

The New Criterion

Notebook

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The absence of Amy Lowell

by [Carl Rollyson](#)

On the enigmatic poetess.

When Amy Lowell died in 1925 at the age of 51, she was at the height of her fame. Her two-volume biography of John Keats, published in the last year of her life, had been greeted in this country with almost universal acclaim. She was the premier platform performer among her generation of poets.

In 1926, Lowell's posthumous volume of verse, *What's O'Clock*, was awarded a Pulitzer Prize. She had remained in the public eye ever since the publication of her second book, *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* (1914). She had wrested the Imagist movement away from Ezra Pound, producing three best-selling anthologies of Imagist verse while publishing a book of her own poetry nearly every year. Pound retaliated, calling her appropriation "Amygism."

The pugnacious Lowell dominated the poetry scene in every sense of the word, supporting journals like *Poetry* and *The Litt* ...

Carl Rollyson writes a column on biography for *The New York Sun*.

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