

THE PEDDLER

Seiffert, Marjorie Allen, 1885-1970

Hark, people, to the cry
Of this curious young magician-peddler
Seeking a golden bowl.

He wanders through the city
And offers useful tin-ware

For all the ancient metal
You have left to rust
In the dim, dusty attic
Or mouldy cellar
Of your soul.

He refuses nothing-
Rusty nails,
Which may have played their part
In a crucifixion--
For ten of these he will give
A new tin spoon.

The andirons
Once guarding hearth-fires of content,
Now dusty and forgotten
In an obscure corner--
He will give for these
A new tin tea-kettle
With a wooden handle.

And for this antique bowl
Fashioned to hold
Roses or wine?

The eyes of the peddler glisten.
Oh woman,
If acid reveal
Gold beneath the tarnished surface
He will gladly give you
His hands, his eyes, his soul,
His young, white body--
If not,
A mocking laugh
And a bright tin sieve

To hold your wine
And roses.