

# \*Ye Olde Plum News\*

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## POETS IN PLUM'S WORLD

### PERCY GORRINGE

A poet, with tortoiseshell-rimmed spectacles and whiskers. Stepson to L.G. Trotter. He was in love with Florence Craye and dramatized her novel Spindrift. One of his poems:

#### *Caliban at Sunset*

*I stood with a man*

*Watching sun go down.*

*The air was full of murmurous summer scents*

*From the sky that smouldered in the west,*

*A sky of crimson, amethyst and gold and sepia*

*And blue as blue as were the eyes of Helen*

*When she sat*

*Gazing from some high tower in Ilium*

*Upon the Grecian tents darkling below.*

*And he,*

*This man who stood beside me,*

*Gaped like some dull, half-witted animal*

*And said,*

*'I say,*

*Doesn't that sunset remind you*

*Of a slice*

*Of underdone roast beef?'*

Tom Travers said: *Quite an intelligent young fellow, that, though he wears whiskers.*

Percy had a secret. He wrote detective novels under the pseudonym Rex West: *The Mystery of the Pink Crayfish*, *Murder in Mauve*, *The Case of the Poisoned Doughnut*, *Inspector Biffen Views the Body*, and a novelette: *Blood Will Tell*. Bertie Wooster was a great admirer of Rex West.

(Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit, 1954)

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### AILEEN PEAVEY

Canadian poet. *She had large, fine, melancholy eyes, and was apt to droop dreamily.* She had published six volumes of poems and was invited to Blandings by Lady Constance.

*She was the sort of woman who tells a man ... that she was up at six watching the dew fade off the grass, and didn't he think that those wisps of morning mist were the elves' bridal-veils. Lord Emsworth told: she asked me if I didn't think that it was fairies' tear-drops that made the dew.*

Miss Peavey and Madeline Bassett seems to be soulmates, even if Bertie said about Madeline: *I won't go so far as to say she actually wrote poetry.* Miss Peavey had dark secret:

She was a thief. In criminal circles she was known as 'Smooth Lizzie'.

(Leave it to Psmith, 1923, Right Ho, Jeeves, 1934)

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### RALSTON McTODD

Writer of a collection of poems called **Songs of Squalor**. *The powerful young singer of Saskatoon ('Plumbs the depths of human emotion and strikes a new note' - Montreal Star)* was a temperamental fellow, very annoyed by lord Emsworth's way of collaring the conversation during a lunch. When lord Emsworth suddenly left him to look at some flowers he lost his temper and left the lord one poet minus.

A line in one of his poems: *Across the pale parabola of Joy.*

(Leave it to Psmith, 1923)

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### ESMOND HADDOCK

*He was a fine, upstanding - sitting at the moment, of course, but you know what I mean - broad-shouldered bozo of about thirty, with one of those faces which I believe, though I should have to check up with Jeeves, are known as Byronic. He looked like a combination of a poet and an all-in wrestler. It would not have surprised you to learn that Esmond Haddock was the author of sonnet sequences of a fruity and emotional nature which had made him the toast of Bloomsbury.*

(Mating Season, 1949)

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### ALARIC 'RICKY' GILPIN

The Duke of Dunstable said: *My nephew Ricky writes poetry.... And now he wants to sell soup... He's potty.* But Dunstable considered everybody but himself as 'potty'. *Beefy chap with red hair. ... 'He said he was going to look in today and break my neck.' 'I didn't know poets broke people's necks.' 'Ricky does.'*

(Uncle Fred in the Springtime, 1939)

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### ANGELA VINING

Stanley Ukridge said that this poetess, and friend of his Aunt Julia, *was a gaunt sort of toothy female who had come to lunch once or twice while I had been staying in my aunt's house.* He regarded her to be a disease.

(The Level Business Head, 1926)

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### EUSTACE HIGHNETT

*He was a small, fragile-looking young man with a pale, intellectual face. Dark hair fell in a sweep over his forehead. He looked like a man who would write vers libre, as indeed he did.*

*'Practically all the poetry I have written rather went out of its way to boost women, and now I'll have to start all over again and approach the subject from another angle. Women!'*

(The Girl on the Boat, 1921)

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### OFFICER GARROWAY

This New York policeman expressed his feelings about his life with broken heart in *vers libre*. He had learnt that rhyme was an out-worn convention. *'And a great convenience I found it. It seems to make poetry quite easy.'*

#### *Streets!*

*Grim, relentless, sordid streets!*

*East, West, North,*

*And stretching starkly South;*

*Sad, hopeless, dismal, cheerless, chilling Streets!*

*I pace the mournful streets*

*With aching heart.*

*I watch grey men slink past*

*With shifty, sidelong eyes*

*That gleam with murderous hate;*

*Lepers that prowl the streets.*

*Men who once were men,*

*Women that once were women,*

*Children like wizened apes,*

*And dogs that snarl and snap and growl and hate.*

*Streets!*

*Loathsome, festering streets!*

*I pace the scabrous streets*

*And long for death.*

(The Small Bachelor, 1927)

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