

THE  
COMPLETE POEMS  
AND SELECTED LETTERS  
AND PROSE OF

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HART CRANE

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EDITED WITH AN  
INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY  
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TO EMILY DICKINSON

You who desired so much—in vain to ask—  
Yet fed your hunger like an endless task,  
Dared dignify the labor, bless the quest—  
Achieved that stillness ultimately best,

Being, of all, least sought for: Emily, hear!  
O sweet, dead Silencer, most suddenly clear  
When singing that Eternity possessed  
And plundered momentarily in every breast;

—Truly no flower yet withers in your hand,  
The harvest you descried and understand  
Needs more than wit to gather, love to bind.  
Some reconciliation of remotest mind—

Leaves Ormus rubyless, and Ophir chill.  
Else tears heap all within one clay-cold hill.

[1927]

KEY WEST

Here has my salient faith annealed me.  
Out of the valley, past the ample crib  
To skies impartial, that do not disown me  
Nor claim me, either, by Adam's spine—nor rib.

The oar splash, and the meteorite's white arch  
Concur with wrist and bicep. In the moon  
That now has sunk I strike a single march  
To heaven or hades—to an equally frugal noon.

Because these millions reap a dead conclusion  
Need I presume the same fruit of my bone  
As draws them towards a doubly mocked confusion  
Of apish nightmares into steel-strung stone?

O, steel and stone! But gold was, scarcity before.  
And here is water, and a little wind. . . .  
There is no breath of friends and no more shore  
Where gold has not been sold and conscience tinned.

[1935]

first coll. in *CP*, p. 117 (where "marble into" was substituted for "marble only into" [line 1] and "In dusk it" substituted for "In dusk, it" [line 8]). The poem is the first of a group of five appearing together in *transition*, no. 9, pp. 132-36, under the collective title of "East of Yucatan": "Island Quarry," "Royal Palm," "Overheard" ["Bacardi Spreads the Eagle's Wings"], "El Idiota" ["The Idiot"], and "The Hour" ["The Hurricane"]. Present text taken from a typescript page (*Key West*) which revises the *transition* version in line 2 ("Flat prison slabs" instead of "Flat slabs") and line 8 ("In dusk, as though" instead of "In dusk, it is at times as though").

#### OLD SONG

First pub. in *The New Republic*, 51 (August 10, 1927), p. 309; first coll. in *CP*, p. 139. Text from a typescript page (*Key West*), which conforms in all details but one minor punctuation variant ("rose,—" instead of "ros—" [line 1]) with the first published version; bears the typed notation of "New Republic / Aug. '27"; and corrects the version in *CP* by giving "Thy absence" instead of "Thine absence" (line 1), "the dream." instead of "the dream" (line 4), and "burden of the" instead of "burden on the" (line 9).

#### THE IDIOT

First pub. in *transition*, no. 9 (December 1927), p. 135 (see note for "Island Quarry"); first coll. in *CP*, p. 119. Text from a typescript page (*Key West*) with holograph emendations entitled "The Idiot," which also furnished text in *CP* (except that "see" was substituted in *CP* for "see—" [line 1], "That boy" substituted for "The boy" [line 2], and "kite string;" substituted for "kite string," [line 9]).

#### A NAME FOR ALL

First pub. in *The Dial*, 86 (April 1929), p. 297; first coll. in *CP*, p. 120.

#### BACARDI SPREADS THE EAGLE'S WINGS

First pub. as "Overheard" in *transition*, no. 9 (December 1927), p. 134 (see note for "Island Quarry"); first pub. as "Bacardi Spreads the Eagle's Wings" in *Contempo*, 2 (July 5, 1932), p. 1; first coll. in *CP*, p. 126. Text from *Con-*

*tempo*, to which HC sent the poem on March 11, 1932; it differs from text in *CP* (apparently an erroneous transcription of the *Contempo* version combined with some of the punctuation in the earlier *transition* version).

#### IMPERATOR VICTUS

First pub. in *Poetry*, 41 (January 1933), p. 180; first coll. in *CP*, p. 123. Text from a typescript page (*Key West*) with holograph emendations, which also provided text for *CP* (where lines 11, 12, and 13 were omitted).

#### ROYAL PALM

First pub. in *transition*, no. 9 (December 1927), p. 133 (see note for "Island Quarry"); first coll. in *CP*, p. 121. The text has been taken from *transition*, which apparently also furnished text in *CP* (except that "more than regal" was substituted for "more-than-regal" [line 1] and "aethercal" for "aethereal" [line 8]).

#### THE AIR PLANT

First pub. in *The Dial*, 84 (January 1928), p. 140. First coll. in *CP*, p. 122, whose text is taken from a typescript page (*Key West*) bearing notation "Hart Crane, / RFD-Patterson, N.Y. / as sent to Criterion / July 16th." The present text conforms to that in *CP*.

#### THE HURRICANE

First pub. as "The Hour" in *transition*, no. 9 (December 1927), p. 136 (see note for "Island Quarry"); first pub. as "The Hurricane" in *The New Republic*, 67 (July 29, 1931), p. 277. First coll. in *CP*, pp. 124-25, where the text is based on a typescript page (*Key West*) with holograph emendations that precedes the *New Republic* version, from which the present text has been taken.

#### TO EMILY DICKINSON

First pub. in *The Nation*, 124 (June 29, 1927), p. 718. First coll. in *CP*, p. 128, whose text is based on a typescript page (*Key West*) with a holograph emendation ("Needs" instead of "Takes" in line 11) that provides the only variation from the *Nation* text. The present text conforms to that in *CP*.