

# Overheard on a Salt Marsh

by Harold Monro

Nymph, nymph, what are your beads?  
Green glass, goblin. Why do you stare at them?  
Give them me.

No.

Give them me. Give them me.

No.

Then I will howl all night in the reeds,  
Lie in the mud and howl for them.

Goblin, why do you love them so?

They are better than stars or water,  
Better than voices of winds that sing,  
Better than any man's fair daughter,  
Your green glass beads on a silver ring.

Hush, I stole them out of the moon.

Give me your beads. I want them.

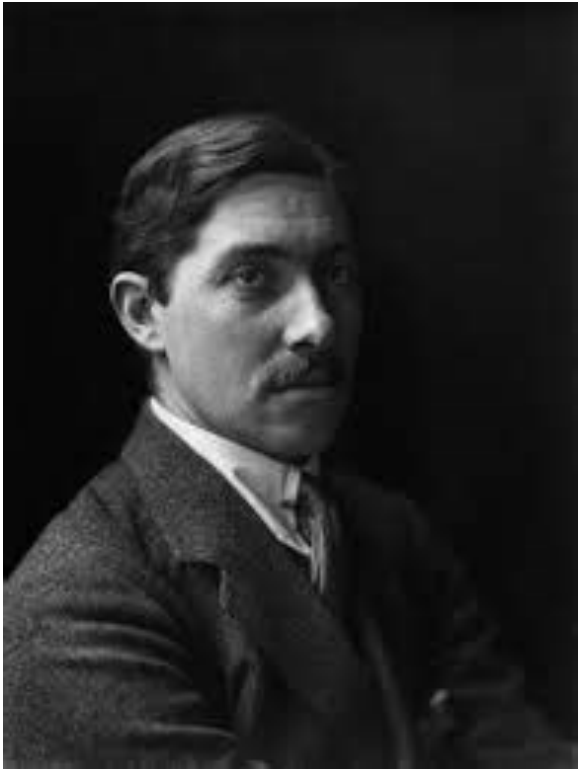
No.

I will howl in a deep lagoon  
For your green glass beads, I love them so.  
Give them me. Give them.

No.

*Overheard on a Salt Marsh* was suggested by Barbara Neason:

*“I vividly remember the feelings evoked by the sound of the words of this poem when I first heard it at the age of about nine.”*



Poet and businessman, ascetic and alcoholic, socialist and reluctant soldier, twice-married yet homosexual, Harold Monro probably did more than anyone for poetry and poets in the period before and after the Great War. He founded the Poetry Bookshop in Bloomsbury in 1912, promoting poetry-readings, publishing new collections at his own expense and rarely making a profit, as well as providing a welcome for readers and poets alike. Several poets, including Wilfred Owen, actually lodged in the rooms above the bookshop. In the same year he became the first editor of *The Poetry Review*, the newly-founded Poetry Society's magazine, and used it as a platform for Ezra Pound and the Imagists, until he was ousted by conservative trustees of the Society. His *Collected Poems*, introduced by T. S. Eliot, appeared in 1933. His poems *Bitter Sanctuary* and *The Milk Cat* appear in many anthologies.

Today, Monro is probably best known for this curious little dialogue-poem that Barbara has selected, *Overheard on a Salt Marsh*, an inconclusive contest between a nymph and a goblin who covets her green glass beads. The poem became a schools anthology favourite – to Monro's surprise. It wasn't intended for children.