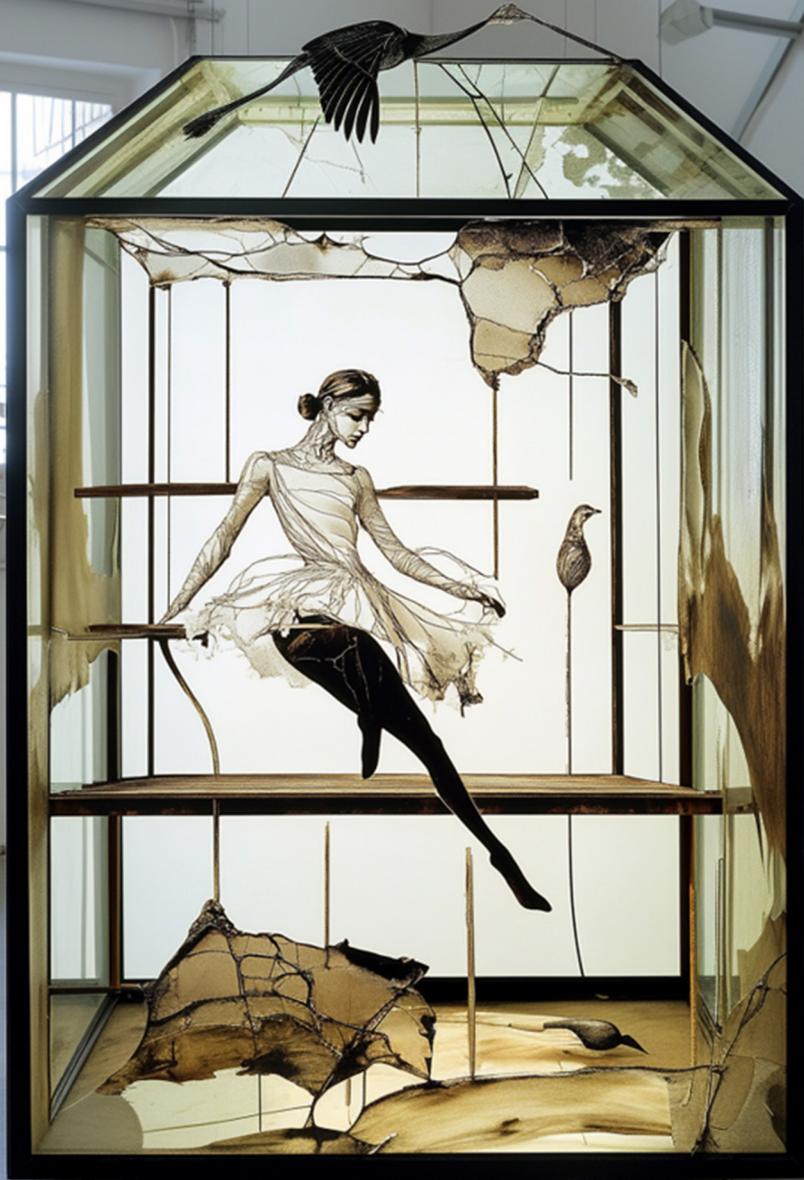


# Walter Arensberg Selected Poems



# Walter Arensberg

April 4, 1878 [Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania] –

January 29, 1954 [Los Angeles, California]

Sed ut perspiciatis unde omnis iste natus error sit voluptatem accusantium doloremque laudantium, totam rem aperiam, eaque ipsa quae ab illo inventore veritatis et quasi architecto beatae vitae dicta sunt explicabo. Nemo enim ipsam voluptatem quia voluptas sit aspernatur aut odit aut fugit, sed quia consequuntur magni dolores eos qui ratione voluptatem sequi nesciunt. Neque porro quisquam est, qui dolorem ipsum quia dolor sit amet, consectetur, adipisci velit, sed quia non numquam eius modi tempora incidunt ut labore et dolore magnam aliquam quaerat voluptatem. Ut enim ad minima veniam, quis nostrum exercitationem ullam corporis suscipit laboriosam, nisi ut aliquid ex ea commodi consequatur? Quis autem vel eum iure reprehenderit qui in ea voluptate velit esse quam nihil molestiae consequatur, vel illum qui dolorem eum fugiat quo voluptas nulla pariatur?

*Poems.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914.

*Idols.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916.

# For Forms That Are Free

Loosen the web, Arachne, and we will waltz.

Loosen, Arachne,

The spider-web that has ensnared

The feet in such a struggling bergamask.

# Voyage A L'infini

The swan existing  
Is like a song with an accompaniment  
Imaginary.

Across the glassy lake.  
Across the lake to the shadow of the willows,  
It is accompanied by an image,  
— As by Debussy's  
“Reflets dans Peau.”

The swan that is  
Reflects  
Upon the solitary water — breast to breast  
With the duplicity:  
“The other one!”

And breast to breast it is confused.  
O visionary wedding! O stateliness of the procession!  
It is accompanied by the image of itself  
Alone.

At night  
The lake is a wide silence,  
Without imagination.

# Dirge

Make of the moon a motion.

You

Who are laid to rest,

Make of the moon about the eaves of space.

You who upon the earth

Are doing nothing,

The circles of the swallow

In the twilight,

You who have left above the empty house

The night

In suspense.

# The Voice Of One Dead

Of the relented limbs and the braid, O lady.  
Bound up in haste at parting,  
The secret is kept.

## To The Gatherer

Heavy with the life among the leaves  
The bough  
Is heavy with your hands . . .  
It yields.  
And will the yielding bough at the last  
Break?  
Or at the last made light  
By hands that gather and cannot hold,  
Will it swing away as it used to swing,  
Out of the reach of hands.  
High with one apple?

# Autobiographic

Permanently in a space that is anywhere here  
While I am I,  
I am temporarily  
Always now.

And at the eternal  
Instant  
I look —  
The eye-glassed I  
At the not I, the opaque  
Others,  
Eye-glassed too.  
And I who see of them  
Only the glasses  
Looking,  
See of myself  
In looking-glasses  
Faces  
Distorted.

And throughout the transparent  
Spaciousness,  
Which is so extensively  
The present  
Point  
Located personally —  
A solid geometry  
Of vacancy  
Bounded by the infinite  
Absence,  
I  
Foreshorten  
To the end  
Of me . . .  
Walls and ceilings  
Of my cellular

Isolation  
Wrecked by perspective.  
Habitable cubes  
Of static  
Surfaces of plaster  
Prolonged in flight.  
And it is I who hold them back,  
And it is I who let them go,  
These gray planes plunging  
In an emptiness  
Blue,  
These rampant sides of pyramids  
That converge  
To nothing

# While I am I. The Night Of Ariadne

She waited in a grotto by the sea  
The vital visit of the Minotaur  
Untouched. The night had grown oracular  
With tongues of licking heat that were not he,  
She knew not how she knew, reluctantly.  
The entrance of the grotto was a scar  
Of heaven, and in it lengthened, star by star.  
Stalactites to her credulous chastity.

Heavy the darkness that she lay beneath;  
The tide was swelling ; and a rosy wreath  
She vowed to an old pagan monolith.  
Her god, if it would send against the myth  
A man. . . . And in a dream she seemed to sheath  
The dripping blade that he would enter with.

# Portrait

She has a gas-lit glitter of cold stones.  
She lives, and she makes light of lingerie;  
And she has suffered not the little ones  
To come to her, suffering you and me.

The flesh is pretty about the gentle bones.  
And these at least — you feel! — have modesty.  
These of her naked life the last Unknowns  
That she 's afraid as death to let you see.

# Consider The Lilies

Lilies are the beckonings  
Of a world of lilies fallen,  
Yielding to alighted wings  
Secret pollen.

Yesterdays are ghostly sheaves.  
Noon is golden on the bough.  
Life is ripe among the leaves . . .  
Beckon thou.

Wave a handkerchief of prayer.  
Keep a secret in a gown.  
When the wings are in the air,  
Bow down.

## To A Poet

What are you doing like a naughty child  
To the original non-entity,  
Without a wedding and a little wild,  
Those moments when you say of beauty: “be”?

# Am Tag!

William of Germany, is this the day  
For which you have been drinking — or a night  
Which is awakened by the dynamite  
Clearing the darkness in your drunken way?  
The deeds of darkness are not yours — you light  
Louvains about the beds of children. Yea,  
And in the churches where the women pray  
For some conception of the divine right,

Them you enlighten, too — the right divine  
Is yours! And from a heaven above the Rhine  
Your visitation! And immaculate  
Is the conception as the women wait.  
Beneath the dove-like wings of aeroplanes,  
The pleasure that you feel in their remains.

Infinite Mercy

Can He who heard the plea for ignorance:  
“Forgive them, for they know not what they do!”  
Stooping to the uplifted cross of France,  
Forgive the Germans — they who know and knew?

# ING

Ing? Is it possible to mean ing?

Suppose

for the termination in g  
a disoriented  
series

of the simple fractures  
in sleep.

Soporific  
has accordingly a value for soap  
so present to  
sew pieces.  
And p says: Peace is.

And suppose the i

to be big in ing  
as Beginning.

Then Ing is to ing  
as aloud  
accompanied by times

and the meaning is a possibility  
of ralsis.











































































































































































