

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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