6-3-2010

Two Poems

Gerald Locklin
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**Abstract**
A pair of poems, one about Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and one about Sir Thomas Lawrence.

**Keywords**
Poetry, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Sir Thomas Lawrence

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by Gerald Locklin

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec: *Divan Japonais, 1893*

The Artist of the Advertisement,

The poster, the color lithograph,

The Artist of the Entertainment,

Of the Entertainer,

Of the dancer Jane Avril;

The flat-chested, thin-armed chanteuse,

Yvette Guilbert; the critical

Edouard Dujardin.

Of drink, sex, music, gambling,

Pleasure, Gaiety, Desire.
Paris was the Other,

Orientalized,

Of Victorian England.

Only the Artist,

As so often is the case,

Was at the Party but not of it,

The Historian of the Orgy,

The (like Voltaire) Philosopher.

But the Parisians understood

God all too well,

His supreme talent for Narration,

Plotting, Achilles’ Heels, Retaliation,

Rising and Falling Actions,

The Economy of the Cosmic Melodrama:

Around the corner lurked

The Infernal Century.

* * *

Sir Thomas Lawrence: Portrait of Arthur Atherley as an Etonian, c. 1791

What an arrogant and odious Pretty Boy—in a way the Blue Boy

Really wasn’t. Soft-brimmed hat in one bare hand, one suede

Glove in the be-gloved other, longcoat over vest,

Maroon on white, with girlish curls to frame
Two Poems

A prematurely predatory countenance—

No wonder “city boys”—day students—scholarship recipients

Like Forster and Orwell came to despise all Etons.

But Marion Davies easily discerned a value in

The image and the execution, and perhaps it gave her added pleasure

That she and Hearst bought and sold aristocratic fops

To adorn their Santa Monica Beach House:

Refuge of the cinematic Brits.

Citizen Kane is a great film—the fourth time I watched it I could finally

See why: the fascination of Welles inventing a non-verbal language,

That of Film, for this most Modern and American of Arts,

The inflections of the lighting, camera angles, editing,

The coloration or the absence of it,

The musical accompaniment or silencing of it.

And Hearst would soon teach Welles,

What Hearst and his “whore” had always known: That money matters

And that it matters nowhere more than Hollywood.

Gerald Locklin is Professor Emeritus of English at California State University, Long Beach, and, in retirement, a part-time lecturer there and in the Master of Professional Writing Program at the University of Southern California. His most recent collections of poetry are Gerald Locklin: New and Selected Poems, from World Parade Books, Huntington Beach, California, and The Plot of Il Trovatore, from Kamini Press, Stockholm, Sweden. He contributed an essay, “The Small Presses and Little Magazines: A Few Reflections” and three poems to Literature and Its Writers: A Compact Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama, edited by Ann Charters and Samuel Charters, Fifth Edition, Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2010. He publishes regularly and widely in journals such as New York
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PUBLISHED: June 3, 2010
FILED UNDER: Uncategorized

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