

A FLAGON  
OF  
BEAUTY

---



---

WILSON MACDONALD

---

## CONTENTS

### *The Flagon of the Red Wine*

	PAGE
A FLAGON OF BEAUTY . . . . .	13
THE LACE MAKER . . . . .	15
VAN BUREN'S COACH . . . . .	17
VAN BUREN'S INN . . . . .	20
MELISSA'S BROOM . . . . .	23
A HYMN FOR NOONDAY . . . . .	26
HIGH TIDE . . . . .	27
UNANSWERED . . . . .	28
AT THE PIANO . . . . .	29
THE DANCERS ON THE SAND . . . . .	31
SERF . . . . .	33
STORM IN APRIL . . . . .	36
RIDDLES . . . . .	38
THE RETINUE . . . . .	39
THE MIRACLE SONGS OF JESUS . . . . .	40
AFTER THREE YEARS . . . . .	46
A LOTUS SONG . . . . .	48
JOHN GRAYDON . . . . .	50
THE DEIFIC GRIEF . . . . .	52
A SONG OF DISTANCES . . . . .	53
THE PALACE . . . . .	54
SONG OF THE UNADORNED . . . . .	58

	PAGE
THE OLD CRONE . . . . .	59
WHERE SHALL I WALK? . . . . .	61
THE ORGAN SPEAKS . . . . .	62
UP SOUL . . . . .	64
THE SEARCHER . . . . .	65
IN JOHANNESBURG . . . . .	66
CAPTAIN LOCKE . . . . .	69
THE CONVICT MARCH . . . . .	70
THE WORLD OF BEAUTY IS IN DEEP DISTRESS . . . . .	72
PORT . . . . .	74
GRANNIES . . . . .	75
SOMEWHERE, SOMETIME THE GLORY . . . . .	77
DEAR MAID OF THOSE SAD EYES . . . . .	79
THE LAW . . . . .	80
THE ROAD FROM THE CLOUDS TO THE SEA . . . . .	82
TO AN INCONSTANT MAID . . . . .	84
THE CAIRN AT MORPETH . . . . .	85
CARL AHRENS . . . . .	88
THE SONG OF THE DEAD SORROW . . . . .	89
GLOOM . . . . .	90
THE WRECKERS . . . . .	92
THE TRAPPER'S DAUGHTER . . . . .	94
A SONG OF FUTILITY . . . . .	96
UPTON WOOD . . . . .	97
BARBARY . . . . .	100
PAULINE JOHNSON . . . . .	102
THE CRY OF THE SONG CHILDREN . . . . .	103
WHIST A WEE . . . . .	107

### *The Flagon of Wine and Bitters*

	PAGE
ELEGY WRITTEN AT THE GRAVE OF A MATERIALIST . . . . .	111
SONG FOR A DYING CIVILIZATION . . . . .	114
CONVOCATION . . . . .	117
THE CHINK . . . . .	121
AN UNCONVENTIONAL EASTER SONG . . . . .	124
THE SONG OF THE DEAF CHICKEN . . . . .	125
THE SONG OF THE JAZZ HOUNDS . . . . .	128
THE HOUSE OF REBELS . . . . .	130
AH'VE DONE QUIT STEALIN' . . . . .	135
WAR . . . . .	137
A SONG OF THE ULTIMATE . . . . .	138
HARLOT SONG . . . . .	144
A SONG OF BETTER UNDERSTANDING . . . . .	145

### *The Flagon of the White Wine*

BRAS D'OR . . . . .	153
WOOD INVOCATION . . . . .	161
ART . . . . .	163
SUN RITUAL . . . . .	164
A SELKIRK SUMMIT . . . . .	166
BEFORE DAWN . . . . .	168
SIERRA MADRE . . . . .	170
THE OLD MILL . . . . .	172
THREE CANDLES . . . . .	173

	PAGE
A MORNING SONG . . . . .	175
ROSES . . . . .	178
CHAFFEY'S LOCKS . . . . .	180
WHERE IS ANTIOCH! . . . . .	182
HILL SONG . . . . .	184
A GABLE SONG . . . . .	186
O VIEWLESS WORLD . . . . .	190
A TOAST TO BEAUTY . . . . .	192
MINOR . . . . .	193
DROUTH . . . . .	195
ENIGMA . . . . .	197
IF YOU WOULD FIND ME . . . . .	198
GRAY WINDS . . . . .	201
KINSHIP . . . . .	203
RIVERS . . . . .	205
THE SEEKERS . . . . .	207
LINES WRITTEN BY LAKE ROSSEAU . . . . .	210
A NIGHT SONG . . . . .	212
MOONLIGHT ON LAKE SYDENHAM . . . . .	213
POPLARS . . . . .	217
A VESPER SONG . . . . .	219
PINE TEMPLES . . . . .	221
THE STORM . . . . .	223
A COURTIER'S SONG . . . . .	226
IMMANENCE . . . . .	228
MARY MAHONE . . . . .	230

BOOK I  
*The Hagon of the Red Wine*



---

## A FLAGON OF BEAUTY

---

I HAVE gathered the essence of beauty  
From many strange places;  
From a Cree as he danced in the blood  
Of a red, evening sun,  
From the yearning, the infinite yearning  
In hungering faces,  
From the word of a long-bearded rabbi,  
From the slow-moving lips of a nun;  
From the twisting of wind about trees,  
From cold and black rivers that rise  
In swift, white rebellion of foam;  
From the swan-moving curve of the seas,  
From the wind-wandered leagues of the wild,  
From the large, flaming indolent dome  
Of the slow and magnificent night,  
From the liquid-toned laugh of a child.

I have gathered the essence of beauty  
And poured it in glasses.  
And standing arow I have placed them  
For any poor vagrant who passes.  
With a vine of wild grapes I have graced them—  
Wild grapes that grew low by a pool  
Where a chaos of grass interlaced them—  
For the leaf of the wild grape is cool.

Red are my hands from the brambles,  
Torn are my feet from the quest,  
From the quest of the essence of beauty.  
I have searched where the mountain-goat gambols,  
And winds never rest.  
I have walked the white sand  
Of the sea in a storm, and have found  
The clear wine of beauty in sound.  
I have pillaged the harsh  
And unlovable wastes of a marsh  
For that beauty which few understand.

The Lord of the Garden of Beauty  
Has come in the night when I slumbered  
And touched my poor wine to His lips—  
My glass with the wild grape encumbered—  
And who shall disdain what He sips!  
For all I have found was His making:  
The fire at the heel of the goat,  
The skylark's tumultuous awaking,  
The truth in Melchizedec's throat.

---

## THE LACE MAKER

---

THAT her life's art  
Might not be lost  
A lace-maker's heart  
Was turned to frost.

And when it is cold  
She makes rare lace  
Which is never sold  
On the market-place.

No wage she earns  
Nor glory gains  
As she weaves white ferns  
On the window-panes.

When the north wind beats  
Or the east wind whines  
She never repeats  
Her rare designs.

Her fingers seemed slow  
When in flesh she dwelt  
And would strive to show  
What her spirit felt.

But she has no hands  
To hamper her now;  
What her soul commands  
Will her art allow.

And so it seems  
That she weaves in frost  
All the earthly dreams  
That she loved and lost

---

## VAN BUREN'S COACH

---

VAN BUREN'S COACH is on the road;  
It strangely moves from town to town:  
At every stop pale folk step down—  
A pale and shadowy folk;  
And pale and shadowy folk step in—  
Whose hands are long and white and thin:  
Tragedian, knave and harlequin  
In ghostly cap and cloak.

If you should wake on windless nights  
You'll hear Van Buren's Coach go by,  
And if the moon is in the sky  
You'll see unearthly horses,  
In silver costumes dominoed,  
Straining along the dustless road  
As though they pulled a heavy load  
Instead of grinning corses.

Van Buren drives the Coach himself:  
His legs are like transparent mull,  
And every hair upon his skull  
Most carefully is parted.  
Black orbs, that hold his sunken eyes,  
Are filled with moonlight from the skies.  
He was a man beloved and wise  
And ever kindly-hearted.



Van Buren loved and loved in vain;  
And when he died his spirit grieved  
For all who thus had been deceived—  
Whose faithful hearts were broken.  
And every night his gaunt ghost takes  
These mourners in his care, and wakes  
Wild echoes on the hills and lakes  
A mile above Hoboken.

And no one rides by dark with him  
Save those who loved and loved in vain,  
And who could never love again  
So ardent was their passion.  
He takes them back to gate and door  
Through which their amours passed of yore,  
And here they plead for love once more  
In the old, hopeless fashion.

And no one in this migrant band  
Can speak or sing or laugh or weep,  
And yet from caverns dark and deep,  
Where their cool eyes are burning,  
You gain a hint of what they were;  
Like something in a misty blur;  
And from this sadness you infer  
The anguish of their yearning.

To-night the wind is weird and chill;  
A ghostly ring is round the moon;  
All morning and all afternoon  
A tempest has been brewing.  
The lake is wild with crying waves,  
And from the churchyard's grassy graves  
I hear above the wind, that raves,  
A low and sweet hallooing.

And to the road a maiden comes  
With wildness in her haunted eyes:  
The wind is caught and, strangled, dies  
In her ungathered tresses.  
She hails Van Buren's Coach: "I came  
To tell you, sweetheart, of my shame:  
I am alone, alone to blame,"  
The lovely maid confesses.

Too late! The ponderous Coach goes on:  
It strangely moves from town to town.  
At every stop pale folk step down—  
A pale and shadowy folk.  
And pale and shadowy folk step in  
Whose hands are long and white and thin—  
Tragedian, knave and harlequin  
In ghostly cap and cloak.



---

## VAN BUREN'S INN

---

VAN BUREN'S INN is builded where  
The Catskills guard its door;  
And few who pass it ever care  
To pass there any more.

You cannot see the Inn by day;  
But every night at nine  
A shadowy fiddler there will play,  
And dead folk dance and dine.

Van Buren is forever drest  
In gayer hues than most;  
And at the door each dusty guest  
Is welcomed by his ghost.

And some come in Van Buren's Coach  
Which moves in soundless flight,  
And some on silent feet approach  
The hostel, warm with light.

They crowd the highway's moonlit floor  
And whiten it like frost.  
But none can pass Van Buren's door  
Save those who loved and lost.

The dance begins at nine o'night:  
To morning it will go,  
When all the moving forms in white  
Will melt away like snow.

Each lad will dance from dark to dawn  
With her he loved in life.  
And two, perchance, will seek the lawn  
And walk as man and wife.

And children like a happy mist  
Will race beneath the thorn  
And each will run up to be kissed  
As though it had been born.

And here the maiden will explain  
Why she was false in life.  
And so they'll walk a while again  
As any man and wife.

And then the waltz will call them in;  
And wistfully will he hold,  
As though she were sweet jessamine,  
The woman he lost of old.

But all night long Van Buren waits  
For one, and all in vain.  
And every knock upon the gates  
Fills him with joy and pain.

But just as dawn is near at hand  
The door comes open wide;  
And she he loved comes in to stand  
In beauty at his side.

Van Buren holds her to his breast  
As though she were sweet sin;  
And then the red dawn, striding west,  
Destroys Van Buren's Inn.

Destroys it ere his lips can find  
The wonder of a kiss:  
And every dawn the morning wind  
Will grieve, beholding this.

And yet to-night Van Buren's ghost  
Will guard his door again.  
He is a proud and gallant host  
Who'll love for aye in vain.

---

## MELISSA'S BROOM

---

M<sup>ELISSA</sup> is gone,  
Melissa is gone;  
And ah see her empty pillow,  
Cold and white at dawn.

Melissa's away;  
She's a long piece away;  
And ah can't quit grievin'  
At de close of day.

Strike up de banjo,  
Let de bass voices roll,  
For dis silence in de air  
Is eatin' at ma soul.

Ah've heard guns talk  
And ah've seen men riot,  
But dey ain't half so bad  
As dis here quiet.

Quiet by de cupboard,  
Quiet by de sink—  
Lord make some thunder  
So dis negro needn't think.

Ah might get 'customed  
To dis silence in de room  
It it wasn't fo' de sight  
Of Melissa's broom.

Ah've heard it speak  
Fo' a powerful long time,  
And dere ain't nothing sweeter  
Dan dat old broom's rhyme.

But night or morning  
It will nevermore play,  
For no one can move it  
In Melissa's way.

Ah don't care, Lord,  
How pure are your skies,  
Dey won't look clean  
To Melissa's eyes.

And ah'm certain sure  
She'll find dust dere  
On de pearly gate  
And de golden stair.

So, Lord, when ah comes  
To de Judgment Day  
Let me bring dat broor  
For Melissa to play.

And all ah ask  
Is a nice quiet room  
And de music evermore  
Of Melissa's Broom.



---

## A HYMN FOR NOONDAY

---

STRENGTH of the rocks be mine,  
But not that grace alone:  
Ease Thou that power with the pine  
And the moss on the stone.

I would have strength, but not  
That granite arm and mind  
Which in its power forgot  
To love and to be kind.

Mix Thou within my soul  
Rock-silence and wind-psalm;  
Make me a perfect whole  
Of restlessness and calm.

For when at that dark Gate  
I meet a kindly God,  
Some virtues He may hate  
Some nobler sins applaud.

And, though I march to love  
Through laws and rituals broken,  
He in His Courts above  
May grant me some sweet token.

---

## HIGH TIDE

---

AS LIGHT at dawn, falling on sails of ships,  
I have seen sunlight on your arms and breast;  
I have seen beauty folding in your lips  
Or making in your hair a billowed nest.  
And yet I will not praise your lips or eyes,  
But rather sing that spirit which hath bound  
These lovely things together, and doth rise  
Like violets from the fragrance of the ground.  
You are too human to be always holy;  
You are too holy to be always human;  
Like a great flood you moved upon me slowly,  
And now I hail the high tide of a woman.  
I will not frame endearing words to meet you,  
For clods can often love with garish phrase;  
Then, only with this flower of song I greet you,  
And admiration, stumbling in its praise.

---

## UNANSWERED

---

New is the grass on the hill:  
    "Nay, it is brown, it is dead."  
New is the leaf on the tree:  
    "Nay, it is yellow and red;  
You look not well, O comrade."  
    Yes, my eyes are clear:  
You do not see what I see  
    Nor hear what I hear.

I walk amid blossoms  
    When the trees are bare;  
I drink of blue-white water  
    Where no waters fare.  
I lie on the brown arm  
    Of a sunburnt plain,  
And hear, when skies are burning,  
    The downward cool of rain.

"What is your gift, O Comrade,  
    That these things should be?"  
I cannot tell you, brother;  
    You could not tell me.  
If I could give you reason,  
    When you thus implore,  
In this or any season  
    I need sing nevermore.

---

## AT THE PIANO

---

I N a crimson gown she waits me  
    At the golden dip of sun;  
While her hands caress the lilies  
Which an octave's garden spun,  
Through her fingers flows her spirit  
Till her passion is outpoured  
In the sweet, confession cloister  
Of the priestly clavichord.

'Tis an alchemy of wonder  
Gives this idyl to the breeze  
When her slender, shapely fingers  
Melt their whiteness with the keys:  
Keys that answer her caresses  
In the language of her soul;  
Passion, love and lamentation  
Pleading neath a fine control.

Can my heart forget those twilights  
When she tamed the chord's unrest?  
Oft, it seemed, she took the burden  
Of the songsters, gone to rest.  
As the crimson of the morning  
Fades before the feathered throng,  
So her figure, in the gloaming  
Melted neath her simple song.

I have never heard that keyboard  
Answer any other hand  
With a melody so soothing  
With a symphony so grand.  
Nor have ever maiden's glances  
Wakened music, with their art,  
Half so sweet as she awakened  
On the octaves of my heart.

Love doth make the stars grow humble:  
Love doth hold the seas in thrall:  
Love doth bridge eternal chasms  
With the music of her call.  
And, when Might shall find his army  
Baffled by a city's power,  
Love shall storm, and win the gateway,  
With the petals of a flower.

---

## THE DANCERS ON THE SAND

---

THREE nude maidens  
Rose at the dawn  
And with brown limbs danced  
On a rose-strewn lawn.

They raced up the lawn,  
Where the grave oaks stand,  
And danced down a hill  
To the sea's yellow sand.

Their bodies were cool  
As flying foam  
And they moved like leaves  
On windy loam.

They swiftly danced,  
In the sea's wild roar,  
Like three brown leaves  
On a yellow floor.

A journeyman saw  
The dancers sunbrowned,  
And, seeking not beauty,  
No beauty found.



But he cried, "The world  
Is mad forevermore  
When three naked women  
Go dancing on the shore."

And I drove the man  
With a lash of scorn  
From the Temple of Dawn  
In the Kingdom of Morn.

But a hermit who came,  
And walked awhile there,  
Heard the rhyme of feet  
Like a morning prayer.

And we climbed together  
A nearby height  
And cleansed our souls  
At the lovely sight.

And the maids danced on,  
By the singing shore,  
Like three brown leaves  
On a yellow floor.

---

SERP

---

THEIR hands move wearily  
At tasks they cannot love.  
They toil, looking downward;  
They cannot look above.  
Dawn comes heavy upon them:  
Noon brings no surcease.  
Sleep, and the sleep of death  
Alone bring them peace.

For ages these have bowed  
Under a great wrong.  
They have toiled well, but lost  
Toil's triumph of song.  
Weariness was in their sires;  
And weariness, like a cloak,  
Covers them with chilling weight  
As a fog blankets smoke.

You cannot heal their wounds,  
For their hurt is heart deep.  
Their words fall like great tears  
Which they could never weep.  
The gyves of endless years  
Have seared their germs of life.  
They come, pre-natal scarred  
With fire and rope and knife.

Dull thoughts of that heritage,  
Which came to them on earth,  
Have made the loins of women  
Rebels of life and birth.  
These all have lost forever  
The triumph of the womb.  
They will not bring child-sunshine  
Into world-gloom.

Tearless as desert sand,  
Their grief is desert grief.  
If they could weep, this flow  
Might drown their unbelief.  
The snows that touch their brows  
Grow, at this touch, more cold.  
They pass on April days  
And spring herself grows old.

If you should bring them flowers  
The first to see would die.  
They cannot look on beauty  
With unaccustomed eye.  
They are past yearning; weariness  
Has chilled their spirits' flow.  
Only the last breath of a storm  
Such weariness could know.

The upturned hands of men  
Reach high like thin, white grass.  
Vainly they reach and then go down  
To reach no more, alas.  
Love has been tardy, overdue:  
The thing she seeks is void.  
Ages alone shall build anew  
What ages have destroyed.

---

## STORM IN APRIL

---

AND is this April,  
Who I dreamed would rise  
With the young crocus  
And the sunny daffodil  
And the velvet tips of willow;  
With the music of warm rain  
And the after, blue skies,  
And hills fragrant and flowing  
With the first green billow?

Winter was kindly at moments,  
And sometimes was rich with light.  
And her long darkness,  
And her wind's crying  
Were given with full warning.  
But here, where the blossoms should be,  
Is another—a mocking white—  
And wind wild and cold as the sea  
On a mad morning.

Yet why should this April  
Come here in a quiet way,  
With the young crocus  
And the sunny daffodil  
And violets burning blue?  
Better the white snow and the wind's lash  
And the sky's gray;  
For the heart of my love is false,  
And the word of my love is untrue.



---

## RIDDLES

---

"WHO are we," you ask me,  
    Passing this strange way?  
"We are plastic figures shaped  
    Between Yea and Nay."

"Why are we?" I answer:  
    "We the best and worst  
Are the living waters poured  
    For some anguished thirst."

"Where then are we going?"  
    "That is ours to choose:  
There is ancient star-dust  
    Still upon our shoes."

"When shall we have answer  
    To these riddles all?"  
"Never, lest our marching cease,  
    And the heavens fall."

---

## THE RETINUE

---

YOU are to me  
    Colors I cannot see.  
To me you are  
Light when there is no star,  
The fabric of the dreams I wear  
Is woven, O my loved one, of your hair.

All things that I hold dear  
Are mine when you are near.  
The pavement of a street,  
Beneath your feet,  
Would sound as sweet as wind on golden wheat.  
New planets swing across my startled skies  
When I look in your eyes.  
And should you go forever, on that day  
Dark things of desolation, cold and gray,  
Would flood about my door.  
And with your going a great retinue  
Of all that I have loved or counted true  
Would pass in lines that ended nevermore.

---

## THE MIRACLE SONGS OF JESUS

---

JESUS, the poet of Galilee,  
Fashioned the light in His lyric hands,  
And held it up for all men to see:  
The Publican and the Pharisee,  
The merchant rich and the robber bands  
On the outcast fringe of Galilee.  
But the learned men all sneered at him;  
And the gay young fellows jeered at Him;  
And only a fisherman fool or two  
Looked up at the Light with its liquid hue  
And drank its beauty of red and blue.

Jesus, the poet of Galilee,  
Sang that the weary might be free;  
Sang of the lilies—how their glory  
Shamed the best at a king's command;  
Sang His truths in a lyric story  
Even the poor could understand.  
And the wise men heard and they tried to scan  
The rhymes of the poet Son-of-Man.  
But, every time that He sang, they found  
Some cherished rule of their pedant school  
Was killed in his poem's strange, new sound.

And Jesus, the poet, grew sick at heart  
And fled from the halls where learning kills;  
And took His verse from the fear of art  
To the bold delight of the rain-washed hills.  
And the songs He sang to the desert sea  
Were far too sweet for the ears of men;  
But the gray-white dunes of Galilee  
Have blown with a fairer flower since then.

A learned group of dons will gloat  
At a fool's last word in a high priest's throat.  
But the song of God in a Carpenter's saw  
Could never hold wise men in awe.  
And whenever Christ, the bard, would sing  
They lost His truth in a hammer's ring.

The wilderness called with her silent lure:  
"O poet of thoughtless Nazareth  
Come out to me with your starry breath."  
And His white reed yearned for the moon-chilled  
sands,  
Where the frayed flowers cure  
With their gypsy hands.  
But He turned His face  
From the silent place,  
With the comrade stars above,  
As we all have done,  
As we all have done  
From a maid we dare not love.



And the silent desert called again:  
"O poet of thoughtless Nazareth,  
Come out to me with your fragrant breath,  
And walk with me in the moon's white rain."  
But a blind man's stick on a hollow stone,  
As it slowly tapped through a distant city,  
And a broken woman's hopeless moan  
Called out to Him with a deeper tone;  
And the heart of the Lord was pity.

And back to the town the poet came,  
And took His feet to the temple's hall,  
And heard the boast of a man named Saul;  
And He heard Saul mock,  
In a fiery tongue,  
The sweetest songs which His heart had sung.  
But Jesus of Nazareth, then and there,  
Could scarce forbear  
From a fond embrace,  
Knowing the beauty the man should wear  
At another time, in another place.

The critics were many in Jesus' day;  
And His songs were scorned by the caustic pen.  
He did not write in the Grecian way;  
And He knew not how to preach or pray  
In a way approved of men.  
His themes were bad by the Roman chart,  
And His metres all were wrong;  
For all the High Priests had their art,  
And He had only His song.

So few of the people cared to hear  
The Poet blow on His starry reeds,  
That He took His gift from the soul's high  
sphere—  
The miracle song that few would hear—  
And lowered His power,  
In a hopeless hour,  
And made men cower  
At His miracle deeds.

A miracle deed is a simple thing  
To a miracle song or a miracle truth.  
Yet they marvelled not that a song could bring  
To the veins of Time the world's lost youth.  
And two were gathered and sometimes three  
To hear the poet of Galilee.  
But the mob swept down like leaves in a storm  
When they heard the miracle man would perform.

And the lame men walked and the blind men saw;  
And the dead men breathed by a strange new law.  
But they were few to the far-flung throng  
Who saw and breathed through the poet's song.  
When they sat and fed on the fish and bread  
Five thousand men was an easy count;  
And the deed was done;  
But to-morrow's sun  
Will still bring throngs to the Pulpit-Mount.



And I am sure that John or Mary  
Cared not a whit when He walked the sea.  
But I am sure that they loved to tarry  
And hear the Poet of Galilee.  
And of the throng that around Him pressed  
'Twas John and Mary that He loved best.

And when the Poet sat down, to choose  
The men to take to the world His news,  
He sought not them who had held their dishes  
To catch His gift of the loaves and fishes.  
But He chose them out of the purer throngs  
Who came to hear His miracle songs.

And when at last He went up a Hill,  
To seal His songs with the seal of Death,  
Whose were the hands that were raised to kill  
This brave young poet of Nazareth?  
The man who thrust at His side, I find,  
Was a man who saw Him heal the blind.  
And the men who fed on the fish and bread  
Were cheering the deed in the ranks behind.  
But in a group which had drawn apart,  
To pour their tears for His broken heart,  
Were the ones who heard  
His miracle word.

If all the miracle deeds of Christ  
Had proven birth in a womb of lies  
My spirit would still with Him keep tryst  
With faith as deep as the sun-washed skies.  
But why should I doubt so simple a thing  
As a miracle deed from a man who could sing  
A miracle song that sheds its power  
In a pure, white light to the world's last hour?

The temple bells ring out to-day  
And the Pharisees pray  
In their ancient way,  
And the lips of the preachers love to tarry  
On the virgin birth and the miracle deed;  
But the temple bells I shall not heed;  
For I am going with John and Mary  
Out on the hills with the slender throngs  
Who love to hear the Miracle Songs.

---

### AFTER THREE YEARS

---

THREE years ago she passed  
In a quiet way,  
As a bloom that ripens not  
But dies in May.  
And still my wonder grows  
Over that dark hour;  
It clouds the blue of heaven:  
It chills each wood bower.

Night has no terror  
In her shadowy wing;  
But darkness at noon  
Is a fearsome thing;  
When the moon on the sun  
Lies like black crêpe,  
And the child that was day  
Has the midnight's shape.

It is a break in rhythm—  
A flaw in the world's rhyme—  
When the young leaves fall  
Before their time.  
I see the black on an old tree  
With sweet delight,  
But the black on pale blossoms  
Is a grievous sight.

What is buried with youth  
When she droops and dies?  
Not alone strong, young limbs  
And dawn-like eyes,  
But dear words of lovers  
And lovers' sighs,  
And the maturing years,  
Kindly and wise.

When the threads grow pale  
In the waning sun,  
And the wool is combed  
And the fabric is spun,  
When the linen is folded  
And the wheel put away  
The weavers seek joyfully  
Their couch of clay.

But youth lies down  
With a wistful eye  
When they make her bed  
With the sun shining high,  
With love all unanswered,  
And work hardly begun,  
And the green meadows calling  
Through trumpets of sun.

---

## A LOTUS SONG

---

I F I SHOULD meet you  
In the Garden of Allah,  
Where the rich light breaks  
In a red-bronze foam,  
What would you remember,  
What would you forget  
Of the gifts I gave you  
In our old earth home?

Would you remember  
The shimmer of a pearl-rope  
Flowing with its lustre  
On your moon-white throat?  
Or would you remember  
The blue fire of diamonds,  
Or silver of a fox-skin  
Paling in your coat?

I gave you all these  
For the earthly praises  
Which your proud, curved lips  
Crooned slowly to my soul.  
But I gave you more,  
To your cool disdainings,  
To win your heart  
On some far, high goal.

There shall you hunt, dear,  
For the lost phrases  
I coined in my wooing  
In a moon-mad bower.  
You shall gather up my tears  
In a slim, high flagon  
To quench your thirst  
In some star's white tower.

Beauty shall unmask  
In the Garden of Allah;  
And the earth-blind shall see her  
With their new-made eyes.  
So I give you this song  
Though you scorn my singing  
Till our souls go winging  
Down the blue-trailed skies.



---

## JOHN GRAYDON

---

I own John Graydon's place—

His elm trees moving with a lovely grace  
As slow and stately as a minuet,  
His great lawns wearing shadows like black lace,  
Too lovely to forget.

A beggar am I, or vagabond of verse,  
With neither script nor guinea in my purse,  
With neither land nor honor of men, and yet,  
Unknown to all the scullions of his race,  
I own John Graydon's place.

John Graydon bought with gold  
These ivied walls, magnificent and old,  
This roadway guarded by dark, granite towers,  
These moon-cooled urns that, uncomplaining, hold  
The ashes of dead flowers,  
And watch the dawn-like roses come and go,  
And these warm hawthorne hedges white as snow,  
These fountains, cool against the sunburnt hours,  
These beds, where blue forget-me-nots unfold,  
John Graydon bought with gold.

John Graydon paid the cost;  
But what he gained with power of gold, he lost.  
I bought his lands with love, and they are mine—  
These acres where the moonlight lies like frost  
On grass and tree and vine.  
And, though I stand afar, my spirit sees  
The falling streams of beauty in his trees:  
I hear his roses speak, his lilacs call;  
And mine are all these gardens of cool shade  
For which John Graydon paid.

Comrade, the world is yours:  
Her gardens, fountains, valleys, hills and moors;  
And for each lonely aching of your soul  
There is a balm that ever heals and cures.  
The amber sunlight filling high her bowl,  
The pomp of purple asters are for you,  
And heavy roses wet with crimson dew:  
For you the march of stars, the ocean's roll.  
And you can own, as I, these gardens old  
John Graydon bought with gold.



---

## THE DEIFIC GRIEF

---

IF God in His Heaven  
Should kill my existence  
Or banish me evermore  
Out of His presence,  
I know in some lonely,  
Unutterable moment  
When He grows weary  
Of untried perfection,  
He will remember  
The voice of a poet  
Who grieved him often  
And often blasphemed,  
And yet who had moments  
Of love which an angel,  
Immune to forgiving,  
Could not understand.  
Then will He yearn for me  
And that lost cry of mine  
Heard in strange places—  
By thundering shores,  
In rose-reddened gardens,  
On sun-gladdened hilltops,  
In moon-silvered valleys  
Where often I wandered  
And sang of His beauty.

---

## A SONG OF DISTANCES

---

"IS THE horizon far, my friend;  
And who shall reach its goal?"

" 'Tis far, but not so far as lie  
The frontiers of my soul."

"How deep then is the deepest sea?"

"Far down, beyond belief;  
But shallow if you measure it  
Beside a mortal's grief."

"How high is heaven at a clear noon?"

"Ah, very high it seems;  
But loftier than its dome arise  
The summits of my dreams."

"How broad is space from edge to end,  
Out, out, below, above?"

"It is a cold and narrow room  
That cramps the heart of love."

With never torch save the moon's frosted lighting;  
And here I mount until my spirit seems  
To hear Elysian streams,  
And voices alien to all earthly cries;  
And here I blow a wild Arcadian reed,  
Until, above the ramparts of the skies,  
Some winging soul gives heed.

The Builders here will never cease their labors:  
They lift new walls and turrets, day by day.  
And you can see their hammers flash like sabres  
In the clean light of morning's ambered gray.  
And, sweet as ripened hay,  
The yellow shavings curl and heap the floors,  
And silent mortar manacles the stones,  
And chisels gnaw the casements and the doors  
With quiet, insistent tones.

The traffickers pass daily by the portals  
Of this strange palace, nor behold it there.  
These are the dull and unbelieving mortals  
Who gaze, where Jacob's Ladder mounts the air,  
With unperceiving stare.  
But some shy pilgrims see these towers arise,  
And they go in with quick and glad release;  
And some come out with sorrow in their eyes,  
And some return with peace.

More often than of old, each year more often,  
I seek this manor's cellars, cool, apart;  
And rouse from mellowing sleep old wines to soften  
Those fevered draughts of Life that burn the heart  
With harsh, unripened art.  
And here I drown the inhumanities,  
That grope with caustic fingers everywhere,  
Draining some flagon to the crimson lees  
Of nectar old and rare.

Pale towers! that crumble not nor know decaying  
When wind and rain devour their granite meal;  
Nor give that subtle toll whose silent paying  
Is grimly made against the mute appeal  
Of colonnades of steel.  
Pale towers! whom Charon calls not to vacate;  
But which will rise as now forevermore,  
Enriched by clearer light, beyond the Gate  
To some Parnassian shore.

---

## SONG OF THE UNADORNED

---

YOUR wealth of beauty needs no added glory—  
Lace, or the clinging vine of eastern shawls.  
Chaste as the simple telling of a story  
I love you best when no adornment falls  
From your white, shapely ears, or when your hands  
Are caught in yellow bands.

Some need heraldic crests for their completeness;  
Some need baronial halls to pillar their charms;  
But you have need of nothing in your sweetness  
Save the cool flowing of your lovely arms,  
And the deep wonder of your holy eyes  
Outfathoming morning skies.

Come then to me with your hair simply folded  
Like memories of the night against the morn.  
The drifts of snow, which at your bosom are moulded,  
No diamond can enhance or pearl adorn:  
All beauty to your own is a lesser art,  
O my beloved heart.

---

## THE OLD CRONE

---

"I HAVE two sons,"  
Said my lord,  
"Two sons straight and tall,  
Two sons who hold well the sword  
And who come at my call.  
They have yellow hair like mine;  
Their bodies are steel and willow.  
They are my bread and my wine  
And my night's pillow."

But an old crone cried,  
By an old, old tree:  
"You have three sons, my lord,  
You have three."

"No cripple is mine,"  
Said my lord,  
"This child is of Fate:  
And he is a broken design  
To nourish my hate.  
He came evil-shaped in the womb:  
My sons are all straight like the pine.  
He is dead, for his flesh is a tomb,  
So call him not mine."

But an old crone cried,  
By an old, old tree,  
"You have three sons, my lord,  
You have three."

But my lord one day  
When he was old  
Lost all his lands  
And all his gold.  
And the sons, who stood as straight as the pine,  
Each cried, "This man is no kindred of mine:  
His son is the lad with the crooked spine."  
But the third youth came with bread and wine:  
"Father, my father," he said.  
And the father replied, "I had two sons  
And both of my sons are dead."

But an old crone cried,  
By an old, old tree:  
"You have three sons, my lord.  
You have three."

---

## WHERE SHALL I WALK

---

WHERE shall I walk with my new love?  
Not by the sea;  
There my old and faithless love  
Used to walk with me.

Shall I meet her in the wood?  
Better elsewhere;  
By yon tree my old love stood;  
She will still be there.

Shall I climb with her this hill  
Warm with autumn's gold?  
Nay, I cannot; she I loved  
Walked there once of old.

Where then shall I go with her?  
Up a city street:  
The tread of hosts who travel there  
Will drown my old love's feet.



---

## THE ORGAN SPEAKS

---

ON THE DEATH OF THE ORGAN-MASTER,  
GARFIELD THOMAS

WHY comes he not to waken me  
With some sweet hour of song?  
Has he, then, now forsaken me  
Who loved me well and long?  
Another hand is on my keys,  
But oh, his touch is cold;  
Nor can he wake those ecstasies  
My master waked of old.

At twilight he would often stride  
Across the chancel's gloom.  
I was the master's only bride  
And he my one bridegroom.  
And many a child of sound was born  
Of this sweet union there;  
And now I hear them night and morn  
Calling him everywhere.

If it should be he comes no more  
Let me have rest awhile;  
For sound becomes a grievous roar  
Without my master's smile.

I have been faithful all these years  
As any lover should.  
Then let no touch profane my tears  
Or mock my widowhood.

The master came back, riding slow;  
He came back cold and prone.  
Nor could he hear how, strange and low,  
The organ's soul made moan.  
There's grief in every sobbing wind,  
And if you tore apart  
Old harps and organs you would find,  
In many, a broken heart.

To-day the master sits again  
Beside a clavichord,  
With his tired fingers eased from pain,  
And with his soul restored.  
His stops are winds of heaven, he plays  
Immortal chords and bars;  
And we shall hear his pipes, in praise,  
When we pass through the stars.

---

## UP SOUL

---

THE dark yields easily  
To the morning's gray.  
The gray burns into red  
In a quiet way.  
The red pales into blue  
And the blue warms to gold:  
Gladly arises forever  
The new from the old.

There is a sad voice  
In falling leaves;  
But it is not the voice  
Of one who grieves.  
There is a strange wailing  
On marsh and mere,  
But in that sound there dwells  
No heart of fear.

Shall man be then  
The one complaining voice?  
Up soul, whatever comes  
Let our hearts rejoice.  
Hold not the dead truth,  
But when young truth appears  
Let the old slip easily  
Down the dark years.

---

## THE SEARCHER

---

LOVE comes to me from unexpected places,  
But never by the pathway where I wait,  
I dreamed that she would come in cooling laces,  
And she came cloaked in crimson to my gate.  
I dreamed she came in majesty and power,  
But she came quietly as a growing flower.

I went in search for love down a wild valley  
Where roses roared like flame against the sky.  
I sought her in the gardens of a chalet  
Where I would surely go if love were I.  
I hunted for my love in a dark wood;  
I called her with a word the winds hold dear;  
And by one great, dark gateway long I stood,  
But love came never near.

And so I said, "I seek my love in vain;  
Nor will I go to find her any more."  
And then, like drops of some diviner rain,  
Love beat upon my door.  
And sweetly, in chiding tones, I heard her say,  
"I have been here to see you many a day;  
You have, alas, been very long away."

## IN JOHANNESBURG

(NOTE: Two valiant ladies, both richly endowed with the purest culture and the finest traditions of Canada, went overseas and into the heart of Southern Africa. Before one year had passed Aletta Marty, LL.D., was called to the Rose-Room of God. The remaining sister died of a broken heart as she journeyed toward her old home.)

JOHANNESBURG, JOHANNESBURG, your skies are high  
and fair;  
But oh, the cool Muskoka skies, and oh, the Northern air!  
And oh, the laugh of silver birch against the gloom of pine!  
And shall I pass and never see this blessed land of mine?

Dear sister, it is well you came to ease my alien hours,  
For we are far from Canada, her people, fields and flowers;  
Then leave me not until I go, but let me feel your eyes—  
The only light of Canada beneath these Southern skies.

We came not here as men once came with heavy tramp of war;  
We came with rich Canadian thought and fine Canadian lore.  
We came with dream of brotherhood—the noblest dream of all—  
But deeply do we yearn, to-day, the whitethroats' sudden call.

Sister of mine, 'tis strange to see no bloodroots in the spring;  
And all the winter I have missed the merry sleigh-bell's ring.

Johannesburg, your folk are kind, your gardens fair to see;  
But lonely are the waves that grieve betwixt my land and me!

The sun to-day is rich and warm, the winds are crooning low,  
But all I see is Canada, where silver rivers flow.  
And there's no fire in all the world to cure my spirit's ill  
Save purple flames of violet against a Northern hill.

'Tis Maytime in Johannesburg, but there's no silver rain;  
And there is not a lilac bloom in garden or in lane.  
O God, I do not fear to die, but it is hard to go  
So far away from apple trees that now are raining snow.

Johannesburg, Johannesburg, your suns of copper melt  
Within the cauldron of the hills against the lonely veldt;  
But there's a colder sun I see more clearly than your own,  
And all the lakes of Canada across my spirit moan.



I have loved toil, and now I earn a royal holiday;  
And I shall sit with friends, unseen, by blue Toronto  
Bay.  
And if my ashes seek the wind that cools the tropic  
fern,  
My soul will walk Canadian hills where scarlet  
maples burn.

---

## CAPTAIN LOCKE

---

I CURSED him for his drunken lips;  
I called him liar, brute and swine;  
And he but smote his swarthy hips  
And laughed as though the joke were fine.

When he came riding from the Horn,  
And found me in the market-place,  
I taunted him as basely born  
And called him coward to his face.

"Ha, ha; ho, ho," said Captain Locke,  
"I always loved a merry jest."  
And then, a fool, I rose to mock  
The thing in life that he loved best.

I called his ship an ugly name;  
And laughter died within his eyes;  
And from his lips a wild word came,  
And like a beast I saw him rise.

The scar is here upon my head;  
Another mark is on my throat.  
Three years has Captain Locke been dead,  
And yet I fear to curse his boat.



---

## THE CONVICT MARCH

---

SHAVEN head and garb of fool;  
Swing of steel and night's abyss;  
Clang of chain, and cry of pain,  
And the memory of a kiss.  
Neath my window pass the convicts,  
with their hopeless sullen tread;  
And they're marching like an army of the dead.

Mine, the freedom of the land;  
Friendship of the merry town.  
Their's—the loveless, cold command  
And the warden's heavy frown.  
Through my window I can see them,  
in their garb of blue and white;  
And my soul is sick with sorrow at the sight.

Law of man and law of God!  
Break the first and lo! these bars.  
Break the other—Cræsus comes  
With his chain of gilded cars.  
Through my window I can see him,  
by the people's homage fanned,  
Though they know their children's blood  
is on his hand.

If each broken law of Love  
Brought a garb of white and blue  
What a motley throng would swing  
Up the crowded avenue.  
I could watch them from my window  
with more pleasure in my breast  
Than I watch these few Fate singles from the rest.

Shaven head and garb of fool;  
Swing of steel and Night's abyss.  
Clang of chain is sweeter pain  
Than the memory of a kiss.  
Neath my window walk the convicts  
with their lifeless, halting tread;  
And they're marching like an army of the dead.

---

## THE WORLD OF BEAUTY IS IN DEEP DISTRESS

---

ON THE DEATH OF BLISS CARMAN.

THE world of beauty is in deep distress,  
And sorrow, like a frost, is everywhere;  
For one sweet singer has laid down his lyre;  
And now a great calm falls across the world—  
A peace like that deep silence when the birds  
Are gathered up from song at eventide.

Kind was that Fate which did not let him go  
Before his priestess, April, passed this way.  
And did she for this once forget to make  
His spirit over! Did her singing rain  
Neglect her old renewal of his song!  
Or did she make him over now so well  
That he was tuned to sing in a nobler choir  
In that new land where all his days shall be  
As lovely as late April at the dawn.

He left us at the noonday, ere one shadow  
Had fallen on the ardor of his soul;  
Nor strange was it the Caravan of Noon  
Should call him, who had noonday in his heart.  
Now Vagabondia's eyes are wet with tears,  
And all the gypsy spirit of the world  
Is weakened by his going. Soon shall come  
Those dusty roadside flowers of his song;  
And they shall wait in vain for him who came  
And in a word redeemed their vagrancy.

He did not stand aloof as some have done:  
And who in all our country shall forget  
His great, gaunt figure, crowned with tameless hair,  
His fine, unhampered throat and ageless eyes.  
From Halifax to shining English Bay  
The echoes of his passing to and fro  
Are still like music in our northern air.

To-night the tides of Grand Prè shall come in  
As slowly as a group of praying nuns,  
And Blomidon will lean against a cloud;  
And the high elms of Fredericton will move  
With a strange, lonely gesture in their arms;  
And one new grief will wail amid the reeds  
On Minas Basin's poet-loving shores.

---

## PORT

---

HALE seas swinging bold and strong,  
Light seas breaking into laughter,  
Cold seas singing a slow song,  
And a long quiet after:  
Have you ever heard sea-laughter?

I have heard it. Who has heard this sound  
Never shall hear another lover.  
Having heard it, I shall not be found  
Far from where the sea-gulls hover:  
Are you, too, a deep-sea lover?

When rest time comes let me dwell  
By the sea in a rose-stained cottage.  
There will my soul feast well  
With the salt-wind tang in my pottage:  
I have built in dreams that cottage.

You will be with me; I await you:  
Somewhere in the unknown you wait me.  
When you come my gardens all will fête you  
With red roses leaning to the sea—  
You and I and the roses, lovers three.

---

## GRANNIES

---

GRANDMA DOYLE turns eighty on her next birth-  
day;  
But looking after Grandma Blake has kept her young  
and gay.  
Grandma Blake is eighty-one and should she walk or  
ride,  
Always Grandma Doyle is there, watching at her  
side.  
I saw these dear old ladies on a crowded city car,  
And Grandma Blake had fallen at the jolt and jar;  
But Grandma Doyle was watching well and led her  
to a seat;  
Oh, sure it is a pretty sight when two old ladies meet.

I like all women when they're young or when they're  
very old.  
It's the women in between them who nag and fret  
and scold.  
But when a dear old lady reaches seventy or more  
She knows the petty things of life are not worth  
fighting for.  
And should you listen some fine day to Grandmas  
Doyle and Blake  
You'll hear some bits of wisdom a philosopher might  
make.  
They're both so sure of Heaven that they've found  
a Heaven here;  
And it isn't death but Jesus whom their souls are  
drawing near.



Grandma Blake is slowing down in eye and ear and  
tongue,  
But Grandma Doyle to help her must ever more keep  
young.  
"Now watch your step," says Grannie Doyle, as they  
go down the stairs.  
And when it's bedtime, "Grandma Blake, did you  
forget your prayers?"  
And then aside, "She's eighty-one and losing sight  
and smell;  
And I am only eighty years so I must guard her  
well."  
Oh, any morning down the street you'll see these  
grannies walk;  
And faith, it is a pretty sight when two old ladies  
talk.

---

### SOMEWHERE, SOMETIME THE GLORY

---

THE fog is heavy to-night and the sad horns are  
droning.

What so sad as a bank of mist that cannot weep  
into rain?

A little, old man comes down the road where you  
and I are moaning;

A little, old man who sings a song and here is the  
rune's refrain:

Somewhere, sometime the glory;

Somewhere the sun.

I'll read me on to the end of the story:

God's will be done.

O little, old man you shame me; for the weak oft  
shame the strong.

The fog is heavy to-night and the sad horns are  
crying.

What so sad as a pair of lips that cannot break into  
song;

And learn so long as we keep a song Hope shall  
know no dying?

Somewhere, sometime the glory; let me but keep this  
shard,

Torn from the crumbling mountain peaks of our  
philosophies.

Bring me hither the music man, the brother of the  
bard,

And he shall mate it with music from the lips of  
seven seas.

Somewhere, sometime the glory;

Somewhere the sun.

I'll read me on to the end of the story:

God's will be done.

---

DEAR MAID OF THOSE SAD EYES

---

DEAR MAID of those sad eyes,  
It is not mine to lead you or advise  
Your way to happiness; I only know  
Where one finds joy another may find woe.  
Life is so lonely that I should not care  
To take from you one ritual or one prayer  
If they can bring you comfort in an hour  
When sadness overwhelms you with its power.  
If in your beads of rosary you find  
Peace for the heart and mind  
Then will I bless this charm  
And pray it keep you from all earthly harm.

But, maid of those sad eyes,  
My temples all are domed with shining skies;  
My rosary is on the beaded lawn  
And in the wood at dawn;  
My ritual is sunlight on a sea,  
My cloisters walled by wind,  
And oh, I weep you will not walk with me  
Through abbeys that surpass the shrines of Ind.  
But, since you will not go,  
I will not steal those comforts which you know.  
But I shall bare my head  
While your carved beads of rosary are spoken,  
And say, "If these will only  
Make her less lonely  
No word of mine shall rob her of this token."

---

## THE LAW

---

THE LAW came from the mountains to Moses and  
to me;

It came as rigid as the hills that mail themselves in  
stone:

But Love came unto Jesus from the velvet-footed sea  
Where the stars of God so carelessly are sown.

What is this leaping cascade but a rebel of the rocks,  
A breaker of the Decalogue that froze the mountain's  
form?

It puts the silver and the gold on its forbidden frocks  
And boasts to be a bastard of the storm.

The law was made for weakness but Love was made  
for strength:

The rebels of the static stars excite no God to rage.  
The law hath depth and thickness and height and  
width and length;

But Love hath no dimension man can gauge.

Some old commandment falls to dust at every whim  
of wind;

Some musty truth hears blasphemy in every singing  
wave.

If you could look in Beauty's heart your golden lens  
would find

A stronger word than Sinai ever gave.

The law came from the mountains to Moses and to  
me;

It came as rigid as the hills that mail themselves in  
stone:

But Love came unto Jesus by the velvet-footed sea  
Where the stars of God so carelessly are sown.



---

## THE ROAD FROM THE CLOUDS TO THE SEA

---

ON THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN LOEWENSTEIN

THE strangest walk that ever man walked was a  
road from the clouds to the sea.

God grant you never may take that walk; God save  
that trail from me.

It's a road that takes no print of foot; the sandal  
sounds not there;

It's the longest road and the shortest road that ever  
a man might dare.

There isn't a tree along this road to nod in a green  
farewell.

There is never a soul along this road to wish a jour-  
neyman well.

No priest is there with his kindly hand; no friend is  
there to console;

And the moon and the sun and the lovely earth are  
this lonely roadway's toll.

He took one step as long as the stride they take in  
the fairy-tales,

And his feet were shod with sudden air and his form  
was cloaked with gales,

And he heard the sobbing of grieving waves on the  
cool Plutonian shore

Ere his soul had lost the cry of man and the wind's  
amazing roar.

He lost his foot as a venturesome star that walks on  
a daring height;

But no gazer of planets saw him fall in the awful  
bowl of light.

And now he knows how blessed is he who rests on  
a couch, and goes

With the lip of love against his lips like a rose against  
a rose.

The strangest walk that ever man walked was a road  
from the clouds to the sea.

God grant you never may take that walk; God save  
that trail from me.

It's a road that takes no print of foot; the sandal  
sounds not there;

It's the longest road and the shortest road that ever  
a man might dare.

---

## TO AN INCONSTANT MAID

---

I DO NOT hate you, child;  
Someone has falsely spoken.  
I only grieve that faith  
Should be so lightly broken.

I only grieve that words,  
On which my hope was leaning,  
Should be so poor a prop  
And have so empty meaning.

Words to the Men of Singing  
Are sacred as the sun,  
And so I grieve your flinging  
Away the dearest one.

---

## THE CAIRN AT MORPETH

---

THEY come, these tardy mortals, late once more,  
As mankind has come late the ages through;  
And they have built a cairn by Erie's shore,  
As if dead poets cared what men could do;  
As if the cold, carved glory of white stone  
Could pay sweet compensation to the dead,  
Or any valiant phrase could now be said  
That for our long indifference can atone.

Ironie Jesters! Ye who build great towers  
To them who wore in life your crowns of thorns;  
Who walked through all their days in lonely bowers,  
Or sang to sleeping hosts on heedless morns.  
For Lampman in our temples still might stand  
Had he been left to song, and that alone:  
And better far than any cairn, the tone  
Of one yet-living poet in our land.

It is the crown of utter loneliness  
To know that life will bring not one reward,  
That bards must die ere men will rise and bless  
The regions of warm beauty they restored;  
The temples of high thought they builded strong,  
And swept austere with the flow of sound;  
To know that they must sleep beneath the ground  
Ere earth will learn the richness of their song.

Let now beside this monument be heard  
Another well-loved poet of our time,  
Who, in the bard of Morpeth's spirit stirred  
The first fine flowing of his youthful rhyme---  
Charles Roberts of the half-sea Tantramar,  
And Duncan Scott who loved him well and long  
And who, through all our poet's years of song,  
Kept the white brilliance of a comrade star.

There is an autumn haze on Erie's hills,  
And Beauty is descending from the trees.  
And, like an afterthought of daffodils,  
The goldenrod blows down the yellow breeze.  
And in the burning fury of this flame,  
While purple's royal hand is on the grass,  
A white cairn rises, that all men who pass  
May know the eternal beauty of one name.

That beauty came to me while yet a boy;  
And still in Heat, untempered by a breeze,  
I watch the plodding farmers move, with joy,  
And breathe the "white dust puffing to their knees."  
And near the heels of June I see great Pan,  
With "hot blown cheeks"; and at the summer's close  
Between the purple aster and the rose  
I've climbed, in song, September's caravan.

White Cairn of Morpeth! in your marble years  
Desire to give endurance to one name.  
Yet better Mary's love to Rabbie Burns  
Than all the bronze memorials to his fame.  
And could our poet gaze from his far bourne  
His eyes would see no cairn or gathered throng,  
But, for those souls who loved in life his song,  
Beyond his cloudy frontiers would he mourn.



---

CARL AHRENS

---

THE Arts and Letters Club is white with flame,  
And all near-genius gathers to a feast.  
Around the broken morsels of a beast  
They praise the names whom time hath given fame,  
And then they give each other mild acclaim;  
While Talent looks at Talent's equal measure.  
And nothing mars the evening's gentle pleasure  
Until some outcast speaks the Giant's name.

O Genius, if one enemy you know  
It is the jealous Talent's flickering fire.  
The Arts and Letters Club is bright as noon,  
But out at Lambton, wading through the snow,  
Carl Ahrens hears to-night his mystic choir  
Of naked trees, beneath a wintry moon.

---

THE SONG OF THE DEAD SORROW

---

"WHY are you mourning there, my friend,  
Down by the shore?"

"I'm mourning for a sorrow, brother,  
That will be no more."

"Is it not strange to mourn for this—  
That Grief should have an end?"

"Not strange, because for years this woe  
Has been my only friend.

"At first it chilled me like a ghost  
That walks a windy moor;  
And then my heart its doleful face  
Was strengthened to endure.

"And then was born a wistful whim  
To have my sorrow near;  
And then I grew to love my woe  
Greater by year and year.

"And now a maid returns; my grief  
Shall see me not again,  
Neither beside the singing sea  
Nor down the lilac lane.

"But woe had grown a part of me;  
And now, on the windy shore,  
I'm mourning for a sorrow, brother,  
That will be no more."

---

## GLOOM

---

GLOOM has a lazy soul;  
It moves not here nor there.  
It hates the dancing of the sun,  
The running of the air.

It broods in caves and darksome woods;  
It lurks in musty halls.  
It never leaps nor ever runs  
But always creeps or crawls.

Gloom has a tame heart,  
But Joy is swift and wild.  
Gloom is a craven thing that runs  
Before a laughing child.

I hied me to a dark wood  
Where all was damp and cold.  
I banished from my life the sun,  
And bade my heart grow old.

And then you came and drank the gloom  
As though it were cool wine;  
And then you put a cup of light  
Into this hand of mine.

And now I walk the aged wood,  
I tread the unlighted room;  
But never in the dark do I  
Behold the face of gloom.

Gloom has a lazy soul;  
It hates the running air.  
But most of all it hates a maid  
With laughing eyes and hair.

---

## THE WRECKERS

---

HAMMER at the brick  
And lever at the wall:  
The beams are very thick  
And heavily they fall.

They're tearing down a fine house  
On a fair street:  
An old world is ended  
In a hammer's beat.

Outside the great door  
Many ghosts stand:  
One has a slender ring  
Shining on her hand.

Every wrench of the bricks  
Tugs at her heart;  
When they tear the old house  
They tear her soul apart.

Wreckers! let the broad stair  
Stand to the last:  
She descended it, a bride  
With heart beating fast.

Is there any wonder  
As the hammers race  
That her eyes look lonely  
At the old, dear place.

When an ancient dwelling falls  
At the chisel's bite  
There go out great calls  
Far across the light.

And all her dead lovers  
Come back to pay  
Tribute to the old house  
On its doom's day.

But the dull wrecking-crews  
See them not there,  
Or if they do see  
Who of them will care?



---

## THE TRAPPER'S DAUGHTER

---

A CHOKING hand is on the breeze;  
Afar the swift, red dragon slays;  
And smoke and haze enfold the trees,  
And cloak the woodman's daughter.  
Her lover comes not late or soon.  
Rich red to-night will be the moon,  
And long the crying of the loon  
Above the reedy water.

Red-surpliced is the poplar's choir;  
The yellow daisies bow in prayer.  
The blurring blare of marching fire  
Roars out in vain its warning,  
A copper mask is on the sun;  
The bushes crash where wild things run.  
The wood is a chameleon  
Or like the skies at morning.

Oh, sweet is life and swift is flame  
In woods of spruce, in woods of pine!  
O winds that whine, call out his name  
Across the scarlet billows.  
Put in his heart the young deer's skill,  
The elk's inexorable will,  
The cunning of the sloping rill  
That flees beneath the willows.

She found him, on a charring height,  
Crushed earthward by the red parade.  
The Dog-star bayed across the night,  
And all the winds were weeping.  
She did not fear the crimson roar,  
But took the fiery cloak he wore  
And wrapped her soul for evermore  
Beside him in his sleeping.

---

## A SONG OF FUTILITY

---

I HAD thought language was most rich and varied;  
I had thought words were sorceries of power.  
Now, since your shining soul to mine was married,  
I find no words to greet this gallant hour;  
But rather wail the poverty of phrasing,  
And the inadequate syllable deplore:  
On lesser themes their strength had been amazing,  
But for this task they keep a piteous store.

If words could catch the eloquence of your eyes,  
Or move with your dear bosom's rise and fall,  
Then could I paint the sunsets in their dyes,  
And light the stars anew on Heaven's wall.  
But you are like a cliff, before my speech,  
Which the slow tide can lave but never reach.

---

## UPTON WOOD

---

THEY hanged three men  
In Upton Wood:  
Three months on air  
Their feet have stood.

The ravens came,  
With raucous cries,  
And picked well clean  
The six dead eyes.

Their eyes, that once  
Revealed their souls,  
Looked now at night  
Like six black bowls.

And all by dark  
Who happened near  
From these cups drank  
The wine of fear.

The ravens, in picking  
The Three necks clean,  
Had eaten the marks  
Where the ropes had been.

The first man killed  
Died raving mad.  
The second man prayed,  
And the third was a lad.

They left the lad  
In this upright sleep  
For being with men  
Who stole men's sheep.

His hair now hung  
Six inches long;  
And even his bones  
Looked young and strong.

Few people walked  
In Upton Wood  
Where three dead men  
On blue air stood.

But a maid came there  
Who felt no fright  
When skeletons rattled  
On a cold, wild night.

She came and watched,  
By a yellow moon,  
Three dead men dance  
Without cape or shoon.

And she came by dark,  
When she could not see,  
And heard them dance,  
On their tall death-tree.

And one cold night,  
That was still and black,  
The maiden walked in  
And never walked back.

When dawn flamed red  
They found her there  
With a skeleton's foot  
Caught in her hair.

The bony foot  
Held as a vise;  
And the dead maid's eyes  
Were like blue ice.

Now four ghosts dance  
In Upton Wood;  
And two dance together  
As young ghosts should.

And one is the daughter,  
Sweet and fair,  
Of the sheriff who left  
Three dead men there.



---

## BARBARY

---

“WHAT is your creed?” cried the census man;  
And I answered: I have none:

I am one of the hosts of Barbary  
Who worship beneath the sun.  
We have temples aflame with flowers;  
And wearing the clouds their towers.  
And the seven days are the hymns of praise  
We sing to the Holy One.

The creed hath need of a belfry bell  
To summon the knee to prayer.  
But we, of the Hosts of Barbary,  
Are called by the love we bear.  
O, we ride through the morning dews  
To gird on the Master's shoes.  
And we wait by night, while the stars burn white,  
The soul of His smile to share.

Ten falsehoods nailed to a truth have ye;  
And a long cathedral aisle.  
And we, of the Hosts of Barbary,  
Stand out on the hills and smile.  
But we garner your truthful word  
And add it to one we heard,  
From a pagan band, somewhere in a land  
By the Ganges or the Nile.

Ye feed your souls on a worn-out scroll,  
And chain them to chapel walls;  
Until they have never a thought of God  
Away from their pews and stalls.  
But we, whom your numbers despise,  
Are pastured on cloudless skies;  
For our souls have found that Holy Ground  
Is ever where Beauty calls.

And ye are bound to a rule and law  
Upheld by a chant and charm.  
But we are fed from the veins of flowers  
That redden an upland's arm.  
O, in Barbary fair, we grow  
A lily as white as snow,  
And a damask rose to welcome those  
Who fly from a creed's alarm.

So go to him who would know thy creed  
And say to him: “None have I:  
I have joined the hosts of Barbary  
Who worship beneath the sky.”  
For a day, when the last creed's power  
Goes down with her temple's tower,  
From a granite peak, shall the great God speak;  
And Barbary's hosts pass by.

---

PAULINE JOHNSON

---

SHE sleeps betwixt the mountains and the sea,  
In that great Abbey of the setting sun:  
A Princess, Poet, Woman, three in one;  
And fine in every measure of the three.  
And when we needed most her tragic plea  
Against ignoble pæans we had sung,  
While yet her muse was warm, her lyric young,  
She passed to realms of purer poesy.

To-night she walks a trail past Lillooet:  
Past wood and stream; yea, past the Dawn's white fire.  
And now the craft on Shadow River fret  
For one small blade that led their mystic choir.  
But nevermore will Night's responsive strings  
Awaken to the "Song her Paddle Sings."

---

THE CRY OF THE SONG CHILDREN

---

SAY not I write to a metre's measure  
Who gather my words in flood.  
Say not I write for the lilting's pleasure,  
For lo! my ink is blood.  
Oh, if these lines could show my passion:  
Look, is the blood not rich and red!  
I will pour it out till my soul is ashen  
And my grief lies dead.

I am a fragment of restless wind  
Against the peak of a mountain broken.  
My heart is oft with the snow entwined  
And wears as a sweet token,  
Wherever I move, or ever I run,  
The sting of the frost and the kiss of the sun  
To show that I favor no pilgrim more  
Than the next who knocks at my cheerful door.

As a woman, athirst for an infant's cry,  
Rocks her thin arms to the cooing air  
And croons a Lydian lullaby  
To soothe the child of her own despair,  
So I go out on the hills at night  
And rock my arms with a sad delight;  
Rock them long  
For the children of song  
Which my barren page is athirst to bear.

The souls of these unborn crowd me round  
And call to be clad  
In the mystical, glad  
Body of sound.  
I am coming, I cry, to release you all.  
The roses are red  
On the sea-brown wall;  
But the roses come and the roses fall;  
And the children call,  
And the children call;  
But I am asearch for bread.  
A wisp is here and a wisp is there;  
A long day's march in the blinding dust,  
And I gain the form of a fleeting crust  
To lessen an hour's despair.

And I cry to God:  
Shall my blood be shed  
And my years be trampled away in the sod  
For bread, for bread!  
Oh, softly I cry, nor chide my fate.  
But the rose hangs red  
Far over the beautiful garden gate,  
And the children wait.

I am Caneo;  
And my skin is brown from the comrade sun.  
And my heart is a cluster of grapes; each one

Ripe and ready to flow together  
In the channel sweet of a purple song.  
And the unborn children around me throng.  
I will fill the air  
With their floating hair,  
I said.  
And I rose, when the morn was a film of gray,  
And moiled in a garden where love lay dead.  
And the children called and I answered: "Yea,  
I come;" but the beckoning wisp of bread  
Called me away, away;  
And the children mourned as I lay in sleep;  
When the night was deep  
I could hear them weep.

This is the poet's Hell; to know  
How fair his unborn, wildly crying;  
To stand at night in the wind-flow,  
As the last light is dying;  
To call to his children and find  
His voice is a broken chord  
That is weary from calling all day in the wind:  
"This hour's bread, O Lord."

Come, little flaxen-haired,  
Throat-bared,  
Sun-browned imp who hath called me long,  
Here is your life in a song.



Dance, here on this page, and never  
To the last forever  
Need you to call again.  
I stole this hour to give you birth; the rain  
Let down your hair.  
The sky's  
Deepest dyes  
Tintured your eyes.  
Dear little flaxen-haired,  
Throat-bared, wild,  
Sun-browned child  
Here is your life in a song undefiled.

The morn is a film of lovely gray;  
And the rose is blown from a crimson thread;  
But I am over the hills, and away  
For Bread.

---

## WHIST A WEE

---

“**W**HIST A WEE!”  
Little brown Dee  
Peers from her shelter  
Of bush and of tree.  
Her time she is biding  
To leap from her hiding.  
And she says unto me:  
“Don’t look this way, big man, or they’ll see  
You are looking at me:  
Please, please look out at the sea:  
Whist a wee!”

And I walked up the sands,  
And three little rebels took hold of my hands;  
And they said: “Do you know  
Where a little brown maid,  
In a little brown plaid,  
Did go?”  
And I lied and said: “No.”  
And they scampered away  
Like young squirrels at play;  
And looked all over and under the rocks  
For a glimpse of brown frocks.  
And I heard a quick cry  
From the shade of the tree  
Saying to me—  
Yes, saying to me:  
“You’re a dear, you’re a dear.”

And I said, "Whist a wee;  
The rebels are all returning for thee."  
And she hugged to the tree.

\*      \*

"Whist a wee," just three little words:  
But I heard them to-day in the song of the birds.  
And the waters all sang as I walked by the sea:  
"Whist a wee, whist a wee."  
And I looked behind bush and I looked behind tree;  
And the birds still were there and the busy song bee.  
But little brown Dee,  
With her solemn "Whist a wee,"  
Spake not unto me.

And over the hills I went,  
And a gentle mound  
I found;  
Lying like some fairy's lost pillow upon the ground.  
And I knelt on my knee  
And wrote on the sand,  
With a sorrowing hand:  
"Little brown Dee  
Sleeps here by the sea:  
All ye who pass,  
Whist a wee!"

## BOOK II

### *The Flagon of Wine and Bitters*

---

ELEGY WRITTEN AT THE GRAVE OF A  
MATERIALIST

---

HERE rests a mighty potentate  
In darkness and the common mould:  
For one mad moment he was great  
To men whose judgment lies in gold.

For him long litanies were said,  
And organ thunder swelled the air;  
Yet now the tree above his bed  
Is of his presence unaware.

There is no hint in grass or sky  
That he was rich who sleeps below.  
Of them who on her bosom lie  
The earth hath never care to know.

And not one flower above his tomb  
Shall burn for him a purer red.  
He rests in his low-ceilinged room  
As any pauper who is dead.

Yea, here he lies who looked at life  
Through glasses that reversed all worth,  
Extolled the bauble and the strife  
And dwarfed the lovely things of earth.



Great, lustrous diamonds, cooled by shade,  
Lay in his vaults like deathless ice;  
Yet on his hoard was never laid  
The brighter jewels of sacrifice.

Now slow, ironic grave-worms gnaw  
The flesh that men once held in fear:  
The grim, irrevocable law  
Has brought him like all mortals here.

And all his wealth of brick and stone,  
His carven door and graven gate  
Are his no more: he sleeps alone,  
And they but mock his final state.

For he had dreamed an idle dream—  
That gold was power, and now he lies  
Where nothing can restore the gleam  
Or tear the bandage from his eyes.

Oblivious to the sky and trees  
He took his years with furious stride;  
And all the finer ecstasies  
Were left untasted when he died.

The stream, that wandered by his door,  
Flowed through his granite years, unheard.  
He walked the meadow's fragrant floor  
Heedless of singing wind or bird.

For him in vain the goldenrod  
Burned yellow candles everywhere;  
In vain the milkweed broke her pod  
And then unbound her silver hair.

Sightless, he walked between the glow  
Of roses on a ridge of dawn  
And lilies like forgotten snow  
After the winter days are gone.

And heedless too in heart and brain  
He heard the wild, autumnal choir,  
Or saw October drown with rain  
Her golden flame and crimson fire.

Great leagues of dawn broke on his lands;  
But now his little day is done.  
And here he rests with empty hands,  
A stranger to the earth and sun.

---

## SONG FOR A DYING CIVILIZATION

---

YOU'RE deaf as the deaf and blind as the blind:  
You're always limping in the ranks behind.  
You laughed at Moses with his tablets ten.  
From the very first you have hated strong men.  
You threw brave Daniel in the Lion's den  
As you limped, limped, limped along.  
You killed good men from Beersheba to Dan,  
And you crucified Jesus, that amazing man;  
And you sneered at His life and you laughed at His  
plan,  
And you jeered at His wonderful song.

When you slept in mud,  
In a cold, black cave,  
You called for the blood  
Of the seer who gave  
The first rude hint of a better abode  
Than the room you shared with the snake and the  
toad.  
For the prophets to you are always wrong:  
You hate their vision and you hate their song.  
And though they lifted you out of your slime  
To the top of a sun-kissed hill,  
As then and now, to the end of Time,  
You'll go on hating them still.

You brought in, to Herod, John the Baptist's head.  
You stoned poor Stephen for a word he said.

You murdered Savonarola, the brave man,  
With hands of a cave-woman, hands of a cave-man.  
You held smiling Cranmer in the fire's red play;  
And you lynched Gene Debs in a slow-motion way.  
All these you killed and buried with laughter;  
But you'll canonize them all a hundred years after.

Flesh at the summit and soul at the base;  
A seer-hating people and an ape-loving race!  
The wrestlers strip and the women applaud:  
(Who said they were made in the image of God?)  
You would think four years in the stink of war  
Would sicken them of blood, but they call for more.  
They toss a shilling to the poor and old;  
But they pour out millions in a pot of gold:  
They shovel in guineas with a wild delight  
When two men-beasts of the jungle fight.

A banquet is spread in a sun-domed hall:  
But few men come at the Master's call.  
The rich leaves burn on the lone wood-aisles,  
The white rivers thunder down granite defiles,  
The black sky weeps and the blue sky smiles,  
But where are the guests to-day?  
They are crowded in rooms, they are massed in line,  
And they gorge their bellies on the husks of swine,  
And their eyes are bleared with smoke and wine,  
And what can the Master say?



Fools on the highway, fools in the air:  
Their goggled eyes have a demon's stare.  
They kill and maim and the roads run red.  
Their hearts are shrivelled and their souls are dead.  
If a dunce goes up in a gassed balloon  
Three feet nearer to the gray old moon  
Than any vain dunce ever went before  
The mayors will shout and the governors roar.  
It's novelty, speed; what else should count?  
Who gives a damn for the Sermon on the Mount?  
Huddled in rooms on the fourth floor back,  
Gazing through glass where the sky seems black,  
Are the poets and prophets and men who take  
The cross and the sneer for a mad world's sake.

Who cares to walk the fields of the King,  
Where the strong hills wait and the great trees sing?  
Who cares for the word of the seer or the bard?  
Who wanders alone when the nights are starred?  
The madness of Sodom is upon our heads:  
We hate in our marts and we lust in our beds.  
In vain do the five great oceans roar;  
In vain do the leaves in a red rain pour;  
In vain do the hills lift high their snows;  
In vain is the call of the wild wood rose;  
In vain is the pleading of the prophet's breath;  
For the orchestra is Jazz and the dance is Death.

---

CONVOCATION

---

WHO calls learning grim, who says her garb is  
sober?

Here she sits gowned to-day like red October.  
Red are the Oxford gowns; scarlet the clergy:  
Who would have gloomy black, shining and sergy?  
Law has her crimson—blood-saver and blood-spiller—  
Law the mock-friend of life, law the arch-killer.  
Here in this wine-red light that warms and hallows  
Sit men who sent comrade-men to the grim gallows.  
This priest's hand is wet with oil from the unction;  
That man's head is stuffed with writ and injunction.  
All here, whatever else, are humble in the knowledge  
They are of God's favored few who are gowned at  
college.

The Chancellor is very old; his gray beard falls  
Like thick-leaved ivy on grim old walls.  
To grant the dignity of years—this is his mission:  
He is here to keep the world true to tradition.  
Here's the young provost—a fresh-souled apostle;  
He's here to keep all the rest from going to fossil.  
One ear to the world and one to the cloister:  
He's willing to pray a bit or ready to roister.  
Here's another man with belly like a goitre;  
At turning Greek phrases none could be adroiter.  
All he loves or all he hates is far-away, historic:  
His comrades are Athenians; his gods are all Doric.



At his side is the Bishop (daily growing fatter)  
Come what will, come what may, he's a stand-patter.  
There's academic lustre in his very attitudes:  
Sunday after Sunday he wallows in platitudes.  
He's proud of his gay robes and his name's handle;  
And his dull life is free from all hint of scandal.  
Yonder is another bishop, mellow and kindly:  
He does not swallow rules and creeds wholly and  
    blindly.  
He tested this and gauged its worth before he took it;  
If he found aught that did not measure true he for-  
    sook it.  
He came slowly forward, breasting all opposition,  
But swiftly his foes fell before his erudition.  
Some called him radical; some called him queasy:  
But always in his presence knave or bigot felt uneasy.  
The cobwebbed fundamentalists all said he shamed  
    his collar;  
But he went on his way—a Christian, gentleman and  
    scholar.

## II.

Wine-red the light falls from the draped clusters;  
Falls on the noble band which Learning here musters;  
Falls on the graduates and their proud triangles:  
Naught is here that disturbs, nothing that wrangles.  
Yet these are highwaymen—wisdom their plunder—  
In their honor the great organ breaks into thunder.  
The cold walls are shaking; the gilded reeds tremble:  
It took an hour's manoeuvring ere all could assemble.

First spoke the President, quietly, circumspectly:  
Nothing had he to say and he said the thing correctly.  
In his brain no protest ever was resident:  
The Governors all knew that when they made him  
    President.  
The Provost followed him—a young man straight  
    and ruddy—  
Who equally liked bishops and fools who wouldn't  
    study.  
He loved good verse and good wine, and didn't fear  
    to show it:  
And nothing pleased him more than to hob-nob with  
    a poet.  
He dared a jest and made a speech at once profound  
    and witty:  
And as he spoke one ancient Don sat purring like a  
    kitty.  
After his speech he called men up for honors from  
    his college:  
Three plutocrats, a general, and one poor man of  
    knowledge.  
Honoris causa—some one said, and all the seers and  
    scholars  
Rose up in reverent array and bowed the knee to  
    dollars.  
The General was a man of most wonderful propul-  
    sion:  
He hadn't heard of Marmion but knew of Scott's  
    Emulsion.

An old-time scholar shuddered as the LL. D.'s were going.

"In youthful lands," he sighed, "the dollars make a splendid showing."

### III.

Wine-red the light falls from the draped clusters;  
Falls on the noble band which Learning here musters.  
Red are the Oxford gowns, black the triangles  
Naught is here that disturbs, nothing that wrangles.  
Wisdom has had its hour—wisdom, I wonder!  
Once more the organ reeds break into thunder  
Out they go—President, Chancellor and Scholars  
Riding on the chariots of gentlemen of dollars.

---

### THE CHINK

---

A QUIET, cultured Celestial,  
Honor-man at Shanghai,  
Ph.D. from Harvard,  
And with an infinitely fine  
Background of thoughtful ancestors  
Bequeathing to him  
The amazing bequest of wisdom,  
Passed this morning, as quietly  
As light sliding down a wave,  
A group of Canadians  
Whose ancestors were money grubbers,  
And whose souls were jazz,  
Who told lewd tales,  
Spat, smoked, swore and whored;  
And one Canadian said,  
"There goes a damned Chink."

The foreigner heard the remark  
With fine forbearance  
Bred in his bone through centuries,  
And he passed on with a smile,  
Forgetting—in that gesture—  
As only gentlemen can forget.

Perhaps he chuckled when he passed,  
But not in their hearing,  
For white men alone  
Are masters of rudeness.  
Here was civilization:  
Ten rowdies hurling insults,  
Some of word and some of eye,  
At men and women who passed:  
Proud Anglo-Saxons  
Arrogant in their inferiority,  
With service-station culture  
And gasoline-odored minds.  
Afar, in China, was savagery  
And barbarianism—  
The savagery of quiet discussion  
Under the bloom of magnolias,  
The chanting of Confucius  
In some old temple;  
The dream and drip of oars  
On ancient rivers.

Countryman of China,  
My countryman,  
I salute you.  
My brethren are the tolerant,  
The unintrusive, the cultured,  
The men who do not sneer;  
The men who hate the sword;

The men who love the garment of laughter  
Better than the cloth of gold.  
Yellow men, bronze men, black men,  
And some white men  
Who still care to wander at night  
With the milk-white mantle of the moon  
Over their shoulders thrown carelessly.



---

## AN UNCONVENTIONAL EASTER SONG

---

THE toyman sighs for Christmas,  
The printer sighs for the same.  
They'll both make yellow dollars  
Out of the High Priest's name.  
The florist sighs for Easter  
When lilies sell for pay;  
And all the business men grow fat  
On every Jesus-day.

To Him upon a Friday  
The bakers all give thanks.  
For buns will bring them shining gold  
To fill their hungry banks.  
The haberdashers, milliners  
And all the clothing men  
Are very glad on Easter morn  
That Jesus rose again.

On Mother's day the business men  
Sell roses by the ton.  
Her name is good, but not so good  
As Mother-Mary's son.  
The Cross of Cedar always made  
A splendid business tryst;  
And so, on every Jesus-day,  
The tags are higher priced.

---

## THE SONG OF THE DEAF CHICKEN

---

"Now look here, Abe,"  
Said old Judge Deeks,  
"You've been here five times  
In de last four weeks.

"And every time  
You've showed such repentance  
Dat ah've let you go  
On suspended sentence.

"Did you steal dat chicken  
Of Farmer Brown?  
If you're guilty dis time  
You are going down."

"Not guilty," said Abe  
In a voice very mild.  
"Ah'm as innocent, Judge,  
As a new-born child.

"I was out last night  
Just walking up and down  
Past de chicken coop  
Of Farmer Brown.

"And I thought of you, Judge,  
You're so good and kind,  
But de thought of chicken  
Never crossed mah mind.

"But as ah walked home  
From dat old hen coop  
Two chickens followed me  
To my own back stoop.

"So ah said: 'Go home!'  
In a very stern bref.  
And one chicken heard,  
And one it was deaf.

"And de one dat heard  
Right back home flew.  
But de deaf hen remained—  
So what could ah do?

"If you let me go  
Dis once, Judge Deeks,  
Ah won't eat chicken  
For de next fowh weeks."

Said de Judge, "You'll keep  
Dat promise widout fail;  
Cause you'll spend de next  
Four weeks in jail.

"You'd a got four years,"  
He said under his bref,  
"If de chicken dat followed you  
Hadn't been deaf."

Old Judge Deeks  
Is a powerful figure.  
In all South Georgia  
Dere's no one bigger.

---

## THE SONG OF THE JAZZ HOUNDS

---

DEAD leaves, dead leaves whirling round and round;  
Whither are they going, whither are they bound!  
The floor is glass  
And the dancers glide:  
Their eyes are graves  
Where their souls have died.  
They are lifeless leaves whirling in a throng  
To a Hell-born rune, to a Hell-born song.

The gramophones gnaw at the dear, quiet air,  
And the fools' fevered feet move everywhere.  
They toddle and strut,  
And grace moans low  
For the stately steps  
Of the long ago.  
But there's no rhyme where the hot breath pants,  
And the Jazz-Hounds bay and the lost souls dance.

Breast to breast and knees scraping knees;  
They have given their flesh to a foul disease.  
What unto them  
Is the poet's song!  
Or the great gaunt trees  
In a choric throng!  
Or the wan waves wimpling on a long, low shore,  
Or the little winds crying like a child at the door.

On with the jazz—till the cold, pale morn  
When the cock will crow like the judgment horn.  
The floor is glass  
And the dancers glide:  
Their eyes are graves  
Where their souls have died.  
They strut and toddle, they shimmy and crawl  
While the moon grows white and the many stars fall.

If Jesus were here but from dusk to dawn  
The dancers would cry, "Let the dance go on."  
For who is Jesus  
When the jazz-pipes groan,  
And breast meets breast  
And bone grips bone?  
Yea, who is Jesus when the Jazz-Hounds throng  
At the raucous cry of a Hell-born song?



---

## THE HOUSE OF REBELS

---

PROUDLY I take my seat among the rebels:  
The despised and hated of all times and places,  
The inhabitants of prisons, the wearers of manacles,  
The dignitaries of crosses, the royal receivers of  
stones,  
The great and little saviours of the world.

These are they who went out into the darkness  
That the children of the morrow might know light.  
These are they who drank of wormwood and gall  
That the children of the morrow might drink wine.  
These are they who fasted in the wilderness of hate  
That the children of the morrow might eat at the  
table of love.

In the House of Rebels I find no Pilate or Caesar,  
No king or prince or judge or rich merchant.  
In the room I likewise find no craven or coward,  
For a coward never chooses the way of danger;  
And hatred and danger are the full portion of the  
rebel.

He wets the lips of the peoples who curse him;  
He washes the feet of the peoples who tread on him;  
He feeds the mouths of the peoples who spit on him.

On my way to the House of Rebels, with its rude  
benches,  
I pass divans flowing with silk and blushing with  
color.  
I pass couches that look as restful as a summer cloud.  
I pass a bevy of maidens moving together as grace-  
fully

As a group of roses in the vagrant air of June.  
I pass houses of marble, costumes of silk and wool,  
Carriages that outrun the antelope.  
I pass a table whereon is spread the cup of leisure,  
The bread of esteem and the meat of friendship,  
And as I pass I know all these things might be mine  
Did I forego the rude benches in the House of Rebels.

In the House of Rebels I know the luxury of sorrow,  
The warmth of nakedness and the comradeship of  
solitude.

I know the pain of the cross and the fire of the torch:  
I know the infinitely more horrible sneers of the fool.  
But as I sit among the outcasts on the hard, rude  
benches  
The exclusive joy of the rebel is in my heart.

In this house will I sit until all men  
And all women have equal opportunity.  
My voice shall protest forever the pampered,  
The indolent, the insolent and the over-indulged of  
the avenues.  
Equally do I protest the gaunt eyes and thin legs  
That in the hueless alleys starve for light.

I protest stock-brokers, middlemen, soldiers,  
Gamblers, prize-fighters and all paid athletes.  
I raise my voice eternal against hypocrisy;  
Against those daughters of the Janus soul  
Who smile to eastward and to westward scowl.

I protest affectation of language or manner,  
And loathe the snob with his carefully cultivated  
drawl.

I speak in no faltering tongue against fashion,  
Believing each person should dress after his own  
heart.

I denounce preachers in fat pulpits,  
For the word of truth brings not riches but poverty  
I raise my voice in fierce denunciation  
Against all men who overeat, overwork or overplay;  
Against moral reformers who would legislate unto  
Heaven;

Against physicians who employ serums and vaccines  
And become maniacs of the knife;  
Against all private profit from necessities,  
And ultimately against all currency of metal or paper.  
I announce my decision against all privilege and all  
license;

Against all prisons that are not reformative;  
Against the rope, the knife and the electric chair.  
And above all do I protest the materialist,  
The frequenter of churches, the visitor to hospitals,  
The speaker heard from each and every platform,  
Who never broke the law in word or deed;

Whose alms are extolled from every housetop,  
But whose heart is barren of love, whose eye hath no  
fancy,  
And whose soul never caught up a fragment of  
beauty  
From the low flower to the high star.

I protest also ragtime—the music of harlots—  
Overlooking no harmony in syncopation,  
But likewise overlooking no discord.  
I decry the poem of faultless rhyme and rhythm  
Which is neither flecked with rain or sun or wind,  
Or spattered with blood or tears or the morning dews.  
I sing against that fool—the optimist—  
Who, treading on slain men and murdered children,  
Sickens the very heavens with his smiles.  
I despise the man who asks, "Do you love Jesus?"  
And the knave in black who prays where all men  
hear.

I speak boldly against motor boats and cars,  
Knowing they have taken away more than they have  
given.

I protest the starvation of our neglected creators  
And the luxury of our overpaid performers.  
I weep for the poverty of the ploughman of Ayr,  
And rebel at the wealth of men who stole his songs.  
And in all my protestation, in all my rebellion  
You will find that I would banish nothing that is  
good.



Come with me, comrade, into the House of Rebels.  
The benches are hard, I assure you, and the cushions  
few;  
But the comradeship is milk and honey to the soul.  
Look over the rebels: here is Savanarola,  
Here Luther, here Tolstoi, here Stephen,  
And here the arch-rebel of them all;  
The summit of vehemence, the acme of denunciation,  
The hater of sham; the incomparable,  
Shunned, despised, hated, crucified Jesus;  
The High-Priest of the cult of protest,  
The Prince who sits all day long in the House of  
Rebels.

---

### AH'VE DONE QUIT STEALIN'

---

“A<sup>H</sup>’ve done quit stealin’,  
Ah’ve done quit stealin’;  
Ah’m awful scared of de burnin’ fire.  
But de ole desire lingers  
In dis Negro’s black fingers;  
And, O good Lawd, make de chickens roost higher.  
Fo’ though ah’ve quit stealin’ and ah’m saved from  
Hell,  
White chicken fried in butter has a mighty nice smell.  
From now on dis Negro will be pure as snow;  
But, Lawd, don’t you let de chickens roost low.”

“Amen, amen,”  
All de women moaned.  
“Amen, amen,”  
All de men groaned.  
“We’ll all obey de angels, way up in de sky;  
But, O good Lawd, make de chickens roost  
high.”

De preacher den looked in dat Negro’s direction:  
“Eef yo’ got repentance in yo’ black complexion  
Ah think de time is opportune to take up de collec-  
tion.



"Now eef you put a quarter on de old brass plate  
 You'll travel up to Heaven in fust-class state.  
 But eef yo' put a dime on de old brass platter  
 You'll journey up dere as second-class matter.  
 And eef yo' put a nickle you'd better feel blue,  
 Fo' ah think you'll have some trouble before you  
 squeeze through.  
 But eef yo' put a button on dat old collection  
 You're going straight to Heaven in de wrong direc-  
 tion."

"Mr. Preacher," said de Negro, "mah name is Mose  
 Jones,  
 And am awful generous in mah blood and in mah  
 bones.  
 Mah family all are generous—mah cousins and mah  
 aunts;  
 But ah'm generous in mah soul and ah'm stingy in  
 mah pants.  
 So, dear Mr. Preacher, though ah feels affection  
 Ah can't put any money on de church collection."

"Amen, amen,"

All de women moaned.

"Amen, amen,"

All de men groaned.

"We'll all obey de angels, way up in de sky;

But, O good Lawd, make de chickens roost high."

## WAR

His feet are rotting  
 From a slow gangrene;  
 His tusks are yellow  
 And his eyes are green.  
 But the church of god  
 Calls him sweet and clean.

His flesh is livid  
 With copper-hued sores.  
 He ravishes lads  
 And he sleeps with whores.  
 But the church of god  
 Lets him in her doors.

His eyes are founts  
 Of greed, hate, lust;  
 And he killed high freedom  
 With a quick, cold thrust.  
 But the church of god  
 Has declared him just.

O church of god,  
 Where the great hymns roar,  
 Is that the man, Jesus,  
 Going from your door?  
 Is he going to make room  
 For your red saint, War?

---

## A SONG OF THE ULTIMATE

---

THE rose having risen  
from green slime,  
and the broad banyan-tree  
having come to its spread  
and its beauty  
from spawn of the stars,  
who shall deny the great gift  
of emergence in life?  
Or who shall weep over  
discouraging years  
when discouraging aeons  
were lifted from chaos to order?  
I, a serene disbeliever  
in all that surrounds me this hour,  
a hater  
of all the gold gods  
in the Temple of Life,  
rise nevertheless  
to proclaim my strong faith  
in the Ultimate Day.

Thanks to you all I give—  
martyrs, philosophers, poets,  
who toiled and who died  
for the joy of this Ultimate Day.

Your faces peer through my words,  
your voices are in my song,  
your strength has blown  
like a strong wind  
into my spirit.  
I cannot forget any of you  
for I am a part of you.  
Proud am I to be  
descended from you;  
exultant am I,  
the bugles within me triumphantly crying.

I see around me gloom  
and destruction  
and depravity and despair;  
but over all these  
I see the shining  
of a clear, white star  
that heeds them  
no more than Arcturus  
heeds the foul marshes  
which she must behold every night  
from her throne in the sky.  
It is with this star  
that I now keep continual tryst.  
And, whether depravities increase  
or indignities prevail,

I have faith that the pale light  
of this planet will burn  
until it leads us  
to the unutterable loveliness  
of the Coming Day.

I will have nothing to do with Death  
or Sorrow:  
I banish them both.  
They are delusions  
like a will-o-the-wisp  
in the swamplands.  
I shall laugh at the sexton  
who tries to bury me.  
Many times did he cover me with clay,  
and many times have I arisen;  
and every time I arise  
my song is sweeter than before;  
and when you hear me elsewhere  
it shall be sweeter  
than it is now.

I am eager upon all adventures  
for I am a lover of life.  
My sweethearts are weaving in woodlands  
a garment of green,  
are dancing the long, valiant rivers  
in amber and white,  
are waiting in frost-wakened crimson  
on hill and in vale.

I feel comrade hands in the reach of a tree,  
I hear comrade lips in the drone of the wind,  
for I have companioned myself  
with all lovely things  
that wander or bivouac under the cool of the stars.

I laugh at you who say  
this little breath of life is all.  
You, who proclaim this,  
have a full color-blindness of the soul.  
I know where there is a flower  
that pours like crimson wine  
in the wind's flowing,  
and to know that flower  
I need a million years;  
therefore to know all beauty  
must I wrap many eternities about my soul  
and go from star to star  
until I have worn away  
the broad, blue roadways of the skies  
with marching of my feet.

How many and how infinite  
are the pleasures of this world!  
To breathe is to be glad.  
The purple berry and the amber nut  
are sweet to the tongue and lovely to the soul.



We can find rhythm in dancing  
over a field of ferns,  
strength in the hurdling of rocks,  
and peace in the cloister of pines.  
We can sing songs alone on the hills  
or in companies,  
we can run in the healing of dew  
at the gold of the dawn,  
we can dream with a friend at the noon  
in the cool of a tree.

If the meeting of atom with atom  
in darkness  
could rise to the beauty  
of oceans, tremendously moving,  
and rich flaming roses,  
and the infinite tenderness  
flowing from lover to lover,  
what shall be fashioned in workshops,  
unwalled and unroofed,  
in the forever and ever eternally rising?

Then come with me, friend,  
and let us be lovers of life:  
not lovers who rest on their oars, and say,  
"Life is all good."  
The evil is here,  
it is valorous, woeful, terrific.

Destruction is here and is coming:  
the toll must be paid.  
But over these woes, and beyond,  
like a great, shining river,  
I see aeons and aeons of calm,  
indescribable beauty.  
I see many new kingdoms arise,  
and their flags shall be one; universal.  
I behold that strong hour  
when great hosts shall advance into seership,  
When the dumb shall sing morning and night  
with the cadence of poets,  
when a Master shall rise in each heart,  
clear-eyed as the noon.

---

## HARLOT SONG

---

THE big whores and the little whores  
Are out on red parade.  
The little whore walks up the street,  
But the big whore's car is jade.  
The little whore is a frightened thing  
But the big whore's unafraid.

The little whore came to the town  
From meadowlands warm with sun.  
She had wild roses in her cheeks  
And her hair like gold was spun;  
And the town looked on her roses and gold  
As things to be sought and won.

The big whore's price was a wedding ring  
And a car and a diamond pin.  
Her lust was stamped with the seal of law  
And her heart was proud therein,  
And a bishop rose in a long-aisled church  
And sanctified her sin.

A Nazarene and a little whore  
Once met in a holy tryst.  
But the big whores nod on a Sunday morn  
In a marble church of Christ.  
For these in vain were a thousand Lords  
On their crosses sacrificed.

---

## A SONG OF BETTER UNDERSTANDING

---

I SING this song that you may know me better;  
That I may know you better;  
And that we two may burn our false idols  
At the same altar.

I come first to you,  
Young, inland mariner on a sea of flowing grapes,  
In purple France:  
Shaking the carved snow from my hardy shoulders  
I come to you.  
Long has my race, companioned by strong elements,  
Misunderstood the liquid nature of your soul.  
And you, with the same blindness as my own,  
Have called my silent Northmen cold and passionless.  
Let us approach one another, comrade;  
Look in my eyes and I will look in yours;  
And that fair light which falls when soul greets soul  
Will be the first spark to arouse the fires  
Which shall consume our idols.

Your people gave me to drink at the rare founts  
Of Molière, Hugo and Gounod.  
My people renewed your soul of art  
With the clear flow of Shakespeare, Wordsworth and  
Keats.  
A thousand pleasures of the heart and eye  
We owe each other.

Upward reaching toward the same white light  
Have all our yearnings been.  
Only have our idols blinded us through the long, sad  
years.

Now the way is open:  
Consume fires; flame fiercely;  
For an idol does not burn readily,  
And this can never be a Song of Better Understanding  
Until all our false idols are translated into ashes.

Yesterday I said: "I will go kill a German:  
I hate Germans: I hate their diet: I hate their ag-  
gressiveness."

So I buckled on my sword and sought out a Teuton.  
And soon I found one sitting by the roadside,  
And his head was bent in an attitude of profound  
thought.

Then I said: "My enemy, I have come to kill you."  
And he answered quietly, "I will let you slay me  
If you will permit my body to fall on the floor of  
yonder chapel."

So we journeyed to the chapel and entered its soli-  
tude;

But as I prepared my sword he chanted to me,  
In the rich accents of his thoughtful tongue, a song  
of Goethe.

His Goethe? Nay! My Goethe? Nay! Our Goethe?  
Yea!

And when I raised my sword I turned, savagely, and  
slew

Not him, but one of my idols—my false idols.

Then from the chapel organ a soft sound crept with  
panther tread;

And through the windows of song passed, like a great  
wind,

All the pent-up passions of the ages. "The Appassion-  
ata," I cried:

His Appassionata? Nay! My Appassionata? Nay!  
Our Appassionata? Yea!

And I swung my sword more savagely than before,  
and slew,

Not him, but all of my idols—my false idols.

And when the last note had folded its head, like a  
tired child,

In the arms of silence, leaving our hearts, like sea  
beaches,

White and shining after the tempest has passed be-  
yond,

My enemy and I sang together the greatest song of  
man:

The Song of Better Understanding.

And, when we parted, I said:

"All white men are my brothers: I will slay a white  
man no more.



Only are the black men my enemies, and the yellow men.

I will go and kill an African or a man of China."

And soon I found a yellow man sitting by the roadside:

And his head was bent in an attitude of profound thought.

Then I said as before, "My enemy, I have come to kill you."

And he answered quietly, "I will let you slay me  
If you will let my body fall on the soft sands of the sea-shore."

"And why the sea-shore?" I said. And he replied to me:

"There is a star which I love better than all stars;  
And, if I fall upon the sands, my last look will be upon that star."

Then from his lips flowed the wisdom of Confucius.  
And my sword fell helpless and I said:

"I loved that star best of all stars in old England;  
And I loved that truth of your seer best of all truths:  
Let us sing together;" and we, lovers of the same star,  
Locked arms upon the rim of No-Man's sea, and sang  
"The Song of Better Understanding."

What antagonism to America and her States  
Shall override our granite debt to Emerson,  
To Lowell, to Poe, to musical Lanier;  
To Whitman who blasphemed the god of Technique;  
To Whittier whose life was a gentle song!  
What prejudice against Italian fury  
Is justified when we unbare the page  
Of Dante; or when eye and soul regale  
In the majestic sweep of Michael Angelo!

I sing this song that you might know me better;  
That I might know you better.  
For now is the day at hand when we shall behold  
The dust of all our broken idols, our false gods,  
Paving the streets where lusty mortals walk,  
Chanting the hymns of Barbary and her hosts.

O magnificent hosts! I can see them pass and repass,  
Singing, in diapason of a universal love,  
"The Song of Better Understanding."

BOOK III

*The Hagon of White Wine*

---

BRAS D'OR

---

WHEN I saw, under the diamond stars,  
The jewel-heavy Lake Louise  
I dreamed the last of the avatars  
Had come in the guise of rocks and trees  
And water and sky and fragrant breeze,  
And cried: "No beauty shall ever again  
Stab me as now with its lovely pain."  
But here, on a lone, amazing shore,  
The old wound opens afresh once more,  
And I laugh and weep  
By the singing floor  
Of the lovely, wild, untamable deep  
That men have called Bras d'Or.

If I could give the strength of a man  
To a woman's beauty and charm,  
If I could merge, in a noble plan,  
A lady's foot and a warrior's arm,  
I would have a parallel to thee,  
O beauty of lake, O strength of sea.  
My heart is weeping; I had not come  
Prepared for this glory of wind and foam;  
Nor wonder I now that the bards are dumb,  
For here is beauty come home, come home;



Come home to rest in shadow of rock,  
In sound of the sea, in strength of the land,  
Where the birch and the tamarack interlock,  
And the hemlocks dance a saraband.

Bras d'Or, Bras d'Or,  
Deep, dark Bras d'Or!  
I search down vellum aisles of lore,  
In vain I search, for evermore,  
For words that sing thy peerless shore.  
But who has sung thee in a strong  
And valiant pæan of pure song,  
O Queen of wonders,  
Half sea, half lake,  
Where the ocean's trapped heart leaps and thunders,  
And the first dawns break?

Crawling low, like a crouching lynx,  
Gloom creeps under the crowding spruce.  
Silence is there, like an unveiled sphinx,  
Answering not the winds that loose  
Shriek and wail and roar and whine,  
As they go by with a crying hoof  
Over the forest's fragrant pine,  
Over the cedar's scented roof.  
But the heart of the wood remains aloof  
Like a poet's holy shrine.

The hills around are prone in sleep,  
And oh, the glory of their dreams!  
The old spruce crowd the rocky steep,  
And drink at night the white moonbeams,  
Yet grow no whiter for this fare  
But darken the forests everywhere.  
In all the world there is no quiet  
So sweet as under the spruce and pine:  
The swift wind, running in a riot,  
Can never this peace divine.

High on a cliff, where the wind alarms,  
A lone spruce stands with a child of snow—  
A pure-white child—in her ebon arms;  
And the winter fears that she will go  
Away with her burden far over the sea;  
And her smoke-like hands  
Lift up from the lands  
And a hopeless grief is in her plea.  
Yet the Nubian shall not leave this shore,  
But in April rain will she restore  
The stolen child  
To the great, rock-piled,  
The untamable, wild  
Bras d'Or.

Dark is the hue of spruce and pine,  
And dark is the hemlock's sheen;

And their colors vie, on this long shoreline,  
With the ocean's deeper green—  
The green that flows, with never a care,  
Like a running maiden's hair,  
Caught here and there with the ivory comb  
Of a wandering wisp of foam.  
Oh, many a robe has this sea or lake;  
(Call her whatever you will).  
A robe of green will her beauty take  
Whenever the winds are still.  
And a robe of white  
Is her delight  
When the crying breeze comes down the height.  
And she comes in crimson, she comes in gold  
At the choric cry of dawn;  
And she comes in gray  
At the close of day—  
The gray of a lovely fawn.  
But, whatever she wears, this shy Bras d'Or  
Is soul of loveliness evermore.

Like an antlered stag, one leafless tree  
Leans over the water's brink;  
But there's bitter salt in the spuming sea  
That never will let it drink.  
And a thousand spruce lean over the crag—  
You can hear their panting breath —  
Like hounds they harried this wounded stag  
And now are in at the death.

A hundred thousand years ago  
The land unto the sea did cry:  
"You are less lovely far than I."  
And the two agreed that it was best  
To put their rival charms to test.  
And they met on the wild, untamable shore  
Of the great, rock-piled Bras d'Or.  
And the sea put on pale gossamer—  
Green as a leaf young-born—  
And the land walked down in a robe of fir,  
Half crimson from the morn.  
And when they met, in the clear salt air,  
The gods, who came from everywhere,  
Could not tell which one was more fair.  
But they all declared, when the sun had set,  
That the loveliest sea and land had met.

This hour my soul flew out of me,  
And only my flesh goes on, goes on:  
And my heart is down by the pounding sea  
In a kingdom lovely as light at dawn.  
And I'll wander there, kept warm by snow  
And Viking winds, and on midnights rare,  
When the winds are sleeping everywhere,  
Beauty and I together shall row  
A phantom craft between sun and sun,  
Or moon and moon when the day is done,  
Or star and star when no moon is there.



And our oars shall move in rhythm slow  
From singing shore unto singing shore  
Of the lovely, wild,  
The strong, rock-piled,  
The undefiled  
Bras d'Or.

You can keep from me your gifts of gold;  
But the earth is warm when men are cold;  
And none shall ever keep from me  
The lyric lore of a laughing sea;  
For all my heart is an open door  
Wherein the tides of beauty pour:  
Beauty of blue at amber noon,  
Beauty of dark at silver dusk,  
Beauty of song in the water's croon,  
Beauty of brown in the hazel's husk,  
Beauty of gloom and fog and rain;  
And when I hunger for loveliness  
I'll turn toward dawn, in my cold distress,  
And seek Bras d'Or again.

Blue of the sky and green of the sea  
And black of a freighter's hull,  
And the little village Shenacadie—  
White as a resting gull;  
And far shores, veiled in a purple mist,  
Where great streams, clear as amethyst,

To the leaping speckled-trout's delight  
Break into white  
On a plunging height;  
And the yellowing cream of the surging salt,  
And the granite bastions crying halt  
To the legioned waters marching there  
With the spice of Trinidad in their hair,  
And the iceberg's cold within their bones  
To chill the heart of the bloodless stones—  
The ice-clad stones that challenge the sea  
At the doors of white Shenacadie.

Not all the stars can be given sweet rest  
On this watery couch, so they flame in war.  
And the victors shall lie on a sea-lake's breast  
And rest there evermore.  
And this is their crowning, starry quest—  
To sleep on the violet floor  
Of the lovely, wild,  
The great, rock-piled,  
The undefiled  
Bras d'Or.

When summer comes, and the winds upcurl,  
And the waves are like a sandalled girl,  
The rains will comb with a sweeping rake  
The silver grass of this flowering lake.  
And a younger green, like flame, will break  
Over the darker spruce and fir,  
Over the deeper hues that were.



And the quays shall break in a hum and stir,  
And the shining sails shall pout and purr;  
And swarthy sailors  
And red-cheeked whalers,  
Who took the sea as an early bride,  
Shall cheer these ports with their lyric stride.

Bras d'Or, Bras d'Or,  
Dark, wild Bras d'Or!  
Who now would dream, beneath this sky,  
The summer air went wimpling by!  
Who now would dream the hours could tame  
These leaping waters, white as flame!  
What shall I call thee? Lake or sea,  
Or prisoner of the iron hills,  
With doors ajar that you might go free  
Whenever the spirit wills!  
To-day my heart is breaking with song,  
My lips are prayers and my tongue is praise,  
And my troubled spirit again is strong,  
And dear is the light upon my days—  
The light that comes in the open door  
And falls in peace on the singing shore  
Of the great, rock-piled,  
The undefiled,  
Untamable, wild  
Bras d'Or.

---

## WOOD INVOCATION

---

THOU of the pitying rain  
And the caressing sunlight;  
Thou of the bending willow  
And of the mercy of yielding water!  
Didst Thou not pillar the gloom  
Of this deep-shadowed wood  
With columns of silver birch  
Lest moonlight, entering here,  
Should be afraid?

Pine-shadowed woods are lovely:  
Under the tamaracks I go  
With night-adventuring joy.  
Nor shall I fear the dark  
While the white candles of the shining birch  
Are held like guiding torches everywhere.  
They burn their unmelting wax with silver fire  
In this first chancel of the singing world.

Who goes buccaneering at noon,  
In full, untempered light,  
Keeps, as the kernel of his joy,  
The memory of a cool grove  
Where the brass cornets of the sun  
Muffle with shade their golden chords of sound.

Thou of the pitying rain  
And the caressing sunlight,  
Hear then this invocation of my soul;  
And may Thy love like silver birches flame  
Beside that woodland trail where I must go:  
Where the pines drone sadly,  
And the tamaracks arch darkly,  
And the cedars mourn for shadowy Lebanon.

---

ART

---

WHAT is that art  
A pale butterfly knows  
When it lies in the heart  
Of a flaming, red rose?

Ask the young moon  
Now drifting on high  
At the roof of the noon  
On a gold summer sky.

---

SUN RITUAL

---

OUT of the city's claw,  
Out of her reach of hate,  
Out of her crime of law  
I come through a long-closed gate.

Out of speech that is dumb  
Into the eloquent word  
Of the Silent Speaker I come,  
And hear what the dreamers heard.

I muse by the sea and find,  
In ageless water and sand,  
The Word of the Master's mind,  
The grope of the Master's hand.

Here, in a vacant pew  
In the first great Church of Time,  
I learn what the young world knew  
And lost in its wiser prime.

Here I explore high thought  
With the strong urge of life—  
Not by the ethic-ought  
Nor by the prober's knife.

And here, in a wind's phrase,  
Those mysteries are made plain  
Which wise men all their days  
Could nevermore regain.



---

## A SELKIRK SUMMIT

---

GRANITE stepping on granite,  
Stone lifting on stone;  
Hard, bald, cold, jagged, loveless ridges!  
Fissured rocks whose awful gaping reveals  
Glaciers glittering like the cruelty of eyes!  
Crag that toss down the gauntlet of death!  
Streams spilled carelessly from granite cups  
Into a marble bowl miles deep in the valley!  
Everywhere hardness: the wind is cut to ribbons  
On the toothed edge of a high boulder.  
Even the stars are like hard jewels:  
Like cold diamonds they cut the glass of the sky  
When they fall. There is no tree, no flower,  
No grass, no fern, nor any gentle thing.  
"Hard-voiced God, strong God, stern God," I cry:  
"God the relentless, God the austere, God of Sinai."

Then, cupped in a shy corner of rock,  
I behold a frail flower, one flower, one only,  
Woven by the strong God in an after mood.  
"What a giant-swing," I muse, "from the hardness  
of rock,  
From the wintry-white glitter of stars  
To the softness of stamens, the wool of a stem,  
The milk of a root, the aroma of petals;  
Soft-voiced God," I cry, "God of forgiveness and  
mercy,  
God not of Sinai, but of the hills of Galilee."

---

## BEFORE DAWN

---

THERE is in this slow flood of dark, that moves  
Across the shoreless void, a stern rebuke  
To that vain crash and that unending roar  
Which lashes these deep canyons at high noon.  
In this great ocean of quiet, beneath whose tides  
The temporary dead await the dawn,  
All vanity is stilled; and hates and loves,  
That rose like mountains in the reign of light,  
Have melted in this crucible of peace.

Nightly we come as players to rehearse  
The Drama of Eternal Rest, that calls  
All mortals to the footlights, soon or late;  
Nor could we go to Death so gallantly  
Had we not learned the friendliness of slumber.  
O blessed haven of man, where he may go  
And in Lethean gloom forget all strife  
And tears and the sad discord of the world,  
And where his soul may find the level calm  
Of that sublime democracy of Sleep.

Cool are the fingers of Somnus, dewy cool.  
They rest upon our fevered brows with love  
And a dear mothering; and patiently  
They cradle us until our souls forget  
All the severities of life, and lie  
In the unfevered groves with that same peace  
Upon us which Endymion's dreaming knew  
In the rich Dorian darkness. O sweet Sleep,  
I would your somnolence might destroy  
All memory of hate, that we might rise  
At every dawn as childlike as the sun,  
With all our loves refreshed, and all our hates  
Drowned in the cauldron of forgetfulness.

Apparelled with the opulence of dreams,  
I stand as a traveler who has returned  
From many and wondrous lands, and wait the dawn.  
And in this waiting hour I mend my shield  
And strengthen my armor for another day  
When I must wander down discordant aisles  
And dream of woodland trails forevermore.

---

## SIERRA MADRE

---

LOVELY sounds "Sierra Madre"  
When a Spaniard speaks the name.  
Down the hills of California  
Never sweeter music came.  
For a Spanish curse is music;  
And a Spanish blessing falls  
Like the breath of orange lilies  
On the stoic mission walls.

For the northland I salute you,  
Mother of the many hills!  
At your feet a flaming garden  
Where the loom of beauty mills.  
On your brow a whiter blossom  
Than the valleys hold in fee  
From the slopes of Altadena  
To the bugles of the sea.

With the child of dawn I saw you,  
Palest gray about you thrown;  
In the wisp of southern twilight,  
Blood of roses, fairly blown,  
Glistened in your gayer gowning.  
Yea, a Spaniard once did swear,  
"Never twice the same adornment  
Does Sierra Madre wear."

From the lawns of Pasadena,  
With their orange-lighted halls  
Where the pepper leaves are raining  
In a shower that never falls,  
I have watched the varied garments  
Which the modiste of the sun  
Wraps about you, and there's beauty  
In the weave of every one.

I am alien to the southland;  
But to-morrow as I go  
Through the canyons of Alberta  
In the magic land of snow,  
I shall think of that far country  
Where Sierra Madre dwells,  
Counting on her beads, the ages,  
By the solemn mission bells.

I shall think of Pasadena  
When the blizzards rip the cheek,  
And the wildest mountain creature  
My companionship shall seek.  
And although I love the wildness  
'Twill bring comfort to my breast  
That the world has one sweet haven  
Where she keeps eternal rest.



---

### THE OLD MILL

---

THESE once-proud walls are utterly undone;  
And yet, in mute remembrance of the past,  
They lift their wounded columns to the sun  
And lean in broken grandeur on the blast.

The winds have brought them healing which atones  
For all their wounds; and neath attendant skies  
Old moons will wine the chalice of their stones  
And golden noons will stain them with warm dyes.

I hear this gentle stream, that gave us bread,  
Sing sweetly on the Old Mill's echoing stone,  
Lest we forget those Words that once were said:  
That mankind shall not live by bread alone.

The wheels are silent now, and yet is milled  
Pale grist that once was warm as autumn's gold;  
And on clear nights transparent sacks are filled  
By cloudy shapes that move as men of old.

And misty farmers ride up with their grain;  
And spectral horses neigh against the door;  
And streams of blurring amber pour in vain  
Their flood of ghostly wheat forevermore.

And all these phantom millers move in rhyme  
Even as when in life; and on clear nights  
You can behold them toiling as though time  
Had never passed the river's silvered heights.

---

### THREE CANDLES

---

BY MY bed to-night  
Three candles burn—  
Light, and the memory of light,  
And the light of all I yearn.  
The first fire is bright,  
The second light is low,  
But the third flame is white  
As the shining of snow.

This triune's hue  
Is my moon, star and sun.  
In one light I do;  
In one I have done.  
In one I would be  
Though the fates may defy;  
But most of all three  
The third light is I.

On my curtained bed  
Three loves recline:  
And one love is dead,  
And one is still mine.  
But the third love is best,  
And she lies ever there,  
Though I feel not her breast  
Nor her lips nor her hair.

She comes here to-night,  
Yet does not come nor go;  
For she is that fair light  
Which I can never know.  
I cannot touch her face,  
Her form I cannot see;  
And yet it is all space  
And all eternity.

---

### A MORNING SONG

---

A TALL pine spears the salmon dawn but cannot  
hold its prey.

The poplars shake their tambourines and hidden  
silver flows.

Rare opals burn along the grass, and all the hills are  
gay

With russet fires of goldenrod and wilder flames  
of rose.

To him who never saw the sun come shouldering up  
his gold,

Out of the green and amber fires that burn a drift-  
ing sea,

The day will be a foster child he little knows, and  
cold,

Compared with love begun at dawn, will all his  
ardor be.

God loves the best of all His men who wake to meet  
His dawns,

Who rise to greet with ardent souls His miracle  
of birth.

And yet unpeopled are the fields, unpeopled are the  
lawns

While all the lovely hosts of light come swinging  
up the earth.

The pioneering rays of dawn are holy avatars;  
And valiant hosts shall follow them and lift their  
battle-cry.  
The heathen gods at their advance go out in dying  
stars  
Until one King of Light is left to rule the earth  
and sky.

And when pale beams invade the wood their joy is  
great to see  
The silver birch is silver still, the lily white as  
snow.  
When darkness billowed down the world they did  
not bend the knee  
But kept amid the hosts of dark their dauntless  
fires aglow.

The winds of dawn are cleaner winds, the heart of  
dawn is pure;  
There's something in the virgin light that girds the  
soul once more.  
There's something in the burning dew with healing  
power to cure  
The little pilgrims of the world from every weary  
shore.

At dawn the fishermen of space draw up their net  
of stars  
Which they had cast, at eventide, in lordly depths  
of sea.

And, tossing off their hoods of dark and that one  
rose of Mars,  
The billows burn like sapphires caught in a golden  
filigree.

The sun now pours her crimson wine to gain a cup  
of gold;  
And beauty wastes along the clouds and pales to  
gray and white.  
The sea-gull's wings are flowing fire which they, one  
moment, hold;  
But little longer than my heart can treasure each  
delight.

I have known dawns and many dawns and every  
dawn was fair;  
Though some came up in troubled mists and some  
came up in rain.  
And this shall be at eventide of every day my prayer:  
Let me, O Lord, go up Thy hills and meet Thy  
dawn again.



---

## ROSES

---

I wish I had a garden  
Where I might wander free:  
A little wind-walled garden  
Running by the sea;  
With wild grass in it,  
And tame grass too;  
And roses wearing ear-rings  
Of white-flamed dew;  
And one with a pendant  
Of a great, bronze bee  
Hanging at her fair throat  
In gorgeous minstrelsy.

Not anything so lovely  
As a rose can ever die.  
Their petals all are gathered,  
By winds that wander by,  
And handed to the master-winds  
That troop each lawn;  
And they are melted in a pot  
To make red dawn.  
And some, of paler coloring,  
Are carried to the sky;  
And often, on a cloudy moon,  
I see them drifting by.

I know wherever Heaven is  
That roses must be there.  
And I have hopes that rose-vines  
Will climb the golden stair.  
But here on earth I find the gates  
Of Paradise ajar;  
Nor do I yearn for lovelier things  
Beyond the moon and star.  
A rose of red is Beauty's heart,  
A rose of white her soul.  
Distill them, Lord, within my cup  
And make my spirit whole.

---

### CHAFFEY'S LOCKS

---

POVERTY is abroad to-night;  
Sullen and pale she goes  
Over the dark, brown hills  
Reddened by never a rose.  
The leafless branches wail  
Like a prima-donna old:  
Rich was their summer song  
That now grows thin and cold.

I press my foot in the stirrup  
Of the swift winter air,  
And ride great hills of rock  
Lying brown and bare—  
To west of Chaffey's Locks  
And east of Sydenham,  
I ride great, purple rocks  
That front a world of sham.

What a grim chalice to hold  
Lakes of so lovely blue!  
You would think so brown a vessel  
Would stain the wine's frail hue.  
You would think these heavy islands  
With their dark-plumed crew  
Would go down miles of azure  
And crash wildly through.

Poverty may be abroad  
But I am rich at soul.  
Lovely is earth, although the hills  
Have paid their last toll.  
Now, in this wind-swept room,  
December and I can ponder  
On the new glory of the spring  
That sleeps over yonder.

---

## WHERE IS ANTIOCH!

---

WHERE is Antioch, brother?"  
"Ten miles on and on;  
Ere you reach the city's gates  
Sunlight will be gone.

"Ten miles of dust and a hot sun  
To lash your head and back.  
The man who comes from Antioch  
Has found a better track."

I wandered down the road  
Fearful of earth and sky;  
It seemed as if the lagging fields  
Would never pass me by.

And then I asked a maid;  
"How far is Antioch, lass?"  
She said, "Nine miles of clear, blue sky,  
And nine of waving grass;

"Nine miles to walk with wind  
Blown hither from the sea;  
Nine miles to watch the red-plumed birds  
Flame in the dark-plumed tree."

Oh, then the fields went by  
With swift and lovely feet;  
And I was soon in Antioch  
And laughing down a street.



---

## HILL SONG

---

I LOVE the sound of rit-a-tat  
From bills of tapping birds—  
The drummers of the orchestra—  
Their tappings are like words.  
And sweet to me the chickadee,  
And sweet the whip-poor-will,  
And sweet the cry of silver grass  
Upon a silver hill.  
But best I love the sound of wind  
Across the mountains hurled  
When a violin is crying  
At the shoulder of the world.

I love the sound of cataracts  
And dark, down-leaping rain,  
The laugh of leaf along a bough,  
The wash of golden grain.  
And dear to me the sobbing sea,  
And dear the poplar trees  
That toss their leaves like silver coins  
To beggars in the breeze.  
But best I love the sound of wind  
Across the mountains hurled  
When a violin is crying  
At the shoulder of the world.

There is a Fiddler on the hills  
Who draws a mighty bow,  
And flutings of a thousand rills  
Applaud him far below.  
And only he whose heart is pure  
Shall hear this Fiddler play;  
And only he whose feet are sure  
Upon the granite way,  
Can gain this music of the wind  
Across the mountains hurled  
When a violin is crying  
At the shoulder of the world.

---

## A GABLE SONG

---

I HEAR the wild, night wind  
Crying in the eave-alleys,  
Sighing in the eave-alleys  
At the close of day.  
The old leaves mutter,  
And the young leaves hark;  
And a brave old star  
Rides out against the dark;  
And a worn-out shutter,  
With a great, deep scar,  
Is winging at my window  
On a broken bar.

I love eave-music  
And the wail of a gable,  
When the red-cheeked fruit  
Is before me on the table,  
And the rich, brown grain  
Is steaming in the bowl,  
And the moon-like oranges  
Are shining for the soul.

It's cold in the cellar  
Where the webs are spun,  
But the wind in the gables  
Is warmed by sun;  
And a book of old fables  
Says, "Up in the gables  
The old ghosts wail  
And the young ghosts run."

Who sing in my gables?  
I know who they are:  
They came on the night-wind  
In a gray car.  
The car was a gray cloud  
Filled with a phantom crowd.  
The car was a swift cloud  
Lit by a star.

I'm never lonely  
When the ghosts are there:  
Old ghosts and young ghosts  
With warm, yellow hair.  
And some in white garments,  
And some in harsh sable,  
And some with red cheeks  
Like the apples on my table.

Ghosts cannot talk  
When the winds are still,  
But they speak to-night  
As I move my quill.  
"Who-eee, who-eee,"  
Weird is their laughter  
Running through my gables  
On a dark oak rafter.

O brave young star  
Riding at the dark,  
While the old leaves mutter  
And the young leaves hark,  
Be kindly to my ghost-friends  
Who dance with their bones  
In my gables, in my gables  
When the wild wind moans.

Who-eee, who-eee,  
Ee-ee-who;  
My windows tremble  
As the sound comes through.  
The ghosts are out  
In the winds to-night,  
And they dance on my roof  
In the pale moonlight.

I love eave-music  
And the wail of a gable  
When the red-cheeked fruit  
Is before me on the table;  
And the rich, brown grain  
Is steaming in the bowl,  
And the moon-like oranges  
Are shining for the soul.



---

O VIEWLESS WORLD

---

THE snow is turning swift to sleet  
And westward wildly blows.  
The air is like a one-way street  
Where tireless traffic goes.

There is no print of foot to view  
Upon this busy way,  
Though here white, silent forms pursue  
Each other night and day.

But if your ear is trained to catch  
Ghost footsteps on a stair,  
Or phantom lifting of a latch,  
You'll hear faint tramping there.

Some call it rain, some call it snow,  
But I see, clear as dawn,  
A phantom host that slowly go—  
Forever moving on.

No windows frown upon this road;  
No wheel its peace destroys.  
And it doth lead to some abode  
Of everlasting joys.

O Viewless World! more real to me  
Than temples wrought with stone.  
My home is on a shoreless sea  
Which I must sail alone.

---

## A TOAST TO BEAUTY

---

"GIVE us a toast," they cried, "Our spirits wane:  
Some florid theme, helotic, debonair."  
And poured me wine so red the favored air,  
Through which it flowed, shall ever wear its stain.  
And I, an outlaw in the witless reign  
Of that old, yellow monarch now adored,  
Flung high my glass above the festive board  
And cried: "A toast to Beauty let us drain."  
"A jest" they laughed, "to toss this liquid rose,  
This fine, bacchantic bloom to one unknown  
Save to the fools on vagabondian streets."  
Then I, a lyric lost amid their prose,  
Saw the red vintage I must drink, alone,  
Pale in my chalice to the tears of Keats.

---

## MINOR

---

THE limner to-day  
Dipped lightly in His paint.  
The sky is a blue-gray,  
The sea's green is faint.

Light is the yellow  
On the butterfly;  
And voiced like a cello  
The winds go by.

I hear no major notes;  
I see no major hue.  
The winged seed lifts and floats  
As phantoms do.

This is the resting hour  
Of the woodland kings.  
Rich color and iron power  
Have folded their wings.

But lest we should tire  
Of these delicate tones,  
On his deep-bass lyre  
A brown bee drones.

Belted and booted, he,  
As any buccaneer;  
He sings right lustily  
And joyfully I hear.

---

## DROUTH

---

THE thirsting road blows up like smoke;  
My knees are in a dusty blur.  
The drouth hath burned the panting oak  
And made more red the rusty fir.  
So long the showers  
Have been away  
The wayside flowers  
Can scarcely sway.  
At close of day the only stir  
Is from the beetle's lusty whirr.  
No cloud rides by to call the dew:  
The winds exhausted run.  
The world is tired of endless blue  
And weary of the sun.

I cross a streak of whitened stones,  
That scar the meadow's burning cheek,  
And count an army's bleaching bones  
Where once had been a churning creek.  
The frogs are still;  
The tree-toad raves.  
The wild-flowers fill  
Untimely graves.



The clapping beetles dryly speak  
Above a field of ferning leek.  
And that old sound of falling rain  
Seems like a lover's cry  
That we shall never hear again  
Beneath a gentle sky.

Now all the world is turned to brass:  
The sun is like a painted sphere.  
Hot carrion lie amid the grass,  
The lake becomes a tainted mere.  
The ox is bowed  
Without its yoke.  
The churches crowd  
With praying folk;  
And men invoke the saints, yet fear  
The gods are unacquainted here.  
And then as Hope prepares to go,  
With one loud cry of mirth  
A shining drop of rain leaps low  
And lifts the dying earth.

---

## ENIGMA

---

STARVING for fragrance on the lilled hills,  
Hungry for color in a bower of rose,  
Grieving for beauty amid daffodils,  
Man—the enigma—goes.

He covers his head from suns and grieves at cold;  
He walks by silver rivers and has thirst.  
When youth is for his asking he grows old:  
Man—by himself accurst.

Lord of the overwhelming loveliness,  
Of the flung sunlight and the zoning shade!  
Forgive us in these prisons of distress  
Whose bars ourselves have made.

---

IF YOU WOULD FIND ME

---

IF you would find me  
Whither I am gone  
Up on the high summits  
Out beyond the dawn,  
In that far, brave land,  
Sung by the old bards,  
And entered by that pass  
Which Charon guards—

If you would find me  
In this new birth,  
Think well upon the things  
I loved on earth:  
Child-laughter and wind-music,  
And the swift storm's riot,  
And wood-gloom and shore-peace  
When the earth is quiet.

Remember how I loved  
A great organ's thunder,  
And a young maid's eyes  
Breaking into wonder,  
And an old man's lips  
Mumbling at the moon,  
And bird-song and water-mirth  
At a still noon.

Then, with this knowledge  
Written in your hands,  
You shall quickly find me  
In the high, vast lands.  
What I loved on earth, friend,  
I will love there—  
Sailor's yarns and top-sails  
And clear salt air.

If you would find me,  
Wait until the breeze  
Drops like a waterfall  
Through the birch trees;  
I will be there to hear—  
Who would miss that sound!  
Know you not up in Heaven  
Birch trees abound?

Should wise men gather,  
On that far shore,  
And speak of some strange truth  
Never heard before,  
There will I surely be,  
Hungry as of old  
For that which is not measured  
By silver or gold.

Then when you have found me,  
In that endless blue,  
Not of broad and golden streets  
Will I sing to you;  
But I will chant a measure,  
Even as when on earth,  
Of dying autumn's purple flowers  
And April's lovely birth.

---

## GRAY WINDS

---

WIND goes in color  
As a lady goes—  
Red, blue, gray and green  
And warm red rose.

All winds are gray winds  
When my love departs.  
All winds are gray winds  
To lonely hearts.

I have seen blue wind—  
Blue as heaven's dome;  
When skies are clear skies  
These blue winds roam.

I have seen green wind  
Run a field at noon.  
I have watched red wind  
Crossing a low moon.

Once I saw a dark wind,  
Black as flying crows,  
Turn, at my lady's coming,  
To a lovely rose.



But my lady comes no more  
Either by night or day;  
And all the colored winds I knew  
Are cold and withered gray.

---

## KINSHIP

---

THERE is one wave, that roams this amber sea,  
More lovely than all other waves to me.  
And why, I do not know, unless I feel  
Something within its daring to appeal.  
I love its clarion cry when all around  
A timid host of muffled waves are found.  
And, too, I love its curving wealth of green  
Which scythe or sickle nevermore shall glean.  
This wave leaped higher on yon granite shore  
Than any that came after or before;  
Yet like some vestal virgin it bears fire  
Humbly, whenever sun and moon desire.  
The whitest flowers upon a mountain wall  
Are not more lovely than its seedless bloom  
Whose petals melt and die but never fall,  
And which at death know neither grave nor tomb.  
This wave is leader of all: I love it best,  
Whether it wears the morning like a rose,  
Or whether to the gloomy fields of rest  
Armored, beneath the silver moon, it goes.

There is one tree that woos and wins my heart  
More quickly than any tree within this wood.  
Perchance it is because it long has stood  
From all the other forest trees apart,  
Aloof yet not aloof, giving its song  
But joining with no shadow of the throng;

Or is it that it has a lordly sound  
Which in the lesser trees is never found?  
For though full many a fir may shame the reach  
Of this beloved patriarch of mine,  
Yet none have caught the richness of her speech  
That pours upon the air like fragrant wine.  
This tree is old—an old and rusted pine  
Full of deep whispers and of scented gloom  
Through which the filtered light of planets shine,  
And thunders, awed and reverential, boom.  
This tree has beauty, wisdom, strength and song,  
And who or what has more? Nor does it yield  
Aught when the winter comes to wood or field  
Demanding her inevitable throng,  
But keeps full cortège in the hour of grief,  
Granting the unkindly foe no tithe of leaf.

Strange is this spirit-kinship everywhere  
That bids us single out from a vast sky  
Unusual clouds that seem to us more fair  
Than all their kindred argosies on high;  
Or urges us, who cross a garden wall,  
To pass a thousand flowers and choose but one,  
Or sit beside a smoking waterfall  
To watch one salmon leaping at the sun.  
And was not, dear, this spirit kinship strong  
When I walked out and found you in a throng?

---

RIVERS

---

THE Hebrew says,  
"The Jordan River  
Flows through high Heaven  
Forever and ever."

But another, passing  
The King's white throne,  
Sees a clear stream  
That flows like the Rhone.

And another looks  
For the Jordan in vain,  
But hears through all Heaven  
The cry of the Seine.

And yet another  
Cries out his loud thanks  
For the torpid Missouri  
Overflowing its banks.

And one joyfully shouts:  
"The Book must be wrong;  
The River I hear  
Has the Thames' quiet song."

And a brown savage running  
To God like a fawn  
Sees coursing through Heaven  
The broad Amazon.

And, walking serenely  
Mile after mile,  
Great hosts find peace  
On the banks of the Nile.

And one—a bronze Arab—  
Through all Paradise going  
Sees never a flame  
Of blue water flowing.

But I shall not seek  
For rivers more fair  
Than the Ottawa running  
Her dark-granite stair.

Yet the Hebrew says:  
"The Jordan River  
Flows through high Heaven  
Forever and ever."

---

## THE SEEKERS

---

I HEAR the sleet  
On my window's glass  
Like the marching feet  
Of storms that pass;  
Or like shaking beads  
At a wraith's throat,  
Or the pouring of seeds  
In a deep boat.

The winds beleaguer  
My winter's camp  
Where burns the meagre  
Lone light of a lamp.  
What is one light's worth,  
In the night's wide doom,  
When from star to earth  
All is cold and gloom?

This wind's rhyming  
Brings back to me  
A fleet wind climbing  
Great ships at sea:  
Climbing the tall masts  
And speaking strange tales,  
Or blowing cold blasts  
Through the yellow sails.



No older word  
Was ever muttered  
Than this cold word  
The night wind uttered.  
It was an aged word  
Ere the first tongue;  
When my words are old words  
It will be young.

If I could translate  
This long sad whine,  
All the hidden great  
Truths would be mine.  
It knows the wherefores  
That beset my soul:  
It has washed the shores  
Where the last seas roll.

Sometimes I seem  
To half understand  
Frail hints of a dream  
Of another land—  
A gleam as slender  
As a moonbeam's white;  
But Oh, the splendor  
Of that swift light.

Many tongues there are  
That seek to tell:  
The light of a star,  
The voice of a bell.  
They are the Seekers  
Who, seeking, ever fail—  
The invisible Speakers  
Beyond a dark veil.

LINES WRITTEN BY LAKE ROSSEAU

AUGUST 18TH, 1927.

THE year is at the summit of her glory;  
No more the upward striving tempts her soul.  
In loveliness has she revealed her story,  
And in completed beauty found her goal.

There is no place so lonely as the turning,  
When we must leave the pathway we have known,  
And gather up the fragments of our yearning  
And mend them on some alien road, alone.

Late summer days are sadder than December,  
For then those loves we made in spring depart—  
The leaves, the flowers—until we scarce remember  
How sweet the blooms of May were to the heart.

We grew to love the earth; our ardor growing  
In hymeneal June and rich July,  
And in the days of August's fiery snowing  
When stumbling stars lost foothold in the sky.

Soon, at the solemn turning of September,  
The air will sing of farewells; the brown grass  
Will bravely burn into a dying ember  
And, like departing guests, the leaves will pass.

They'll go in livery of flame, complaining  
Against the brief allotment they have known;  
And I will wander where the wood is raining  
A crimson shower on bush and grass and stone.

And I shall understand their pæans of sorrow,  
That loveliness, being lovely, should have end;  
For unto them no promise of to-morrow  
This sacrifice of beauty shall defend.

The fern goes down in the wood like a swooning  
dancer,  
And all the world around is left bereaved;  
But when our faith is low the pines make answer  
That full immortal life may be achieved.

O blessed tree, that keeps our hope from dying;  
O tree that gives no leaf to the autumn air,  
I feel assurance in your valiant sighing  
Of that immortal life which we shall wear.

---

## A NIGHT SONG

---

FAIR is the rose  
In the dawn's wet meadows;  
Fair is the light  
In a noonday sky.  
But lovely, too,  
Are the fragrant shadows  
That all night long  
In a deep wood lie.

Dear to my heart  
Is the golden sunflower,  
Swinging like a censer  
At the fragrant noon:  
But dear is the beauty  
Of that one flower  
That fears even light  
From a cloud-swathed moon.

Light in my right hand  
Dark in my left;  
I go with Beauty  
Wherever she desires;  
Whether comes noon,  
With her amber weft,  
Or whether comes night  
With her silver fires.

---

## MOONLIGHT ON LAKE SYDENHAM

---

THE dawn came wild with rain, and all day long  
The storm ran over the lake with furious feet,  
Waking the silent shores to lovely song  
And cooling the high meadows, brown with heat.  
And now pale light descends,  
With sandals white as frost, this daring stair  
Down which the storm-cloud tumbled through  
the air,  
And to the wounded lake sweet ministering sends,  
As though she were the ghost of that cold rain  
In chaste repentance come to earth again.

The fragrance of a rose at noonday sings  
In language louder than a spoken word;  
And if your ear is tuned to soundless things  
The silent tread of moonlight can be heard.  
For with that hidden ear  
I catch the rhythmic marching of the stars—  
White-helmed Arcturus and red-hooded Mars—  
Treading the same high roadways year by year.  
And I have heard in winter, blow on blow,  
The chisels of the frost against the snow.



The workers sit around me everywhere,  
Shaping the fragrant beauty of each hour.  
At noon I hear their hammers of warm air  
Welding the golden armor of a flower.  
With tireless hands they toil  
In maple groves or hawthorne-haunted lanes;  
And, in their glad employ, the bugling rains  
Arouse the lovely sleepers of the soil.  
And I can see their axes fall as one,  
At even, against the rose-bush of the sun.

Sunlight is fire to warm our cooling faith;  
And moonlight shall restore our broken dreams:  
She moves across the world, a lovely wraith,  
Beatifying rocks and lakes and streams.  
And something in her eyes  
Betrays a sorrow for the moonless days  
When, in a flood of warm, revealing rays,  
The evening's cool romancing droops and dies,  
To be restored again on cloudless nights  
When that Pale Traveller treads her jewelled  
heights.

Beneath the granite glory of these shores  
I carve the flameless water with my blade;  
While high above the hills the night-wind roars  
Until the cloistral forest is dismayed.

And soon my frail craft turns  
From overhanging gloom of rock and brake,  
And moth-like seeks the silver-flaming lake  
Where the dropped candle of the high moon burns.  
And troubadours of many a wandering choir  
Sing at my prow upon this sea of fire.

When waters are turned by ploughmen of the breeze  
The grain of light upon them yieldeth well;  
But when those seeds invade the gloom of trees  
They darken and wither swiftly where they fell.  
And I too feel at night  
The black repulse of woods, and flee their gloom  
For that high, roofless Temple where the doom  
Of darkness dies on billows rich with light.  
And here, afar from slumbering bird and tree,  
My restless spirit joins the unsleeping sea.

There is a universal loneliness  
Where deep goes calling sadly unto deep;  
And, as the darkness grows, the planets press  
In closer ranks along the shores of sleep.  
And this same lonely heart  
Is in the serried pine, and mortal man,  
Who climbs an overcrowded caravan  
And fears the woodland, silent and apart;  
Nor knows the balm for loneliness is found  
In herbs that in the wilderness abound.

How fine this Limner, who can leave His dyes—  
The blue of noon and evening's crimson blush—  
And etch the glory of these lakes and skies  
With naught but black and silver on His brush.  
Far from a reeded shoal  
Floats down the dauntless laughter of the loon:  
I hear it while the drapery of the moon  
Falls, through the lonely night, about my soul;  
And wait until some frail star is withdrawn  
To light the first thin taper of the dawn.

---

POPLARS

---

SAND on the desert-dunes  
Called once for rain;  
In all her singing winds  
Sounded one refrain:  
"Ocean-bed and ocean-shore  
Is our lost domain;  
When will our water-bride  
Come here again?"

Deep is the drift of years  
Since she went away;  
But sand-love for sea-song  
Dies not in a day.  
They are eternal lovers  
Like blossoms and May,  
Like a singer and a song  
Which he loves to play.

Heavy was their grief—  
These mourning sands—  
For the old sea-song  
And the old shorelands;  
So the kind earth raised—  
She who understands—  
The sea-voiced poplar  
With her cooling hands.



No sand sorrows now  
For her water-bride.  
In wind-hours she hears ever  
The coming of the tide.  
The poplars march the sand-dunes  
With a cool stride:  
The old voice of shorelands  
Has come back to abide.

---

## A VESPER SONG

---

DULL as the ardor of a tarnished chain  
The dying sunlight falls along the sky;  
The yellow valor of its golden rain  
Faded to bronze, and soon this bronze will die.

The wind is heavy-footed as an ox:  
As a great ox it plods and rests and goes.  
There is a purple softness on the rocks,  
And a dull languor on the darkening rose.

This is Imagination's holiest hour;  
And now the boldest beauty takes the veil.  
Already is the young moon on her tower,  
Fair in her white and silver coat-of-mail.

And soon the earth will put like armor on,  
And battle the advancing hosts of night;  
Nor doff this vesture till the relieving dawn  
Comes with his striding multitudes of light.

Across the tranquil beauty of a bridge  
Comes music from a holy choir of bells.  
It falls, and dies away along the ridge  
Upon whose brow a weary peasant dwells.



He hears it, nor knows why to him is given  
Peace that no salver, heavy with bread and wine,  
Ever could give: it is the peace of Heaven;  
And all his overflowing cup is mine.

How quietly slipped yon fir trees in the dark,  
So quietly that I did not hear them go.  
The poplar goes less bravely. I can hark  
Her trembling in the shadows, soft and low.

And even as blindness makes the ear more keen  
So now the darkness brings more fragrant air.  
It seems the rose and columbine, being not seen,  
Must pour a richer fragrance everywhere.

Beyond the river and halfway up a hill  
A plowman's lantern splutters at his knees;  
While from the valley, spectre-like and chill,  
The white mists rise and slowly mount the trees.

He who has been to toil a valiant friend  
Shall go to dreams and sweet untroubled rest,  
And find in them the shadows given to mend  
The wounds of day upon the human breast.

---

## PINE TEMPLES

---

HERE is a temple where incense is rising forever  
and ever;

And it burns without fingers of verger or priest to  
rekindle its fire.

And here is a ritual chanted, surpassing all human  
endeavor,

And here a magnificat ever is sung by a green-  
surpliced choir.

The lights of this twilight cathedral are borrowed  
from rafters of Heaven;

And their oil is of silver at night and of gold when  
the noon day is fair.

The organ plays ever in whispers, for silence is wor-  
shipping's leaven,

And no prayer in this abbey is heard, for the  
temple itself is a prayer.

The rubric is crimson from sunsets, the psalter un-  
changed and eternal;

Unchanged the baptismal anointing by stars from  
the font of the sky.

The litanies all are the lore of the Fountain-Head,  
holy, supernal;

And the sad-flowing blood of no martyr sounds  
through their magnificent cry.

O musical Temples of Pine! with your organs sun-  
keyed and wind-reeded;  
Your voice is more lovely to me than the wavering  
wisdom of man.  
Few are the priests and the preachers and few are  
the rabbis I've heeded,  
For I worship in pine-pillared temples whose floors  
wear the footprints of Pan.

---

## THE STORM

---

MUSKOKA, 1926.

A WILDER night came never to this world  
Of inland calm and beauty. The black lake  
Moves like a noble sea, and the deep wood  
Hears in her bowl of darkness the white rain  
Of starlight falling through her wounded trees.  
Awakened are the shy and starless pools  
Whose cold, black floods in windless calm reclined  
Through all the lazy summer, and they move  
Like dancers who have never danced before.  
And on the roof of this dark temple of trees  
Roll foamless billows that shall never know  
The soft and peaceful welcome of a shore.

The lithe, young wrestlers of the wind move now  
With supple arms and feet, and swiftly pin  
The shoulders of oak and poplar to the earth.  
And those sweet sounds of singing branch and leaf,  
The sighing of pine, the birch's swift applause,  
That lay upon the salver of light wind  
Are lost in this great cauldron's boiling roar.

Out of their tombs come last year's withered leaves  
To leap up at the stars or pour in tides  
Like fleeing armies in the doom of war.

Broken is now the alabaster box,  
And all the earth breathes fragrance of the pine  
And hemlock and those earthy smells that seem  
Part of the very forest's fragrant soul.

And now this lake, that looked so gentle at noon,  
Leaps like a panther at her granite bars,  
And, with a splendid grandeur in defeat,  
She roars against her inability,  
And hurls her cold, yet angry, spindrift high  
As the proud reach of birches, to come down  
Like a strange dew. I cannot choose between  
The water and the wood, nor dare to say  
Which hath the finer fury. Who could know  
Might choose between a red, unfolding rose  
And a proud, purple aster, or could tell  
Which is more gracious to the seeking soul—  
The cooling sunset or the warming dawn.  
Like some lost fragment of the storm I run  
And reach a garden cloister, to behold  
The hollyhocks go down in a dance of death  
And all the lowly pansies bow to earth  
Like Moslems called to prayer in Allah's garden.

So to my room I go but not to rest,  
For the wild spirit of the hour comes here  
And wails about my casement, and I become  
The pine that wrestles wildly with the wind,  
The fern, the pool, the lake, the hurrying clouds.  
And I too am the darkness and the stars;  
And many a year after the wood forgets  
Will I keep valiant memory of this storm.



---

## A COURTIER'S SONG

---

I HAVE been at court:  
Witness the purple flowers,  
Witness the royal blue  
That canopies my hours,  
Witness the gold of light  
Wind-hammered to a crown,  
Witness the parliament of stars  
Looking wisely down.

I have seen the king  
And I have talked with him;  
Yea, I have seen the king  
And I have walked with him.  
His steps are not unlike my own,  
His voice is in my cry.  
I sit with him upon his throne  
And watch the world go by.

The king has knighted me  
And lifted me to earl.  
In the plumed hat I wear  
A hundred daisies curl.  
And whether knight or whether earl  
My titles all are given  
With full approval of the hills  
And signature of heaven.

Come then to court with me;  
I will present you all.  
There is no fee, my friend, no fee  
To any, great or small.  
The king will grant what wish you crave;  
And happy will he be  
If you should ask a marigold  
Or a purple lilac tree.

---

## IMMANENCE

---

I NEVER think of God  
As a God afar  
When he lifts His torch  
To the first white star.  
I never think of Him  
As a spirit aloof  
When His kind rains dance  
On my dark, wet roof.

I never think of Jesus  
As in Galilee  
When I wander on the shores  
Of a gold-rimmed sea.  
I never think of Him  
On a shining throne  
When I walk at high morning  
In a wood, alone.

I know a path  
Where the hollyhocks nod;  
And when I go there  
I grow friendly with God.  
And when young daffodils  
Dance before my eyes  
I cannot think that Heaven  
Is away in the skies.

I have a friend  
Whose hands feel in mine  
Like the very same hands  
That turned water to wine.  
And when, at the day's end,  
I look in his face  
The whole wide world  
Is a God-filled place.

---

MARY MAHONE

---

A POET in soul is our Mary Mahone:  
She walks with a sweetheart when walking  
alone.

A rose on her heart and a song on her lips,  
Adown a shy path to the ocean she slips.

"A poet I'll be," said our Mary Mahone;  
"And pour out my soul like the wind making moan.

"Like the wind making moan or the breakers that roll  
I'll pour out the passionate flood of my soul."

A basket of roses at Ballymore grown  
Was never as fair as was Mary Mahone.

"To-morrow," she cried, "will I rise with the birds  
And fashion a lyric from magical words."  
But at peep-o-the-morn came a lad up the hill  
To tell her the widow O'Connor was ill.

And waiting no ribbon or bonnet of lace,  
For fairer the sun on her hair and her face,

She came to the room where the sick woman lay:  
And Death, when he saw her, soon hurried away.

O, woe to the poem of Mary Mahone  
But joy to the miserable heart of a crone.

And Mary in April, agowned in a shower,  
Danced up the green meadows and left them in  
flower.

"Ah, April," she cried, "I have waited thee long:  
A poet am I and I'll sing thee a song."

A lilt on her lips and a stranger passed by,  
A limp in his foot and a tear in his eye.

"O, sir," says my Mary, "you're weary, I see."  
"Yea, weary," he cried, "for the moaning banshee."

"O, sir," says my maiden, "come up to the town:  
The honey is gold and the biscuits are brown."

He felt her warm arm and he felt her wet hair,  
And Heaven fell down upon Ireland right there.

So well was he nursed by our Mary Mahone  
That his heart grew as fresh as the flowers at her  
zone.

And, late in the summer, he went back to sea  
With never a thought of the eerie banshee.



O woe to the poem of Mary Mahone;  
But joy unto one of God's many unknown.

Thus year after year saw the green turn to gold  
And still was her song like a story untold.

"O never," she cried, with a Celtic despair,  
"Has God looked with favor upon my one prayer."

And then on a May day, as fair as a bride,  
Our Mary Mahone had a dream that she died.

And, straight up to Heaven she went, for they say  
The Irish go up by no roundabout way.

The air was all music and, over its tone,  
She heard good Saint Peter say: "Mary Mahone,

"Pass up with the poets." But Mary replied:  
"O, sir, I'm no poet, though often I've tried

"To write me a poem; but never could I  
While there was a cheek which my fingers might  
dry."

But softly Saint Peter said: "High on his throne  
God waits for the poet called Mary Mahone."

The Lord rose to meet her and all the white throng  
Sang: "Hail to the poet who wrote the great song."

And so many mortals around me made moan  
"That I toiled by the day and I watched by the moon  
And never found time to awaken a rune."  
And Mary cried: "Lord, I am Mary Mahone,

The Lord smiled upon her and all the white throng  
Cried: "Hail to the poet who wrote the great song."

And Mary, bewildered, looked up and implored:  
"Pray tell me what song I have written, O Lord?"

"Thy Life is the song," said the Lord in her dream;  
"And Love is the metre and Love is the theme."

Then Mary awakened and Phœbus rose, too,  
And drank to the poet in wine of the dew.

And this is the story of Mary Mahone.  
And what if it, too, be a tale like thine own!

And what if the Master hath seen in thine eyes  
The script of a poem they love in the skies.

For you, though a song reed you never have blown,  
May, too, be a poet like Mary Mahone.