



10-15-1989

## Epitaph / Of Oak and Innocence

Lynn Riggs

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### Recommended Citation

Riggs, Lynn (1989) "Epitaph / Of Oak and Innocence," *Westview*: Vol. 9 : Iss. 1 , Article 20.  
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol9/iss1/20>

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# Epitaph

By Lynn Riggs

Here lies a bag of bones—here lies my love  
Here I lie too, who never meant to die  
at last unloved, and face ignominy—  
for such it is for such as I, by love.  
Immutably the standard flown above  
splits in the wind, announcing the poor guy,  
unrewarded by the wizardry  
that love is. Immured is he who strove,  
past all disclaimer, by his love and me  
for bliss that follows after—bliss, my eye!  
Is this a thought to take you when you die?  
Is this the sentiment to put on stone—  
a granite coverlet of sympathy  
to wrap yourself in, when you lie alone?

*Illustration by Maria Valentina Sheets*

Poems provided by Lynn Riggs' biographer—  
—Phyllis Cole Braunlich of Tulsa

## Of Oak And Innocence

With wry contortions poets turn and seek  
that lyric moment to be precious in:  
"The frigid bird claws with his granite beak,"  
"O murderous ash! O grace of terrapin!"  
We must go backward to a timeless wood  
of soft-dropping light and green moss underfoot,  
and sit in the sun that idles where we stood  
centuries ago and long: back to the root  
of oak and innocence—back to the year  
when the young sun soaked the amazing earth  
and crashed through fibrous stem and stone to be  
wombed in the darkest cell of soil and tree—  
when the simplest leafy motion was a birth,  
and the quiet word a thundering in the ear.

LYNN RIGGS, like his Claremore predecessor Will Rogers, was part-Cherokee. Long deceased, Riggs was best known for GREEN GROW THE LILACS, which became the Rodgers-Hammerstein hit OKLAHOMA! The Riggs poems published here are from his collection titled THIS BOOK, THIS HILL, THESE PEOPLE