SYNCOPATION

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Syncopation by Robert DeCamp Leland

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ROBERT DECAMP LELAND

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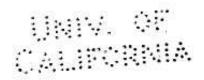
BOSTON THE POETRY-DRAMA COMPANY 1919

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There by the river that first fair day of Spring Or in the vague remance of a city night Always your face before me. What was the night? I remember you, The blue of your eyes, The wistfulness of your flesh Somewhere in the city Looking down upon the park Moonlight and the monotone of people in the streets Or over a café table on a Sabbath afternoon; August, a secret room beside the sea Far off the throb of 'cellos and the lilt of lithe violins Cinematic, transitory. . . memories of glamored days, Flashes from romanced nights Sagan's at Christmas . . . and heard your voice again A damank room, lights dim And tearing the silks and laces That half-concealed your beauty . . . Traffic And the drone of plodding men below Fools, fools they were, but naught could tell them so . . . May-flower road, a car, what was the year? Citylight palloring your frail, wanton face Your eager flesh that sobbed with quick desire . . . A song to Eros . . . a dance to Syncopa . . . our symphony of life vivacious . . .

Autumn. .. the rush of crowds. . . the caress of color. Obbligate to our youth . . . I touched your hand and you swayed There is pleasure Catch it, snatch it Through a snowfall arm in arm Don't worry, dear, there is no harm Hold me that way, Ardentel The vagrant loves are all that live . . . Climbing apartment stairs eagerly Opening doors into soft, cerise bedrooms Lovers of mine Breathing their perfume, sensing their lure Here we'll be happy . . . the world pauses Transient, inconsequent Cherishing only the illusions of the here-and-now . . . April, a Colonial inn, the town historic, Staid in the legends and landmarks of antiquity; Why did I first possess you there? Pagans of the contemporary in the land of the Puritana. The ironic verve of it had a thrill to eternally dramatize the night, the month, the year Flesh and spirit . . . the old hymns yielding to a madder syncopation. Looking out that night upon the relicted square Elthia, beloved. . . beauty at last The radiant flower of passion triumphant over the fetid garbage of the Puritanage;

Historic, dear? Our night of passion made it so . . . September again . . . cadenza . . . youth silks by. Turnpike, camisole, café chartreuse Through the park and up the river Staccato whispering, your voice all fire and desire. Sudden ... swaying ... soft buff through pastel pink Onick continuity Life is so short; can you capture it. Furious, curious, insatiate Why do you always want to kiss me in public. Stop, they're looking. You're darling. You order. It's cute here, isn't it. All stucco, Now your hand at a matinée We hug our secret. Here's a Florentine inn Sit in this alcove and I'll tell you why the whimsical is never art. Hush, dear, Tis better you're illiterate of all but love: The more the pretension, the less the charm. Snap out that light and climb in -I love that chemise As delicate and restiff as your arms; Kiss me like that again, I'll make an artist of you yet . . . Let's take the cance and paddle down the river; Sorbet, nougat and the latest records; and if you're good We'll snug in at Jansen's for a canter and a cognac.

Yes, the river's historic
But don't throw that bottle overboard
They've passed laws against it.
Let's paddle over to the shade and lie in close.
This day will soon be over.
There's the 5.26 on the bridge
The clock watchers' special from the hive of industry,
As the dailies say.
You know, Fran, I'd rather be an idler here
Than the greatest schwab that ever cleaned a Street;
We'll tarry the carry at Jacot's, and check out.
I've got the roadster there . . . a little whirl to
Sorneroft.

Now give me your hand, dear; there's a mirror.

It'll make a hundred an' ten; five gears forward;

some bus . . .

What a pretty town . . . slow down a bit.

Yes, the white old-Colonial somehow thrills . . .

A Wayside inn . . . now there's tradition —

I'd like to take over the place, put a live revue in there.

Get Art to write some sway songs,

A cute chorus of twelve, three principals,

And speed the intimate all over the room;

Open up the taproom, dust out the chambers,

And stock the buffet with some rare Margaux —

Wouldn't old Longfellow turn over once or twice;

Twould be a new thrill anyway, and that's what

counts . . .

Spring in Philistia,