

to her writing poetry; one of her earliest extant poems came out of her adolescent crush on her girlfriend, "Louly W."

Amy Lowell's first published volume of poems, *A Dome of Many Coloured Glass* (1912), contains a number of seemingly homoerotic poems, addressed to two women. But the most significant body of her experiential love poems was written to and for the actress Ada Russell.

Amy Lowell first encountered Ada Russell in 1909 when the actress was traveling on a New England tour of *Dawn of a Tomorrow*. The two met again in Boston, in 1912, when Russell, playing the lead in *The Deep Purple*, appeared as a guest of honor at the Lunch Club, to which Lowell, then half-heartedly living the life of a Boston society woman, belonged. They spent part of the summer of 1912 together, and for the next two years the poet tried to convince the actress to live with her. This courtship is reflected in approximately 20 poems of *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* (1914). Ada finally yielded to Amy's pursuit in the spring of 1914. She quit the stage and went to live with the poet in her Brookline mansion, Sevenels, ostensibly as her paid companion, but in fact as her mate. The two lived together until Amy's death in 1925.

Several of Lowell's later volumes contain love poems about the relationship between the two women, such as *Pictures of the Floating World* (1919) and two posthumous volumes, *What's O'Clock* (1925) and *Ballads for Sale* (1927). The 43 poems in the "Two Speak Together" section of *Pictures of a Floating World* are the best and most complete record of the love relationship between Amy Lowell and Ada Russell.

The usual critical observation that Lowell was overweight and unmarried, and that her work is a "knell of personal frustration . . . an effort to hide the bare walls of the empty chambers of her heart . . ." (Harvey Allen, *Saturday Review of Literature*, 1927) and the exposure of the heart of "a girlish, pathetic, and lonely

woman, underneath [whose] . . . bump-tious manner lies disappointment" (Winfield Townley Scott, *New England Quarterly*, 1935), is not borne out by the body of Lowell's poetry. The preponderance of her experiential poems suggest a life and a relationship that were extremely happy and productive. Typically, in "Thorn Pierce" Lowell talks about the world being dark and glazed, but another woman gives to her "fire,/And love to comfort, and speech to bind,/And the common things of morning and evening./And the light of your lantern." In "Christmas Eve" she tells the other woman, "You have lifted my eyes, and made me whole,/And given me purpose, and held me faced/ Toward the horizon you once had placed/ As my aim's grand measure." "A Decade," the poem that celebrates the first ten years of their acquaintance, concludes "I am completely nourished." Lowell admitted to her acquaintances, such as John Livingston Lowes, that such love poems were about Ada.

In a scurrilous study published one year after Amy Lowell's death, Clement Wood argued that Lowell was not a good poet because many of her poems were homosexual; therefore, they did not "word a common cry of many hearts." Lowell, he concluded, may qualify "as an impassioned singer of her own desires; and she may well be laureate also of as many as stand beside her," but non-lesbian readers will find nothing in her verse (*Amy Lowell*, 1926).

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## LUCIAN (CA. A.D. 120—CA. 185)

Greek writer. From Samosata on the Euphrates, Lucian traveled widely as a tutor and professional lecturer, delivering set pieces in Greek, though his native

tongue was Aramaic. He was surnamed "the blasphemer" according to Suda for telling absurd tales of the gods. At about the age of 40 he settled in Athens and gave up rhetoric to write philosophic *Dialogues*. Eventually, perhaps under Commodus, he became an imperial official in Egypt. He borrowed from Cynic wit, Menippean satire, mime, Old Attic Comedy, and (for his later *Dialogues*) from Plato. Practicing successively law, sculpture, and rhetoric, he exposed the charlatan in *Alexander* and the religious fanatic in *Peregrinus*, who becoming a Christian grew wealthy by donations from his duped coreligionists but abjured Christianity when he was released from prison where he was confined for fraud and ended by immolating himself at the Olympic games. Anticipating the concerted attack that would be organized by later imperial families, he characterized Christ as "that crucified sophist" and his followers as "unhappy men (who) have persuaded themselves that they will be immortal and live forever; wherefore they despise death and willingly sacrifice themselves" (*Peregrinus*, 13).

His *Life of Alexander of Abonoteicho*: satirized a Pythagorean divine who, having become rich and famous through fraud in middle age, kept a harem of pretty young priests. Born about 105 in that Hellenized Black Sea port, Alexander, a tall, handsome, quick-witted youth, became the beloved of a quack physician from Tyana who had once followed Apollonius. Having learned and gotten all he could from the doctor, the unscrupulous youth joined an itinerant entertainer "practicing quackery and sorcery." He claimed descent from Perseus and mesmerized credulous audiences as a prophet of Asclepius, whose snakes, Alexander's pets, answered in verse questions submitted in writing for one drachma and two obols. Marcus Aurelius granted a new name to his native city (Ionopolis), which issued coins showing Alexander wearing his grandfather Asclepius' fillets.

Lucian questioned his contemporaries' received beliefs and without great originality proffered sound comments on art, literature, and history. He satirized Zeus and Ganymede, poking gentle fun at the Greek gods' pederastic loves. In pamphlets Lucian often accused even innocent men of homosexual acts, a tactic by his time standard in Greek (and Roman) oratory. Peregrinus, he charged, paid the poor parents of a youth he had corrupted three thousand drachmae to escape being hauled before the governor of Asia.

The ironically entitled *True History* is possibly the first gay science fiction. On a voyage into the Atlantic, the narrator is suddenly enveloped by a typhoon, which sweeps him up to the moon. Earth's satellite is inhabited by men only, and is engaged in a war with the sun. After distinguishing himself in combat, the hero returns to the moon, where the king magnanimously gives him his son the prince in marriage. Since there are no women, male babies are born in two ways: by parturition from the thigh (presumably after having been inseminated anally) or by planting the left testicle in the ground, whereupon the child grows out of the ground as part of a plant. Shorn of its homoeroticism this romance inspired Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, the fantasies of Cyrano de Bergerac (1619-1655), and many later European tales of interplanetary flight.

The romance *Lucius*, based on the work of Lucius of Patrae, may be among Lucian's authentic works, but rather appears to be a gross summary of his elaboration of Lucius' work. On a visit to Thesaly, the protagonist witnesses the drug-induced transformation of his hostess into a bird. Taking a draught himself, he becomes an ass and undergoes various sexual abuses, being buggered by a randy master and having to copulate interminably with a nymphomaniac. Lucian indicated that some Greeks abhorred lesbianism: "Citing monstrous instruments of lust . . . the *tribade* [lesbian] will become rampant" (*Loves*). Lucian attests to the widespread

practice of pederasty in the Roman period, and also the range of public opinion on the subject.

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## LUDWIG II (1845–1886)

King of Bavaria during the period of German unification. Born at Nymphenburg Palace near Munich, he ascended the throne at the age of 18. In his early youth he was not only handsome but also intelligent and kind-hearted. The death of his father and his premature accession kept him from attending a university. One of his first acts was to invite the financially desperate Richard Wagner to Munich, promising him every favor, including the rebuilding of a theatre so that his operas could be performed. Despite opposition by officials and the public to the enormous sums that Ludwig devoted to the composer's projects, the king remained loyal to him throughout his life, supporting the construction of the opera house in Bayreuth where Wagner at last saw all his work performed.

In the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 Bavaria unwisely sided with Catholic Austria and was easily defeated; the peace treaty served to make Bavaria dependent upon Prussia and ensured its involvement in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, which culminated in the creation of the German Empire with Prussia at its head. Ludwig was pressured by Bismarck to copy in his own hand a letter inviting the Prussian king to become emperor—an act which he himself regarded as disgraceful.

Toward women Ludwig was completely indifferent, and attempts to arrange a marriage for him came to naught. He had at least fleeting homosexual relations with Paul of Thurn and Taxis, and a more enduring liaison with Richard Hornig, who exerted such influence over him

that in official circles the favorite was called "the secret Chancellor of Bavaria." Their love had its crises, but at other times Hornig was the only one who had access to the king, and his decision to marry was experienced by Ludwig almost as treason. But the king found a successor, a certain Hesselschwerdt, who later, after his death, gave frank and revealing testimony to a secret committee of the Bavarian Parliament: that Ludwig had a weakness for simple country boys, youths with muscular arms and legs whom he could observe stripped to the waist while they tilled the fields. For men in uniform he had far less fondness and never cared to wear uniforms himself. When he had to appear in uniform, he wore a fanciful adaptation of the costume of the uhlans that bordered on masquerade. Ludwig also had a love affair with a Viennese actor named Josef Kainz whom he watched perform as the sole member of the audience. But the actor had too great a need of a genuine public and tired of the liaison.

The psychological idiosyncrasies and peculiarities of the king gave rise to what Thomas Szasz has called "the first psychiatric assassination committed successfully and in broad daylight on an important personality." In fact, the death of Ludwig II on the evening of June 13, 1886, is shrouded in mystery. His body was found floating on the surface of the Starnberger See along with the body of the psychiatrist Bernhard von Gudden, the Director of the Insane Asylum in Munich, who was part of a commission appointed to take the king into custody when the lavish expenditures on his new castles became impossible for the state. The castles themselves were expressions of the royal fantasy, executed in a series of derivative styles anticipating the interior decoration that was later to be recognized as a homosexual specialty. The death of the king was commemorated in literary works composed by nearly all of the great contemporary homosexual writers. As an eccentric on the throne, Ludwig of Bavaria was the last of