

## LITTLE-KNOWN DOCUMENTS

*Outlook*

LIBERTY HYDE BAILEY

INTRODUCTION BY JOHN  
LINSTROM

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**Introduction: Ecocosmic “Prescience” in Liberty Hyde Bailey’s *Outlook***

As the environmental humanities grapple with the forces fueling climate change and planetary mass extinction, scholars have sought to amplify and articulate disanthropocentric and ecocentric counter-epistemologies to uncritical scientism and petrocapi-talism. To that end, a drumbeat of articles, book chapters, and conference papers over the past two decades have called for a reassessment of the literary-philosophical writings of Liberty Hyde Bailey (1858–1954), the farm-raised horticulturist and rural reformer who founded the College of Agriculture at Cornell University and chaired the Commission on Country Life under President Theodore Roosevelt. That reassessment has led to two Bailey anthologies (Jack; Stempien and Linstrom) and the launch of The Liberty Hyde Bailey Library from Cornell University Press. The overarching recuperative project hinges on reading beyond Bailey the scientist, recovering Bailey the humanist. While believing in the democratizing potential of the scientific method, provided that common people were empowered (through university extension) to practice and apply it themselves, Bailey also argued that the sciences alone were insufficient to the pursuit of truth and a better world (Peters, “Every Farmer”). A serious consideration of his poetry helps illuminate the nuances of Bailey’s complex “earth-philosophy” (*Universal Service* 16). His most ambitious poem, *Outlook*, appearing here in a “corrected” edition for the first time, mobilizes an interspecies ethic and speculative poetics to challenge the competing dogmatism of both religious fundamentalism and techno-optimistic scientism.

Partial and inaccurate readings led to several dismissive appraisals of Bailey in the 1970s and 1990s, throwing environmental history off his trail. More recent recuperative readings identify in Bailey a robust critique of the Progressive Era’s efficiency-obsessed technocracy, complemented by the articulation of a philosophically pragmatic project of worldview transition toward planetary ecoconsciousness

(Morgan and Peters, esp. 450–52).<sup>1</sup> But Bailey's poetry remains particularly understudied.

Bailey envisioned a "new nature poetry" that could help galvanize rural reform (*Outlook to Nature* 25). His arguments for integrating poetry into children's nature-study curricula pitted him against scientific colleagues, but he thought "the poetic interpretation of nature" could help propel a movement toward sustainable agriculture and a corresponding rural revitalization (*Nature-Study Idea* 149–54; see Linstrom, "It" 43–52). In *The Outlook to Nature* (1905), he theorizes that the book's titular orientation, informed by evolutionary science, practical experience, and the arts, could bring country and city together around a strengthened awareness of interdependence with nature. He had seen the poetic interpretation of nature facilitate this "nature-sympathy." When sharing canonical nineteenth-century poetry with his farm-bred agriculture students, he often found them receptive, if initially wary, and eventually moved: "as full of sentiment as an egg of meat" (28).

In this populist context, Bailey's ecopoetics were idiosyncratically modernist, sounding "uncannily familiar to those who know something of the development of modernist verse" and anticipating modernism's canonical manifestos (Schultze 65–66). He wanted poetry composed of "short, sharp, quick, direct word-pictures that shall place the object before us as vividly as the painter would outline some strong simple figure with a few bold strokes of his brush" (Bailey, *Outlook to Nature* 19).

Some of Bailey's own poems modeled this modernist-naturalist poetics, eliciting both praise from the modernist critic William Marion Reedy and popular reception in the rural periodicals where Bailey frequently published (Reedy 760; Kates), but he also wrote philosophical poems, such as *Outlook*. Unlike his modernist contemporaries, Bailey embraced a certain continuity with the Romantic tradition, but the "new nature poetry" would ground Transcendental metaphysics in experience. Accepting Ralph Waldo Emerson's injunction to "hitch your wagon to a star," Bailey playfully amends, "a person must have the wagon before he has the star, and he must take due care to stay in the wagon when he rides in space" (*Nature-Study Idea* 88). His philosophical

poems, like *Outlook*, owe their musicality and cosmic vision to Romantics like Emerson, Walt Whitman, and Edgar Allan Poe, the latter having been among his favorite poets (E. Bailey 31).

Self-published as a chapbook in 1911, *Outlook* distills the earth-philosophy of *The Outlook to Nature*, which itself was condensed and revised that same year to become the first of Bailey's four-volume Rural Outlook Set. The poetic composition and prose revision may have occurred simultaneously and share significant imagery; perhaps the two were companion volumes. (The prose book is projected to be published in a new edition from Cornell University Press in 2026.) In the poem, Bailey's speaker recounts his intellectual evolution: he is released from inherited religious dogmatism and anthropocentric alienation through working contact with the land and an embrace of both scientific methods (interspecies kinship apprehended through the study of evolution) and a speculative-poetic imagination (forecasting contact with Mars, for instance), finally arriving at elemental peace with the "confounding" complexity of nature's "everlasting silences" (line 69).

The poem was never reprinted in full. Of nine known copies in public collections, one at the Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum bears several corrections in Bailey's hand. The most critical revision is the word "science" changed to "prescience" in the line "For some far time will prescience open wide the vista vast" (line 99). Prescience transcends dogmatic scientism—simultaneously a future-oriented vision and that which comes before, pre-, science.

Read today, *Outlook's* ecoscosmic critique still refuses the twin dogmatisms of scientism and fundamentalist religion, reorienting toward a radical ethic of more-than-human evolutionary "kinship": "man and brute and wood / All set in one vast fellowhood. . . . A kinship that encompasseth the universe / Wherein will all our feeble cults disperse" (lines 38–39, 111–12). The poem does not explicitly link this cult-dissolving, cosmic kinship to the dismantling of systems of racialized, gendered, and economic forms of oppression—it might, among those "feeble cults," imply the dissolution of "white survival and control," as Dixia Ramírez-D'Oleo advocates in her critique of the kinship trope (7), but

without describing “what comes after the (white) human” (61). Yet *Outlook* remains worthy of study for providing a metaphysical foundation to Bailey’s actual coalition-building work with Black-led and women-led nature-study movements (Linstrom, “It” 48–50, 37–39). As technocratic and reductionist impulses threaten to subsume justice-centered and nature-based responses to today’s climate crisis, there are lessons for our time in the study of counterepistemologies to similarly atomizing Progressive Era impulses. Bailey provides such a case study.

## NOTE

1. For examples of such scholarship, see Armitage; Azelvandre; Berry; Fuldner, *Evolving* and “Good Work”; Jack; Jackson; Kates; Kirschenmann; Kohlstedt; Linstrom, Introduction, “It,” and *Land*; Linstrom and Rinn; Lowe; Minter; Montmarquet; Morgan and Peters; Orr; Peters, “Every Farmer” and “Storying”; Peters and Morgan; Pihkala, *Early Ecotheology* and “Rediscovery”; Rinn; Sarver; Smith; Stempien and Linstrom; Stoll; Szarkowski; Thompson; Van Wieren; Williams; Wirzba.

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## Outlook

### Corrected<sup>1</sup>

“In Adam’s fall  
 We sinnèd all”  
 They told me when my years were young;  
 And deep with pain my heart was stung  
 That we were banished all to woe,  
 Nor understood why we should thus be disciplined  
 Because some other one had grossly sinned  
 Six thousand years ago.<sup>2</sup>

No power have we  
 Ourselves to free  
 From out this thrall,  
 Miserable sinners all;  
 For all the race is downward doomed  
 From high estate,

Mankind is lost, its hopes consumed  
 By guilt innate,  
 And at the last  
 Our convict souls on hell are cast.

If we attain to paradise  
 Some other one must make amends  
 And must avert these awful ends  
 By mortal sacrifice.

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Years have come and gone since then  
 And I have wandered far from homes of men  
 In deep strong woods and fragrant fields  
 Where every rising morning yields  
 A world uncursed and new.  
 The meadows green, the heavens blue,  
 The noonday heat, the morning dew,

The winds that roam the great groves through,  
 The beast and fin and feathered crew,—  
     They bear no mark of fateful trend  
     To perdition or doom-end—  
 All lead me out to fearless view  
 A deepening hold on life construe  
 For what they teach I hold is true.

They teach that all the world is good<sup>3</sup>  
 Alike for man and brute and wood  
 All set in one vast fellowship,  
 Nor innate guilt appears;  
 That all the tribes are onward bound  
 Ascended each from lower round  
 Prophetic of uprising forms  
 That shall accord to higher norms,  
 And in them all no wreck inheres;  
 Some better man than yet may come  
 Old earth is still not dead or dumb,—  
 The kinds and races are outpost  
 And every one unto itself is better than the last.<sup>4</sup>

So,  
 I trust my lot  
 As my ways are trod,  
 And I blaspheme not  
 The perfecting works of God;  
 And I build my holy fires  
 Where every living thing aspires.

And I am I;  
 Dominion unto me is given<sup>5</sup>  
 As the fertile years go by  
 To win my way to heaven.

Myself I must redeem—  
     All nature helps me on  
     And all good saints of here and yon—  
 My soul must be supreme.  
 Within myself my kingdom lies  
 Nor any fatal faiths shall blind my eyes  
 When my soul would take its wings and rise,  
 For all nature disregards our small philosophies  
 And confounds them with her everlasting silences.

The creatures live their parts complete;<sup>6</sup>  
 To them there is no blank defeat  
 Or canker set against the heart:  
 So shall I take my eager part  
 In the great program

And let there be no weak repine  
 And no self-annulment mine  
 Where I am,—  
 But may there be some good conquest  
 That I shall win with trust and zest  
 Where all things are divine.

Nor are we blind  
 Hope lies not behind  
 Ever new is the language nature speaks—  
 We live not with the Greeks;<sup>7</sup>  
 The earth and sky stretch on and on  
 With web of law and mystery  
 Yet bear some healing benison  
 To consecrate my sins to me—  
 We find a goodly harmony  
 When nature holds the mastery.

I break not with the past.  
 I stead myself in all the things of yore  
 In all mankind's long climb and all the sacred lore,  
 And then I outward look to what lies on before.  
 From first unto the last  
 Some mighty essence runs,  
 It moveth in the worlds and riseth in the suns:  
 Its scheme I would forecast,  
 For some far time will prescience<sup>8</sup> open wide the vista vast  
 And let us see the chart whereon our ways are cast.—  
     When I consider the heavens, the stars, and the moon  
     My spirit out-wings its small forenoon  
     With pride of master and man  
     To partake in the plan.

Not too much do I look within  
 Within the barren circle of one's moods<sup>9</sup>  
 We helpless gaze unto the stars;  
 But some great day we shall in signal be with Mars<sup>10</sup>  
 And in a twinkling shall sense a wider brotherhood  
 Than any man hath ever understood,—  
 A kinship that encompasseth the universe  
 Wherein will all our feeble cults disperse  
 And all the worlds our neighbors be  
 In one vast fraternity.  
 New visions will outlift the race<sup>11</sup>  
 As we identify ourselves in space  
 And achieve the meaning of the whole  
 In some new splendor of the soul;  
 Old formulas will readjust,  
 And calmer still will be our trust

When our shrinking fears shall cease  
 And we discover our release  
 From all vagary and caprice;  
 And everywhere shall God appear  
 In our serene abiding here.  
     And closer then on earth the ties  
 When free of doubt and all disguise  
 Their common end men recognize  
 And in one wholesome effort rise.

'Tis not for time alone I seek  
 'Tis not for hope or joy I speak,  
 I fly beyond all things we know  
 To understand why all is so—  
 I must be free:  
 Why should I fear to look when I have eyes to see?  
 Then casting all reserve aside  
 To know things as they are,  
 The order in the world's my guide  
 Its process is my star:  
 The planets and the systems ply—  
 If they are safe, then so am I.  
 I fear no ill where I shall range  
 Nor lose my bearings when my forms of hope shall change.  
 There may be worlds about us that we cannot apprehend  
 Existencies that all our hopes and days transcend:  
 These may take us hence  
 Into some super-sense  
 And this may be our great sequence.  
 So,  
 I hail the brother soul  
 Who rides with me this whirling world  
 Through the waiting spaces hurled;  
 So I let the cycles roll  
 While this tiny sand-grain sphere  
 Spins<sup>12</sup> its little shining year.

And so will my days possess  
 No aching void of loneliness  
 Because my world has larger grown,  
 But fuller be as they unfold  
 With the gladness lived of old  
 And with the ranges then unknown.  
 Quietly the rain-drops fall  
 And tirelessly the white winds call;  
 So,  
 I live and love as seasons fly  
 And then, O Teacher, here am I.  
 I stand within the cosmic sea

And dreadless wait my destiny—  
 I stand with bird and beast and tree  
 And all the things unbond<sup>13</sup> and free,  
 For they and I and all together  
 Pass on in space and time and weather.<sup>14</sup>

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## EDITOR'S NOTES

My thanks to Matthew Wynn Sivils for his early encouragement and direction on this project, to Una Chaudhuri for her feedback on the introduction, to Patricia Crain for her feedback on an earlier iteration, to Michael Fiedorowicz for providing me with a scan of the corrected edition, and to John A. Stempien for introducing me to this gem of an artifact and to the world of Baileyana more generally, now fifteen years ago. Any errors or oversights remaining are mine alone.

1. Bailey wrote this word in ink, triple underlined, on a translucent sheet of onionskin wrapped around the chapbook's cover, such that the word appears just below the title as viewed through the wrapper. Similar onionskin wrappers may be found on numerous books from Bailey's home library, most of which are now in the collection of the Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum and Gardens in South Haven, Michigan. The title also appears on a title page and on the first page of the poem itself, separated from the first line of the poem by a single large fleuron. Section breaks in the poem are denoted by sets of three smaller fleurons (see [fig. 1](#)). Bailey's name was not printed anywhere in the chapbook, but his signature appears on the title page of each of the copies I have consulted.

2. The stanza begins by quoting the first two lines of the *New England Primer*, a classic pedagogical text published in colonial New England but still used into the nineteenth century, such that it is not impossible a young Bailey may have encountered it at his rural two-room school or elsewhere in the frontier settlement of South Haven, Michigan, in the 1860s. The first three stanzas of *Outlook*, excised from the poem's only known partial reprint (which concluded the 1949 biography of Bailey written by Andrew Denny Rodgers III), depict the Puritan worldview the speaker remembers inheriting in childhood, which his experiences will lead him to reject. This stanza also alludes to the Puritan doctrine of predestination and to the belief that, based on biblical genealogies and creation mythology, the earth was only six thousand years old. Early nineteenth-century geological studies showing a much older age for the planet reinforced biological theories of evolution that emerged later in the century, which in turn shaped Bailey's early intellectual development, including his early encounter with Charles Darwin's writing (Rodgers 11–13, 87–88).

3. This "goodness" of the earth would become a major theme in Bailey's 1915 book *The Holy Earth*, in which chapters 2, 3, and 4 are titled "The earth is good," "It is kindly," and "The earth is holy," respectively. The seventh chapter is titled "The brotherhood relation," which lays out a theory, rooted in evolution, that humanity bears a kinship relation to the rest of the "living sensitive creation" (25). This echoes what he writes a few lines further down in *Outlook*, figuring humans as set "in one vast fellowhood" and "a

✓  
prescience  
For some far time will science open wide  
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And let us see the chart whereon our ways  
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When I consider the heavens, the  
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My spirit out-wings its small forenoon  
With pride of master and man  
To partake in the plan.



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We helpless gaze unto the stars;  
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Than any man hath ever understood,—  
A kinship that encompasseth the universe  
Wherein will all our feeble cults disperse  
And all the worlds our neighbors be  
In one vast fraternity.  
New visions will outlift the race  
As we identify ourselves in space  
And achieve the meaning of the whole

FIG. 1. Page 8 of Bailey's corrected copy of *Outlook*.

kinship that encompasseth the universe.” Such “fellowhood” forms the basis of Bailey’s argument that humans, given our outside ecological influence within these “kinship” relations, bear an ethical responsibility toward the well-being of life generally (drawing together “man and brute and wood,” as he states it here—animal and vegetal). In the light of Darwinian evolution, he considered these kinship relations literally. This framework would redefine “goodness” in ecocentric terms to reflect a responsiveness to and sense of responsibility toward the full more-than-human world, rendering it a “bio-centric” rather than a “man-centred” value, as he puts it in *The Holy Earth* (25). The aim was less to sanitize nature than to radically redefine goodness and redraw systems of morality.

4. The language of “kinds and races” here and elsewhere in the poem deserves attention. In *The Outlook to Nature*, Bailey critiques “the book dogma of ‘species’” (170–71) and raises the idea that science might move beyond studies of kinds, species, or races of organisms—groups that he argued were made for convenience and were, at a fundamental level, arbitrary, and even problematic insofar as they contributed to the “species bogey” that falsely considered species categories as “something fundamental” rather than just convenient descriptions of generalized observations (153, 154). In his 1896 article “The Philosophy of Species-Making,” Bailey had offered this succinct, relativist definition of the term “species”: “The unit in classification, designating an assemblage of organisms which, in the judgment of any writer, is so marked and so homogeneous that it can be conveniently spoken of as one thing” (457). In place of “the book dogma of ‘species,’” he advocates in *The Outlook to Nature* for a new kind of study centered on specific, individual animals or plants, and he makes the suggestion as part of his defense of the literary animal stories by William J. Long and Ernest Thompson Seton that had been attacked by John Burroughs and Theodore Roosevelt as part of the nature-faker controversy (170–72). The terms “tribes,” “kinds,” and “races” in this section of the poem make clear reference to the interspecies catalog of life-forms listed earlier in the same section, e.g., “beast and fin and feathered crew . . . man and brute and wood,” rather than to humans narrowly. This is in keeping with his usage in *The Outlook to Nature*, *The Survival of the Unlike*, and elsewhere.

Bailey’s understanding of such categories as ultimately arbitrary and permeable marked one of the ways he distanced himself from the social Darwinist views of many contemporaries; Armitage also notes the way in which Bailey’s emphasis on adaptation over strength as the mark of evolutionary fitness “repudiated the vision of nature red in tooth and claw promoted by social Darwinists” (105). Bailey’s unusual first name was inherited from his father, who was given it by Bailey’s abolitionist grandfather as a prophecy of racial liberation (“Call him Liberty—for all shall be free” [qtd. in Dorf 3–4; see Rodgers 6]), and Bailey’s views of human racialism seemed to cut against eugenic discourse and instead emphasized inherited abolitionist values of equality and tolerance. Bailey also aligned himself in the scientific community with the “Neo-Lamarckian” evolutionists, whom he considered closer to Darwin’s actual thought than the “Neo-Darwinians” led by August Weismann. Weismann’s

germplasm theory helped lay the groundwork for the eugenics movement, and it was very specifically and vigorously opposed by Bailey (*Survival* 55–106). In the social realm, Bailey believed that universal access to education and improved living conditions were among the primary means of bettering society, and he seemed to think they were universally needed, across racial lines, for the best social progress (see, e.g., Linstrom 48–50).

5. In environmental literature, the term “dominion” is most often associated with the creation myths of Genesis, which are invoked either as the originating cultural cause of “our ecologic crisis” or as a resource for getting out of it (see, e.g., the classic critique in White, and the rebuttal in Berry 267–81). In *The Holy Earth*, Bailey invokes that narrative to consider the human “dominion” on the earth in terms of an ethical relationality and stewardship. The dual facts of the human species’ “bio-centric” kinship with all life and that same species’ vastly outside ecosphere influence compared to any other, he argues, place upon humanity a unique responsibility to care for the rest of the web of life (25). He distances himself from the word’s domineering and selfish connotations when he writes, “Dominion does not carry personal ownership” (13), and “Man has dominion, but he has no commission to devastate” (18). In this passage of *Outlook*, such dominion is turned toward the self to contradict the inherited Puritanical theology of predestination alluded to in the poem’s first section. Still, for Bailey, such “redemption” appears to be an effect of outward-facing stewardship, and the “heaven” he invokes in this stanza should not be conflated with afterlife-oriented fundamentalist theology so much as with the social-gospel sense of the need to build the kingdom of God on earth (see *Holy Earth* 10–11).

6. Bailey added the semicolon in pencil.

7. This reference appears to be in conversation with the following passages in *The Outlook to Nature*:

“I read recently in a college paper that ‘the classics are the source of culture, all culture, and they always have been’; and again: ‘Greek, once considered the foundation of all culture, is fast dying out, and our whole system of education for the sake of culture and power is threatened with destruction by the ever-increasing flood of materialism in scientific courses, and of practicalism in the professional courses. The task of stemming this flood has given rise to the most vital and difficult problems of the modern university.’ I wish that we had more Greek, but I do not admit that Greek or any other group of subjects is the sole source of what we ought to know as ‘culture,’ nor that ‘materialism’ is a result of scientific courses, nor that ‘practicalism’ is any bar to the highest flights of thought; and it is strange that any person in these days should regard Greek as the one preëminent source of [reasoning] power. All education should lead to culture and to power. . . . When only Greek-minded men went to college, it was enough that Greek was taught; but now that physics-minded and physiology-minded and farm-minded men go to college, engineering and physiology and agriculture also should be taught” (99–100, 102).

8. Bailey replaced the word “science” with “prescience” in pencil, scribbling over the word “science” (see fig. 1).

9. This section of the poem, as previously published, began with the present third line, “We helpless gaze. . . .” In the left-hand margin between the previous section and this one, on page 8, in

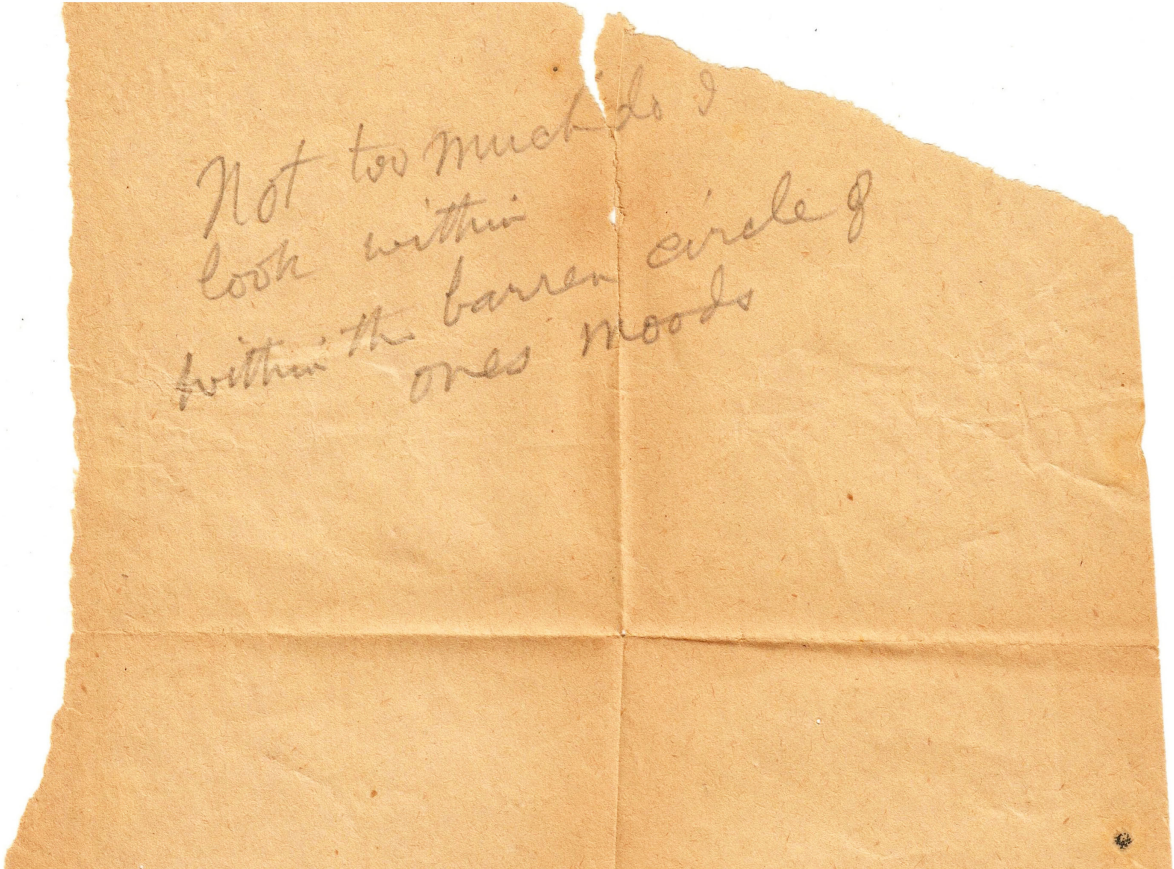


FIG. 2. Detail from a scrap of paper that Bailey apparently glued into the corrected copy of *Outlook*.

pencil, Bailey wrote an insertion mark pointing toward the section break (see fig. 1). On a folded scrap of torn paper kept between pages 8 and 9, Bailey wrote, “Not too much do I look within / Within the barren circle of ones [sic] moods,” in pencil (see fig. 2). The scrap of paper was recently discovered by the collections manager John A. Stempien after having been long misplaced in the collections of the Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum and Gardens—my thanks to him for finding and sharing these lines late in the process of my work on this edition. Over the phone, he and I visually matched the scrap to the corrected copy of the chapbook by a small stain on page 9. The stain runs through several pages in either direction (see fig. 1) and also appears in all four quadrants of the folded scrap of paper.

The insertion mark floats ambiguously between the two sections, and some judgment for how to treat these lines is required of the editor. The folded scrap of paper contains enough space for many more lines of poetry, so one must consider the possibility that Bailey did intend to compose an entirely new section of the poem, to be set off on either end with fleurons, but never finished it. Clearly not enough to constitute an entire section as they stand, the two new lines work better thematically and poetically here than tacked onto the tight and conclusive quatrain ending the previous

section. They bring the section that they introduce into line with every other section of the poem by presenting the first-person singular pronoun near the beginning and then developing a theme that proceeds from personal experience to universal insight—from hyperlocal and personal to global and cosmic. (The added lines, moreover, clarify the role of the personal in the poem broadly, and it may be significant that “look within” rhymes with no other line in the entire poem.) The “barren circle of one’s moods” gives a new, melancholic charge to the sentiment that “We helpless gaze unto the stars,” and that barren circle finds its counterpoint several lines later as the circle of “kinship” widens to the cosmic. Stylistically, “moods” may be intended as an imperfect rhyme with “brotherhood” and “understood,” with precedence in the very imperfect rhyme of “philosophies” and “silences” in lines 68 and 69 (and numerous instances of end rhymes occurring three or more lines apart). All this seems sufficient to justify placement after the section break.

I have supplied the apostrophe needed to make sense of “ones” as a possessive, and it is tempting to go further and add end punctuation, such as a dash or semicolon, to either or both of the new lines. While such punctuation would clarify the syntax of the stanza, each possibility would do so differently—e.g., should these

two lines be read together as one thought juxtaposed with what follows (punctuation after the second line), or should the first line be read as one thought with the second line modifying the third (punctuation after the first line)? The fit will never be perfect, since the third-person “one’s” matches neither the first-person singular of the preceding line nor the first-person plural of the following. The meaning is ambiguous enough as Bailey left it that I have chosen here not to impose my own interpretation through additional clarifying punctuation.

10. To be “in signal,” or in communication, with Mars was an idea available to Bailey from various sources, whether in science fiction works like Robert D. Braine’s 1892 *Messages from Mars by the Aid of the Telescope Plant*, in which the advanced Martian “Oronites” with whom the protagonist learns to communicate live in a quasi-socialist rural society without cities (Crossley 58–65), or in the mystical eighteenth-century writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, who claimed to communicate with deceased residents from many of the solar system’s planets through the spiritual realm in his work *Other Planets*. Confidence in intelligent life on Mars had already been popularized by Percival Lowell’s interpretation of Martian “canals” and “oases” in his first book, *Mars* (1895). For Bailey, the possibility inspired more than one moment of speculative poetry. In *The Outlook to Nature*, he writes:

“Worlds, like men, grow old and die. The marks of senility may even now be apparent in this earth of ours, which seems to us so young. With the receding and absorption of the waters, great areas have become deserts—perhaps the beginning of that great decline which must end in death. The moon seems to have run its span of life, and there is evidence that Mars is now far advanced upon that arid course which leads its inhabitants onward to extinction. It is conceivable that the planets will fall again into a central mass and thence again shoot forth to begin a new creation. We do not know whether this cosmos that we see is the first or the millionth!

“Oh Mars! Sister in the stellar void—

Thy course far run upon the great abyss—

Send us thy message!

What hast thou learned in thy great life,

What hopes are thine, what doubts removed,

What dost thou see beyond the veil,

What meaneth life and death?” (177–78)

11. Whenever Bailey specifies the meaning of the word “race” in his writing, used with the definite article in relation to humans (as opposed to the typically botanical sense mentioned in note 4, above), it is to refer to the “human race” rather than to any single racialized group. Compare *Outlook’s* second stanza, which equates the term through parallelism with “mankind,” or the second paragraph of *The Holy Earth*: “It is good to think of ourselves—of this teeming, tense, and aspiring human race—as a helpful and contributing part in the plan of a cosmos” (3). Bailey also had expressed his desire, when using masculine nouns like “mankind,” to be understood as referring to humanity broadly, as in this passage from *The State and the Farmer* (1908): “Throughout this writing, I intend the word man to include the farm woman: the language lacks a good word to imply them both” (175).

12. Bailey wrote “Spins” in pencil under the original first word of this line, which was “Lives.”

13. In the excerpt from the poem reproduced in Rodgers’s biography, this word is changed to “unbound.” The edit makes sense, continuing the theme of liberation from traditions “bound” in texts as the speaker turns instead to the presumably “unbound” book of nature (an especially common trope for Bailey in *The Nature-Study Idea*). However, I have not found evidence that the change in Rodgers’s edition was at Bailey’s request, it is not marked in the corrected edition, and Bailey uses the word “unbond” in two other poems published in his 1916 poetry collection, *Wind and Weather* (13, 200), so I have left it here. While the word does not appear in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, it does appear in writing from Bailey’s time to the present—whether describing the unbonding of pebbles from a gravel road or the chemical unbonding of molecules—as an online search with *Google Books Ngram Viewer* reveals.

14. The poem’s conclusion mirrors the conclusion of *The Outlook to Nature*, in the chapter “Evolution: The Quest of Truth.” The one-stanza poem at the end of that book, lightly edited, would become the title poem of Bailey’s 1916 collection *Wind and Weather*. While elsewhere in *The Outlook to Nature* Bailey advocated for “a generous discontent and a diligent unrest” as the necessary result of taking “nature [as] the norm” against which to judge society (7), in the conclusion Bailey is attempting to convey to religious skeptics of evolution the peace of accepting new truths revealed by scientific investigation:

“All beliefs, all doctrines, all creeds are mine. I want only the truth and the privilege to live in the great good world. Truth, and the quest of truth, are always safe. It is not my part to be anxious about destiny or about the universe. If my tiny opinions are outgrown, I shall wait, in patience and in hope.

“There is grateful release in letting the universe take care of itself. The universe is in better hands than mine. In these matters, I will substitute trust for faith. If I cannot remove the dandelions from the lawn, then I will love the dandelions. Where once were weeds are now golden coins, bees reveling in color, and the spring sunshine kissing the blossoms with lips of dew. It is so sweet and restful that I abide in peace.

“Passengers on the cosmic sea

We know not whence nor whither:

’Tis happiness enough to be

In tune with wind and weather.” (195)

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