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The Poet, René

Elmhurst poet, Blanche René is the author of two volumes of poetry. A PONY CART OF VERSE, was published in 1949, by Trovillion Private Press, Herrin, Illinois. The Trovillions printed this volume not only for children, but for private press collectors of beautifully made books. It was published in a limited edition, on Fabriano hand-made paper, bound in red, silverflaked boards. Henrietta Hartke Houy of Villa Park created the cover-design.

The second volume, BOOK OF THE REBORN, is a book of revelation. Based on a profound personal experience, Miss René expresses here, her own metamorphosis. Reflecting this changed consciousness, the former Blanche Grant then assumed the nom-de-plume of Blanche René. In BOOK OF THE REBORN, this new identity is expressed in the poem entitled "Rebirth and a Name", page 10.

BOOK OF THE REBORN, published in 1953, by the Fortune Press of London, England, contains illustrations by Herman Graff, an instructor of design at the Art Institute of Chicago. He illustrated the spiritual message of René's poems which speak of a Better Self, a Better Day to come. To shed light upon the "Viewless-Selves" of us, Mr. Graff used symbols embedded in the poems. In René's own words, "How to paint the Self, the Real, the mental-selves of us--now that is a problem for any artist".

In addition to these two volumes, Miss René has also had poems published in poetry journals and has led poetry workshops. A former part-time student at Elmhurst College, she had the opportunity to study poetry under Professor Karl H. Carlson. Under her maiden name, Blanche Grant, she appeared in summer stock.

Prior to living in Elmhurst, Miss René married Einer William Larsen, a mechanical engineer at Western Electric Company. Their daughter, Frances, attended Hawthorn School and York Community High School before going to Northwestern University. Later she married Richard T. Birr of Lombard.

245 Claremont Street, Elmhurst was the home of the poet for many years. Living on a five-acre estate in South Barrington, Illinois, Miss René blossomed into an avid gardener. For the past decade the poet has lived in Chicago.

Blanche René's Bookplate

Blanche René's bookplate was designed by Margaret Ely Webb of Santa Barbara, California, one of America's foremost bookplate artists. In the lettering and drawing symbolism was used with dignity and appropriateness.

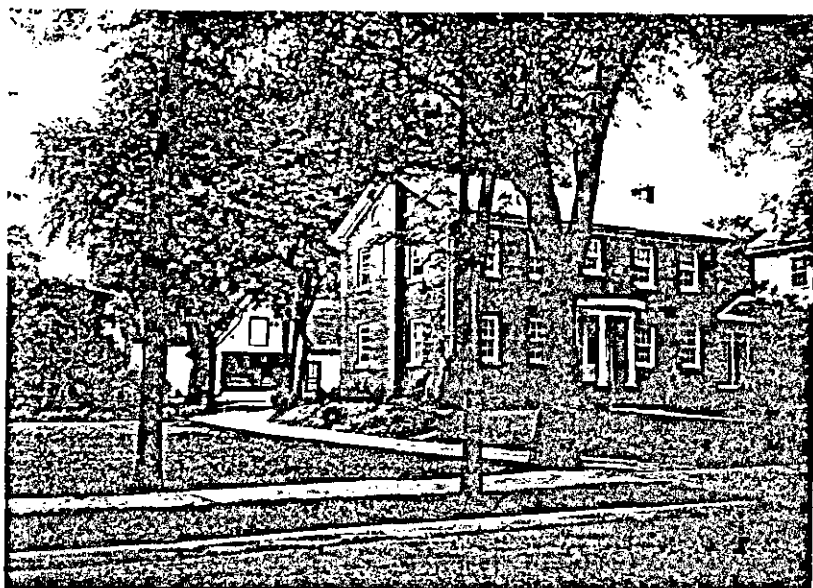
Miss Webb, in her symbolic design, tied a lettered ribbon around the flowers and flutes. With a little imagination it is easy to see that the heart shaped leaves of the flowers symbolize the poet's love for all mankind, and the pipes signify poetry, the medium for expressing that love for God and man used by Miss René.

Embodied in the plate, the butterfly at the top, symbolizes rebirth--man's resurrection from mental bondage after which comes spiritual and religious freedom.





Blanche Rene 1952



Blanche rene, 245 Claremont, Elmhurst, Ill
1955

At the SIGN of the SILVER HORSE

published every little while by Trovillion private press

VOL. IX

HERRIN, ILLINOIS, U. S. A., AUTUMN, 1949

No. 1

ON OUR FORTIETH BIRTHDAY

Since the appearance of the last issue of *Sign of the Silver Horse*, Trovillion Private Press has completed forty years of continuous operation. This makes it the oldest private press in this country. In that time it has produced forty-six books, all limited editions, and most of them printed on fine, hand-made papers. In addition to this number, many brochures, folders and broadsides have come from this press from time to time.

We might honestly advertise every book that we have ushered into the world after the fashion of the very early publishers who claimed for them that "They will be found pleasant for men, profitable for women and harmful to none."

In the years that may yet be allotted us, we hope to continue to live up to the high standard we set for our press in the beginning. A press obtains and accumulates honor by what it publishes and by what it supports. Such has been the course of our press.

We fall back onto the words of our literary guardian, the late Thomas Bird Mosher, whose path we have tried to follow in style, selection of matter and design of our books: "At the outset," he once wrote, "I only wanted to make a few beautiful books and to that end could think of nothing more suited to my purpose than what I have chosen; the things I loved and desire others to love."

In 1943, Herman Schaulinger compiled *A Bibliography of Trovillion Private Press* which we published and a few copies are still available, giving a full description of the founding and operation of the press and the books that have been put out.

A checklist of titles up to July, '49, follows, giving titles, date of printing and number of copies printed:

- *Neapolitan Vignettes, by Hal W. Trovillion: 1913; 197 copies.
- *Amphora of Robert Louis Stevenson; 1914; 137 copies.
- Love Letters of Henry VIII; 1916; 138 copies. Reprinted 1936 and 1945.
- *The Happy Prince by Oscar Wilde; 1920; 120 copies.
- *Francine's Muff by Henry Murger; 1923; 197 copies.
- *Vagaries from Munthe—Published by Violet and Hal W. Trovillion; 1925; 221 copies.
- *Tussie-Mussie by Violet and Hal W. Trovillion; 1927; 203 copies.
- *Favorite Fragments by Hal W. Trovillion; 1927; 209 copies.
- *The Selfish Giant by Violet and Hal W. Trovillion; 1930; 108 copies.
- *The Selfish Giant by Oscar Wilde; 1932; 128 copies.
- No. 5 Cheyne Row by Mae Trovillion Smith; 1933; 300 copies.
- *In Casa Mia by Violet and Hal W. Trovillion; 1933; 139 copies.
- The Sundial in Our Garden—by Violet and Hal W. Trovillion; 1935; 156 copies.
- In Country Places—by Gilbert Rae, 1937; 111 copies.
- *The Private Press as a Diversion—by Violet

A SALUTE FROM OLD WALES

From his sequestered hill-top home far up in the north of quiet Old Wales, our good friend, John Cowper Powys, sends greetings to our press on the occasion of its fortieth anniversary of founding, now the oldest private press in America in continuous operation. Under date of June the 28th, '49, from 7 Cae Coed, Corwen, Merionethshire, Wales, he writes:

"It was indeed a lucky day for all of us grateful 'fans' of the wonderful Private Press at the sign of the Silver Horse when forty years ago our inspired friends, Violet and Hal W. Trovillion, decided to drive their car up the slope of Parnassus. Since then among such exceptional marvels of literature as *King Henry's Love Letters to Queen Elizabeth's Mother*, *The Happy Prince and Selfish Giant* by Oscar Wilde, my own fortunate family has been rendered specially happy and proud by the appearance, in this stately and arresting format, of our dear brother's Llewelyn's *Baker's Dozen*, with an introduction by my personal friend and most erudite of bibliographers, Mr. Lloyd Emerson Siberell. So it is with all gratitude that I lift my glass of pure Heliconian white wine and goat's milk to the long life of the Trovillion Private Press!—JOHN COWPER POWYS."

- and Hal W. Trovillion; 1937; 147 copies.
- *Christmas Entree—by Violet and Hal W. Trovillion; 1938; 77 copies.
- First Garden Book—by Thomas Hyll; 1938; 287 copies.
- *Kipling Speaks to the Young Men—1939; 167 copies.
- A Baker's Dozen—by Llewelyn Powys; 493 copies.
- Delights for Ladies—by Sir Hugh Plat; 1939; 279 copies. Reprinted 1942; 498 copies.
- *Old English Yuletide—by Llewelyn Powys; 1940; 202 copies.
- *When Lincoln Came to Egypt—by George W. Smith; 1940; 493 copies.
- The Happy Prince—by Oscar Wilde; 1940; 277 copies.
- The Tussie Mussie—1941; 487 copies.
- *Christmas in Review—by Violet and Hal W. Trovillion; 1942; 171 copies.
- Bibliography of Trovillion Private Press—by Herman Schaulinger; 1943; 277 copies.
- Visitation at Thatchcot—by Harry R. Burke and F. A. Behymer; 1944; 490 copies.
- No More Dogs at Thatchcot—by Hal W. Trovillion; 1944; 321 copies.
- The Merchant Royall—by Robert Wilkinson (1607); 1945; 477 copies.
- Success and Failure—by Benjamin Jowett; 1945; 487 copies.
- Books and Gardens—by Alexander Smith; 1946; 807 copies.
- Recipes and Remedies of Early England—by Violet and Hal W. Trovillion; 1946; 997 copies.
- Lincoln and Ann Rutledge—by William H. Herndon; 1945; 897 copies.
- Happy Prince and Selfish Giant—by Oscar Wilde; 1945; 497 copies.
- Christmas at Thatchcot—by Violet and Hal W. Trovillion; 1947; 711 copies.
- Passing of Mother's Portrait—by Roswell M. Field; 1948; 992 copies.
- Country Housewife's Garden—by William Lawson (1617); 1948; 997 copies.
- A Pony Cart of Verse—by Blanche Rene'; 1949; 497 copies.
- *Out of print.

A BEAUTIFUL BOOK OF POEMS

The most recent title from our press is Blanche Rene's *A Pony Cart of Verse*, one of the most charming we have ever printed. Young people will be delighted with this little volume. Written in a conversational tone with feeling and melody, it inspires a child to notice some of the wonders of himself. He will taste a berry bug, feel "A Pair of Agile Feet," smell the musteline mammal in the poem, "Miss Tweet," hear the "Peckeroo" of the woodpecker, see a "Lady in a Silo."

Miss Rene' has won many awards in poetry—children's lyrics and prophetic poetry. She has served on the Board of the North Shore Creative Writers and as a chairman of the Midwestern Writers' Conference. She is President of Illinois Chaparral Writers, and book-reviewer of that society's journal.

The book is printed on Fabriano hand-made paper from the world famous old Italian mill, bound in red silverflake boards laminated with cellophane, illustrated, and limited to 497 copies signed and numbered by the author.

Critics of poetry and book-reviewers have received the poems very favorably.

"It is a beautifully printed little volume of lively verses for children—all about animals and birds and such. Charming in content and tastefully printed and bound. Keep it in mind for Christmas-giving to child or lover of fine printing. — PAUL JORDAN-SMITH in Los Angeles Times.

The verse of Blanche Rene' comes in a book of pony cart size because it is a cargo of beauty rather than bulk. There is security for it in the way it comes to waiting children because the pony cart is like the earth, "although it tilts it never falls!"—F. A. BEHYMER in St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

A well-known critic and himself a poet of distinction comments — "These poems for young people have quality and originality. The verse itself has the kind of sureness and resonance that one finds only in the work of an accomplished craftsman. I like the verses immensely and I believe the author has talent."

The poet enters into the life of the child of today, and has given us a book that is a staple for a child's library and a joy-gift for the Christmas season.—LYNN SMITH, Poetry Editor, Inland Journalist.

Ada Cosner, the playwright, has paid high tribute to the book and the genius of the author.

AN IDEAL OF MY YOUTH

In my early coming-up days, no writer was so loved or so widely read and his ideas so fully digested by me as was Robert Louis Stevenson. I have never ceased to re-read his essays even to this day. From him I learned to appreciate the value of words and their fit and proper uses. I still worship with him at the same shrine on these matters.

So let me here renew my debt to him and my love for him in that the centennial of his birth is here. He was born November 13, 1850, at 8 Howard Place in Edinburgh, Scotland. His death came in his forty-fourth year on the isle of Samoa where he had gone to live in hopes of regaining his health.

In my library stands a little yellowed cedar chest, crudely constructed, its corners bound with homemade brass. It was made and presented to RLS by the natives of Samoa when he set out one time to make a tour of the islands. In the chest is a copy of Crabb's *English Synonyms*, published in London in 1829. It is a worn and well-thumbed volume, as well it might be, for surely RLS made good and frequent use of it. Above the desk where I type this copy hangs a framed charcoal drawing of an English house with a stone fence around it, and the grounds heavily planted with evergreens. This picture once hung in the California home of the Stevensons. It bears the signature of the artist, A. W. Henley, whom Lloyd Osbourne wrote me several years ago was the Anthony Henley, a brother of W. E. Henley. All of these RLS mementoes I bought in 1916 at an auction sale of the Stevenson effects at the Anderson Galleries in New York City, after both he and his wife had passed.

At the time it was a great sacrifice for me to procure these things for I was working hard and pinching and saving every penny I earned as a country newspaper editor and publisher here in our little mining town. But I am now glad of the expenditure for these mementoes which have lived with me close to my heart all down through the years.

In my travels I have trailed RLS in many places. Twice I have visited the birthplace at No. 8 Howard Place in Edinburgh and as many times been in the University of Edinburgh where he was educated. At Bournemouth in Hants this summer with Kenneth Hopkins, the English critic, I was shown where stood the house in which he wrote *Kidnapped*, but the Germans left only a memory of the spot after this last war. Many years ago I motored up the Royal Dec from Aberdeen to Braemar and saw the house where he dashed off, in the summer of 1881, *Treasure Island*. On the French Riviera this summer I visited Nice, Menton and other places where he sojourned in his early years in search of a climate that would agree with him.

I have dwelt long and happily with RLS although his bones have been mouldering for more than half a century on a Samoan mountain top under the "wide and starry skies."

He is still remembered here in America as the most beloved of the writers of his age whom he did so much to cheer and stimulate.

So let me leave this prayer of his which I included in one of the first little books from our press many years ago:

AT MORNING

The day returns and brings us the petty round of irritating concerns and duties. Help us to play the man, help us to perform them with laughter and kind faces, let cheerfulness abound with industry. Give us to go blithely on our business all this day, bring us to our resting beds weary and content and undishonored, and grant us in the end the gift of sleep.

PONY CART SELLING OUT

A *Pony Cart of Verse* put out last year by our press is fast approaching the out-of-print list. Since the last *Silver Horse* issue, a number of highly praising reviews have come in from all over the nation and as far away as from poets of prominence in England into whose hands has fallen this little book of happy lyrics which can be read with pleasure by parent and child alike.

J. Redwood Anderson, recognized English poet, author of a number of volumes; Mrs. M. M. Hart of London, who has just published *The Hedgerows*, a fine volume of poems, introduction by Walter de la Mare; and Ruth Pitter, eminent poet living in Chelsea, London, have all spoken of the freshness and originality of *A Pony Cart of Verse*.

A review by Ruth Campbell in the *Nashville Tennessean* follows:

"There is something of the delicate and appealing quality of Milne in these "Pony Cart" verses, for Blanche Rene writes with the understanding of a grown-up touched with the make-believe of a child.

"Once you have decided on adventure beyond the fine cover you will find imaginative and gay little poems. There is a homely quality that should appeal to a child as quickly as an old-fashioned toy.

"From cover to cover the book is charming. Not only for the poems but for the book itself. It is a worthy one to mark the 40th anniversary of the Trovillion Private Press. In the years of its existence this distinctive publishing house in Herrin, Illinois has devoted itself to the making of fine books.

"*The Pony Cart of Verse* is always welcome to the hand as a rare old edition with its beautiful type and handmade paper."

And Miss Rene is not without honor in her own Midwest. Kelsey Guilfoil of the *Chicago Tribune Magazine of Books*, Van Allen Bradley in *Chicago Daily News*, H. Russell Austin in the *Milwaukee Journal*, and many other publications have praised *A Pony Cart of Verse*.

There are not many copies left. What better gift for a child for Christmas than an autographed copy of this first edition, attractively bound in Santa-Clause red, flaked with silver. Place your order early as this limited edition is fast selling out.

A LAST AND SAFE REFUGE

When the melancholy days descend upon one in his declining years, he is not a lost man if he had in his younger years cultivated a love for books, for therein he can find a true Balm of Gilead. Reflect upon the case of Niccolo Machiavelli. When stripped of his great power by the Medici, he betook himself to his library, and with only wood cutters and peasants left him for friends, he wrote in those ill days that befell him these fine words in praise of the library:

"With these companions I play the fool all day at cards or backgammon. But when evening falls, I go home and enter my library. On the threshold I put off my dirty habit, filthy with mud and mire, and array myself in royal, courtly garments. Thus worthily attired, I make my entrance into the ancient courts of the men of old, where they receive me with love, and where I feed upon that food which only is my own, and for which I was born. I feel no shame in conversing with them and asking them the reason of their actions. They, moved by their humanity, make answer; for four hours' space I feel no annoyance, forget all cares. Poverty cannot frighten nor death appall me. I am carried away to their society."

LIST OF BOOKS IN PRINT

A list of Trovillion Books still available follows. If desired a descriptive list, giving full description of books, will be sent on request. Prices postpaid:

- A Pony Cart of Verse—Blanche Rene' ..\$3.00
- *A Baker's Dozen—L. Powys 4.00
- Signed by the author 6.00
- Books and Gardens—A. Smith 2.50
- Bibliography of Trovillion Press 3.00
- Christmas at Thatchcot—Trovillion 2.50
- Countrie Housewife's Garden—Lawson .. 3.00
- Limited fine edition 6.00
- Delights for Ladies—Plat 3.00
- First Garden Book—Hyll 3.00
- Happy Prince and Selfish Giant—Wilde 3.00
- Lincoln and Ann Rutledge—Herndon
- Collector's edition 6.00
- Trade edition 3.50
- Love Letters of Henry VIII 2.50
- Mosher's Bibelot (Wise) 21 Vols.
- second hand, good condition30.00
- No More Dogs at Thatchcot 1.50
- The Passing of Mother's Portrait—Field 3.00
- Recipes and Remedies of Early
- England—Trovillion 3.00
- Success and Failure—Jowett 2.50
- Sundial in Our Garden—Trovillion 3.00
- The Merchant Royall—Wilkinson 3.00
- The Tussie Mussies—Trovillion 3.00
- Visitation at Thatchcot—Trovillion 1.50

Dated October '50 annulling previous prices.
*Not many left.

TROVILLION PRIVATE PRESS

at sign of the silver horse
HERRIN, ILLINOIS

BEAUTIFUL PRESS BOOKS



from TROVILLIONS

At the Sign of the Silver Horse

HERRIN, ILLINOIS

Good books, wholesome in content, beautifully printed on hand-made paper and attractively bound are always welcome in any home. For gifts they are as treasured as one can bestow whatever the occasion may be.

Trovillion Private Press books are typographical gems for collectors. They have a distinction and charm all their own and their rare selection of titles has won for them a place in the rare book room of many great libraries in this country and in England.

Of the forty-six titles that have appeared, only twenty are still available. The editions are limited, and all books are numbered and signed by the publishers. They are in many respects unlike other books for they are made for book-lovers and priced within reach of the poorest purse.

Here is a checklist for fall of '49 and spring of '50. All prices are postpaid anywhere in the United States and guaranteed until the fall of '50. We advise ordering early.

✓ A PONY CART OF VERSE BY BLANCHE RENE' \$3.00 CHRISTMAS AT THATCHCOT, BY VIOLET & HAL W. TROVILLION. \$2.50

This book with its intriguing title catches the fancy of both the young and old who have experienced a ride in just such a fascinating pony-cart as illustrated on the cover and those who wish they might have such a ride. The even trot-trot of the pony with the occasional exhilarating bump, and the delighted squeals of the riders giving evidence of their joy is a pictured experience of reading *The Pony Cart*. The energy of the pony never flags and one rides with gaiety from one poem to another. In simple conversational manner and with refreshing clarity and originality, the poet enters into the life of the child of today, and has given us a book which fills a need, long felt, in the world of poetry for children. *The Pony Cart* is a staple for a child's library and a joy-gift for the Christmas season.

The edition is limited to 497 numbered copies signed by the author. Printed on Fabriano hand-made paper, bound in red silverflaked boards, laminated with cellophane.

It is a cargo of beauty rather than bulk. There is security for it in the way it comes to waiting children because the pony cart is like the earth, "although it tilts it never falls."—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

A beautifully printed little volume of lively verse for children. All about animals and birds and such. Charming in content and tastily printed and bound. Keep it in mind for Christmas.—PAUL JORDAN-SMITH in Los Angeles Times.

The poet enters into the life of the child of today, and has given us a book that is a staple for a child's library and a joy-gift for the Christmas season.—LYNN SMITH, Poetry Editor, Inland Journalist.

This joyful Christmas book is filled with helpful suggestions for those who do their own greetings for Yuletide. It is compiled to make pleasant Christmas reading and to put one in the holiday mood and contains the oft-quoted letter, 'Is there a Santa Claus?'; a bit from Dickens; two appropriate pieces from Nicholas Breton. Here is reproduced the ever heartening essay on Christmas from Alexander Smith's *Dreamthorp* which the late Hamilton W. Mabie declared was one of the finest things written about Christmas. Printed on Van Gelder handmade paper, red silverflake end papers, bound in decorative boards, title stamped in gold, nothing could be more appreciable for a Christmas book.

THE PASSING OF MOTHER'S PORTRAIT BY ROSWELL M. FIELD. \$3.00

Field collectors will welcome this long out of print book, the masterpiece of the younger brother of Eugene Field. It is an impressive story of filial neglect and disregard and points a lesson that puts the blame on this age. Mother's portrait from her gilded frame tells the story. At first she is given the most prominent place in the home, but is gradually pushed back as the family achieves riches and grows socially prominent and finally winding up in a dark and dingy attic, abandoned, forsaken, forgotten. J. Christian Bay, librarian emeritus of Crerar Library, Chicago, writes an appreciative introduction. The volume has been charmingly produced in limited edition, nice paper, clear, readable type, neatly bound and all copies numbered and signed.

Blanche René, our guest poet for this issue, is the nationally renowned author of *A PONY CART OF VERSE*, published by Trovillion Press, Herrin, Illinois. Since its publication in 1948, Miss René has been regarded as one of the "greatest living poets of our time." For her poetry she is acclaimed abroad as well as here in America.

Miss René's work shows great imagination, an entirely new style and orthodox form. At writers' conferences she has studied with such well known poetry critics as Robert Hillyer, Joseph Auslander, Allen Tate, Jessica N. North, and Henry Rago. While visiting this poet many times at her home I was struck with the electric quality of her own personality, the warmth and beauty and genuineness of her nature. Miss René is not only a truly great poet, but a truly great woman.

ON THE EXODUS

By Blanche René

Until I had been risen from the dead,
I did not know my lyric self at all,
Nor did I then perceive I would be sped
Past earthy man like Eddy, Blake, and Paul,
Like Rilke, Keats, and Emily Dickinson.
I made the exodus. I know the way
Nongenius has to go to be all done
With it as robin with the oval stay.
Up, up on viewless wing, ascend the height
To man reborn. Unbound by larva^e ties,
As an arrivist, haloed by the light,
You chorus with the angels, false man dies.
Done with the chrysalis, you are made
whole.

The exodus makes you a winged soul.

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