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Ianthe's alt.sex.intergen 'Poems of the Week'.      Number 35.  
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This week's theme is CHILDREN'S HAIR. A mix of boys and girls
in this week's posting, for a change.

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- * Sei Shonagon (China, circa 10th Century AD)
 from 'Adorable Things'
 - * Gerard Malanga (United States, Born 1943)
 'Forty-One Line Poem'
 - * Sherwood Anderson (United States, 1876-1941)
 from 'Hands'
 - * A.E. Housman (England, 1859-1936)
 'O Who Is That Young Sinner...'
 - * Camillo Sharbaro (Italy, 1888-1967)
 'The Little Girl Who Runs Beneath The Trees'
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Malanga is a contemporary North American poet, photographer,
filmmaker, curator and archivist, with an international
following. He was a major influence on Andy Warhol, with whom
he founded 'Interview' magazine.

Anderson was the leading North American naturalist writer in
the early years of this century.

Housman was Professor of Latin at Cambridge University and
the leading classicist of his generation. His 'A Shropshire
Lad' poems became hugely popular during and after the Great
War. His brother Laurence was the Secretary of the worldwide
secret queer society 'The Order of Chaeronea', and A.E. was
also a member. [For more information on this worldwide Uranian
diaspora, carried out largely via literature from the 1890s
until the Second World War and perhaps beyond, see: Weeks,
Jeffrey. Coming Out - homosexual politics in Britain from the
19th Century to the present. London. Quartet Books, 1977.
Chapter 10 - 'Creating a Consciousness', and especially pages
122-127 on The Order of Chaeronea.] Housman himself seems to
have preferred older teenage 'lads', though many in The Order
were boy-lovers.

from 'ADORABLE THINGS'

A child,
who's hair has been cut like a nun's,
is examining something;
the hair falls over his eyes,
but instead of brushing it away
he holds his head to the side.

The pretty white cords of his trouser-skirt
are tied round his shoulders,
and this too is adorable.

Sei Shonagon.

FORTY-ONE LINE POEM

for Sarah Greenleaf Whittier

Trying to imagine you--
age: nine
or eleven
hair: honey coloured,
pig-tailed
bound in ribbon
sturdy legs--
no, not just sturdy legs--
long, skinny legs, pleated
skirt above knees
tall, the eyes downcast,
the feet small, somewhat invisible
in the uncut grass,
invokes for me
a whole realm of
when I thought
to know you.
Now,
nothing
I can fix
the mind on
not even
detail of hair
behind ear,

loose at
temples,

of girl
sitting across
from me

at Chinese Chance
curious resemblance
too close

to be coincidental

or not take notice of--

and seeking to become articulate--

not what
will be

or was before,

but not known--

my only refuge
in the poem

Gerard Malanga.

The above poem can be found, along with many others on the subject of
young girls, and an excellent collection of young-girl photo's, in:

Malanga, Gerard. 'Three Diamonds'. Santa Rosa, USA. Black
Sparrow Press, 1991. 225 pages, acid-free paper, p/bk. ISBN
0 87685 837 X

from HANDS.

In his youth Wing Biddlebaum had been a schoolteacher in a town in
Pennsylvania. He went by the less euphonic name of Adolph Myers.
As Adolph Myers he was much loved by the boys of his school. Adolph
Myers was meant by nature to be a teacher of youth. He was one of
those rare, little-understood men who rule by a power so gentle that
it passes as a lovable weakness. In their feeling for the boys
under their charge such men are not unlike the finer sort of women
in their love of men. And yet that is but crudely stated. It needs
the poet there. With the boys of his school, Adolph Myers had walked
in the evening or had sat talking until dusk upon the schoolhouse
steps in a kind of dream. Here and there went his hands, caressing

the shoulders of the boys, playing with their tousled heads. As he talked his voice became soft and musical. There was a caress in that also. In a way the voice and the hands, the stroking of the shoulders and the touching of the hair was a part of the schoolmaster's effort to carry a dream into the young minds. By the caress that was in the fingers he expressed himself. He was one of those men in whom the force that life creates is diffused, not centralised. Under the caress of his hands doubt and disbelief went out of the minds of the boys and they too began to dream.

Sherwood Anderson.

'Oh who is that young sinner with the handcuffs on his wrists ?'

Oh who is that young sinner with the handcuffs on his wrists ?
And what has he been after that they groan and shake their fists ?
And whyfore is he wearing such a conscience-stricken air ?
Oh they're taking him to prison for the colour of his hair.

'Tis a shame to human nature, such a head of hair as his;
In the good old time 'twas hanging for the colour that it is;
Though hanging isn't bad enough and flaying would be fair
For the nameless and abominable colour of his hair.

Oh a deal of pains he's taken and a pretty price he's paid
To hide his poll and dye it of a mentionable shade;
But they've pulled the beggar's hat off for the world to see and stare,
And they're hailing him to justice for the colour of his hair.

A.E. Housman.

And an extra poem which has already been included in a previous weekly posting, but which fits this theme too...

THE LITTLE GIRL WHO RUNS BENEATH THE TREES

The little girl who runs beneath the trees
has only the weight of her pigtail,
and a faint song in her throat.
She skips alone
and skips along the street; because she does not realise
that she will never have any greater good
that that piece of live gold on her shoulders,
or of that joy in her throat.

To those of us who have
no happiness other than words,
not the bright tuft of hair nor the great
hope that swells the heart of that girl,
if it is not too much to ask, let
love be taken before this gift is taken away.

Camillo Sharbaro.

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"You were a boy before you became a man
- I don't see the join". Morrissey.

(split) ends.