

**'My dear Miss Brachvogel...'**  
**A Ms Version of a Yeats Quatrain**

*The friends that have it I do wrong  
When ever I remake a song,  
Should know what issue is at stake:  
It is myself that I remake. (CWVP2, epigraph)*

Philip R. Bishop

On 6 June 1908 Susan Mary (Lily) Yeats boarded an ocean liner to return to Dublin without her father, John Butler Yeats. Her original plan was to tend a booth at the New York Irish Exhibition in January,<sup>1</sup> but her stay was extended in the hope of convincing her father to return home with her. John Butler Yeats had enjoyed his time in New York too much and resisted returning to Dublin where old perceived failings, both financial and family, awaited him.<sup>2</sup>

Accompanying Lily Yeats on the return voyage was a slender Mosher Press<sup>3</sup> book given her in safe keeping by a young, well-educated German-American woman she befriended sometime during her five month stay in the States, Clara Brachvogel.

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<sup>1</sup> Travel and room & board arrangements were made by P. T. Power, a show manager and promoter in Irish sales in New York who was familiar with John Quinn. Power not only paid for Lily Yeats representing the Dun Emer Industries (her father using other funds donated by his friends), but also reluctantly backed the quarrelsome Evelyn Gleeson who represented the Dun Emer Guild. The two segments of the business were in contention, finally leading to their split in 1907 when Lily Yeats and her sister Elizabeth (Lolly) Yeats formed the Cuala. See William M. Murphy, *Family Secrets—William Butler Yeats and His Relatives*. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 130-40, 179-82.

<sup>2</sup> See Murphy, *op. cit.*, Joan Hardwick's *The Biography of Susan and Elizabeth Yeats* (London & NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 1996), 151-160; Gifford Lewis, *The Yeats Sisters and the Cuala*. (Dublin and Portland, Oregon: Irish Academic Press, 1994), 77-80.

<sup>3</sup> The Mosher Press operated out of Portland, Maine from 1891-1923. Its founder and owner was Thomas Bird Mosher (1852-1923). See also n.12 below.

Records show that the only Brachvogels living in New York City during Lily Yeats's stay were members of the Udo Brachvogel family, including their only surviving daughter, Clara.<sup>4</sup> Udo Brachvogel (1835-1913) was the editor of the *Belletristische Journal* and a major figure in German-American publishing in New York, as well as an author, poet, translator, and long-time friend of Joseph Pulitzer.<sup>5</sup> Lily Yeats had a long-time interest in Germany<sup>6</sup> and quite possibly met Clara Brachvogel through John Quinn.<sup>7</sup> In honour of his Irish guests, John Quinn hosted many social gatherings, dinners and parties for Lily Yeats and her father. She may also have met Clara Brachvogel at the Irish Exhibition.

The 2 ½ page ALS by Lily Yeats, and its accompanying book bearing four lines of poetry signed and dated in William Butler Yeats's holograph, have remained together over the past hundred plus years—more recently at Quaritch in London in the 1980s; then

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<sup>4</sup> According to U.S. census records, Udo Brachvogel and his wife, Kaethe, lived at 1270 Madison Ave. in Manhattan and had at least one female servant. They married in 1878 and had four children but by 1900 only two were living: a son, John K. (b. 1883) and a daughter, Clara (b. 1887). Clara Brachvogel was still single and living at home by the 1910 census. She was 24 years old, fully literate (as were both her parents) and with no listed occupation in 1910. She would have been twenty-one when she met Lily Yeats.

<sup>5</sup> Udo Brachvogel's papers and correspondence, MSS and Archives Division, New York Public Library (MssCol 361).

<sup>6</sup> See Hardwick, 137 and Murphy, 159 & 189.

<sup>7</sup> John Quinn (1870-1924), a highly successful corporation lawyer, was a distinguished arts patron and nonpareil collector of later 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century literature. Quinn's library included significant holdings of inscribed copies of Yeats's books and manuscripts of his poetry and plays, such as the holograph of *The Land of Heart's Desire*. His collection also included the holograph of *Ulysses*, now at the Rosenbach Museum & Library, Philadelphia, PA. See the *Complete Catalogue of the Library of John Quinn*. Sold by Auction in Five Parts. 2 vols. (NY: The Anderson Galleries, 1924, Reprint, NY: Lemma Publishing, 1969), lots 11338-11610 and 4920-4939. Quinn was the strongest American advocate and supporter of Yeats and his immediate family: See Reid, B. L. *The Man from New York: John Quinn and His Friends*. (NY: Oxford University Press, 1968). Forty-six linear feet of John Quinn's papers are preserved at the New York Public Library (MSS Collection, 2513 \*ZL-355).

for three decades in a Georgetown University scholar's collection; and presently in the Bishop Collection of the Mosher Press where this material was examined. The full text of the letter follows, with an image of its first page (fig. 1):

GURTEEN DHAS,  
CHURCHTOWN,  
DUNDRUM,  
Co. DUBLIN.<sup>8</sup>

July 5<sup>th</sup> 1908

My dear Miss Brachvogel

I was lucky enough to get hold of my brother last week & he has written in your book, which I now return to you.

He seems to bear no grudge against Mosher & just remarked that he wished honest publishers had such good taste. The little book is certainly well turned out.

I had a pleasant journey home & found all well.

I am going to send you the reproduction of a sketch my father did of me in New York, & I hope you will like it & keep it as a souvenir.<sup>9</sup>

I often think of that beautiful trip you took me to White Plains.<sup>10</sup> It was so kind of you. - & our evening with the Amie, do tell me if you hear any news of her.

With remembrances,

I remain

Sincerely yours

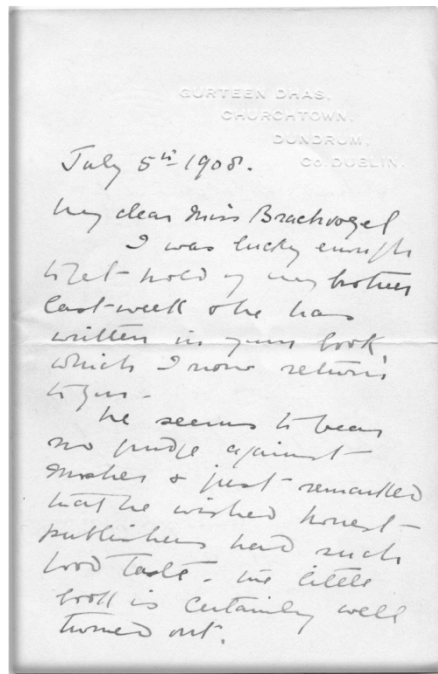
Lily Yeats

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<sup>8</sup> The letter's inside address is composed of four embossed printed lines in caps, and the paper on which the letter was written was made at the Swiftbrook Mill in Saggard, Co. Dublin. It bears two watermarks: (a) that of the standing figure of Erin accompanied by crown, harp and shamrock-entwined banner, and (b) the round tower and Irish wolfhound including the wording 'Ancient Irish Vellum' and the papermaker's location.

<sup>9</sup> The portrait mentioned here is the pencil sketch John Butler Yeats did of Lily Yeats in New York in May 1908 described as 'half length, seated, full face, right hand in lap', now in the National Library of Ireland and pictured in Murphy, *op. cit.*, 152.

<sup>10</sup> White Plains is a city just north of New York City and serves as the county seat for Westchester County in the State of New York.



**Figure 1**  
First page of Lily Yeats's letter to her  
American friend, Clara Brachvogel.

A portion of the first page is quoted in the footnotes to the *Collected Letters*, misdated to 'c. 30 June 1908', the date Yeats supplied for the quatrain he inscribed in the book accompanying the letter (CL3, 555, n. 2). The editors indicate that the letter accompanies 'a copy of the 7th edition (1908)' of *The Land of Heart's Desire*,<sup>11</sup> they mention

<sup>11</sup> The editors note that Mosher was a Welsh-born publisher (CL3, 508, n.9)—his ancestry was Scottish—and he was born in Biddeford, Maine. The revised edition first appeared in Mosher's serial publication, *The Bibelot*, IX, No. 6, in June 1903, with Mosher's proud encomium, 'It is, therefore, with especial delight that with Mr. Yeats' permission, we reprint *The Land of Heart's Desire*, written ten years back, but now given according to his latest revision' ([p. 181]). It is far from clear, however, that Yeats's permission extended beyond this printing to what ensued, as 32 presentation copies of this *Bibelot* version but printed on Japan vellum, appeared in July 1903 (Wade 12), followed by the first trade edition of October 1903 in the Lyric Garland Series (Wade 13), and the bound yearly volume of *The Bibelot*. Mosher issued twelve editions in the Lyric Garland Series (later followed by a thirteenth published in 1925 by Mosher's assistant, Flora Lamb, who continued the work of the business after Mosher's death in 1923). There is also another edition published in Mosher's Miscellaneous Series in 1909, thereby bringing the count to fifteen editions plus *The Bibelot* for June 1903, bringing the total count to sixteen printings all together. At the end of a tour in the U.S., Yeats wrote to George P. Brett of Macmillan & Co., Ltd. to boast of his speaking engagements 'at over sixty-four colleges and literary societies in America' (Quinn estimated Yeats spoke before 25,000-30,000 people during this time), citing the Mosher editions of *The Land of Heart's Desire* as yet another barometer of his need for a regular trade publisher in the States: 'I only learned yesterday that Mosher's second edition of

neither its dated quatrain nor Lily Yeats's indication that Yeats had inscribed it. No doubt the information was unavailable to them.

This letter encapsulates the ambivalence many an English, Scottish or Irish author had towards Mosher's publications: Mosher, the 'dishonest' publisher, 'the pirate' *vs.* Mosher the producer of lovely books. Many thought, in effect, that while Mosher pirated their work, they desired exposure to an American audience and that Mosher's books were so handsome that they were pleased to see their work in such a format. The arguments remain contentious to this day.<sup>12</sup>

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my little play, "The Land of Heart's Desire", each edition being 950 copies, has become exhausted, and that this has been done within the last few months. I believe that ultimately I shall have a considerable market in this country...' (CL3, 555).

<sup>12</sup> Positions vary from harsh criticism of Mosher's method of publishing (contemporaneous authors such as Andrew Lang, Lionel Johnson, et.al., particularly through *The Critic* in 1896, but also elsewhere) to positions bordering on the benign and even supportive (British publisher, Grant Richards; literary critic Clement Shorter; and American apologists of more recent times). Warwick Gould has termed Mosher 'a scoundrel' (YA 15, 382) and has determined that Mosher's 'piracy' of *The Land of Heart's Desire* unduly influenced the subsequent reception of Yeats in the States because Macmillan (an honest trade publisher) despised Mosher's ways and felt it necessary to impose quite extraordinary contracts on this author thereby severely limiting Yeats's options in seeking a collected edition of his works under one publisher ('Yeats in the States: Piracy, Copyright and the Shaping of the Canon' in *Publishing History* 51, 61-82). Perhaps Andrew Lang most succinctly summed up Mosher's opportunistic 'piracy' campaign under what was the Copyright Law of 1891 (the Chase-Breckinridge-Adams-Simonds-Platt Copyright Act) when he tersely inscribed a copy of Mosher's 1903 second edition of his *Helen of Troy*: 'This piracy is perfectly legal — in America. A. Lang' (Bishop Collection, Mosher Press). Indeed, Mosher was an opportunist who aggressively exploited his publishing rights under what can only be described as a bad law, and anyone wishing to gain a better understanding of British and Irish grievances against Mosher would do well to consult Professor Gould's article.

Direct evidence of Yeats's formal or informal terms with Mosher—if indeed there were any—has never been uncovered. Mosher's business letters which are now at Harvard University's Houghton Library have only one much later 1912 letter from Yeats to Mosher [bMS Am 1096-1635]). Mosher's 1903 catalogue further indicates this reprint was done 'with Mr. Yeats's consent' (see Bishop, Philip R. *Thomas Bird Mosher: Pirate Prince of Publishers...* New Castle, DE & London: Oak Knoll Press & The British Library, 1998, 185, entry 186). George Russell was the intermediary who coaxed Yeats to let Mosher print the revised edition of *The Land of Heart's Desire*: see Gould. *Publishing History* 51, 65-66.

Those arguments aside, this is a pre-publication manuscript of 'The friends who have it I do wrong...'. Yeats's straightforward distinction between Mosher and 'honest publishers' indicates his usual reserve on the matter, while his remark about Mosher's taste is also very much in line with his views elsewhere. Lily Yeats's observation that 'the little book is certainly well turned out' is informed by her experience at the Dun Emer Press.

Three manuscript versions of the Yeats quatrain are known, two of which pre-date its printing and one which may be a 'fair copy'. All three are compared with the published version as it first appeared (CWVP2) and are displayed below in order of appearance for easy comparison (italics used to demonstrate holograph vs. printed form):

Sotheby's Sale  
Catalogue

*The friends that have it I do wrong  
Because I still remake my song  
Know not the issue that's at stake:  
It is myself that I remake.  
July 21, 1907*

Bishop Collection<sup>13</sup>  
Mosher Press

*The friends, who have it I do wrong  
when ever I re make a song,  
should know what issue is at stake:  
It is myself that I re-make.  
WB Yeats. June 30. 1908*

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<sup>13</sup> This manuscript quatrain appears on the front pastedown of Yeats's *The Land of Heart's Desire*. Seventh edition. Portland, Maine: Thomas B. Mosher, [January] 1908. It is accompanied by a 2 ½ page letter from William Butler Yeats's sister, Susan Mary (Lily) Yeats, here printed with kind permission of Linda Shaughnessy of A. P. Watt Ltd., London. The letter and the Mosher book containing the quatrain was previously in the possession of the Wordsworth scholar, Dr. Paul Betz, and were both displayed in an exhibition at Georgetown University in 2004. For the attending exhibition catalogue, see Betz, Paul F. *Professor and Collector: A Selection of Books, Manuscripts, Pictures and Objects*. Washington, D.C.: Special Collections Division of the Joseph Mark Lauinger Library, Georgetown University, 2004, 25, entry 61 quotes the quatrain and several lines from Lily Yeats's letter. In addition, the pencil notation "Quaritch '86" (in Dr. Betz's hand) appears on the last free endpaper indicating it passed through the firm of Bernard Quartich Ltd. of London. In the Bishop Collection of the Mosher Press.

Printed version  
(CWII & VP 778)

The friends that have it I do wrong  
When ever I remake a song,  
Should know what issue is at stake:  
It is myself that I remake.

[September 1908]

Garvan Collection  
Yale University

*The friends that have it I do wrong  
When ever I remake a song  
Should know what issue is at stake;  
It is myself that I remake.*

W B Yeats

[5 astrological symbols, to come]

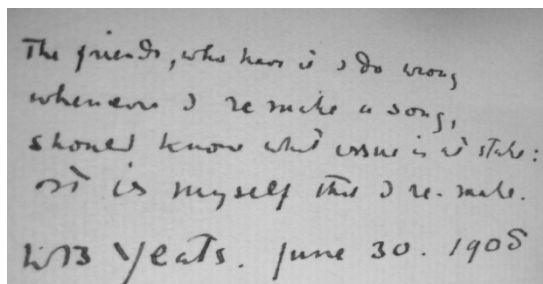
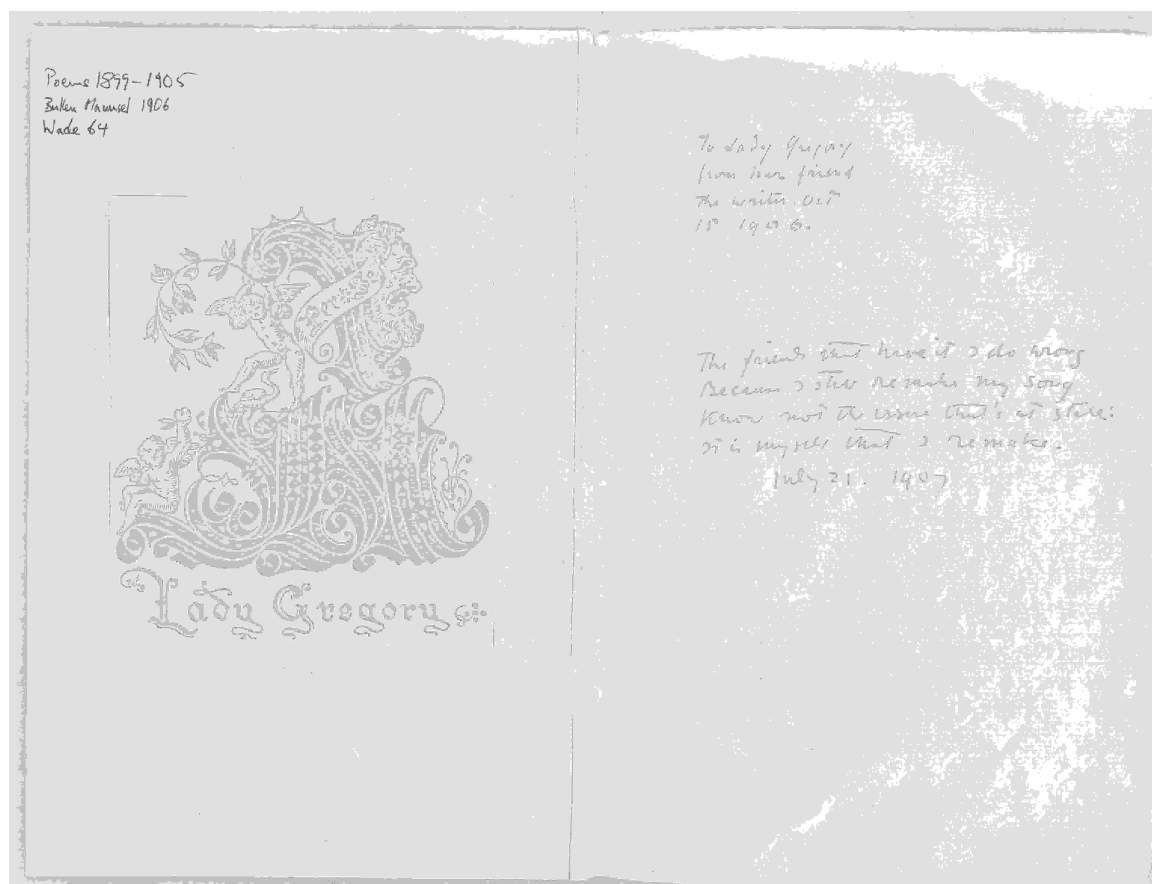


Figure 2. WBY's poem as written in the Mosher Press edition of *The Land of Heart's Desire* (1908).

The first of these, was accurately transcribed into the *Catalogue of Valuable Autograph Letters, Literary Manuscripts and Historical Documents* (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet & Co., July 23-24, 1979), 250 (Lot 351, purchased by Quaritch). The quatrain was written in a copy of Yeats's *Poems, 1899-1905* (Wade 64) inscribed 'to Lady Gregory | from her friend | the writer. Oct. | 15 1906.' The quatrain was added later below the 1906 inscription on the front free endpaper. Lady Gregory's bookplate is glued to the front fixed endpaper. Below the quatrain, Yeats has added the date 'July 21. 1907'. No photograph is present of this item in the catalogue, and the volume is untraced. The Sotheby's transcription had been republished in David Holdeman's edition of W. B. Yeats, "In the Seven Woods" and "The Green Helmet and other Poems" *Manuscript Materials* (Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 2002, xxx, 254-5).

However, before consigning this volume for sale in 1979, Dr Colin

Smythe, Yeats's bibliographer, took the precaution of making a photostat of the page. That photostat, albeit in faded condition, has recently turned up in a private collection in London, and a digitally enhanced copy is subtended here.



(VERY ROUGH!!)

As noted by Kelly and Schuchard, 'William Butler Yeats never altered his habit of revision, a practice which has sometimes caused irritation to his readers and, frequently, anguish to his editors. He defended his conduct in a short poem of this time, which he published' in CW2 (CL4, 774, n. 8). The 21 July 1907 inscription is the earliest known MS appearance of this poem, and was written fourteen months before its first publication. It is likely that its composition was in some way, as yet unexplained, connected with



Yeats's work on the whole *Collected Works in Verse and Prose* project. Most notable is the different wording in the second line 'Because I still remake my song' which later becomes the more open-ended 'When ever I remake a song', and the wording 'Know not the issue that's at stake:' of the third line which by September 1908 was changed to 'Should know what issue is at stake:'.

Just three months prior to the printed version, the 30 June 1908 MS version was written on the front pastedown of the Mosher book (fig. 2), an apt comment perhaps on the ongoing revision of that play which had first appeared in 1894. After Lily Yeats returned home, her brother was in London until 17 June and afterwards went on to Paris until at least the 22<sup>nd</sup>. On his return to Dublin he corrected proofs for CW2. He inscribed Miss Brachvogel's book on 30 June.

In this MS the most notable differences are the first line's 'The friends, who have it I do wrong' which was later altered for publication by taking out the punctuation and changing the relative pronoun *who* to the demonstrative pronoun *that*, so that the line would read 'The friends that have it I do wrong'.

The third and last known MS version of the quatrain is found as a bifolium tipped into a copy of *The King's Threshold*.<sup>14</sup> The most interesting element of this MS is that under Yeats's signature there appear five astrological signs which read as 'Moon trine Jupiter opposite Mars'. Would this allow us to approximate a date as to when the quatrain was written? Selecting the most likely outside dates given the quatrain's printing in 1908 (roughly 1907-1911), Warwick Gould submitted this astrological combination to Mr. Roger Nyle Parisious, who has kindly supplied us with the three astrological occurrences within those limits: 19 April 1908, 1-2 January 1909, or 25 June 1910. The degree of 'fit', based upon the time separation between events within the astrological configuration, is best summed up in the following chart:

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<sup>14</sup> Manuscript quatrain in Yeats, William Butler. *The King's Threshold—A Play in Verse*. (New York: Printed for Private Circulation [John Quinn], 1904). Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Ip Y34 904kb. Transcribed and printed with kind permission of Linda Shaughnessy of A. P. Watt Ltd., London.

### THREE MOST LIKELY DATE ASSIGNMENTS for 'Moon trine Jupiter opposite Mars' between 1907-1911

<u>Order</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Events / Occurrences</u>	<u>Time difference between events</u>
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Best fit:			
	25 June, 1910	Moon at 03AQ57 opposing Mars at 03LE57 at 6:34 am. Later that day Moon at 05AQ26 trines Jupiter at 05LI26 at 9:19 am.	2 hrs/45 min.
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2nd choice:			
	19 April, 1908	Moon at 04SA11 trines Jupiter at 04LE11 at 8:04 am. Moon at 08SA28 opposes Mars at 08II28 at 3:37 pm.	7 hrs/33 min.
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3rd choice:			
	1/2 Jan., 1909	From 1 Jan. , 4:01 pm – 2 Jan, 11am. Mars and Jupiter are 10 degrees apart when the Moon opposes Mars.	ca. 19 hrs.
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Mr. Parisious assigned the strongest weight to the 25 June 1910 date since the 'Moon trines Jupiter' occurred only 2 hrs. and 45 min. after 'Moon opposing Mars'. The distance in time between the two occurrences is, at least in part, the reason for the assignment of 'best fit' for WBY's astrological configuration (Moon trine Jupiter opposite Mars). The second best fit of 19 April 1908 has a separation of 7 hrs. and 33 min., between the 'Moon trine Jupiter' and 'Moon opposes Mars' events. The last occurrence has a difference of around 19 hours between 'Moon trines Jupiter' and 'Moon opposes Mars', with the added proviso that 'Mars & Jupiter' were 10 degrees apart in this occurrence which further weakens the argument for 1-2 January 1909.

The 25 June 1910 date finds some support in a copy of *Poems: Second Series*, published in March 1910 and inscribed to Olivia Shakespear that year with a similar string of astrological signs added (YA9, 301, n.28, 307). The Garvan quatrain differs from the published version by one simple omission of a terminal comma to the second line, and so it is not unreasonable to assign to it 'fair copy' status. As such it would be of lesser interest than the two

manuscripts of the yet unpublished poem.

The survival of Miss Brachvogel's inscribed and signed copy of *The Land of Heart's Desire* with the letter echoing WBY's view of Thomas Bird Mosher perhaps reveals a tension between the poet's obsessive instinct to revise and republish, and the family's essential misgivings about then-prevailing American attitudes and practices with regard to authors' rights. Nowhere perhaps, is this more firmly established than by the evidence found on John Quinn's set of the Cuala proofs<sup>15</sup> of *Twenty-One Poems written by Lionel Johnson*: Selected by William Butler Yeats (1904). The proofs had been finished by 27 October 1904 (a day on which Yeats and Quinn had breakfast in Dublin). Yeats and his sisters Lolly and Lily each added a comment to a set of the proofs, which found its way into Quinn's collection. Lily Yeats's comment is 'Not to be pirated | Oct 27<sup>th</sup>. 1904 Lily Yeats'. Thomas Mosher waited until 1908 to pirate the book in 950 copies on Van Gelder paper, before tactfully distributing the type.

<sup>15</sup> The proofs are now in a private collection, London.

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