

1942

Prohibition

James Franklin Lewis

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Recommended Citation

Lewis, James Franklin. "Prohibition." *New Mexico Quarterly* 12, 3 (1942). <http://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmq/vol12/iss3/19>

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Tomorrow kill our sworn quarry
And pop his two white sight-buds.

It must be done,
And the mind takes rapid hold
Of pity and the mother-smile
Sweet-smelling babies, and the marriage-manger—
Yet tomorrow—kill!
Shut out the shuddering owl.

I wonder now if the very name of war
Contracts the ears,
Points the eyes,
Sharps the fingers,
Calms the heart.
We kill at dim personifications,
Too soon true,
More hateful than our love.
Tonight pinch off a bit of bread
For your dry mouth.
Shut out the foolish owl.

PROHIBITION

The fire-infested west
Takes a henna-rinse.
Local-colored libraries
Take the generous glow
Where not long since
The last puritan massively shook his beard.

The world's bewildering volume—
Now a schoolboy's atlas.
Now three-dimensional men,
Carefully understating,
Wonder when.

When! Ah, to unfence the range
Where storming cattle

Kick up clouds—
Long-buried battle.

Curb only the belted barons
Wearing spider-signs and fasces.
Curb only the firebrands, firehands,
Silting the spirited earth with spark and ashes.

JAMES FRANKLIN LEWIS

CRUMBLING OF THE ROCK

Long torrents the grass waves,
Touched as with life.
Live your years as minutes,
For no wind has the night.
Night holds the knife.

Smiling, a hard-faced man,
Crumbling Of The Rock, hot breathes
Upon live things blooming and unbloomed.
Give your fragrance
To the pulseless roofs if must,
For none can escape the withering.
The greatest ocean will precipitate dust.

* * * *

No man felt me coming,
And God is a sightless man
Who must be told.
I have slipped in
Where there is no space.

Old deathless man, Crumbling Of The Rock,
Sheds sand upon my upturned face,
And this that is feature
Will come to be a mound—
Eye hollows, mouth filled in,
And the specially-mumbled of a once voice
Will be heard as time passing.

DICK ROBERT