

ROUTLEDGE REVIVALS

**The Life of  
Ezra Pound**

**Noel Stock**



## The Life of Ezra Pound

First published in 1970, this is a detailed and balanced biography of one of the most controversial literary figures of the twentieth century. Ezra Pound, an American who left home for Venice and London at the age of twenty-three, was a leading member of 'the modern movement', a friend and helper of Joyce, Eliot, Yeats, Hemingway, an early supporter of Lawrence and Frost. As a critic of modern society his far-reaching and controversial theories on politics, economics and religion led him to broadcast over Rome Radio during the Second World War, after which he was indicted for treason but declared insane by an American court. He then spent more than twelve years in St Elizabeth's Hospital for the Criminally Insane in Washington, D.C. In 1958 the charges against him were dropped and he returned to Italy where he had lived between 1924 and 1945.

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Noel Stock



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EZRA POUND

*Noel Stock*



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*To my wife*

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# Acknowledgments

The author has obtained permission to quote from the works of Ezra Pound, but the granting of that permission must not be taken as conveying Ezra Pound's approval of the quotations selected nor of the context in which they appear.

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# Preface

When I first began to read Ezra Pound's poetry in Melbourne in 1946 he was a figure as remote as Keats or Rimbaud. In those days I had read only a few of his books: the *Selected Poems* with an introduction by T. S. Eliot, *The Pisan Cantos*, one or two prose books, and in 1951 *The Letters of Ezra Pound*. I knew vaguely that he had been connected with the beginnings of the 'modern movement' in English poetry, that he held strong views on economics and politics, and that he had got into trouble because of some broadcasts he had made over Rome Radio during the war; but if these things made him seem different and exciting, they were also remote, for they had occurred in Europe and America. The turning-point was in 1953 when I wrote to Hugh Kenner, Professor of English at the Santa Barbara College of the University of California, about his recently published book, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound*. In a postscript to his reply of 8 August he suggested that I get in touch with Pound and gave me his address: St Elizabeths Hospital, Washington, D.C., the insane asylum to which he had been committed by an American court. I wrote, not knowing what to expect, and received a reply immediately, the substance of which was that if I was as well read as I seemed to be, then it was time for me to go into action. And from that moment he instructed me how to, writing more than a hundred letters (between forty-five and fifty thousand words) in the next five years.

I well remember Kenner's warning in 1954 to be careful of Pound's politics; I paid little heed and was soon involved in Social Credit and similar activities. I joined a Social Credit newspaper, *The New Times*, and to Pound's great satisfaction began to publish unsigned or pseudonymous items which he sent from Washington. I posted him copies of each issue which he distributed to those whom he considered active or in other respects worthy. In 1956 I also started a literary magazine called *Edge* in which he played a considerable part. It was typical of his drive and energy that shortly afterwards *Edge* was noticed in the Rome weekly *Il Caffé*; the notice was not signed by Pound but part of it had been composed by him in the exaggerated terms which he reserved for

## PREFACE

such occasions. 'In October 1956', it said, 'the centre of intellectual life of the English-speaking nations was transferred to Melbourne, Australia. After *The Little Review* (1917-29) no English or American review has approached the vigour of the Australian review *Edge*. . . .' He also praised *Edge* to a correspondent in Tokyo with the result that young Japan was informed of its importance in a periodical called *The Rising Generation*.

In 1956 I reviewed Pound's *Rock-Drill* (cantos 85 to 95) in the Australian magazine *Meanjin*, a copy of which I sent to Washington. He liked it and within a short time was distributing photo-copies of it. For the next few years I was embroiled in Poundian ferment: I received copies of dozens of periodicals and leaflets in which he had a hand or of which he approved and wanted circulated; at his behest I wrote letters to publishers urging them to publish books he thought important and to writers informing them of matters which for one reason or another Pound did not wish to mention directly; and in looking back through old material I see that I even signed a declaration which he published in the United States: 'Every man has the right to be born free of debt.'

I left Australia in 1958 to live in England and was on the high seas when in April he was released from St Elizabeths Hospital. I had met his daughter, Mary de Rachewiltz, during a visit to Rome in 1955, and now, on my way through Italy again I stayed at her home, Brunnenburg Castle, at Tirolo di Merano in the Italian Tirol, shortly before Pound himself arrived from America. The following year, with my wife and our two daughters, I moved to a flat at Brunnenburg. Pound was away at the time but told me to examine his collection of books and papers. I first met him at Rapallo in the summer of 1959 and in the autumn when he returned to Brunnenburg I edited a collection of his essays published in 1960 under the title *Impact*. I saw him often at this time and met him occasionally later when he went to live in Venice and Rapallo. His wife, Dorothy Pound, continued to spend part of each year at the castle and I had many opportunities to talk to her about Pound's life in London before and during the First World War and in Paris and Rapallo between the wars. And so, in 1966, when Routledge & Kegan Paul asked me if I would undertake a detailed biography of Pound, I reflected that the time was probably ripe to attempt a balanced account of his extraordinary life.

It remains that I should make some acknowledgments. First, I owe much to other books, particularly Charles Norman's *Ezra Pound* (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1960) and *The Case of Ezra Pound* (Funk & Wagnalls, New York, 1968); others which proved helpful were B. L. Reid's *The Man from New York*, *John Quinn and His*

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*Friends* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1968); *Pound/Joyce*, The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce, edited with commentary by Forrest Read (New Directions, New York, 1967); Julien Cornell's *The Trial of Ezra Pound* (John Day, New York, 1966); Patricia Hutchins's *Ezra Pound's Kensington* (Faber & Faber, London, 1965); and Michael Reck's *Ezra Pound A Close-Up* (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1967). Of great assistance in disentangling the steps leading to Pound's release from St Elizabeths Hospital was Harry Meacham's *The Caged Panther, Ezra Pound at St Elizabeths* (Twayne Publishers, New York, 1967), which was sometimes useful for other periods as well. For much information on A. R. Orage and *The New Age* I am indebted to *The New Age under Orage* (Manchester University Press, 1967) whose author Wallace Martin also kindly answered numerous questions about T. E. Hulme, Imagism, and Pound's London years. Other books consulted included *A Casebook on Ezra Pound*, edited by William Van O'Connor and Edward Stone (Thomas V. Crowell, New York, 1959); *The Annotated Index to the Cantos of Ezra Pound*, by John Edwards and William Vasse (University of California Press, 1959); and Eustace Mullins's *This Difficult Individual Ezra Pound* (Fleet, New York, 1961).

For unfailing kindness and patience in correspondence and also when I visited the United States I wish to thank Warren Roberts and his staff at the Humanities Research Centre of the University of Texas and Mrs Mary Hirth and her staff at the Academic Centre Library at the University of Texas. I owe similar thanks to Donald Gallup of Yale, not only for answering questions by post and assisting me in every way when I visited the Yale Library, but also for his *Bibliography of Ezra Pound* (Rupert Hart-Davis, London, 1963). Thanks are also due to the following: The United States Department of Justice, for answering questions about Pound's legal position at various times; A. N. L. Munby of King's College, Cambridge, for several T. S. Eliot items and other assistance; William Fleming, for information about his correspondence with Pound and for tracing material kindly made available by the Latrobe Library, Melbourne; Mrs R. McNair Wilson and Michael McNair Wilson, for making available very useful material among the papers of the late R. McNair Wilson; Mrs Mary Hemingway for placing the Pound-Hemingway correspondence at my disposal and Dr Carlos Baker for his generosity in going through it for me; Professor James McAuley and Dr Laurie Hergenhan of the University of Tasmania, for assistance concerning Frederic Manning's correspondence with Dorothy Shakespear (Mrs Dorothy Pound); Rabindra-Sadana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, West Bengal, for sending me copies of Pound's letters to Tagore; and the Essay Society at St John's College, Oxford, and the college Librarian H. M. Colvin, for information

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I should like to express my heartfelt appreciation of the assistance I received from Carl Gatter of Wyncote, Pennsylvania, who told me all he knew of Pound's early life and traced for me persons and events long passed into obscurity; he was also an enthusiastic guide when in 1967 I visited Wyncote, graciously inviting me to stay at his home, 166 Fernbrook Avenue, the house in which Ezra Pound had been brought up. He also helped me to collect photographs.

And finally I should like to thank Ezra Pound, Olga Rudge and Mary de Rachewiltz for their assistance and kindness over a period of many years; and Mrs Dorothy Pound not only for assistance in many forms but for her patience in the face of numerous questions and requests. During the course of the book I have quoted from unpublished

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work by Pound, unpublished letters, and also from a number of uncollected pieces, the copyright of which belongs to Ezra Pound: for permission to use this material and to quote from the poet's books I must thank Mrs Dorothy Pound in her capacity as committee for Ezra Pound.

Brunnenburg

Noel Stock

# I            Childhood

## 1885/1901

Hailey, Idaho, was a frontier town of about two thousand people when Ezra Pound was born there on 30 October 1885. His father, Homer Pound, ran the United States Land Office, a position which doubtless carried a certain prestige, but not (if we judge by the local newspaper) very much weight. When the poet's grandfather, Thaddeus Coleman Pound, arrived five months earlier on a tour of his mining properties, the *Hailey Times* of 20 May reported: 'Thad. C. Pound, former Governor of Wisconsin, and father of Homer L. Pound, register of the U.S. Land Office here, found his mining interests in a bad way when he arrived in Hailey a few days ago. His claim, the Alturas, on Warm Springs Creek was jumped, ore and all, the morning he arrived, and on his claim, the Acme, in Smoky, there was a cross location saddled. He is disgusted.' The same issue announced, much as if it were the date of the next council meeting, that horse-thieves were busy on Wood River. The general attitude of the population to the finer things of life, and the rollicking, back-slapping humour, are seen in an anecdote which Pound recalled for Ernest Hemingway in a letter of August 1955. After Homer Pound had built a house for his bride, they were joined by her mother, Mrs Mary Weston from New York. Finding no curtain in her attic window she hung up a fancy petticoat, which caused Homer to be inundated next day with inquiries about his female guest. It was some time before he lived it down.

Ezra Pound arrived into this frontier atmosphere by way of a 'disorderly trek of four or five generations across the whole teeming continent', as he wrote many years later. There were in the family the usual stories about money – all families, it seems, have seen better days – and the usual hints about ancestry. There was talk of their having arrived on the American shore aboard the *Lion*, at a suitably short interval after the *Mayflower*; of a plantation in early New England bearing the name Weston; and of Quakers and whalers by the name of Pound who landed originally in New Jersey and later settled in Pennsylvania. Pound was related on his mother's side to the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and to Captain Joseph Wadsworth who

## CHILDHOOD, 1885/1901

in 1687 stole the Connecticut charter and hid it in Charter Oak, to protect it, apparently, from the designs of the Governor-General. He saw in childhood an engraving, possibly of the eighteenth century, of Wadsworth entering the room to steal the charter, and he heard how the captain swept out the candles on the table with a swish of his long cloak. He was taken when he was eight or nine to Hartford to look at a large stump with a young tree growing out of it, which was said to be *the oak*. Closer to his own day we may observe, among much that was thoroughly correct and dull, such curiosities as a relative who rode behind the first locomotive, a sixteenth cousin named Loomis who was said to have sent an 'electric signal' between ships, without wires, in the 1860s and was thought crazy, a grandfather who corresponded with the local bank manager in verse, and a great-uncle Albert who inclined towards the Episcopal Church because it interfered 'neither with a man's politics nor his religion'.

The most important figure in the poet's immediate background was grandfather Thaddeus (son of Elijah), who was born in a log cabin in Elk, Warren County, Pennsylvania, in or about 1832. He married Sarah Angevine Loomis from a family of horse-thieves: charming people, an old lady from Upper New York State once told Pound, in fact the nicest people in the county, but horse-thieves. It was never hinted, as far as I know, that Thaddeus contracted this weakness of his wife's family and no breath of suspicion, that I know of, ever attached to him in regard to the thieves active at the time of his visit to Idaho. We may safely assume that his marriage into the Loomis family and the activity on Wood River in 1885 were in no way connected.

Thaddeus and Sarah travelled west to Wisconsin and settled at Chippewa Falls, where he learnt the lumber business, starting as a bookkeeper, set up the Union Lumbering Company on his own account, and for a time prospered, doing, it was said, more than a million dollars' worth of business annually. Sarah supervised the preparation of meals for about forty lumbermen and Thaddeus, to maintain his prestige, used to wrestle with them. He also 'used to watch his gang saws in person', Pound wrote, 'to be sure the planks were one and a quarter inch thick before planing'. This was to ensure that 'a foot of lumber after planing was one foot square and an inch thick', no scamped planks being delivered. Thaddeus served in the State Assembly, as member and Speaker, became Lieutenant-Governor of Wisconsin, and was three times elected to Congress. He and Sarah separated and he 'took to himself a second feminine adjunct, without sanction of clergy'. He also built three railways, and boosted Morse's telegraph.

The highest point he reached nationally, according to family tradition, was when he was promised a seat in President Garfield's cabinet;



spring of 1883 he received from Washington a wire saying that President Arthur had appointed him 'register' of the Hailey Land Office. He was unable to find Hailey on the map. 'I was given transportation over the U.P. and Oregon Short Line, Wood River branch, that passed me over the line to the "end of the road". If I remember aright I arrived on the "first train in". It was some weeks later before we were able to open the office – in July. Then the long line of applicants for lands that seemed worthless to me began to file in. Then months of contests and trials – it took about two years to get matters adjusted. . . .' It was a time, in places like Hailey, when fortunes were made overnight. The handyman you paid to saw your kindling wood might tell you (as Homer's did) when you asked him a few days later to saw some more, that he had ten thousand dollars in the bank and a mine to sell. And legal arguments were sometimes settled with revolvers. 'I assure you,' Homer said, 'that the first four years of the Land Office were somewhat interesting. There were times when it seemed as if one might be mutilated by some angry seeker after lands.' In 1919 he gave to the *Philadelphia Ledger* a story how the recently appointed American ambassador to France, Hugh C. Wallace of Tacoma, Washington, had 'once grabbed a 42-calibre six-shooter revolver from the wall of his office to avenge an insult to a friend'. Fortunately, said Homer, 'we prevailed upon him not to carry out his threat'. The incident is recorded by Ezra Pound in a number of places, notably 'Retrospect: Interlude' in *Polite Essays* (1937). He met Wallace in Paris after the Armistice of 1919, a very tired, mild, white-haired man in whom it was difficult to recognize the young man of thirty-six years earlier who had announced his intention of dealing once and for all with the 'son of a bitch' who had insulted his friend.

When Isabel's mother arrived in Hailey to see her grandson she stayed for a time at the hotel. She was horrified to discover that there was no lock on the door. A man wouldn't lock his door out there, Homer later told his son, otherwise 'they'd suspicion you'. What disturbed Isabel about the hotel was that conversations filtered through the flimsy walls.

Hailey was five thousand feet above sea-level and the air did not agree with her. When the baby was about eighteen months they moved to New York. Pound tells us in his autobiographical reverie, *Indiscretions*, published as a series of articles in 1920 and as a small book three years later, that they travelled east during the Great Blizzard of 1887, behind the first rotary snow-plough. When baby Ezra's cough disturbed the others in the sleeper, the inventor of the snow-plough cured him with a dose of sugar saturated with kerosene. The family stayed first with Frances A. Weston at her boarding-house

at 24 East 47th Street. In the spring of 1888, when the baby was two and a half, he was taken to Newport for the season. His first toy, he says in a footnote to his essay on Henry James (1918), was a rather slow and well-behaved lift, in New York apparently, while he was either living there or on holiday. When he was three the family, including also Mrs Mary Weston, went to stay with Thaddeus on his farm in Wisconsin, which numbered among its other inhabitants great-grandfather Elijah and Elijah's elder brother. In June 1889, Homer, Isabel, and child moved to Philadelphia where Homer took up an appointment as assistant assayer at the United States Mint. It was here that the young Ezra grew up and went to school and began his literary career with letters to Santa Claus.

For two years the Pounds lived in a brick row-house with tiny lawn, porch and polished walnut door at 208 South 43rd Street, West Philadelphia, which was then at the city's edge. The house still stands, with a white door in place of the polished walnut. They then moved to 417 Walnut Street, Jenkintown, ten miles north of Philadelphia, but connected to the city by the Reading railroad. An old resident of Jenkintown, Miss Grace Ridpath, recalled many years later that when Ezra was about five the maid would call him so that his mother could read him 'the classics' before his afternoon nap. When he was six they bought a spacious house in nearby Wyncote, five minutes' walk from the Jenkintown station. This was 166 Fernbrook Avenue which was his home for the next sixteen years. It is still there, much as it was in Pound's day, and still bears the same street number.

The ground floor consisted of a large hall and dining-room, front and back parlours, a kitchen and a pantry. Upstairs there were four bedrooms, two bathrooms and a sitting-room, on the first floor, and three bedrooms, a bathroom, and a store-room, on the second. There was a closet in the 'Tower Room' upstairs in which his mother once placed him after some particularly odious offence. The house was furnished in Victorian style, plus a few heirlooms. There were three family portraits: 'Uncle Ezra' after whom Pound was named, a great-grandmother, Hannah How, and a William Page portrait of Mary Wadsworth Parker, who married Harding Weston and had Isabel for daughter. Homer planted a row of trees – pear, peach and cherry, and possibly others – down the right side of the yard, and in the rear garden corn and sweetpeas. There was also at the back a large apple-tree with a swing.

It seems that Pound's first school was run by a Miss Elliot, after which, at the age of six or seven, he attended for a year or more the Cheltenham Hills school at Wyncote run by a well-known family, the Heacocks. One of his boyhood friends was Edward (Ned) Heacock who

was drowned young while canoeing on a wild river out Oregon way. His next school was a temporary establishment run by Miss Florence Ridpath in a house which is still standing at the south-west corner of Greenwood Avenue (then Station Road) and Fernbrook Avenue, only a minute or two from the Pound home. An official school, presided over by a severe mistress in marked contrast to the pleasant Miss Ridpath, was opened a quarter of a mile further up Greenwood Avenue. Out of school Ezra and his pals roamed the nearby hills, in those days still uncleared, and there was a cave in which they played by the local creek. He and another boy were almost drowned rescuing a dog caught in a flash flood. The boys built various huts and other constructions out of packing boxes in the Pound apple-tree.

Rising Philadelphia families like Widener, Stetson and Wanamaker, began to build their medieval castles, renaissance palaces and Elizabethan manor-houses in the countryside surrounding the city. Some of the grandest of these edifices were within a mile or two of the Pound house. But even in Fernbrook Avenue itself there were neighbours on the way up. The Sheip boy, next door, kept telling Ezra that his father was an important man who made cigar-boxes. The Kunkles erected a Victorian house immediately opposite and further up Fernbrook Avenue Cyrus Curtis worked on his *Ladies Home Journal*. Ezra peering over the banister when Curtis came to dinner was struck by the square-cut beard. George Horace Lorimer of the *Saturday Evening Post*, who lived only two doors away, took short-cuts through the Pound backyard. There is something in the tone of Pound's later references to Lorimer, as in *Guide to Kulchur* (1938) when he says that the 'vulgar' Lorimer 'honestly didn't know that there ever had been a civilization', which provokes the suspicion that there may have been some sort of clash, physical or intellectual, between the successful journalist and the young poet quite early in his career.

While the neighbourhood generally became richer and more pretentious, the Pounds continued to make do on Homer's salary as assistant assayer. They lived and ate well, better than the same family could ever hope to do today, and Isabel always kept a maid; but there was no money to spare and Ezra was sometimes conscious of the fact that some of his friends and acquaintances were better off than he was.

Visiting the Mint, with its Greek columns, at the corner of Juniper and Chestnut Streets in those days, he was fascinated by the inner workings, not least his father's skill with a gold balance which enabled him to weigh a man's signature scrawled for the occasion on a visiting-card. He mixed with the assayers and drank in stories about 'gold bricks', which he still remembered in 1944 when he wrote his pamphlet on the 'Economic Nature of the United States'. 'Gold bricks' were false

ingots made of lead covered with a layer of gold; some even were solid gold in parts to enable the swindler to bore in and demonstrate their genuineness. It was a period in America when anybody had the right to have his own gold coined at the official mint, and many who had been duped brought their bricks to Homer to have them converted into coin, only to be told that they were mostly lead. When Grover Cleveland was elected for a second time in 1893 – he had been President 1885–89, was succeeded by Benjamin Harrison, but came back again in '93 – the Administration called for a recount of the silver coinage. The boy watched in the light of gas flares as workmen stripped to the waist in the mint vaults shovelled the coins into the counting machines. The scene remained in his memory and there was still a touch of wonder forty-two years later when he wrote to Sir Montagu Webb, a British businessman interested in monetary reform, that 'Silver I saw, as no Aladdin, for when Cleveland was elected there was the recount of four million in the Mint vaults, the bags had rotted, and the men half-naked with open gas flares, shovelled it into the counting-machines, with a gleam on tarnished discs'. And in canto 97, in the book *Thrones* (1959), he speaks of silver dollars,  $37\frac{1}{4}$  grains silver, 'as I have seen them by shovels full lit by gas flares'.

He visited New York regularly to stay with Mary Weston at 596 Lexington Avenue or at the boarding-house on East 47th Street. With his great-uncle, Mr Weston, and later his great-aunt, he walked through the fruit and vegetable markets in search of provisions; on one such occasion he was struck by the fact that he alone of all the bystanders seemed curious about a huge jack-knife thrown in pursuit of a fleeing male figure. To the boy from Wyncote the incident was unique; to the others, including apparently his Aunt Frank, as she was known, it was in no way remarkable. Here in New York, as at home, politics was in the air. He listened to his elders discuss the 'Free Silver' campaign of 1896 when William Jennings Bryan and the reforming party sought (according to the oratory of the time) to prevent the banking class from its attempt to crucify mankind upon a cross of gold. He must have paid great attention to these discussions and absorbed the significance of the nodding heads and weighty pauses. How otherwise to explain the story, which we have on his own authority, in *Indiscretions*, that even at the age of six he was so seized with indignation at the result of a national election that he hurled his rocking-chair across the room.

The Pounds attended the Wyncote Presbyterian Church, called Calvary, where Homer taught Sunday school. It was a wooden building located on the north-east corner of Fernbrook Avenue and Station Road, opposite Miss Ridpath's unofficial school. It was later rolled to a new

site in Fernbrook Avenue, accompanied by a host of small boys including Pound. The Presbyterian minister was the Rev. Carlos Tracy Chester; his son, Hawley, with whom Pound played as a boy, called on him during a honeymoon visit to Paris about 1920. One of their childhood pranks together was to invent a djinn to scare and perplex another boy who bored them with his company. Hawley's sister, Anna, made an impression on him, mainly, it seems, because of her fanatical adherence on the metronome during piano lessons. It is not clear when exactly Pound first began to have his doubts about Presbyterianism, or Christianity in general, but the seeds of his later rejection of Christianity were sown at Sunday-school or during bible class; or, perhaps, at the Christian Endeavour Convention in Boston which he reports as having attended at 'a precocious age'. He said of the Hebrew Scriptures in his 1938 essay on 'Mang Tsze: The Ethics of Mencius' that it was only with the greatest and most tortuous difficulty that the Sunday-school had got a moral teaching 'out of these sordid accounts of lechery, trickery and isolated acts of courage'. In 1940 he complained in a letter to an American Jesuit, Fr Francis Talbot, of the 'modern habit of trying to get everything down to the level of the young men's bible class'. And in a letter in 1958 to the historian R. McNair Wilson, he said that he had been brought up a Presbyterian, 'but it began to seem phoney' under a minister by the name of Lower. This was the Rev. William Barnes Lower who in 1901 took over Calvary Church from Carlos Chester. He was a great organizer and in the words of a local historian, 'Young peoples' groups were started and the whole church was alive with activity'. Pound was still attending church sometimes, even if mainly for the music, when he was nineteen, and still thinking in what we may call Christian terms. If doubts formed early about organized religion and the meaning and import of the Bible, if he began to formulate religious thoughts independently of Christianity, there is still no single overwhelming turn to be traced and recorded because the process was a slow one, intermittent, and by no means consistent.

At the age of ten he seems to have been a happy boy: a well-behaved, slightly spoilt, only child, of above-average intelligence. He was now known by the family and among his friends as '*Ra*', pronounced *ray*. He went with his mother to New York in the spring of 1896. His father, who remained at Wyncote, was requested by Isabel, through her son, in a letter written to 'Dear Pa' on 28 April, to 'douse the palm if you haven't watered it'. 'Ma' was busy 'scribbling thread on the scurt of the dress she made the waist of the other day'. They hoped to come home the first of next week, but didn't know the day. 'Ma Weston' had been invited to return with them but had refused.

Signed 'E.L.P.' When his mother and Homer went to New York later in the year he wrote on 15 November to tell her that he had been in to Philadelphia to see a minstrel show. He declined to send her a full description which, he said, would fill ten sheets of paper, but contented himself with a list of the 'chief topics': 'McKinley Bombarded' (William McKinley, President of the United States 1897-1901), 'Bicycle Crazy' and 'Our Public Safety'. At Wanamaker's Store he had some cream, 'more than we could eat'. He asked her to buy him some stamps, a list of which she would find in the upper outside pocket of Homer's overcoat. If his handwriting was poor it was because he had sprained his little finger at football. And the letter was signed 'X Ra', which in letters a year later became 'X ray'. It was typical of Isabel's sense of duty that she went each evening to the Jenkintown station to meet her husband on his way home from work; and later when the walk back, up Fernbrook hill, became too much for her, she waited beautifully dressed at the door.

In the summer of 1897 he was in New York again with his mother. He was pleased when he wrote to Homer on 7 June because Aunt Frank had promised to have his wheels cleaned. He began to be active in tennis and fencing: repairs still visible in the stained glass on the hall-landing at Fernbrook Avenue testify to the tennis balls which hit the glass while he was practising against the side of the house. He also played chess and in winter skated on Wanamaker's pond nearby.

At the age of twelve he entered the Cheltenham Military Academy only a mile or so up the road from his home at Wyncote. There he studied English, arithmetic, history, Latin and Greek and wore a uniform. He said years later that he could stand everything about the Academy except the drill. Latin and Greek were taught by a Wyncote man, Frederick Doolittle, who was known among the cadets as 'Cassius' or 'Lean and Hungry Look'. For part of the time Pound boarded at the Academy and decked the walls of his room with photographs and posters advertising reigning beauties of stage and music-hall. Midway through January 1898 he and a boy named Reed went to Philadelphia to perform a fencing act as 'picked' representatives of the Academy. 'We did ourselves proud,' he told his mother, 'and have been excused from all drill since and will be for some time to come.'

In February Wyncote was under snow and on the 6th Ezra and a friend called Tom went sledging. They started in the Pound driveway, went down Fernbrook Avenue which falls away steeply to Station Road and then up the road to Cheltenham Hills. He also took a sleigh ride with Levi Bean, one of the founders of Calvary Presbyterian Church, who had the livery stable on Station Road opposite the foot of Fernbrook Avenue. Ezra helped Mr Bean to hook on the horses and they went up

past Glenside – a village adjoining Wyncote – and back. Sometimes he hired a ride with Mr Bean in a horse and buggy at one dollar for the afternoon. Bean had a lift whereby a carriage could enter the stable at the lower or Station Road level and be driven out of the attic door onto the top level of the hill behind. It is not clear whether this device served any important purpose but it pleased greatly Ezra and his companions.

In June 1898 as the school year came to a close he had ice-cream, cake, eight lemonades and crackers after 'Skinny' Dayton, whose name was Dayton Larzelere, beat him in the high jump at the Academy sports. He looked forward to the coming 'declamation contest' which he hoped to win. I do not know the outcome for certain but I seem to remember Pound telling me, or perhaps I read it somewhere, that he did in fact win. On 10 June he celebrated in verse the approaching end of term:

Four more days until vacation  
Then we leave this — plantation,  
No more Latin, no more Greek  
No more smoking on the sneak. . . .

The summer of 1898 he spent abroad on a three months' tour with his Aunt Frank who believed in travelling prepared. She carried in her luggage ninety-seven (according to Pound) little tissue-paper parcels of green tea prepared in advance for the pot. They were distributed throughout her luggage, ever since the occasion when they had all been discovered on top of a single case, to the amazement of a customs official. Towards the end of June and early in July they saw the sights in London: the two which he liked best were the Tower and St Paul's. The 'chief warden' of the Tower he noticed had five medals and was a 'Scotchman'. They went to Kenilworth Castle and to Warwick which he was impressed to discover was 'still' the home of the Earl of Warwick who only the week before had played host to the Prince of Wales. At Stratford he saw 'Shakers birth-place, tomb and memorials', and at Cowes had large strawberries with Devonshire cream. They left London on 4 July and travelled to the Continent, Ezra celebrating American Independence Day, he told his father, by depositing his breakfast and his lunch in the depths of the English Channel. At Brussels they stayed at the Grand Hotel de Saxe where on 5 July he sat down to write an account of his travels to Homer. On receiving news of the fall of Santiago in the Spanish-American war the young patriot dashed off a postscript 'Vive l'Amérique. Hurrah, Santiago has fallen'. After Brussels the route seems to have included Cologne, a journey

down the Rhine to Bingen, Mainz and Heidelberg, a stay in the Alps (Lucerne and Como), and then Florence, Naples, Rome and Venice. It would appear that they also visited North Africa; for there was a photograph in Pound's possession for many years which perpetuated the marvellous vision of Aunt Frank's wide figure in white bodice and hat sitting upright on a narrow mule in Tangiers. They returned to the United States in September.

It must have been about this time or the following year that a man by the name of H. Spencer excited his interest in Greek poetry by reciting a long passage from Homer, after a game of tennis. The incident hung in his mind. In *Guide to Kulchur* he said that hearing the Greek poetry read aloud was worth more to him at the age of thirteen than grammar; and he referred to it again in canto 80 in the *Pisan Cantos*:

and it was old Spencer (,H.) who first declaimed me  
     the Odyssey  
 with a head built like Bill Shepard's  
 on the quais of what Siracusa?  
     or what tennis court  
 near what pine trees?

Of his early reading and taste I know little: only that grandmother Weston read him a great deal of Sir Walter Scott and that his awakening years were 'adorned with the bustuous noises of Kipling'. Beyond that there is a passing reference in the essay 'The Teacher's Mission' (1934) to the fact that Ibsen's name was known to him when he was at preparatory school, and a letter of the same year in which he says that as a child he heard people talking about Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. James Whitcomb Riley was a household name with his poems of rural and semi-rural America and we know that Pound read him: I assume it was when he was a boy but I have no proof.

From Military Academy he went to the Cheltenham Township High School, one stop along the Reading railroad at Elkins Park, to prepare for university. He was fifteen when he left there in 1901. The original building of 1884 is no longer used as a school. There was no sign of Ezra Pound either there or at the present school when I visited them a year or two ago, nor had the school official to whom I spoke even heard of him; the only scrap I could find was a plaque on the wall with the name Homer L. Pound among the Board of Directors responsible for the new building of 1905.

## *II*      University 1901/1907

Pound was about fifteen when he decided to be a poet and began to learn the necessary skills. He believed (he wrote twelve years later, in an article, 'How I Began') that the 'Impulse', as he called it, was from the gods, but that technique was a man's own responsibility; and so he resolved that at thirty he would know more about poetry than any man living: would know the 'dynamic content' from the 'shell', what was accounted poetry everywhere, what part of it was indestructible and could not be lost in translation, and what effects were obtainable in one language only and were incapable of being translated at all. 'In this search I learned more or less of nine foreign languages, I read Oriental stuff in translations, I fought every university regulation and every professor who tried to make me learn anything except this, or who bothered me with "requirements for degrees".' Probably his attitude at fifteen was not as hard as he would have us believe, nor his understanding of what he would have to do, to become the poet of his dreams, quite so clear as it was here represented: a hardening had occurred in the meantime, which by 1913 when he wrote the article, was at the heart of his literary programme, and in the heat of battle it no doubt coloured his memory of 1901; but we may accept the article as a guide to his ambition and as an indication of his inkling about the importance of the craft of poetry, even at the age of fifteen.

In the autumn of 1901, within a few months perhaps of this crystallization of interest, he was admitted to the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, under the name Ezra Loomis Pound, to study 'Arts and Science'. He was not quite sixteen and gained admission largely on account of his showing with Latin. His courses for the year 1901-2 were: English composition, English language and analysis, public speaking, algebra, solid geometry, plane trigonometry, German grammar and reading, Livy, Horace, American colonial history, and principles of Government in the United States. He studied English under Dr Felix E. Schelling, who was the John Welsh Centennial Professor, Dr Clarence G. Child (Assistant Professor), and Dr Cornelius Weygandt (Instructor), and he spent hours on Layamon's *Brut* for

which he was grateful later. For history he had Herman Vandenburg Ames, whose classes contributed little, in a direct way, to his later study of history, but seem to have kept alive his interest in the subject when it might well have died. These classes were at times informal, owing to the fact that Ames, according to Pound later, did not make mountains out of molehills and refused to be disturbed, or even distracted, by the movement of ping pong balls to and fro on the long narrow tables of the history room. Student horseplay he neither condemned nor encouraged. And if a student by the name of James Kirkbride, who was six feet two, was sent sprawling in his path as he walked from his office into the classroom, Ezra Pound's shinbone having been the material cause, he waited until order was restored and continued on his way.

Pound's friendship with the painter, William Brooke Smith ('my first friend', he called him), began when he was fifteen or sixteen. Between 1902 and 1905 Smith was a student at the Philadelphia College of Art, also known as the School of Industrial Art, at the corner of Broad and Pine Streets, Philadelphia. Pound sometimes accompanied him to the college and was enthralled by his talk about art. When Smith moved into a studio Pound was a frequent visitor. While a student Smith appears to have lived at 1612 Diamond Street, Philadelphia, then a fashionable brownstone row-house. Later he lived in a large semi-detached townhouse at 839 Franklin Street, from which address in 1907 he wrote Pound a number of letters reflecting the rather precious world of 'arts and crafts' in which he moved. Years later Pound said that Smith died of consumption in 1908, to the 'intimate grief of his friends'. How Smith came to be in Philadelphia in those days or to be so knowledgeable, between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five, remained for him a complete mystery.

Pound went abroad again in the summer of 1902. In London he visited with his father the Royal Mint which he found more formal and less interesting than the Philadelphia Mint where he was free to walk among the stamping-presses and talk with the staff. A standard game among the workmen at Philadelphia was to tell you that you were welcome to keep one of the bags of gold if you could carry it away. It looked small enough and naturally you tried but it always proved impossible to lift. There was none of this banter and laughter when the two Americans visited the Royal Mint, and despite Homer's official letter of introduction they were not invited to view the workings below. They also visited Venice, which to the young poet was beginning to seem more attractive than Wyncote or Philadelphia.

In his second year at Pennsylvania (1902-3) he enrolled as Ezra Weston Loomis Pound and began to live in a dormitory, travelling home at the week-ends. He studied English composition, nineteenth-

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century English novelists, ethics, logic, constitutional history of the United States, comparative Governments, foreign relations of the United States, the Civil War and reconstruction, and the following in Latin: Catullus and Tibullus, Horace, Propertius and Ovid, and Vergil and Lucretius.

He was beginning to read Browning, Fiona McLeod, Arthur Symons, Ernest Dowson, and the Canadian poet Bliss Carman whose *Songs of Vagabondia* written in collaboration with Richard Hovey was published in the United States in 1894, to be followed by more than a dozen books of verse, under his own name, during the next ten years. Pound's own publishing career began, as far as I can determine, on 8 November 1902. On that day an unsigned poem called 'Ezra on the Strike' appeared in a local newspaper, the *Jenkintown Times-Chronicle*. It contains eight quatrains in imitation of James Whitcomb Riley; the voice is that of an old farmer on his way to town with hay who comments on the approach of Thanksgiving Day and the effects of a strike:

Wal, Thanksgivin' do be comin' round.  
With the price of turkeys on the bound,  
And Coal, by gum! Thet were just found,  
Is surely gettin' cheaper.

The winds will soon begin to howl,  
And winter, in its yearly growl,  
Across the medders begin to prowl,  
And Jack Frost gettin' deeper.

My reason for thinking it may be Pound's work is a statement he made when on 27 June 1958 he revisited the house at 166 Fernbrook Avenue. He told Mr Carl Gatter, whose home it now is, that his 'first publisher' was a Jenkintown newspaper; and in a letter the following year wrote: 'Believe the *Times-Chronicle* had but one poem, the earliest and political.' No other poems have been found which have a better claim than 'Ezra on the Strike', but what makes me hesitate to say definitely that Pound was the author, is that the Rev. William Barnes Lower also was a poet, a regular contributor to the *Times-Chronicle* of similar 'dialect' poems. His work, signed and unsigned, appeared both before and after 'Ezra on the Strike' and some of it was later collected into a book, *Falling Petals*.

Pound continued while at Pennsylvania to play tennis and took fencing lessons under the university coach, Signor Leonardo Terrone. He did not play football but he was interested enough to serve as a voluntary usher for the games played on Franklin Field.

It was during the Academic year 1902-3 that he met William Carlos Williams. A dormitory acquaintance when he heard that Williams wrote verse arranged a meeting with Pound. Williams was two years older, a freshman in the Department of Dentistry who changed the following year to Medicine and became a doctor; but although older he found the other more advanced in literature, 'the liveliest, most intelligent and unexplainable thing' he had ever met. In April 1903 Pound played one of the women of the chorus in Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, given in Greek at the Academy of Music, with his parents in the audience. According to Williams later, he wore 'a great blonde wig at which he tore as he waved his arms about and heaved his massive breasts in ecstasies of extreme emotion'.

A survey of the thirty-three courses which he took during his freshman and sophomore years shows that he received a *pass* in four courses each semester and *good* for most of the others. There is one *distinguished* for a mathematics course, three *not passed* for two mathematics courses and one history course, and one *postponed* (or *incomplete*), for another history course. This suggests that his work was only fair and certainly nothing out of the ordinary.

In 1903 he transferred to Hamilton College at Clinton near Utica in New York State. Two reasons have been suggested for this change – that his parents were disappointed with his progress at Pennsylvania and were unhappy about the company he was keeping. Pound himself has suggested a third reason – that he wanted to know the difference between a big university and a small college. Whatever the reasons may have been he went to Hamilton in June 1903 to enrol for the coming academic year. He travelled north from New York aboard the Empire State Express at an average speed of 54 miles an hour and on the afternoon of 11 June he saw the President of the College, Dr Melancthon Woolsey Stryker, and arranged a two-year course as a third year 'special student' which would enable him to qualify for his degree in 1905. In a letter to his father on 22 July, from New York where he stayed for part of the summer, we find three of the characteristics which to a greater extent and more forcefully mark the correspondence of his mature years: the use of foreign language, dialect, and strong English. Thus the letter begins in German ('Lieber Vater'), and includes both a foreigner's broken English ('oderwise dings vas az dey vas') and straightforward speech, as when he apologizes that the letter has been written 'by bum gas light'. Queer spellings and a great variety of dialect voices gradually began to creep into his letters: sometimes, it seems, for emphasis, but often as not for the sheer fun of it. In later years he also developed oddities of typing, with strange spacing, phrasing and line-breaks, often reinforced by an array of underlinings

and marginal interpolations in ink. Another peculiarity was his method of spacing out the name and address of his correspondent to cover almost the entire face of the envelope. As a result his letters were recognizable immediately and even those that were unsigned bore his unmistakable mark.

At Hamilton he was listed as Ezra Weston Pound and lived at 17 Hungerford. He may have got rid of the 'Loomis' from his name because it was cumbersome, but the deletion may also have been rendered advisable by the proximity of the college to that part of New York State in which the Loomis family achieved its fame.

Although, as I said earlier, the Pounds lived well and were by no means poor, money was always a problem, and while settling in at college Pound was forced to apply to his father for extra funds to pay for such necessary items as blankets, pitcher and washbowl. He was close on eighteen and began looking ahead to the future. His problem was how to earn a living when he had finished his education. He considered taking up Law and toyed with the idea of a career on Wall Street but his travels abroad had made him restless and he decided that the Consular Service would be more enjoyable than either. The ivy and quadrangle atmosphere at Hamilton appealed to him for a time at least and he enjoyed Dr Stryker's vigorous sermons inspired by a non-nonsense Christianity. The hearty clergyman did not express disapproval of religious 'rapture' when he preached on the Transfiguration on the Mount but he warned against the temptation to stay enraptured when you ought to be 'getting busy'. There was a side to Pound which responded to this kind of message, then and throughout his life. Dr Stryker compiled several hymnals and translated some of Luther's hymns into English. One beginning 'A Tower of Refuge is our God' was included in Pound's anthology *Confucius to Cummings*, published in 1964.

Three men, more than others, at Hamilton, played a decisive part in shaping him for poetry by opening his eyes to some of the glories of the European past: Herman Carl George Brandt, who was Munson Professor of the German Language and Literature; the Rev. Joseph Darling Ibbotson (known as 'Bib'), who was Professor of English Literature, Anglo-Saxon and Hebrew; and, the most important, William Pierce Shepard, Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures, who not only introduced him to French, Italian and Spanish but when he saw that the young man's enthusiasm was backed by ability gave him free private tuition in Provençal. Through Ibbotson Pound was steered towards those sonorities in English having their root in Anglo-Saxon, which he exploited later in 'The Seafarer' and other poems; and by Shepard he was introduced to the Europe of the Middle Ages which

thereafter remained a point of reference to which continually he returned and from which he drew intellectual energy and the sustenance for many of his dreams. Both men he mentioned when later he acknowledged early influences which he believed were more important to his poetry than anything received from contemporaries. His first year (1903-4) included courses in German, French, Italian, English and mathematics; one of the highlights of the year was a lecture at the college by, he told his family, 'a personal friend of Browning's'. He was very much struck by a remark made one day by the Dean of the college, Professor A. P. Saunders, about 'that fine old word "an independence"', perhaps because it reminded him of his own position. An 'independence' was 'sufficient income to live on, so that a man could do what he liked'. Among Pound's published poems there is only one which appears to belong to 1903 or early 1904. It was called 'Motif' when published in his first book, *A Lume Spento* (1908), and re-titled 'Search' in *Personae* the following year:

Through woodlands dim  
                                           Have I taken my way,  
 And o'er silent waters, night and day  
 Have I sought the wee wind.

Beneath his junior year photograph in *The Hamiltonian* of 1905 is this description:

Ezra Weston Pound, Philadelphia, Pa.  
 'Bib's' pride. Leader of the anvil chorus at the Commons.  
 Oh, how he throws those legs! Peroxide blonde.

For part of the time that he was away from home his parents moved to 502 South Front Street, Philadelphia, and worked among under-privileged children during the winter. Homer was also superintendent of the Italian Mission in Philadelphia and Isabel his organist.

During the spring holidays in 1904 William Carlos Williams spent a week-end with Pound at Wyncote. 'His parents are very nice people,' Williams wrote to his mother on 30 March, 'and have always been exceptionally kind to me. Mrs Pound had prepared a fine meal.' After supper he and Pound had a long talk on literature, drama, the classics and philosophy, 'subjects that I love yet have not time to study and which he is making a life work of'. He described Pound as a 'fine fellow':

If he ever does get blue nobody knows it, so he is just the man for me. But not one person in a thousand likes him, and a great many people detest him

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and why? Because he is so darned full of conceits and affectation. He is really a brilliant talker and thinker but delights in making himself just exactly what he is not: a laughing boor. His friends must be all patience in order to find him out and even then you must not let him know it, for he will immediately put on some artificial mood and be really unbearable. It is too bad, for he loves to be liked, but there is some quality in him which makes him too proud to try to please people.

In his second year at Hamilton beginning in the autumn of 1904 he was much more active than before; his literary tastes began to clarify and he began to follow with determination wherever they would lead, without losing sight of his immediate scholastic purpose and final examinations; and he showed signs of some of his later critical attitudes. His courses included Old English, German, French, Provençal, Spanish (the Spanish, he said, was 'not particularly exciting'), physics and analytical geometry. Under Dr Stryker he studied the 'Christian Evidences' and listened to 'hot air' about parliamentary law. Soon he was able to report home that he was being transferred to more advanced work in German. He began to read Beddoes and was particularly pleased with *Death's Jest Book*. He was flattered to discover in Edmund Gosse's introduction that Beddoes was not everybody's meat but 'a dish for a few literary epicures' only and to hear that those who enjoyed him would be able to 'pick out his excellencies' without being told. It was about this time that he met Katherine Ruth Heyman, the concert pianist, who although fifteen years older than Pound charmed him for some years to come. In volume two of his two-volume edition of Beddoes her name is inscribed in his early hand and dated 1904. Passages which he marked, then or later, in *Death's Jest Book*, such as:

an I utter  
Shadows of words, like to an ancient ghost,  
Arisen out of hoary centuries,  
Where none can speak his language. . . .

appear thirteen years later in an article on Beddoes published in a magazine called *The Future* (September 1917), and again thirty years later in canto 80.

As the horizon broadened he took notice: he read Caedmon and began to find Anglo-Saxon 'very fascinating'; in French he sampled Descartes and Pascal and read Corneille's *Cid*; in English he explored comedy before Shakespeare; and at last he began to find something worthy of his talents in mathematics. Analytical geometry, he wrote to his mother, 'is the first respectable mathematics I have interviewed for some time'. He took part in the proceedings of a literary club which met

at Ibbotson's; they read *A Midsummer Night's Dream* together and ate, talked and smoked. It was in a talk with Ibbotson, he said in a letter in 1956, that his long poem *The Cantos* originated, his first idea for a *magnum opus* having been, apparently, to write a trilogy on Marozia (d. 945), wife of Alberic I, Prince of Rome. He was also a member of the college's four-man chess team. For exercise he walked and continued to play tennis and for relaxation did odd jobs with knife and tools, which is not in itself remarkable but is interesting here because if we keep it in mind it will help us to understand later a very important aspect of Pound's make-up: his belief, almost to the point of its being part of his temperament, in the virtues of the handyman, the man who can turn his hand to anything, which though often at odds with his professionalism and belief in craft in the highest sense, in a way directed the whole bias of his thought in the 1930s and later.

It was probably in 1904 that he wrote the two short poems, 'Song' and 'To the Dawn: Defiance', which were first published in *A Lume Spento*. They provide evidence of an early stage in the formation of the dream element which is important later. 'Song', which begins, 'Love thou thy dream', and ends:

dreams alone can truly be,  
For 'tis in dreams I come to thee.

is like a pale forerunner of 'To Καλόν' (1914):

Even in my dreams you have denied yourself to me  
And sent me only your handmaids.

The other, 'To the Dawn: Defiance', similarly tells of a 'dream' for which he could not yet find the right words and had therefore to be content to describe in the worn-out word-patterns of the time:

Ye blood-red spears-men of the dawn's array  
.  
.  
.  
My moated soul shall dream in your despite  
A refuge for the vanquished hosts of night. . . .

In January 1905 we find him enjoying Taine, reading Goethe's *Egmont* and Molière's *Femmes Savantes*, looking into the subject of bibliography, via G. H. Putnam's *Books and Their Makers during the Middle Ages*, making a literary and dramatic study of the Book of Job, learning how to debate, and on the side, reading tragedy. His mother's emphasis upon proper behaviour he found rather tiresome and he

could not always resist the urge to reply. An opportunity presented itself in January while he was reading Galdos's *Dona Perfecta*. 'You may tell Miss Whitechurch and Mrs Lovell,' he wrote, 'I'm reading about "a perfect lady" even if the name sounds like a cheap cigar.' Miss Whitechurch and Mrs Lovell were two ladies who boarded at the Pound home; Isabel Pound always referred to them as her 'paying guests'. When he passed his January examination in analytical geometry he was pleased to be able to report that the faculty of mathematics in consultation could not fathom the method by which he discovered the equation demanded by the key problem: 'I wrote it despite the formulae, etc., supposed to be necessary thereto, and which I didn't know.'

By February 1905 he had reached a position on Dante only a short step from the views expressed in his book *The Spirit of Romance* (1910) and throughout the rest of his life. Any developments after *The Spirit of Romance* were only in particulars or certain areas, new depth as the result of detailed readings; but his overall view was based upon his discovery in 1905 that the moderns were not so modern after all and that the Middle Ages knew a few things too. 'Find me', he wrote to his mother, 'a phenomenon of any importance in the lives of men and nations that you cannot measure with the rod of Dante's allegory . . . I shall continue to study Dante and the Hebrew prophets.' And he added that Dante (poet, scholar, lover, soldier and upholder of 'clean politics') had put a pope in hell centuries before Luther. He wrote again within a few days to defend Catholicism against what he believed to be Protestant detraction and to give credit where credit was due in the past.

With the end of the college year in sight and all going well he had himself measured for his gown. In April he was reading the Old Spanish *Cid*, the *Chansons de Geste*, the troubadours, Chaucer and Jean Paul Richter's German. He acknowledged the receipt of coffee from home (presumably in response to his earlier request for a quarter pound of Acker's best pulverized Java), and was able to report that he was attending church in Utica where the music was 'excellent'. His 'Belangal Alba', translated from the Provençal during 1904-5 was published in the May 1905 issue of the *Hamilton Literary Magazine*:

Dawn light, o'er sea and height, riseth bright,  
Passeth vigil, clear shineth on the night.

They be careless of the gates, delaying,  
Whom the ambush glides to hinder  
Whom I warn and cry to, praying,  
'Arise!'

He sent his father a copy on 3 May and reported having heard from William Carlos Williams. Also in May he was engrossed in a technical problem in versification: how to translate Giraut de Bornelh's Tenzon, 'S-ie-us quier', using only five rhyme-sounds over sixty-eight lines.

The money problem, which had continued to dog him throughout the college year, became serious in mid-May. Writing to his mother on 19 May he apologized for being 'too vicious' in a letter to his father. The reason was that he had had to borrow the price of his dinner for three days because his father's cheque had not arrived until the morning of the nineteenth. His letters home at this stage were signed 'Son'. On 2 June he attended a dance in Utica and had more fun, he said, than since he left home. He found that 'these desolate regions', as he described Upper New York State, were made more bearable by the company of a local girl, Viola Baxter, with whom he went driving. She obviously took his fancy and a year or two later he wrote her a number of letters full of news and poems. By 22 June he had passed all his exams except physics, which was in a day or two, and on 29 June he received his degree of Ph.B. and second prize in French.

Of the five poems in *A Lume Spento* which appear to belong to 1905, two of them, 'Plotinus' and 'Ballad for Gloom', move well enough, but the gap between his words and what he is trying to express – if at this stage he had a clear grasp of what it was – is uncomfortably wide; he has had the experience but as yet lacks means to turn it into genuine poetry. Two others of the five were successful and are rightly collected among the author's shorter poems: 'On His Own Face in a Glass' and 'For E.McG', the latter a memorial to a University of Pennsylvania student, Eugene McCartney, 'That was', says the subtitle, 'my counter-blade under Leonardo Terrone, Master of Fence'. The fifth poem, 'In Tempore Senectutis' is of little interest now except to the student who wants to examine the young poet's attempts to digest Dowson, which he never really succeeded in doing. There is a note in Dowson, a perfection in a frail narrow sphere, which he could hear, as witness his footnote on the villanelle in his preface to the *Poetical Works of Lionel Johnson* (1915), but was never able to reproduce.

Returning to the University of Pennsylvania for the year 1905–6, to work for his Master's degree, he studied Spanish drama (Tirso de Molina, Lope de Vega and Moreto), Spanish literature, Old French (*Erec und Enid*), Provençal and Italian and made a 'special study' of Martial, Catullus and Tacitus. Pound told me in conversation in 1959 that he thought his search for clarity and hardness in verse had its roots in his early reading of Martial and Catullus, so it may have been in the period after his return to Pennsylvania that these qualities first struck him as desirable. There is no saying that 'The Cry of the Eyes', which

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he probably began in 1905 and finished the following year, reflects this awakening, and we must admit that it is couched in a rather artificial language; but there is a delightful turn, here and there, in the movement:

would feel the fingers of the wind  
Upon these lids that lie over us  
Sodden and lead-heavy.

and there is a certain simplicity of style, and possibly – it is hard to tell, the margin is so fine – a gain in straightforwardness of presentation:

The yellow flame paleth  
And the wax runs low.

and

this ever-flowing monotony  
Of ugly print marks, black  
Upon white parchment.

It first appeared in *A Lume Spento* and is preserved by Pound in later collections as 'The Eyes'.

Of the three teachers who left a mark on him at this stage it is impossible to say for certain who was the most important but we may guess that it was Walton Brooks McDaniel, assistant Professor of Latin, from whom he received a schooling which enabled him to read Latin easily and with pleasure for the rest of his life. He was to say later that he considered the hours spent copying out McDaniel's prose translation of Catullus, like his instruction under Ibbotson and Shepard, more important to his poetry than any contemporary influences. As with any intelligent young man who is beginning to use his mind beyond the requirements of the classroom it was often the small things with universal meaning, rather than general ideas of no particular significance to his present mood, which caught his mind's eye. Thus Ovid came alive because of a chance remark about Daedalus (probably by McDaniel), in which he suddenly saw the human curiosity which causes the small boy to watch his father at work and copy his every move. 'I am much more grateful', he wrote in his 'Notes on Elizabethan Classicists' in 1918, 'for the five minutes during which a certain lecturer emphasized young Icarus begorming himself with Daedalus' wax than for all the dead hours he spent trying to make me a scholar.' When he became interested in the Latinists of the Renaissance it was apparently McDaniel who warned him that 'after all if one confined oneself to the

accepted authors one was sure of reading good stuff, whereas there was a risk in hunting about among the unknown'. Pound was considering the possibility of doing a thesis on material outside the list of classic authors included in the curriculum, which caused irritation, especially when he pointed out that a thesis was supposed to contain original research. He quotes McDaniel as saying, 'And besides, Mr Pound, we should have to do so much work ourselves to verify your results'.

His other teachers for the years 1905-7 were Dr Hugo A. Rennert, Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures, and author of a life of Lope de Vega, and Felix Schelling. Rennert was handsome and something of a dandy. There are three glimpses of him in Pound's later writings. In canto 28 he sighs heavily and looks despairingly over the top of his glasses when a chronic late-comer arrives puffing at the foot of the stair below the classroom. There is another in a note written about 1930 for a revised edition of *The Spirit of Romance*; the subject is the 'irregular' metre of the *Poema del Cid*: 'I can still see Dr Rennert manicuring his finger nails in seminar, pausing in that operation, looking over his spectacles and in his plaintive falsetto, apropos someone who had attempted to reprint the *Cid* with ten syllables in every line: "Naow effa man had sense enough to write a beautiful poem like this is, wudn't yeow think he wudda had sense enough to be able to keount ep to ten on his fingers *ef he'da wanted tew?*"' The third glimpse is in an article on economics in the paper *New Democracy* (15 October 1935): 'I remember Hugo Rennert remarking on some ballyhoo about "the plant", the U. of Penn. "plant" was, according to the ballyhoo, not to lie idle. Rennert observed on the part of himself and faculty: "But damn it *we* are the plant".'

One of Pound's friends was Hilda Doolittle, later the poet H.D., whose father, Charles Doolittle, was Professor of Astronomy at Pennsylvania and director of the Flower Astronomical Observatory in nearby Upper Darby which was then in the country. Pound, Williams, Hilda Doolittle and a few others made up a group from about 1905 when she began her freshman year at Bryn Mawr. They took woodland walks together near the observatory, went to parties and dances and sometimes met at the Pound home at Wyncote where they sang in the front parlour while Mrs Pound accompanied on the upright piano. Pound gave Hilda a ring to wear and they were unofficially engaged; soon, however, as the result of Professor Doolittle's opposition or some other cause it petered out. But not before Pound had celebrated their friendship by presenting her with a bound collection of twenty-five poems written between 1905 and 1907. Called simply *Hilda's Book*, it is now in the Harvard Library. It is about four inches by three-and-a-half and consists of fifty-four rather badly typed pages, with numerous

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autograph corrections and notes, sewn and bound in vellum – all by Pound himself. Four of the poems were published in *A Lume Spento*: 'La Donzella Beata', 'Li Bel Chasteus', 'Era Venuta' and 'The Tree'. The first two are readable but nothing more. 'Era Venuta' when it appeared in print was considerably altered and bore a new title, 'Comraderie'. In the latter form it has a good ending:

Or on still evenings when the rain falls close  
There comes a tremor in the drops, and fast  
My pulses run, knowing thy thought hath passed  
That beareth thee as doth the wind the rose.

which seems to look ahead to later poems like 'Ballatetta' and 'Ione, Dead the Long Year'. 'The Tree' is a genuine poem with a finely-timed conclusion which appeals through the absence of rhyme in the final line:

Nathless I have been a tree amid the wood  
And many new things understood  
That were rank folly to my head before.

Slightly altered:

And many a new thing understood  
That was rank folly to my head before.

it now heads the poet's own selection of his collected poems. The only other point of interest in *Hilda's Book* is this ingenious experiment in sound and versification:

Tho the elfin horn shall  
                  call to you  
'true                  be true  
By the violets in thy  
                  leaf brown hair  
'ware                  be ware  
. . .  
Tho night shall dwell in thy  
                  child eyes  
'wise                  be wise  
That thy child heart to mine  
                  emprise  
'plies                  replies

For night shall flee  
     from the fore-suns flame  
 'shame               in shame  
 Tho my heart to thee embeggared  
                           came  
 'same               'tis the same. . . .

He uses an echo effect in some of his mature verse but nothing quite like this. We cannot but feel disappointed that he did not at some later stage, when he was in the full possession of his skills, see fit to pursue the possibilities these lines of youth suggest. Another young writer with whom he was friendly was Phyllis Bottome, the novelist, who credits Pound with giving her sound literary advice while they were at Pennsylvania together. They met again in London and years later in Italy.

Three or four minor points in the story which I have not been able to date, even to within a year or two, probably belong to this period after his return to the University of Pennsylvania when he took up again old threads, renewed friendships and created new ones and sought to build for himself an artistic and intellectual life in Wyncote and Philadelphia. He began to play chess with the Rev. James Biddle Halsey who from 1901 to 1908 was Vicar at All Hallows Episcopal Church at the corner of Greenwood Avenue and Bent Road, Wyncote. In the social scale at Wyncote the Episcopal Church came first and the Presbyterian second. He became friends with the landscape painter, Frank Reed Whiteside, who lived a few minutes away in Washington Lane. Born in Philadelphia in 1866 Whiteside studied first at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and later in Paris under Laurens and Constant. Pound used to visit his home, whether at Wyncote or when Whiteside moved to Philadelphia I do not know; but the artist, who was nineteen years older than Pound, told Wyncote residents that he benefited from the younger man's comments on his paintings. In the long poem 'Redondillas, or Something of that Sort', which Pound wrote in 1910, he praised God 'for a few royal fellows . . . like Whiteside'. The painter was shot outside his Philadelphia home in 1929; no one was caught and no motive discovered.

As Pound sought to find an artistic milieu close to home he began to live more consciously the life of 'the artist' and to introduce a little mild eccentricity into his behaviour. Miss Adele Polk who lived in Washington Lane, close to Whiteside, told me in Jenkintown in 1967 that she remembered one day at the Pound home when Ezra, using a sideboard or buffet for chair, methodically pulled out the tail of his shirt as he talked, carefully tore off a square of material, with gravity placed the

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square on his knee, and tapped it during the rest of the conversation. She could not fathom his purpose but she was impressed. Her father however, who was an Englishman, was not one to tolerate anything that smacked of nonsense. One day when he found Ezra on his front lawn, explaining to Adele the art of fencing by bearing down dramatically on an imaginary opponent with his rapier, Mr Polk intervened: 'Young man, I'm afraid you will end up in gaol.' On another occasion while learning to drive, Pound broke the steering on a Pullman horseless carriage.

It may have been as early as the spring of 1906 that he composed the nineteen lines which appear in *A Lume Spento* under the title 'Vana', and as the opening section of 'Praise of Ysolt' in *Personae* and later collections. They are still fresh in their contrasts of rhythm (for example 'In vain have I striven' against 'In vain have I said to him') and still worth reading for the way in which emphasis is brought to bear on a key word – on 'greater', for instance, in the line 'There be many singers greater than thou'. With two other poems which appear to belong to this period he was not so lucky. 'From Syria' is a translation of a song by Peire Bremon, 'made for his Lady in Provença', says Pound in a prefatory note, 'he being in Syria a crusader'. It has all the vices of the young poet struck with admiration for a distant time and place, without any compensating virtues. It begins in April when 'new flowers' blow in 'mead and garden', progresses by way of 'my Love's land' to 'Syrian strand' ('God keep me there for a fool, alway!'), and ends with the news that he is 'desirous' and 'grief-filled', his days 'full long', etc. A note at the end, signed E.P., says it is the 'only bit of Peire Bremon's work that has come down to us, and through its being printed with the songs of Giraut of Bornelh he is like to lose credit for even this', which suggests that Bremon having been forced upon him in his Provençal studies he tried to make the best of it. The other poem similarly defunct is 'From the Saddle', with subtitle 'D'Aubigne to Diane'. It opens well: 'Wearied by wind and wave', but is immediately unseated:

death goes  
With gin and snare right near alway  
Unto my sight. . . .

and does not recover, despite a brave attempt at the end:

since mid war I bear love's pain  
'Tis meet my verse, as I, show sign  
Of powder, gun-match and sulphur stain.

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Pound used them only once, to fill out *Exultations* (1909), and then allowed them to rest.

On 13 June he received his Master of Arts degree, which would seem to have been the occasion of his composing for his parents' amusement a fifty-five line poem called 'The Mourn of Life'. The well-written *Envoi* suggests what I believe to be the truth of the matter, that he was hoping to be a full-time writer but didn't know how he was going to manage, his family naturally enough having no inclination at this stage to support him in such an unusual enterprise, which from their point of view would amount to him doing nothing.

THE MOURN OF LIFE

There comes a time in the lives of men  
That makes their blood turn cold  
And their fathers say  
In a gentle way  
'Thou canst not stay  
Any more in the dear home fold.'

'Twill come some time to you,  
When your noble Dad,  
Your loving Dad  
Your dear Dad, kind and true,  
Will no more pay  
In that generous way  
Your bills as he used to do.

But will gently say  
In his old sweet way  
Though the tone may ring some cool  
'I paid the stake  
The damned high stake  
While you loafed "round school".

While you rushed the can  
And played the man  
A smokin' your fine cheroots  
I had to pay  
In a hefty way  
For a coon to black your boots.

Now you're a Master of Arts  
And a man of parts;

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Go forth, get on the job.'  
There comes a time in the lives of men  
That makes their blood turn cold.

For the world is a place  
They've glanced upon  
From ethereal heights afar  
Where each has fussed his chorus girl  
And each has dined his star;  
And each has spent  
What Dad has sent  
In ways a bit bizarre.

*L'Envoi*

Go little verse  
Go forth and be damned  
Throughout your limited sphere  
But prithee tell  
To the bards in hell  
Who live on nothing a year  
That a Master of Arts  
And a man of parts  
Is trying the same thing here.

Tell thou the ancient story  
To the singers of long ago  
Who left their ills  
And unpaid bills  
And their mortgages on glory  
For good warm rooms below,  
Unto such, when hell gets slow  
Go, little verse, by gumbo, go.

Also in June he received from the university a notice informing him that the trustees meeting on 5 June had appointed him Harrison Fellow in Romanics for one year from 1 September 1906, at a salary of \$500 payable in eight instalments from 30 September 1906 to 31 May 1907. For a student to be eligible he had to possess (among other things) a good reading knowledge of French and German. This 'pittance from Sugar Trust money' (as he described it in a letter to me in 1955) was very important to him at the age of twenty; it made him for the first time independent financially, even if only for a short while, and enabled him in the summer of 1906 to make his first independent trip

to Europe. He was admitted to the British Museum Reading Room on 2 July, for one week, to study the role of the Gracioso in the plays of Lope de Vega which was to be the subject of his thesis for a doctorate at Pennsylvania. In London he stayed at Miss Ann Withey's boarding-house at 8 Duchess Street, Portland Place. It was in July that he wrote the poem 'Scriptor Ignotus', which appeared in *A Lume Spento* with a dedication to 'K.R.H.' (Katherine Ruth Heyman). He draws a parallel between himself and Miss Heyman, on the one hand, and the eighteenth-century poet Bertold Lomax and his lady, an organist of Ferrara, on the other. A note at the end of the poem says: 'Bertold Lomax, English Dante scholar and mystic, died in Ferrara in 1723, with his "great epic" still a mere shadow, a nebula crossed with some few gleams of wonder light. The lady of the poem was an organist of Ferrara, whose memory has come down to us only in Lomax's notes.' 'Scriptor Ignotus' contains Pound's first promise of a long poem to come: a vision in which he sees his 'greater soul-self bending Sybilwise with that great forty-year epic' as yet 'unwrit'; which is rephrased at the end, after the manner of the concluding lines of Dante's *Vita Nuova*, to say that if it be God's will, he will make for her and the beauty of her music a new thing 'As hath not heretofore been writ'. The Temple Classics edition of the *Vita Nuova*, which was published by J. M. Dent in 1906, has: 'So that if it be the pleasure of him, by whom all things live, that my life persevere for some few years, I hope to write of her what hath never been written of any woman.' In his 1934 essay on Laurence Binyon's translation of the *Inferno* Pound says: 'One was thankful in 1906 to Dent for the Temple bilingual edition' (he is referring to both the *Divine Comedy* and the *Vita Nuova*) but whether he consulted the Dent *Vita Nuova* before writing 'Scriptor Ignotus' I do not know.

He also went to Paris and to Spain and with the assistance of the American Consul in Madrid he received permission to work on Lope de Vega in the royal library. He was helped in his studies by a young priest, Father José Maria de Elizondo, with whom he struck up a friendship; they met again in London in 1917. He also met the playwright José Echegaray, winner of the Nobel Prize in 1904, who told him that the reason Lope's plays were not then being staged in Spain was that there weren't any actors who were capable: the last actress who could do them was in South America. In the Prado Museum where he encountered one after the other the paintings of Velasquez, he experienced some of the richest moments in a life devoted to the appreciation of art. So strong was the enchantment, that thirty-one years later he could still call to mind – whether accurately or not does not matter – the order of the paintings as he strolled through the long

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galleries, great halls and smaller rooms of the museum, minute details in the brushwork clear in his mind: *Las Meniñas*, with a glimpse of Velasquez 'by the far door painting the picture'; the *Coronation of the Virgin*, differing greatly in workmanship from the others, 'designed . . . for church lighting and not for a palace'; the *Surrender of Breda*, with the upraised spears; portraits of Philip IV of Spain, on foot with a hunting gun, on horseback, 'the horse's foot having been done first in a different position'; a portrait of Don John of Austria, in which the fire in the background 'is there with two strokes or perhaps *one* of the brush'; *Los Boracchos*, and so on.

Pound was in a crowd outside the palace which witnessed an assassination attempt against King Alfonso and his bride. There was an immediate drive against anarchists and Pound thought it wise to leave Madrid because 'anarchist suspects and uncatalogued foreigners began to be confused in the eyes of the law'.

While in Spain he also explored Burgos and the surrounding countryside where eight hundred years before roamed Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar, hero of the *Poema del Cid*. Looking from the castle of Burgos, out over Old Castile, he 'was tempted to forget there were such prosaic things as doctors' theses to be writ'.

He returned to the University of Pennsylvania for the year 1906-7, to pursue post-graduate studies in Provençal and the *Chanson de Roland*, the Sicilian poets, the *Vita Nuova* and Boccaccio's *Decamerone*, the Old Spanish *Poema de Fernán González*, the plays of Miguel Sánchez, and Lope's *Estrella de Sevilla*. He also did 'an odd sort of post-graduate course' under Professor Cornelius Weygandt which may have been where he first heard of Lionel Johnson. Under the terms of his Harrison Fellowship he was expected to give his undivided attention to his studies and was exempt from the payment of tuition fees. The September 1906 issue of the *Book News Monthly*, a publication of the John Wanamaker store in Philadelphia, contained what appears to be his first published article, called 'Raphaelite Latin', and a review by him of two books on the troubadours by the Frenchman, M. Péladan, which he had come across in Paris. The editors of the *Book News Monthly* prefaced 'Raphaelite Latin' with these remarks:

Mr Pound, who is Fellow in Romance Languages for the University of Pennsylvania, and is especially interested in late Latin, has spent the past summer travelling in Europe, gathering material by the way. He is ready to defend the Latin of this period – which has the lifetime of Raphael as its centre – from the superficial charges of literary barrenness and inferiority of production that have been made against it. Some idea of the mere bulk of this production may be gained from the fact that the Ghero collection alone, if complete, would contain nearly three thousand pages of Latin verse.

The article itself contained, in its references to 'the Germanic ideal of scholarship' and 'the beauty of the classics', the seed of the theory upon which he based most of his later critical writings:

Perhaps the most neglected field in all literature is that containing the Latin works of the elegant poets and scholars contemporary with Raphael, and owing for the most part Pietro Bembo as their chief.

There are causes for this neglect. The scholars of classic Latin, bound to the Germanic ideal of scholarship, are no longer able as of old to fill themselves with the beauty of the classics, and by the very force of that beauty inspire their students to read Latin widely and for pleasure; nor are they able to make students see clearly whereof classic beauty consists. The scholar is compelled to spend most of his time learning what his author wore and ate, and in endless pondering over some utterly unanswerable question of textual criticism. . . .

This 'Germanic ideal' prevents the student from building 'a comfortable house for his brain to live in', and causes him to revile as a 'dilettante' anyone who tries to do so: 'No one knows the contempt and hatred that can be gathered into these few syllables until they have been hissed at him by one truly Germanised.' His review of the two French books in the same issue was headed 'Interesting French Publications', and in it we find reference to the Mysteries of Eleusis and the Albigenses, which would exercise his thought and ingenuity for many years and provide him with a basis for his religious philosophy:

Of all this year's publications of that nervy little bookshop of E. Sansot, which lucky wanderers in Paris will fall upon in the Rue St Andre des Arts 'on the other side of the river', perhaps the book most filled with the snap of brilliant conclusions, arrived at by the sort of argument that most persuadeth, is Péladan's *Le Secret de Troubadours*. The theme is the descent of the idealist from Parsifal to Don Quixote.

. . . Péladan's *Origine et Esthétique de la Tragédie* (1905) is, however, a contradiction of this, being apparently sound, and brim full of clear views of the drama from its Greek beginnings in the Mysteries of Eleusis to the point in literature where Sancho Panza takes unto himself the functions of the chorus of Euripides.

In *Le Secret* . . . Péladan invades the realm of uncertainty when he fills in the gap between these two with four centuries of troubadours singing allegories in praise of a mystic extra-church philosophy or religion, practiced by the Albigenses, and the cause of the Church's crusade against them.

In the October issue of the *Book News Monthly* Pound published 'Burgos, a Dream City of Old Castile', which tells of his trip to Spain. Although of the Cid's house there remained, he said, nothing but a

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'Solar', with a few emblazoned pillars to mark the place where it lay, there were still many doorways in Burgos to which he might have come, as in the old 'Poema', battering with his lance butt at the door closed against him for fear of King Alfonso who had threatened that anyone opening to Ruy Diaz would lose all his possessions 'and the eyes of his head to boot'. The only one in Burgos who 'dared to tell these tidings to the Cid was a little maid of nine; and there are yet in Burgos window and balcony from which she might have leaned . . .'. On a tour of the hill above, which was covered with fallen fortifications, he was guided by a boy of eleven who referred to Pound as a Frenchman. When Pound explained that he was an American the boy replied: 'It is all one. Here we know no other name for strangers save "frances".' And then he came upon a pair of very big black eyes and a very small girl tugging at the gate latch, and he 'knew of a surety' that this was the little girl who had delivered the king's command to the Cid.

Pound was twenty-one, a post-graduate student with ideas germinating that would eventually draw him into the world of the pagan mystery religions; but he was still, apparently, in some sense a Christian. There is still in existence his copy of George Meredith's *Poems*, published by Scribner's Sons, New York, in 1906, with his early signature on the fly-leaf. There is an ink mark against the lines:

Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul  
When hot for certainties in this our life!

and in Pound's hand, the comment: 'yes, if it have not Christ'. And there is a Christian note of sorts in his first commercial success with poetry, 'A Dawn Song', published in the December 1906 issue of *Munsey's Magazine* (New York):

God hath put me here  
In earth's goodly sphere  
    To sing the song of the day,  
A strong, glad song,  
If the road be long,  
    To my fellows in the way.

Two among his collected poems seem to date from late 1906 or early 1907: 'Mesmerism', with its remarkable embodiment of Browning's writing and personality:

One must of needs be a hang'd early riser  
To catch you at worm turning, Holy Odd's bodykins!

and 'La Fraisne', which although it is mannered and stretches his technical equipment of 1907 to its limits, has a freshness, of conception rather than of language, and vitality of rhythm, which win it a place among his best work:

She hath called me from mine old ways,  
 She hath hushed my rancour of council,  
 Bidding me praise

Naught but the wind that flutters in the leaves.

She hath drawn me from mine old ways,  
 Till men say that I am mad;  
 But I have seen the sorrow of men, and am glad,  
 For I know that the wailing and bitterness are a folly.

Writing from home on 16 January 1907, he gave Felix Schelling a brief account of his current studies: he had already begun work on Giordano Bruno's *Il Candelaio* ('in which I have considerable interest'); but Roman private life, on the other hand, so disgusted him (ever since his study of Martial) that he was not inclined to travel in that direction unless Schelling so directed him; in which case, he would endeavour to make his 'hate do as good work' as his interest.

In 1907 while riding home to Wyncote aboard the last and after midnight train from Philadelphia he had an encounter with a working-man which shook him at the time. He was dead tired and had with him a pile of books appertaining to graduate study; a working-man sat nearby. Suddenly, two minutes before the train pulled into Jenkintown station, he launched a verbal attack against the young man with the books, which showed that he was envious to the point of dislike. 'He thought it just as unlikely that fellows that had "that learning" would unbuckle and hand it out to someone that hadn't, as that J. Wanamaker, whose country place lay alongside the railway, would hand out a slice of money.'

On the evening of 8 February the Wanamaker 'country place', called 'Lindhurst', was badly damaged by fire. It lay in huge grounds beside the Reading railroad, about three-quarters of a mile from the Pound home. When the alarm was given neighbours rushed to help – Homer Pound, Ezra and some of his friends among them. Homer and a man called J. W. Hunsberger were mentioned in the newspaper next day for having rushed into the blaze and carried out paintings, in some cases cutting canvases from the frames with a penknife. One picture so rescued by Homer, a 'Crucifixion', is still on display at the Wanamaker

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store in Philadelphia. To Ezra it was a like a scene from the French Revolution: 'the muffler'd lads of the village tearing down gold frames in the light of the conflagration, the onyx-topped tables against the blackness'. He helped to carry out a number of Rembrandts, Van Dykes and Velasquezes, which in his opinion were all fakes. He and a friend tried to ease a grand piano down a flight of stairs, but it gathered momentum in the process and there was little of it left when it reached the bottom. On 30 March John Wanamaker sent out signed copyplate letters to Homer and other neighbours thanking them for the help given in the face of 'great peril'.

Pound's formal education ceased at the end of the academic year 1906-7; he did not continue to study for his doctorate, nor did he produce his thesis on Lope de Vega, although his work towards it went into the Lope de Vega chapter in *The Spirit of Romance*. The exact nature of his quarrel with the University of Pennsylvania is difficult to determine, but it was certainly to do with his studies or the manner in which he chose to pursue them. In an unpublished note in 1930 - written for publication but the project fell through - he said: 'In 1907 I achieved the distinction of being the only student flunked in J.P.'s course in the history of literary criticism. So far as I know I was the only student who was making any attempt to understand the subject of literary criticism and the only student with any interest in the subject. . . .' He wanted to continue his post-graduate work in a certain way, or in a certain direction, the university authorities had other ideas; there were clashes and he withdrew from further studies there when his fellowship was not renewed for a further year. There is a letter he wrote in the summer of 1907 in reply to a suggestion by L. Burtron Hessler (a classmate and later a professor at the University of Michigan), that he continue to work for his doctorate. He had decided not to; an M.A. and a fellowship were enough, anything more would smack of professionalism; and besides 'I have spatted with nearly everybody'. It is clear from what he says in this letter, and from the way he says it, that he rather prided himself on his self-assumed role as gadfly among the professoriate. He had no plans for the immediate future: 'I may go to Carolina before you get here but don't expect to. . . . Am preparing a little booklet of satire that may amuse you slightly. It is a teeny weeny bit caustic in places but you won't mind, and the world is so very ridiculous that one can scarcely help smiling now and then. We will converse at leisure when you arrive. Bed and grub for yours in Wyncote.' In July he ventured into art criticism with an essay on Rembrandt and Fra Angelico but neither the essay nor the 'booklet of satire' seems to have found its way into print.

It was during this period that Pound met Mary S. Moore of 136

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West State Street, Trenton, New Jersey. Her father, Henry C. Moore, was vice-president of the Trenton Street Railway. Their first meeting took place at Scudders Falls, just north of Trenton, at the country home of a young man, John Scudder, whom the poet was tutoring in preparation for college. Pound was lying in a hammock on the porch when Scudder and Miss Moore drove up in a buggy. 'Who is that curly mop?' she asked, and later that evening they met at dinner. They were immediately attracted to one another and their romance continued throughout the summer and autumn of 1907, with invitations to lunch at Wanamaker's Tea Rooms, dozens of letters to and fro, and with Pound visiting the Moore home and Miss Moore a guest at 166 Fernbrook Avenue.