

# Oxford Poetry 1917-1921: Rediscovering the Lost Voices of Alice Major



In the annals of literary history, the early 20th century stands as a turbulent and transformative era, when the world witnessed the cataclysmic events of World War I and the subsequent rise of modernism. Amidst this

tumultuous backdrop, a remarkable literary anthology emerged from the hallowed halls of Oxford University, showcasing the vibrant and innovative voices of a new generation of poets. Oxford Poetry 1917-1921, a collection of poems by fledgling writers on the cusp of greatness, offers a unique glimpse into the literary landscape of this pivotal period.



### **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



Among the many talented poets featured in this anthology, one name stands out as a beacon of literary brilliance: Alice Major. Major, a young writer from Wales, emerged as a formidable voice in the Oxford literary scene, her poems imbued with a rare combination of lyrical beauty, intellectual depth, and emotional intensity. Yet, despite her early promise, Major's literary legacy was unjustly eclipsed by the passage of time, her work fading into obscurity.

With the recent rediscovery of Oxford Poetry 1917-1921, literary scholars and enthusiasts have the opportunity to reassess Major's contributions to the literary canon. This article delves into the life, work, and enduring impact of Alice Major, shedding light on the lost voice of a remarkable poet whose work deserves recognition and celebration.

## **Early Life and Education**

Alice Mary Major was born on October 12, 1890, in the picturesque town of Cardiff, Wales. The eldest daughter of a devout Wesleyan Methodist family, Major received a rigorous education, excelling in her studies from a young age. Her passion for literature and poetry blossomed during her time at Cardiff High School, where she immersed herself in the works of classic poets such as William Blake, John Keats, and Percy Bysshe Shelley.

In 1910, Major won a scholarship to Somerville College, Oxford, where she studied English language and literature. Oxford proved to be a fertile ground for Major's literary development. She became an active member of the university's literary society and began publishing her poems in student magazines. Her work quickly gained recognition for its originality, technical proficiency, and evocative imagery.

## **Oxford Poetry 1917-1921**

During her time at Oxford, Major contributed several poems to Oxford Poetry, an annual anthology featuring the best student work. Her poems, marked by their distinct blend of lyrical beauty and intellectual depth, were praised by critics and fellow poets alike. One of Major's most celebrated poems from this period, "The Island," explores the themes of loss, solitude, and the longing for connection.

In 1917, Major's poem "The Imprisoned Soul" was selected for inclusion in the prestigious Oxford Book of English Verse. This honor marked a significant milestone in her literary career, establishing her as one of the most promising young poets of her generation.

## **Literary Career and Untimely Demise**

After graduating from Oxford, Major continued to write and publish her work, albeit at a slower pace. In 1920, she published her first and only collection of poems, "Songs for Sale." The collection received critical acclaim, solidifying Major's reputation as a gifted and insightful poet.

However, Major's literary career was tragically cut short. In 1925, at the age of 35, she died suddenly from tuberculosis. Her untimely demise robbed the literary world of one of its most promising voices.

### **Rediscovering Alice Major**

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the work of Alice Major. Scholars and literary critics have recognized the enduring value of her poems, which offer a unique perspective on the literary landscape of the early 20th century. Major's work explores universal themes of love, loss, nature, and the human condition with remarkable empathy and insight.

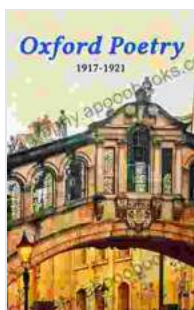
The publication of Oxford Poetry 1917-1921 has played a pivotal role in the rediscovery of Major's work. This anthology offers a comprehensive collection of her early poems, providing readers with an invaluable opportunity to appreciate the full range of her poetic talents.

### **Legacy and Influence**

Despite her untimely demise, Alice Major's literary legacy continues to inspire and resonate with contemporary readers. Her poems, characterized by their lyrical beauty, intellectual depth, and emotional intensity, have earned her a place among the pantheon of great poets of the early 20th century.

Major's work has influenced a new generation of poets, who have been drawn to her unique blend of modernism and traditionalism. Her commitment to craftsmanship and her exploration of universal themes have made her work a touchstone for aspiring writers.

Alice Major's literary journey, tragically cut short, is a testament to the power of the human spirit in the face of adversity. Her poems, discovered anew through Oxford Poetry 1917-1921, offer a profound glimpse into the literary landscape of the early 20th century and continue to inspire and resonate with readers today. As we celebrate the rediscovery of this lost voice, let us hope that Alice Major's work will continue to be cherished and appreciated for generations to come.



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