

1912*-1952, FULL CYCLE

I. LOVE SONG OF PRUFROCK JUNIOR

Must all successful rebels grow
From toreador to Sacred Cow?
What cults he slew, his cult begot.
"In my beginning," said his Scot,
"My end;" and aging eagles know
That 1912 was long ago.
Today the women come and go
Talking of T. S. Eliot.

II. INSCRIBED FOR YOUR BEDSIDE "GLOSSARY OF THE NEW CRITICISM"

Here's the eighth form of ambiguity:
The *new philistia* loves "obscurity,"—
And only we still dare to hate it
Because a *texte* without a Muse in
Is but a snore and an allusion.
Well then, let's turn the tables hard:
The snobs all snubbed, the baiters baited,
The explicators explicated,
And avant-garde the new rearguard.

III. FROM THE SUBLIME TO THE METICULOUS IN FOUR STAGES

DANTE: We were God's poets.

BURNS: We were the people's poets.

MALLARME: We were poet's poets.

TODAY (preening himself): Ah, but *we* are critic's poets.

IV. EPITAPH FOR THE NOUVEAUX NEW CRITICS, HUGH KENNER, E TUTTI QUESTI

'I will not yield
To kiss the ground before young Malcom's feet.'

Cliché is dead, long live cliché,
And in old fields new Georgians play.
O miglior fabbro and O mandarin,
You who skinned Georgians like a tangerine,

*Events of 1912, the key year: *New Age* starts publishing Hulme's essays; Imagist nucleus founded (Pound, H. D., Aldington); *Poetry: A Magazine Of Verse* founded by Harriet Monroe (to whom Pound in 1914 sends Eliot's "Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," written 1910-11); October 1912, the American-verse number of Harold Monro's *Poetry Review* (W. C. Williams, Pound); symbolic clash of the simultaneous 1912 publication of *Georgian Poetry* and Pound's *Ripostes*.

Two Hercules who on your natal day
Strangled these snakes of cliché-pandering,
These same that now through backstairs wander in:
Let not (while death-knells from Kinkanja¹ ring)
The pedant town of Alexander in.
From kitsch the nineteenth century banned her in,
You freed our Muse. For what? Was Queen Victoria
Primmer than précieux new "Prohibitoria"²?
Loving your ART and not your fleas, we pray:
May time protect you from your proteges.
Time's up when pupils' pupils school the school.
Cow? Bad enough! But sacred—calf?
Now that the cup of insolence is full,—
By God, who'll start a brandnew Nineteen Twelve?

1. cf. not *The Golden Bough* but *The Cocktail Party*, American edition, p. 174.

2. Cf. Louis Rubin in *Hopkins Review*, summer 1950: "He has twice criticized the award of the 1949 Bollingen Prize to Pound's *Pisan Cantos*, on grounds both of form and content. Either he must repent, and publicly, or resign himself to a prominent and permanent position in the Index Prohibitorium of the New Criticism."