



# 美国现代诗歌选

Selected Poems of Modern American Poetry



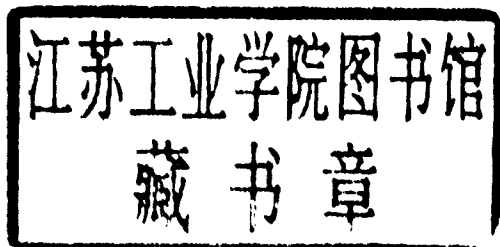
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东北林业大学出版社

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主编 邵 春 于艳华 李庆文



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## Part One Early American Modern Poets

### 1 Carlo Sandburg (1878—1967)

Sandburg was born in Galesburg, Illinois to Swedish ancestry. At the age of thirteen he left school and began driving a milk wagon. He subsequently became a bricklayer and a farm laborer on the wheat plains of Kansas. After an interval spent at Lombard College in Galesburg, he became a hotel servant in Denver, then a coal-heaver in Omaha. He began his writing career as a journalist for the *Chicago Daily News*. Later he wrote poetry, history, biographies, novels, children's literature, and film reviews. Sandburg also collected and edited books of ballads and folklore. He spent most of his life in the Midwest before moving to North Carolina.

Sandburg fought in the Spanish-American War with the 6th Illinois Infantry, and participated in the invasion of Guanica, Puerto Rico on July 25, 1898. He attended West Point for just two weeks, for failing mathematics and a grammar exam. Sandburg returned to Galesburg and entered Lombard College, but left without a degree in 1903.

He moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin and joined the Social Democratic Party. Sandburg served as a secretary to Mayor Emil Seidel, mayor of Milwaukee from 1910 to 1912. Seidel was the first person to be elected mayor of a U. S. city on a socialist platform. Sandburg met Lilian Steichen at the Social Democratic Party office in 1907, and they married the next year. Lilian's brother was the photographer Edward Steichen. Sandburg with his wife, whom he called Paula, raised three daughters.

Sandburg moved to Harbert, Michigan, and then suburban Chicago, Illinois. They lived in Evanston, Illinois before settling at 331 S. York Street in Elmhurst, Illinois from 1919 to 1930. Sandburg wrote three children's books in Elmhurst, *Rootabaga Stories*, in 1922, followed by *Rootabaga Pigeons* (1923), and *Potato Face* (1930). Sandburg also wrote *Abraham Lincoln; The Prairie Years*, a two volume biography in 1926, *The American Songbag* (1927), and a book of poems

*Good Morning, America* (1928) in Elmhurst. The family moved to Michigan in 1930. The Sandburg's house at 331 S. York Street, Elmhurst was demolished and the site is now a parking lot. He moved to a Flat Rock, North Carolina estate, Connemara, in 1945 and lived there until his death in 1967.

Carl Sandburg is best known for his poetry. He won two Pulitzer Prizes, one for his poetry and another for a biography of Abraham Lincoln. H. L. Mencken called Carl Sandburg "indubitably an American in every pulse-beat."

### Chicago

HOG Butcher for the World,  
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,  
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;  
Stormy, husky, brawling,  
City of the Big Shoulders;

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I  
have seen your painted women under the gas lamps  
luring the farm boys.

And they tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it  
is true I have seen the gunman kill and go free to  
kill again.

And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the  
faces of women and children I have seen the marks  
of wanton hunger.

And having answered so I turn once more to those who  
sneer at this my city, and I give them back the sneer  
and say to them:

Come and show me another city with lifted head singing  
so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.

Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on  
job, here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the  
little soft cities;

Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning



as a savage pitted against the wilderness,  
Bareheaded,  
Shoveling,  
Wrecking,  
Planning,  
Building, breaking, rebuilding,  
Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with  
white teeth,  
Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young  
man laughs,  
Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has  
never lost a battle,  
Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse.  
and under his ribs the heart of the people,  
Laughing!  
Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of  
Youth, half-naked, sweating, proud to be Hog  
Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with  
Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation

### **The Harbor**

PASSING through huddled and ugly walls  
By doorways where women  
Looked from their hunger-deep eyes,  
Haunted with shadows of hunger-hands,  
Out from the huddled and ugly walls,  
I came sudden, at the city's edge,  
On a blue burst of lake,  
Long lake waves breaking under the sun  
On a spray-flung curve of shore;  
And a fluttering storm of gulls,  
Masses of great gray wings  
And flying white bellies  
Veering and wheeling free in the open.

### Skyscraper

By day the skyscraper looms in the smoke and sun and  
has a soul.

Prairie and valley, streets of the city, pour people into  
it and they *minge among* its twenty floors and are  
poured out again back to the streets, prairies and  
valleys.

It is the men and women, boys and girls so poured in and  
out all day that give the building a soul of dreams  
and thoughts and memories.

(Dumped in the sea or fixed in a desert, who would care  
for the building or speak its name or ask a policeman  
the way to it?)

Elevators slide on their cables and tubes catch letters and  
parcels and iron pipes carry gas and water in and  
sewage out.

Wires climb with secrets, carry light and carry words,  
and tell terrors and profits and loves—curses of men  
grappling plans of business and questions of women  
in plots of love.

Hour by hour the caissons reach down to the rock of the  
earth and hold the building to a turning planet.

Hour by hour the girders play as ribs and reach out and  
hold together the stone walls and floors.

Hour by hour the hand of the mason and the stuff of the  
mortar clinch the pieces and parts to the shape an  
architect voted.

Hour by hour the sun and the rain, the air and the rust,  
and the press of time running into centuries, play  
on the building inside and out and use it.

Men who sunk the pilings and mixed the mortar are laid  
in graves where the wind whistles a wild song  
without words

And so are men who strung the wires and fixed the pipes  
and tubes and those who saw it rise floor by floor.

Souls of them all are here, even the hod carrier begging  
at back doors hundreds of miles away and the brick-  
layer who went to state's prison for shooting another  
man while drunk.

(One man fell from a girder and broke his neck at the  
end of a straight plunge—he is here—his soul has  
gone into the stones of the building. )

On the office doors from tier to tier—hundreds of names  
and each name standing for a face written across  
with a dead child, a passionate lover, a driving  
ambition for a million dollar business or a lobster's  
ease of life.

Behind the signs on the doors they work and the walls  
tell nothing from room to room.

Ten-dollar-a-week stenographers take letters from  
corporation officers, lawyers, efficiency engineers,  
and tons of letters go bundled from the building to all  
ends of the earth.

Smiles and tears of each office girl go into the soul of  
the building just the same as the master-men who  
rule the building.

Hands of clocks turn to noon hours and each floor  
empties its men and women who go away and eat  
and come back to work.

Toward the end of the afternoon all work slackens and

all jobs go slower as the people feel day closing on  
them.

One by one the floors are emptied...The uniformed  
elevator men are gone. Pails clang...Scrubbers  
work, talking in foreign tongues. Broom and water  
and mop clean from the floors human dust and spit,  
and machine grime of the day.

Spelled in electric fire on the roof are words telling  
miles of houses and people where to buy a thing for  
money. The sign speaks till midnight.

Darkness on the hallways. Voices echo. Silence  
holds...Watchmen walk slow from floor to floor  
and try the doors. Revolvers bulge from their hip  
pockets...Steel safes stand in corners. Money  
is stacked in them.

A young watchman leans at a window and sees the lights  
of barges butting their way across a harbor, nets of  
red and white lanterns in a railroad yard, and a span  
of glooms splashed with lines of white and blurs of  
crosses and clusters over the sleeping city.

By night the skyscraper looms in the smoke and the stars  
and has a soul.

## 2 Edwin Arlington Robinson (1869—1935)

Robinson was born in Head Tide, Lincoln County, Maine, but his family moved to Gardiner, Maine, in 1870. He described his childhood in Maine as “stark and unhappy.” His brother Dr. Dean Robinson died of a drug overdose. It has been speculated that his poem *Richard Cory* may relate to his other brother *Herman Robinson*. His early difficulties led many of his poems to have a dark pessimism and his stories to deal with “an American dream gone awry”.

In the fall of 1891, at the age of 21, Edwin entered Harvard University as a special student. He took classes on English, French, and Shakespeare, as well as

one on Anglo-Saxon that he later dropped. His mission was not to get all A's, as he wrote his friend Harry Smith, "B, and in that vicinity, is a very comfortable and safe place to hang." His real desire was to get published in one of the Harvard literary journals. Within the first fortnight of being there, Robinson's *Ballade of a Ship* was published in *The Harvard Advocate*, a journal of less stature than the heralded *Harvard Monthly*. After Edwin's first year at Harvard the family endured what they knew was coming. His father, Edward, had died. He was buried at the top of the street in Oak Grove Cemetery in a plot purchased for the family. In the fall Edwin returned to Harvard for a second year, but it was to be his last one as a student there. Though short, his stay in Cambridge included some of his most cherished experiences, and it was there that he made his most lasting friendships. Robinson was back in Gardiner by mid-summer, 1893. He had plans to start writing seriously.

With his father gone, Edwin became the man of the household. He tried farming and developed a close relationship with his brother's wife Emma Robinson, who after her husband Herman's death moved back to Gardiner with her children. She rejected marriage proposals from Edwin twice, after which Edwin Robinson permanently left Gardiner. Robinson moved to New York, where he led a precarious existence as an impoverished poet while cultivating friendships with other writers, artists, and would-be intellectuals. In 1896 he self-published his first book, *The Torrent and the Night Before*, paying 100 dollars for 500 copies. It was meant to be a surprise for his mother. Days before the copies arrived, however, Mary Palmer Robinson died of diphtheria.

His second volume, *The Children of the Night*, had somewhat wider circulation. Among its readers was President Theodore Roosevelt's son Kermit, who recommended it to his father. Impressed by the poems and aware of Robinson's straits, Roosevelt in 1905 secured the writer a job at the New York Customs Office. Robinson remained in the job until Roosevelt left office.

Gradually his literary successes began to mount. He won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry for the years 1922, 1925 and 1928. During the last twenty years of his life he became a regular summer resident at the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire, where he was the object of devoted attention by several women although he maintained a solitary life and never married.

**Luke Havergal**

Go to the western gate, Luke Havergal,  
There where the vines cling crimson on the wall,  
And in the twilight wait for what will come.  
The wind will moan, the leaves will whisper some  
Whisper of her, and strike you as they fall;  
But go, and if you trust her she will call.  
Go to the western gate, Luke Havergal—  
Luke Havergal.

No, there is not a dawn in eastern skies  
To rift the fiery night that's in your eyes;  
But there, where western glooms are gathering,  
The dark will end the dark, if anything;  
God slays Himself with every leaf that flies,  
And hell is more than half of paradise.  
No, there is not a dawn in eastern skies—  
In eastern skies.

Out of a grave I come to tell you this,  
Out of a grave I come to quench the kiss  
That flames upon your forehead with a glow  
That blinds you to the way that you must go.  
Yes, there is yet one way to where she is,  
Bitter, but one that faith can never miss.  
Out of a grave I come to tell you this—  
To tell you this.

There is the western gate, Luke Havergal,  
There are the crimson leaves upon the wall.  
Go, —for the winds are tearing them away,  
Nor think to riddle the dead words they say,  
Nor any more to feel them as they fall;

But go! and if you trust her she will call.  
There is the western gate, Luke Havergal—  
Luke Havergal.

### Richard Cory

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,  
We people on the pavement looked at him;  
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,  
Clean favored, and imperially slim.  
  
And he was always quietly arrayed,  
And he was always human when he talked;  
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,  
“Good morning,” and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich - yes, richer than a king -  
And admirably schooled in every grace:  
In fine, we thought that he was everything  
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,  
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;  
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,  
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

### Miniver Cheevy

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,  
Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;  
He wept that he was ever born,  
And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old  
When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;  
The vision of a warrior bold

Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,  
And dreamed, and rested from his labors;  
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,  
And Priam's neighbors.

Minever mourned the ripe renown  
That made so many a name so fragrant;  
He mourned Romance, now on the town,  
And Art, a vagrant.

Minever loved the Medici,  
Albeit he had never seen one;  
He would have sinned incessantly  
Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace  
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;  
He missed the mediaeval grace  
Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,  
But sore annoyed was he without it;  
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,  
And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,  
Scratched his head and kept on thinking;  
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,  
And kept on drinking.



### 3 Robert Frost (1874—1963)

Robert Frost was born in San Francisco, California to journalist, William Prescott Frost, Jr. and Isabelle Moodie. His mother, was of Scottish descent, and his father, a descendant of colonist Nicholas Frost from Tiverton, Devon, England who had sailed to New Hampshire in 1634 on the Wolfrana. Frost graduated from Lawrence High School in 1892. Frost's mother joined the Swedenborgian church and had him baptized in it, but he left it as an adult.

Despite his later association with rural life, Frost grew up in the city, and published his first poem in his high school's magazine. He attended Dartmouth College long enough to be accepted into the Theta Delta Chi fraternity. Frost returned home to teach and to work at various jobs including delivering newspapers and factory labor. He did not enjoy these jobs at all, feeling his true calling as a poet.

Robert Frost's personal life was plagued with grief and loss. His father died of tuberculosis in 1885, when Frost was 11, leaving the family with just \$ 8. Frost's mother died of cancer in 1900. In 1920, Frost had to commit his younger sister, Jeanie, to a mental hospital, where she died nine years later. Mental illness apparently ran in Frost's family, as both he and his mother suffered from depression, and his daughter Irma was committed to a mental hospital in 1947. Frost's wife, Elinor, also experienced bouts of depression.

Elinor and Robert Frost had six children: son Elliot died of cholera; daughter Lesley Frost Ballantine; son Carol committed suicide; daughter Irma, daughter Marjorie died as a result of puerperal fever after childbirth; and daughter Elinor Bettina died three days after birth in 1907. Only Lesley and Irma outlived their father. Frost's wife had heart problems throughout her life. She developed breast cancer in 1937 and died of heart failure in 1938.

In 1912 Frost sailed with his family to Great Britain, living first in Glasgow before settling in Beaconsfield outside London. His first book of poetry, *A Boy's Will*, was published the next year. In England he made some important acquaintances, including Edward Thomas (a member of the group known as the Dymock Poets), T. E. Hulme, and Ezra Pound. Pound would become the first American to write a (favorable) review of Frost's work. Surrounded by his peers, Frost wrote