

This text is concerned with the connections between the Chicago Renaissance movement and the Czech post-war Skupina 42 (Group 42). Not being a fixed programme, Chicago Renaissance covers not only the work of its major representatives – Carl Sandburg, Edgar Lee Masters and Vachel Lindsay, but also the general cultural atmosphere around the time of the First World War in the American Middle West. Although there are considerable timespace differences, the poetics of the particular poets and Skupina 42 members (especially Jiří Kolář) have much in common. Primarily, it is the effort to define a newly developing city as well as an individual's role in a human community. The complexity of this community requires adequate forms of poetic expression, which is in both cases performed by the use of everyday speech and free verse, depicting aptly social, ethnic and individual variability. Moreover, the imperfection and at the same time beauty of the common speech offer a fitting parallel to the character of the city as a whole.