

**Bridge Across a City, Bridge Across Time: *The Book of New York Verse*, 1917****Margaret D. Stetz****Mae and Robert Carter Professor of Women's Studies and Professor of Humanities****Dept. of Women and Gender Studies****University of Delaware****Abstract**

In the Introduction to *The Book of New York Verse* (1917), its editor, Hamilton Fish Armstrong (1893–1973), apologized to readers for any errors in the text: “At the moment New York and its libraries are far away. That this was also the case during the correction of much of the proof must be my excuse if revision has not been as minute as would have been possible in less topsy-turvy times.” New York was “far away,” because he had just been undergoing preparation at an Officers’ Training Camp in Virginia, before sailing to Europe (and eventually to Serbia) as a newly commissioned second lieutenant in the U. S. Army. And the times were “topsy-turvy,” because the U.S. had entered the First World War and was sending into battle young Americans such as Armstrong. For him, the publication of this anthology of poetry about New York served as a bridge in a personal sense, connecting him nostalgically to home and reaffirming emotional bonds to the well-beloved city.

For readers, too, *The Book of New York Verse* functioned as a bridge, allowing them to traverse the many decades represented not only through nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century poetry, but through the accompanying visual images. Armstrong’s anthology enabled them, moreover, to encounter in poetic form one of the chief glories of modern New York: the Brooklyn Bridge. The most memorable account of it came from Richard Le Gallienne (1866–1947), a “bridge” figure himself, having begun life in Liverpool, before becoming a London-based Aesthete and then a poet living for twenty years in New York. In “Brooklyn Bridge at Dawn” (first published in *Metropolitan Magazine*, February 1905), Le Gallienne created his variation on William Wordsworth’s “Composed upon Westminster Bridge” (1802), turning the Brooklyn Bridge into a poetic spectacle meant to rival what Wordsworth had seen in London a century earlier.