

Louise Pound, a dashing friend from her college days.

Drawing on a personal alchemy, she transmuted her feelings into the strong characters of her novels. As she put it: "Whatever is felt upon the page without being specifically named there—that, one might say, is created. It is the inexplicable presence of the thing not named, of the overtone divined by the ear but not heard by it, the verbal mood, the emotional aura of the fact or the thing or the deed, that gives high quality to the novel or the drama, as well as to poetry itself." Whether intentionally or not, the expression "thing not named" evokes an old tradition of homosexual love as unnameable. But Cather's triumph is that her need to veil her inner emotional life did not condemn her to silence, but inspired her great writing.

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Evelyn Gettone

### CATHOLIC CHURCH

See Christianity; Clergy, Gay; Monasticism; Papacy.

### CATULLUS, GAIUS VALERIUS (87-54)

Latin poet. Born at Verona, he spent most of his life in Rome, but kept a villa near his birthplace at Sirmio on Lake Garda. Often considered the best Republican poet, he imitated Sappho as well as other archaic, classical, and Hellenistic models, upon which he often improved, and which he combined with native Latin traditions to create stunning, original pieces. He wrote poems, 250 of which survive, of happiness and bitter disappointment. Some are addressed to his high-born, married, then widowed mistress Clodia, the sister of Cicero's antagonist,

10 years his senior, whom he addressed as Lesbia (though with no insinuation of what we now call lesbianism), and who was unfaithful to him with other men. Homophobic Christian and modern schoolmasters have, however, greatly exaggerated the importance of the poems to Lesbia, which amount to no more than an eighth of the Catullan corpus.

Besides a wide variety of other verses, in some of which he criticized Caesar and Pompey, many of Catullus' poems were pederastic, addressed to his apparently aristocratic beloved Juventius. He was unusual among Romans in preferring an aristocratic boy to a slave but made clear that most others preferred *concupini*, that is, male slaves with whom they slept. Sophisticated and fastidious, he set the standard for the Augustan poets of love Ovid, Horace, Vergil, and Propertius. In the Silver Age even Martial acknowledged his debt to Catullus' epigrams. Like those poets, and most specifically Tibullus, he showed little inhibition and equal attraction to boys and women, but also shared the traditional attitude that the active, full-grown male partner degraded the passive one, and that the threat to penetrate another male symbolized one's superior virility and power. On the other hand, the accusation of having been raped by another male has a largely negative force; Catullus poses as victim in order to insult the excessively Priapic male.

In Latin erotic poetry, as in its Greek sources after the fifth century, the boys have no family, no career, and no identity other than as athletes and slaves, with the sole exception of Juventius. Like most of the Hellenistic poets, their Roman imitators often sang of boys who demanded gifts or were even outright prostitutes. The older, still beardless boy was considered superior to younger ones, so that eighteen was preferred to thirteen. Even in his wildest flights of imagination or rancor no Latin or Greek poet ever advised his listener to enjoy another adult male sexually. So Catullus' homoerotic poetry is

firmly in the tradition of the Hellenistic and the fashionable Roman attitude toward the love of boys.

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### CAVAFY, CONSTANTINE P. (1863–1935)

Leading poet in modern Greek.

Cavafy was born in Alexandria, Egypt, in a merchant family that had long been prominent under the Ottoman Empire. His father died when he was seven and his mother took him to England where they remained for seven years. In 1887 the Cavafy export business collapsed and the family returned to Alexandria, moving to Constantinople in 1882. Here the poet had his first love affair—with a cousin, George Psilliary. In 1885 Cavafy returned with his mother to Alexandria, where he found work in the Department of Irrigation. He remained there for over thirty years. As a young man he led an active street life, some of which is recorded in his poems. When his mother died in 1899, he moved to an apartment over a brothel in the Rue Lepsius. His only known long-term relationship was with Alexander Singopoulos, whom he made his heir.

The canon of Cavafy's works is small, consisting only of about 150 lyrics—though these have been supplemented after the writer's death by several score of unpublished and rejected works. In subject matter his poetry ranges from historical episodes of Hellenistic and Byzantine times to scenes of modern life. The historical poems reveal his sense of kinship with the earlier phases of the Greek diaspora, together with the fin-de-siècle interest in late or "decadent" stages of civilization. His more personal poems in the latter

mode are poignant reflections on the fleeting joys of youth, especially in the homoerotic sphere. Such poems as "In the Street" (1916), "Two Young Men, 23 to 24 Years Old" (1927), and "The Mirror in the Front Hall" (1930) present a comprehensive picture of the urban gay man's world that is easily recognizable today: street cruising, one-night stands, pressures to remain closeted, regret at growing older, ethnic and social contrasts, and nurturing friendships. The cosmopolitan city of Alexandria in which these poems are set is now completely transformed, but Cavafy's vision of it stands as an incomparable metaphor for the awareness of spiritual exile that is a key component of modernist sensibility.

Though concise, Cavafy's lyrics have an extraordinary staying power, an indefinable aura, which largely survives the translation process. In the Greek originals their subtle infusion of the inherited literary language with elements of the spoken vernacular has made them an important stylistic influence. Cavafy has achieved a considerable international reputation, thanks in part to such advocates as W. H. Auden, E. M. Carpenter, Lawrence Durrell, and Marguerite Yourcenar.

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