

**WHEELS: AN
ANTHOLOGY
OF VERSE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649763078

Wheels: an anthology of verse by B.H. Blackwell

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B.H. BLACKWELL

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ANTHOLOGY
OF VERSE**

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1916

OXFORD: B. H. BLACKWELL

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NANCY CUNARD.

WHEELS.

I *SOMETIMES think that all our thoughts are wheels
Rolling forever through the painted world,
Moved by the cunning of a thousand clowns
Dressed paper-wise, with blatant rounded masks,
That take their multi-coloured caravans
From place to place, and act and leap and sing,
Catching the spinning hoops when cymbals clash.
And one is dressed as Fate, and one as Death,
The rest that represent Love, Joy and Sin,
Join hands in solemn stage-learnt ecstasy,
While Folly beats a drum with golden pegs,
And mocks that shrouded Jester called Despair.
The dwarves and other curious satellites,
Voluptuous-mouthed, with slyly-pointed steps,
Strut in the circus while the people stare.—
And some have sober faces white with chalk,
And roll the heavy wheels all through the streets
Of sleeping hearts, with ponderance and noise
Like weary armies on a solemn march.—*

Wheels.

*Now in the scented gardens of the night,
Where we are scattered like a pack of cards,
Our words are turned to spokes that thoughts may roll
And form a jangling chain around the world,
(Itself a fabulous wheel controlled by Time
Over the slow incline of centuries.)
So dreams and prayers and feelings born of sleep
As well as all the sun-gilt pageantry
Made out of summer breezes and hot noons,
Are in the great revolving of the spheres
Under the trampling of their chariot wheels.*

OSBERT SITWELL.

THE BEGINNING.

GREAT spheres of fire, to which the sun is nought
Pass thund'ring round our world. A golden mist—
The margin to the universe,—falls round
The verges of our vision. Rocks ablaze
Leap upward to the sun, or fall beneath
The rush of our rapidity, that seems
Catastrophy, and not the joyous birth
Of yet another star. The air is full
Of clashing colours, full of sights and sounds
Too plain and loud for men to heed or hear,—
The cosmic cries of pain that follow birth :
A multi-coloured world.

The scorching heat
Surpasses all the equatorial days :
Steam rises from the surface of the sea.
Gigantic rainbow mists resemble forms
That bring to mind strange elemental sprites

The Beginning.

Exulting in the chaos of creation.
They glide above the tumult-ridden sea
Which now is shaken as are autumn leaves ;
Great hollows open and reveal its depths—
Denude of any form of life or death.—
Then wave on wave it gathers strength again
And shakes a mountain, splits it to the base
(Still weak from struggles as a new-born babe).
Then night comes on, and shows the flaming path
Of all the rocks that vainly seek the sun.
Broad as the arch of space, a myriad moons
Sail slowly by the sea ; the glowing world
Shows up the pallor of their ivory.—
The din grows greater from the universe
There rises up the smell of fire and iron,—
Not dreary like the smell of burnt-out things,
But like the smell of some gigantic forge—
Cheerful, of good intent, and full of life.

Now all the joyous cries of sea and earth
The universal harmonies of birth
Rise up to haunt the slumber of their god.