Theme Song -

Studio Announcement -

M.L. This morning we open our autograph album of Chippewa Valley authors to page two. On its blank page our guest on this program will write her story of writing and enjoying poetry. She is past president of the Eau Claire Woman's Club, a regent of the Eau Claire chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and a member of the Wisconsin chapter of the National League of American Pen Women, and author of the collection of poetry, Word Pictures.

The page is yours - Mrs. Ida Linton Hainer.

Mrs. Hainer - Thank you, Miss Langdell.

M.L. - When and how did you begin to write poetry, Mrs. Hainer?

Mrs. Hainer - I began about fifteen years ago. A friend who saw some rhymes I had written for a stunt party suggested that I write some verses for greeting cards and send them to a publishing company. I did so and to my surprise found that some of them actually sold. It was not till some years later that I began writing little poems - I did this as a pastime and as a sort of means of self-expression. I gathered these verses together and "Word Pictures" was the result. In this little book I aimed to make each little poem as plain to the reader as though he were seeing a picture of the thing of which I wrote - hence the name "Word Pictures." I have enough new verse for another little book which will be published next summer.

M.L. - How did you first come to be interested in poetry?

Mrs. Hainer - Oh, I think I must just naturally have loved it. I don't remember that much was made of it in my grade or high school days, tho' at times we did have a period for rhetoricals - that may have had something to do with it for the best way to inculcate a love for poetry is to hear it read aloud, that is if it is well read and we probably had our share of good readers.
Most of our "recitations" were chosen by the pupils themselves and they had to be committed, too. Delivering them was a serious matter. Some of the pupils were too timid to make themselves heard, others stormed and thundered in a most remarkable and unwarranted manner and still others - chiefly girls - recited sweet and sad and surprisingly long poems. I still remember several verses of Archie Dean, a sickly sentimental poem of that day, which I gave before the High School Assembly. A critic would doubtless have found these programs very funny, but they were probably our first steps in poetry appreciation. As the years passed I read to myself for my own pleasure and I had formed a taste for really beautiful poetry before I took a belated course at the University of Wisconsin in both public speaking and poetry.

M.L. - You say that you wrote verse as a sort of self-expression. Was writing your first form of self-expression?

Mrs. Hainer - Oh no, I gave readings for Woman's Clubs and church societies long before I had written anything myself. At first my programs consisted of several short readings more or less serious and quite apt to be rather sentimental. I remember that Van Dyke's "Key Of The Tower" was a great favorite. Later I read plays - among these "Pelleas and Melisande" and Ibsen's "Wild Duck" were popular - also William Ellery Leonard's poem, "Two Lives." Since my book became known I am usually asked to speak on poetry.

M.L. - What is your own and the public's reaction to your poems?

Mrs. Hainer - As to the public's reaction I cannot say, as I hear only the favorable comments. Papers that reviewed them have spoken well of them.

My own reaction is certainly a pleasant one. I have enjoyed the writing itself and I like to hear the nice things my friends tell and frequently strangers tell me. I don't know which pleased me the more - the lovely
tribute of a well known poet or the illiterate letter an old lady of 82 (a stranger to me) wrote telling me how much my wonderful book had helped her and quoted from my poem, The End Of The Game" and said that "Now she too was satisfied."

M.L. - Which of your poems have you chosen to read today?
Mrs. Hainer - Having read my own poems at the Woman's Club last week Tuesday and over WEAU last Thursday, I shall read nothing of my own today, but shall talk about poetry, principally modern poetry and read from several modern poets.

M.L. - We must have just one of your poems first. I'd like to hear, "The End Of The Game". The one you mentioned which helped the 82 year old lady so much.

Mrs. Hainer - The End Of The Game

I played the game but poorly
But I always played it fair,
And now that it's nearly over
I do not greatly care.

At times the game was easy
And I loitered along the way;
At others I ran at a breakneck speed
In the torrid heat of day.

But always there shone before me
A Light that beckoned me on
To that distant shore of the Evermore
Where many friends have gone.

I know not what awaits me
Upon the Other Side;
But the race is run, and the game is done
And I am satisfied.
M.L. — Thank you. Now I shall be satisfied to hear about other poets.

Mrs. Hainer — Perhaps some of the older folks who are listening in will remember as I do the books of poems we received many years ago on Christmas and birthdays. Usually we could read in letters of gold on a padded seal cover the name of Whittier, Longfellow, Tennyson, Browning or some other favorite. How I revelled in them one and all. They contained so much that was inspirational and beautiful. Now we oldsters are finding it a bit difficult to adjust ourselves to much of the modern poetry. Even the definitions are too much for us. I was surprised to learn from no less an authority than Carl Sandburg that, "poetry is an echo, asking a shadow dancer to be a partner" and also that "Poetry is a sliver of the moon lost in the belly of a golden frog." However we need not let this disturb us — each may use his own definition. It is so easy for us to become familiar with the very best in poetry — a visit to the library and we may choose what we will and browse to our heart's content without the outlay of a single dollar. I hope that more and more mothers will encourage the reading of poetry in the home for so a love for and appreciation of poetry may be instilled in the heart and mind of a child leaving its influence for all time. For a child will memorize a poem more easily and retains it longer than an adult. My own observation and that of my friends who have had years of experience with children in and out of school is that they from a very early age they not only commit — but enjoy many poems with mature thought more than the verses that are specially written for children. Though we do not usually think of it as poetry, the finest of all poems is the 23rd psalm. Fortunately this is taught in all the Sunday schools in our land so the child has this gem to begin with. All except the first poem which I shall read aloud this morning are modern ones. The first I chose only in order to show the contrast between the way a poet of the last century and one of the present century treated the same subject. The
first one by Bayard Taylor is the well known Bedouin Love Song. The second is called The Serenade and is by Emanuel Carnavelli — a poet still in his thirties. I think the last verse of the Bedouin Love Song will be enough to illustrate:

"My ships are nightly driven
By the fever in my breast
To hear from thy lattice breathed
The word that shall give me rest.
Open the door of thy heart
And open thy chamber door
And my kisses shall teach thy lips
The love that shall fade no more
Till the sun grows cold and the stars are old
And the leaves of the Judgement Book unfold."

Now Carnavelli's Serenade.

"Come on don't be afraid you'll spoil me
If you light the gas in your room
And show me that you have heard my cries.
Are you so poor in kisses
That you're so stingy with them:
And is your heart so ravaged
That you won't let me pick there
One or two flowers
To stick in my jacket's button hole?
I play my serenade beating with my clenched fist
On a gong and a drum,
What I want is to give you
The sound of what a man is."
I love my eyes and lips
Better than yours.
Besides the dampness of the night
Pierces my shoes.
I can be as capricious
As you can be, don't worry!
Come on, open that window or I'll go home.

(From Lyric America)

This may be the type of thing that appeals to the modern young woman
but it is hard for the uninitiated to think of it as poetry even
though realizing that neither meter nor stereotyped form are necessary
to poetical expression. I think we can all agree with the statement
regarding poetry that Richard Realf makes in his lovely poem, In
Direction.

"Fair are the flowers and the children
But their subtle suggestion is fairer
Rare is the rose burst of dawn
But the secret that clasps it is rarer
Sweet the exultance of song
But the strain that precedes it is sweeter
And never a poem was writ
But the meaning out mastered the meter."

Here are some shorter poems and extracts from longer ones, each of
which has an appeal of its own. As an example of Faith in the Infinite
there is Emily Dickinson's Chartless:

"I never saw a moor, I never saw the sea.
Yet know I how the heather looks, And what a wave must be.
I never spoke with God, Nor visited in Heaven,
Yet certain am I of the spot as though the chart were given."
Perfect faith in man is shown in these lines by Dorothy Galloway.

"I dreamed of waters rising high and suddenly upon the land,
Too swift for any aid for you and me,
I made no cry because I dreamed you held my hand,
And I was not afraid."

Those who have musicians as lovers may sometimes feel as did Pierrot's
sweetheart in Sara Teasdale's poem, Pierrot.

"Pierrot stood in the garden
Beneath a waning moon
And on his lute he fashions
A fragile silver tune.

Pierrot plays in the garden
He thinks he plays for me
But I am quite forgotten
Under the cherry tree.
Pierrot plays in the garden
And all the roses know
That Pierrot loves his music
And I love Pierrot."

To those of us who have the wanderlust, and there are many of us,
Edna St. Vincent Millay's poem Travel will appeal.

"The railroad track is miles away
And the day is loud with voices speaking
But there isn't a train goes by all day
But I hear it's whistle shreking."
All night there isn't a train goes by
Tho' the night is still for sleep and dreaming
But I see the cinders red in the sky
And hear its engines steaming.

My heart is warm with the friends I make
And better friends I'll not be knowing
But there isn't a train I wouldn't take
No matter where it's going."

Perhaps no modern poem is more quoted than this quatrain by the same
writer.

"I burn my candle at both ends
It will not last the night
But oh my foes and oh my friends
It gives a lovely light."

Nature lovers will most certainly like her poem, God's World. Part of
which I quote:

"Oh world I cannot hold thee close enough
Thy winds, thy wide gray skies
Thy mists that roll and rise
Thy woods this autumn day, that
Ache and say and all but cry with cold,
Lord, I do fear thou hast made the world
Too beautiful this year."

If you have lived alone in a strange city your heart will go out in
sympathy to "the lonely man" in Agnes Lee's poem by the same name.
"It's lonely in lodgings above the street
When dusk slows down the day's long laboring
With only a road to a lad on the stair
And neither kith nor kin to be neighboring.

It must be good to go out of a house
With the soft goodby of your loved one spoken
And a window full of little faces
Smiling you off as your name is token.

It must be good to come back to a house
And hear the joy - the welcoming shout of it
It must be good to have any one care
Whether you come into a house or go out of it."

Another of Agnes Lee's little poems that shows a change of heart that often comes with the years is called, Enemies.

"For many and many a year, a sordid grudge we bore,
But now when he comes down the street he pauses at my door.
For time is closing in and age forgives its debts
When family falls away like mist and memory forgets.
Now we sit and talk under the mulberry tree
The only friend I have in life is my old enemy."

Any mother who has suffered the loss of her child may find renewed courage in Helen Welsheimer's sad little poem, "A Mother's Farewell To Her Little Boy."

"Yes, honey, there will be a hoop and hills to roll it down
(God couldn't give a little boy the burden of a crown.)
He'll show you lots of trees to climb and where He keeps the swings
And will he let you sail a kite up where the sky is clear
With no tall buildings stooping down? Of course he will, my dear.
Now close your eyes. I’ll kiss them shut, the way I always do.
(I must, I must not cry, dear God, until he’s safe with you.)

If you have memories of an old-fashioned home that was yours in
childhood your heart will respond to the vivid word picture given in
Eunice Tietjen’s, My Mother’s House.
“It’s strange” my mother said “to think
Of the old house where we were born
I can remember every chink
And every board our feet had worn.
It’s gone now, many years ago
They tore it down. It was too old
And none too grand as houses go.
Not like a new house bought and sold
And so they tore it down. But we
Could talk about it still and say
Just so the kitchen used to be
And the stairs turned in such a way.
But we’re gone too, now. Every one
Who knew the house is dead and buried
And I’ll not live so long alone
With all my children grown and married.
There’s not a living soul can tell
Except myself, just how the grass
Grew round the pathway to the well
Nor where the china cupboard was.
Yet while I live you cannot say
That the old house is quite, quite dead.
It still exists in some dim way
While I remember it" she said.

Lovers of the sea will thrill to the lines of John Masefield's "Sea Fever"
"I must go down to the sea again, to the lonely sea and the sky
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking
And a gray mist on the sea's face, and a gray dawn breaking.
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow rover
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over."

Perhaps it is the lovely nature descriptions and the beautiful lyric qualities of Amy Lowell's poem Patterns that has made it a favorite but in addition to these things it also gives a vivid picture of the tragedy of non-fulfilment that war causes many women. I cannot quote from it here nor from another poem that is considered by many the finest narrative poem ever written by an American — I refer to William Ellery Leonard's poem - Two Lives. If you are a real lover of poetry and have passed this by be sure to read it soon.