

# Rediscovering Alice Major's Pioneering Poetry in Oxford Poetry 1917-1921



**Oxford Poetry 1917-1921** by Alice Major

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 5162 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Print length : 316 pages  
Screen Reader : Supported



In the annals of modern poetry, the Oxford Poetry anthologies of the early 20th century hold a significant place. These annual collections, published by the Oxford University Poetry Society, showcased the finest poetic talents of the time, including well-known figures such as W.H. Auden, Stephen Spender, and Cecil Day-Lewis.

However, amidst the illustrious names, there is one poet who has been largely overlooked: Alice Major. A pioneering figure in her own right, Major published several groundbreaking poems in Oxford Poetry 1917-1921, contributing to the anthology's reputation for innovation and daring.

## **Alice Major: A Biographical Sketch**

Born in 1885, Alice Major was a British poet, novelist, and critic. She studied at Oxford University, where she became involved in the literary scene and joined the Oxford University Poetry Society. Major's early poems

were deeply influenced by the Imagist movement, known for its emphasis on concise, vivid imagery.

In 1917, Major's poem "Men Mowing" was published in *Oxford Poetry 1917-1921*. This poem, along with several others she published in subsequent anthologies, showcased her unique voice and perspective, particularly her exploration of feminist themes and the impact of World War I.

### **Major's Innovative Style and Themes**

Major's poetry is characterized by its economy of language, vivid imagery, and exploration of complex emotions. She often employed symbolism and allegory to convey her ideas, creating a multi-layered and thought-provoking body of work.

One of the defining features of Major's poetry is her feminist perspective. In a time when women's voices were often marginalized, Major wrote poems that explored female experience, desire, and agency. Her poem "Self-Portrait" (1920) is a powerful meditation on the constraints and possibilities of being a woman in society.

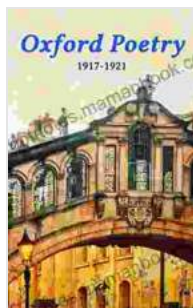
Major's experiences during World War I also had a profound impact on her writing. Her poem "Men Mowing" (1917) captures the horrors of the war and its effects on both soldiers and civilians. This poem, along with others like "Refugees" (1918) and "The Deserter" (1920), explores the human cost of conflict and the search for meaning amidst chaos.

### **Major's Legacy and Rediscovery**

Despite her significant contributions to Oxford Poetry 1917-1921, Alice Major's work fell into obscurity after her death in 1967. However, in recent years, there has been a growing interest in her poetry, particularly among feminist scholars and those interested in recovering lost voices from literary history.

In 2017, a new edition of Oxford Poetry 1917-1921 was published, which included Major's poems for the first time in over a century. This publication has brought renewed attention to her work, leading to a deeper appreciation of her innovative style, feminist themes, and lasting legacy in modern poetry.

Alice Major's pioneering poems in Oxford Poetry 1917-1921 represent a significant contribution to the development of modern poetry. Her unique voice, feminist perspective, and exploration of complex emotions make her work both timely and timeless. As we continue to rediscover and celebrate lost voices from literary history, Alice Major's poetry stands as a testament to the enduring power of words to capture the human experience.

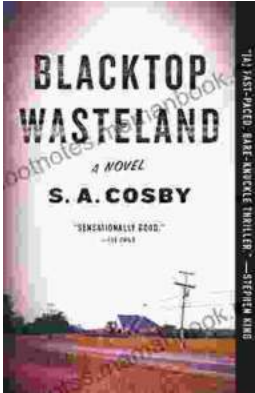


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