

POEMS

MILTON S. RAY

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Title: Poems

Date of first publication: 1934

Author: Milton S. Ray (1881-1946)

Date first posted: June 29, 2014

Date last updated: June 29, 2014

Faded Page eBook #20140617

This ebook was produced by: David T. Jones, Mardi Desjardins, Paulina Chin & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <http://www.pgdpCanada.net>

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Milton S. Ray

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POEMS

BY

MILTON S. RAY

HENRY HARRISON

Poetry Publisher

430 6th Ave., New York, N. Y.

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by MILTON S. RAY

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Acknowledgement

These poems were first published by John Henry Nash, A.M., LITT.D., LL.D. in 1934 and formed part of the original two-volume edition, priced at \$12.50 per set with vellum backs and \$60.00 per set bound in full vellum. The two-volume edition is entitled "The Farallones, The Painted World and Other Poems of California, with fifty-three Illustrations and with a Supplementary History and Description of the Farallones, including Notes on their Plant, Bird and Animal Life."

TO

ROSE CAROLYN RAY

Foreword

In the opening poem, "The Farallones," I have endeavored to depict life on the Farallon Islands as it was near the end of the nineteenth century. Conditions on the islands now, with their wireless and radio-compass stations, tennis courts, and frequent boat service, are entirely different from those existing in the former days which I have aimed to portray.

The idyl refers to the period when the sea-bird rookeries were still of vast extent. Mention should be made that while they still remain of great size, and rank among the largest in the United States, nevertheless the sea-bird colonies on the Farallones of today are not to be compared with the vast rookeries on those islands in bygone years.

The Farallones, a group of seven islands, lie in the Pacific Ocean off the California coast. Southeast Isle, the main island of the chain, lies in latitude 37° 41' 58" and in longitude 123° 00' 04".

Contents

THE FARALLONES

THE POEMS OF THE PROLOGUE

<u>Of Long Lost Years and Centuries</u>	19
<u>Ruins</u>	20
<u>San Francisco</u>	21
<u>Farallon Light—1855</u>	23

THE POEMS OF THE ISLES

<u>Dawn at the Farallones</u>	27
<u>Strange Shores</u>	28
<u>Sea Gardens</u>	30
<u>Sea-Folk</u>	31
<u>Birds of the Farallones</u>	32
<u>The Fugitive</u>	35
<u>Sea Herds</u>	36
<u>On Aulone Isle</u>	37
<u>Destiny</u>	38
<u>When the Steamer Came to the Farallones</u>	39
<u>Wanderers to the Isles</u>	41
<u>Sea-Island Solitude</u>	42
<u>Night on the Farallones</u>	43

THE PAINTED WORLD AND OTHER POEMS OF CALIFORNIA

<u>The Sierra Nevada from Mt. Hamilton</u>	47
<u>Rose of Roses, Star of Stars</u>	48
<u>Winter Storm: Point Pedro, California</u>	49
<u>To Benjamin Putnam Kurtz</u>	50
<u>The Vireo</u>	51
<u>Asleep</u>	53
<u>Clay</u>	54
<u>At Forest Park</u>	55
<u>To Cecily</u>	58
<u>Farallone</u>	59
<u>Storm Toll at Point Sur, California</u>	60
<u>Remembrance</u>	61

POEMS

THE FARALLONES

*AN IDYL OF DAYS LONG PAST
ON LONELY ISLES OF THE WESTERN SEA*

THE POEMS OF THE PROLOGUE

Arranged in chronological order

PERIOD ENDS 1855

Of Long Lost Years and Centuries

I

Perilous Farallones! Romantic Isles!
What endless tale could they unfold,
Of war of winds and siege of seas,
That to some silent star was told
Through long lost years and centuries!
To them it was but yesterday.
In wind-blown ship from pathless miles,
Ferello gained their tranquil bay,
And placed them on his antique chart;
Or when bold Drake of warlike heart,
Who far the haunted ocean cruised,
Among the clustered islands came
And honored them with saintly name,—
Perchance on these same cliffs he mused
Of battles past, and future fame.

II

Dim is the year in the mists of time
When westward through this wild, lone clime,
The Spaniard in his galleon passed,
And gave the name, forever last,
The Farallones! Quaint melody!
Sad echo of the lonely sea!
Forlorn as the wail of some wave-worn shell
That ceaseless moans in a stony cell,
Singing of where lost comrades dwell,
Where the tides and sea-fronds weave their spell.

Ruins

Once upon this barren shore,
Rude homes the Russ and Aleut built
Of sea-worn boulders, sand, and silt;
And on the birds and fur-seal herds
Made wide and heartless war.
Long since, the Northman went his way;
Yet on the isle, near Tower Bay,
Where slopes the shore from Tower Hill,
His ruined huts are standing still.
And from the cleft and moss-grown walls,
Elusively, the rock-wren calls
To coward winds, as on they flee,
Whistling wild in dreary key;
And through the rifts the sun-fays dazzling play,
Or pallid, sleepy moon-folk stray
In chill and silent mystery.

San Francisco

I

Far along wild waters lone,
That ceaseless and pellucid brawled
Down their steep Sierran vale,
Dream-enchancing, fair-haired Gold
Called to the venturous heart of man,
Called so alluringly, called and called,—
Then came an endless, answering tread
Where savage ways in silence led.
Dim in the dust-clouds, creaking rolled
The hundred-eyed, slow caravan
And far through solitary seas were blown
The endless answering sail.

II

Beside a gulf in the sunset sky,
Lone Mission Dolores long had stood,
'Mid her lupine fields and dwarf-oak wood,
And 'mid the fragrance of many a bloom
Where the pollened bee would cradled sleep.
And now from her bold, fair hills, and sandy sweep,
Where the sea-born tides go swinging by,
And inland waters surge to sea,
The valiant town of the miners sprung—
Romantic, golden, rough, carefree.
And not a whit they cared,
That conquering crew who'd fought and dared,
When a fleet, deserted, idly swung
At anchor in the land-locked bay.
Their wild hopes knew but the transient day;
Yet the prophets saw, where far clouds hung,
The vision of a future empire loom,
Immeasurable in its destiny.

Farallon Light—1855

And now a flashing, jewelled tower crowned
These lofty, time-worn granite locks,
Across the circling waters wide
The ever-coming fleet to guide.
And exiles, lone, a loyal band
(Fate wills for every task a crew be found)
Made their abode on this lonely strand,
Alone, 'mid jagged, towering rocks.
Wild haunts of screaming, sea-bird flocks,
Beside bold seas of restless mood,
In bleak, sea-island solitude.

THE POEMS OF THE ISLES

Arranged in chronological order

PERIOD—LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Dawn at the Farallones

Dethroned, a wayward, wandering moon,
Trailed by a lone and faithful star,
Has swept to the west in forlorn flight.
From a mist-hung island's jagged shore
Comes the sea-lions' ceaseless, barking roar;
And with the dawn's vague, barren light,
From drowsy bird flocks on the height
Comes many a droll, discordant tune:
The cormorant's hoarse and guttural croak,
The murre's shrill pipe, the puffin's low bassoon,
And minor bird notes, strange, from waking folk
On craggy cleft or guano dune.
Above a towering wall of rugged cliff,
Above a plunging surf and a sullen sea.
Gray gulls are circling silently.
And now in the flaming, orient sky,
Great clouds, afire, are drifting by,—
Drifting, drifting, languidly;
And out across the rolling wave-swept miles,
Rose-hued and bleak as Teneriffe,
Stands Isle Southeast, the loftiest far,
Of all these rugged, sheer and forlorn isles.

Strange Shores

I

Gray, barren isles 'neath lonely skies!
Yet in all the sea, where sleeping lies
A haven so fair as Tower Bay,
Which spire and tower, superbly tall,
And massive dome and sea-carved arch, enwall?
Where fret and fume in foamy fray
Such whirlwind seas as Breakers Bay?
Or where in land that knows a sun
Do rival streams like the Jordan run,
Whose plunging currents madly sweep
To thundering war in their canyon deep?

II

Climb Great West Arch beneath which flow
The roaring tides so far below
You mark but their faint murmuring!
Beyond its portals few will brave
The treacherous, deep Sea Garden Cave
Where danger rides with the leaping surge!
In Moaning Cavern, far inshore,
Imprisoned seas wide-echoing roar
Their mournful, ceaseless dirge!
On Raven Cliff, that walls the west,
Beneath an overhanging crest,
The ancient pair of night-birds nest.
In the chilling glooms of North Gorge sleep
Waters sullen, still and deep.
And strangely hidden is Amber Spring,
Whose fountains flow where waves uprear
And from their depths of granite bring
The rarest nectar golden clear.

III

View Castle Rocks! Ah! sculpture rare!
For where looms castle half so fair?
Dare the Giant's Bath on Breaker Hill,
That molten spray-clouds splashing fill!
Or invade the winding Great Murre Cave,
Vast vaults that arch the southern wave,
Amid whose summer galleries
The murre's still flock like swarming bees!

IV

And strange the ancient chief who gazes down
From the heights of Arch Rock's lofty crown,
And the maid of gray, time-sculptured stone,
Who stares across wild waters lone,
To where a queenly maid as still as she
Stares back across the lonely sea.
More strange the Lost World Cave. Ah me!
How few have trod its rough, dank floor,
Where chambers weird in endless maze
Far downward lead, through darksome ways,
The unfaint heart to that strange shore
Where pools some subterranean sea!

Sea Gardens

On island marges everywhere,
Save the narrow beaches walled and bare
Of pebbly shingle, shell, or sand,
Swayed by the sea tides to and fro,
The dreaming gardens of the ocean grow.
With the wide retreat of the war-like wave
From rock-bound basin, cove and cave,
What hidden beauty lies revealed
That the foaming tides before concealed!
More verdant than the April mead
That skirts the island's southern strand,
Are these banks and beds of curious weed!
With graceful ferns and subtle moss,
As fine as webs of silken floss,
Sway blooms grotesque of rarer hue
Than hang empearled with glistening dew!
And here are myriads of dainty shells.
Asleep on the banks of weedy dells,
Or cast adrift on the sandy bars.
Like thistles huge amid the vines,
Cling the sea-urchins of unnumbered spines;
And strewn on rocky bank and bed,
Purple, dark, and richest red,
Lie forlorn, forgotten, fallen stars.

Sea-Folk

Who wanders by this mirrored shore,
And from a basin's rugged edge
In the limpid depths peers wide and deep,
Where lolling tides lie half asleep,
Will see strange sea-forms venture o'er
The weed-grown, creviced, glassy floor.
In the quivering depths now dimly glides
A snake-like eel 'neath wavering ledge;
Here, shroud-like, silent, weird and slow,
Translucent creatures come and go,
As strange as the dream-forms that curious flow.
And glittering in metallic mail,
And swift propelled by ancient oar,
The finny barges proudly sweep;
Here urchin-fleets with fairy sail,
Flotillas quaint of purple gay.
That cruise with tides when zephyrs fail,
Pass slowly on the purple sea.
And out in open waters free,
Beyond the surges' flying spray,
The serpent-kelp forever swim and sway.
Blind captives of eternal tides.

Birds of the Farallones

I

In the waning spring, the sea-fowl horde,
That over vast wastes of ocean roams,
In sun-obscuring flocks would come,
To fashion rude their summer homes
And by the din were the utmost isles awoke.
Murrees would crowd the shelving ledge
From wind-swept crag to water's edge
And even the dark, surf-echoing caves.
Sea-parrots of fantastic dress,
Ever sphinx-like brooded dumb
Within some dusky, dank recess.
And cormorants came, jet fisherfolk,
Who gathered deep-sea mosses bright
And vines, that Southeast Isles afford,
To build upon the terraced height,
And far above the warring waves,
Strange towns on many an ancient site.

II

Among the avian hordes of May
Were web-footed pigeons of the sea,
Whose faint and plaintive whispered note
Haunted wild shores half hid in spray.
Snowy gulls, with backs mouse-gray
And wide-spread wings tipped black and white,
Soaring climbed the loftiest skies
In silent, swift, and graceful flight,
Or now on the waves would dancing float,
Or the islands rove in screaming flocks
To plunder all their feathered kin.
And in from the sea on a summer night,
From burrows dark and the crannied rocks
That indistinct and lofty rise,
The auklets swarmed with ceaseless din.
And swift as the jagged lightning's sweep,
Calling wild and weird and free,
Darted petrels, rare, of dainty form,
Wee fearless travellers of the deep,
Who welcome, lone, the perilous storm.

III

Although from all this clamorous throng,
The isles were given naught of song,
Yet, wandering with the winds that sweep
Through gorge of granite, bare and steep;
Down fog-swept summits, bleak and drear,
Or where sheer cliffs oppose the sea,—
There oft would come rare melody.
So strangely sweet! so crystal clear!
Wild, haunting strains of ecstasy!
'Twas the song of the rock-wren, glad and free,
Deep hidden was the pebbled-run
That to the secret cavern strayed,
Where a floor, by feathered pixies laid,
Of tiny, tide-worn stones was made.
And in the evanescent rays of light
Broken shell-pearl glittered bright.
And bits of bone were mortised in,
Forlorn remains of island kin.
Lost tribes of feather, fur, and fin,
That the ever-patient sea and sun
Had long bleached smooth and white.
And scattered everywhere lay stored,
All gathered slow by patient stealth,
The avian fairies' sparkling hoard,
Unrivaled in its curious wealth!

The Fugitive

Sometimes a fur-seal, dappled gray,
Along the isle-winding shores would stray,
And clambering on some lonely rock
That rude seas charged with thunder-shock,
Would cautious doze amid the spray.

Sea Herds

Innumerable, bellowing sea lion herds,
That oft out-roared the roaring sea,
Beneath the clamorous cries of countless birds
And wings that whirred unceasingly,
Dwelt on the foam-blown islets, near,
That towered cloudward, bleak and sheer.
Here the languid, ponderous war-like lords
And their passive mates, of tawny coat,
In the drowsy sun lolled numberless.
Idly they crowded to windward or lee
On the slippery, dank, surf-chiseled rocks
That waded the moon-churned tides, 'mid float
Of bubbly sea spume snowy white.
And here they crowded cove and ness.
Or strayed where the militant sea-bird flocks
Dispute the mist-hung, dizzy height.
Swift and sinuous others would glide
Into the crashing, crystal tide,
To chase their prey in finny flight
Through the swirling skies of the sapphire sea.
Or a maddened herd would floundering roar
Down to the foam-drenched, jagged shore,
To rout in the spray, full ruthlessly,
In passionate, primeval war,
Some rival isle's bride-hunting hordes.

On Aulone Isle

Oh! the channel walls are high and steep,
And the channel waves are wild and deep
And on, and on, they madly sweep,
By Aulone Isle of the Farallones!

Destiny

Drugged by the dreary solitude
Where towering cliffs ever sullen brood
Beside a barren, desolate sea,
Whose rough surf roars monotonously,
And where only the rock-wren sings with glee,
Dull, lonely lives the light crew led,
As their aimless years forgotten fled.
With measured flash of their lofty light
They swept the inhospitable seas of night,
Till the rose-glow of dawn would transient spill
Along the dim crest of some mainland hill.
And fair the dawn. Forever here
Autumn, summer and spring were one,
With never a day of sultry sun,
And only winter would shatter the tranquil year.

When the Steamer Came to the Farallones

I

It always was a month at least,
Till the steamer arrived from the dim shore, east,
And then the busiest days began
Of the uneventful, island year.
When, gladly acclaimed, the ship came at last,
With trail of smoke, and deafening blast
That far in the echoing caves would ring,
The sea-lions swift to the surf would slide;
And out from many a lofty ledge,
Where sheer cliffs wall the harbor edge,
Would scatter far and wide in fear,
Ten thousand querulous birds a-wing.
And the lone, gray mule in the pasture drear,
Who had been staring out to sea,
Or munching wire grass leisurely,
Now, stiff-legged and stumbling ran,
From bitter tasks to vainly hide
'Neath the lowering roof of some cave mouth, near,—
Poor, old, gray mule, bony and slim,
The steamer brought no joy for him!

II

The ship's boat, loaded high and deep,
From the anchored craft to the landing plied,
Where a long-armed crane swung o'er the tide.
Then up the rock-rough tower trail,
Zig-zag, narrow, long and steep,
Which climbs the dominant Tower Crag,
That laboring mule with its pack of oil,
Forced and slow would slaving toil.
Or an unwilling car he now would drag
On dull, unhappy, creaking wheel,—
Along the track of rusty steel,
That from the landing lazily led
Round beach-coves strewn with storm-tossed wood,
Through the high-walled pass with its whistling gale,
And then, with the gently sloping bed
That down the south slope slowly wound,
Across the isle to open ground.
Here, on the broad and stony turf,
Below the lone, wind-swept Tower Light,
And facing towards the southern surf,
The dwellings of the keepers stood,
Red-roofed and spotless white.

Wanderers to the Isles

To the shadowy, placid Tower Bay
A schooner or a flying yacht would sometimes stray,
Or a thunderous tug, half-hid in smoke;
And rarely here, night-anchoring moored
Beneath the moat-like walls, dark skimming craft
Of the mussel-gathering fisher-folk.
The painter, too, these solitary wilds had lured;
And the daring youth who laughed
At peril and like a web-blown spider swung
Far down the mist-cloud's filmy veil,
Where some treasured nest high overhung
Bleak, desolate, mist-hidden seas.
The cool, fog-laden summer days
Would sweep to the isle's fjord-like bays
The egging-fleets of lateen sail,
With their swarthy, motley, jargonning crew,
Swaggering, boisterous and unafraid,
Who, in rough sacken-blouses rude,
With ample space for plunder made,
And shod in rope-wove sandals crude,
Would scale the screaming perilous rookeries.

Sea-Island Solitude

Yet here, withal, the wanderers were few,
And the lonely isle-folk often knew
Unbroken months of solitude.
Oft on a calm and laggard day,
Where spray-blown points invade the sea,
Full sheltered in some sunny lee,
With far-cast line from sturdy rod
And hand-carved wood-reel, large and crude,
They lured the glittering perch or crimson cod.
When the great sea-tides were running low
And the coves and beaches looming bare,
In dark pot-holes of the weedy shoals
They'd gaff the slippery, serpent eel;
Or diving where sea-streams swirling flow,
Defly sweep, with bar of steel,
Dim abalones from the perilous bank.
On rugged slope or rock-strewn lawn,
In the secret light of dusk or dawn,
They'd hunt the friendless island hare,
A scampering shadow, dusky-gray,
As vague as the slope where it speeds away;
Or now with flickering torch, explore
The winding caverns, chill and dank,
That with a hoarse and constant roar
Echo the wild, surf-thundering shore.

Night on the Farallones

A proud moon queens the vaulted halls of night
With far-flung, glittering robe of stars;
A lofty peak looms bare and lone;
A snowy tower crowns the height,
With flashing light far seaward thrown.
Seven islands ride the sparkling seas,
Swept by sharp, salt-laden breeze
That drives the moonlight-shattering wave
In wild stampede on rocky bars.
But from the rugged portals of a cave,
A chattering auklet, hidden, calls
To answering echoes in the chill, dank halls;
And ever from the moon-blanch'd, lonely hill
Comes a forlorn petrel's elfin trill.

THE PAINTED WORLD
AND OTHER POEMS
OF CALIFORNIA

The Sierra Nevada from Mt. Hamilton

Sun-drenched the drowsy vales dream far below,
Rich lands of the laden bough, the stalk and vine,
Bound by hazy hills where idling rivers flow
Beneath the sculptured oak and silent pine.
Beyond, above the wind-blown, wild frontier
That halts the battered hemlock and the shivering deer,
Tower the naked solitudes of dazzling snow,—
Proud, sheer, remote, unending peaks that glow
With sunset's fading fire! How still they seem,
Fair as the splendor of a haunting dream!
Yet, even now, while peaceful vales, down deep,
Drowse on in happy, sun-drugged sleep,
On perilous heights where darkening clouds hang low,
What warring storms will savage sweep
The frigid wilderness and the desolate steep!

Rose of Roses, Star of Stars

I

Great wind-harps of the woods are still,
As slowly fades the sun;
The calm lake mirrors every hill;
Yon clouds burn one by one;
And wild, bleak summits, strewn with snow,
With crimson sun-fire glow.
Yet in memory I ever see
Your eyes, dark violets brushed with dew.
O fairest Rose: I see but you.

II

The stream is singing in the gorge,
Happy and wild and free;
An ouzel is warbling, where the torrents forge,
In his rarest ecstasy;
And maid-stars call in the vast of night
From paths of golden light.
Yet the winds ever bring your voice to me,
So joyous, low and ever new.
O dearest Rose! I hear but you.

III

In reverie, you are to me
The heaven's fairest star,
Dazzling bright in radiant night
Where all star-maidens are.
Their rival beams your splendor bars,
O Rose of Roses, Star of Stars!

Winter Storm: Point Pedro, California

Advancing, swift, in endless lines like regiments of war,
The white-plumed waves, in rank and file, were charging on the shore
With the thundering roar and echo deep, as cannon in the fray,
While rose along the fighting line the battle clouds of spray.

To Benjamin Putnam Kurtz

With consummate, unerring ease he weighs
The rifts of gold in stanza, line or phrase.
Crew of the mines, who, happy plodding, pick and bend
On sun-blached peak or shadowy isle of an unknown sea,
Though from all dragging chains forever free,
Beware the worth of chiseled ore you send
Those fateful scales of chilling wizardry!

The Vireo

I

Once, near the adobe ruins lonely, stood,
Vine-trellised and tangled, a lofty wood,
Far echoing with wild, sweet song of birds;
And, through spacious galleries numberless,
Glad feathered forms were ever winging.
In a somber, drab-green dress,
Lone wandering from spray to spray,
Forever questioning, forever answering,
One wingèd sprite would softly warbling say,
“Am I ever happy? I’m forever singing.”
Wee, feathered fay in dull, green coat,
O vireo with wide, weird eyes
That seem to us so strangely wise,
Of all philosophers are you the king
Or do you merely sing by rote,
Endlessly chanting those haunting words?

II

Forever gone are vine and bough;
Forever stilled those singing streams;
And all the happiness those years have known
Has like the vireo forever flown!
The World? Another generation now,
With alien ways and strangely curious dreams!

III

In moments fugitive I sometimes see,
Far down Time’s haunting gallery,
A tiny bit of feathered ecstasy
Exploring a cool, pavilioned tree;
Through those long lost woods, again, a song is ringing,
“Am I ever happy? I’m forever singing.”

Asleep

I

It was in the hushed and anxious gloom
Of the fever-haunted, sullen room.

II

“I’m so weary,” murmured she,
“So weary of this ever circling sea,
And dulled by its sheer immensity.
Weary of the winds that whistling moan
Across these dark and broken waters, lone;
I’m tired, so very tired of all
The screaming gulls that insistent call;
Weary of the ever surging waves that rolling roar
Along this bleak, forsaken shore,
Vast waves that with sea-born might are hurled
Against the battlements of this, our lonely world.”

III

Yet, by the very tumult was she lulled to sleep,
Lulled by the changeless symphony of the deep,
Lulled by the dark and ever surging waters, lone;
And slow she slept as sound as stone.

Clay

We are but clay within His hand.
We are but clay, and do not understand
Life's transient day. We are but clay.

At Forest Park

I. ON THE HEIGHTS

Over the great woodland one might gaze
To the distant hills and vales three ways,
And yet not see its boundary
Save where, against the western sky,
Beyond those redwoods, bent and torn,
That mark Morena's summit high,
Arose, far off, a peak forlorn.
Within the park, till lost to view,
From iron gates, chill, and massive wrought,
There swept a wide, fair avenue.
By many a high-arched bridge it crossed
The stream that through the woodland coursed,
Whose banks hung wild with ferns and vines,
Gay, swaying blooms and anchored cress;
Or edged where on some grassy slope
Grazed calm-eyed deer and antelope;
Or in dim canyon-depths was lost
'Neath laurel, buckeye, and madrone,
Where the shades of green were numberless;
And now, at last, a lake-shore sought,
Where rose snow-white, 'mid lofty pines,
Wide-spreading oaks, and cypress dense,
Upon a broad, fair eminence,
A marble mansion, chill and lone.

II. IN THE GARDENS

Descending to the lake's calm bay,
Where craft of pleasure idle lay,
Wide steps of marble, dazzling white,
Through terraced lawns and gardens led
Where blushing roses charm the breeze.
And by these paths that wind and turn,
O'erflowing massive vase and urn,
Are myriad blooms and each a star.
And beneath the shade of stately trees,
In the softened, dappled light,
Some stone-hewn maiden listening stands;
Some hunter scans the skies afar;
Or satyr leaps towards wooded lands
Where startled comrades all are fled.

III. THE SUMMER SYMPHONY

It is summer now at Forest Park,
And flashing in the sunlight gold
The fountains weave their nets of spray.
A peacock, here, parades the lawn
With measured step and haughty mien,
And every gaudy pinion drawn;
While where the lake-shore winds along,
In state sails by some snowy swan.
Over poppied meads sings the raptured lark
To his brooding mate 'neath weed-arch green;
From the chaparral of canyon walls,
Rich, clear, and sweet a thrasher calls,
Or happy screams some plundering jay.
With the murmur of waters that wandering flow
Through oaken wood and willowed wold,
There comes a maze of avian song,
Incessant, varied, sweet, and low.
And the depths of darkling verdure know,
Amid the solemn, twilight-hush,
Rare benedictions of the thrush.

To Cecily

O wistful maid in pensive mood,
Emerge from thought's deep solitude!
Seek not those depths for hidden truth!
That wilderness belongs to age, not youth.

Farallone

Her glad young beauty, fair and free,
Was veiled in the splendor of a dream.
Those azure depths, her eyes, were Spring;
And across the silken sheen of her Autumn hair
Would sweep those tints October forests bring
Of copper and bronze and dazzling gold.
With youthful beauty, pure, serene,
Her presence had a subtle charm,
And gave the thrill, exquisite, rare,
Of moonlight floating on a troubled stream
In a rock-strewn, windy wold;
Of the wild, sweet, haunting melody
Of singing summer woods at dawn;
Or of aspen groves on an alpine lawn
That with each zephyr take alarm
And fill the air with flakes of green,
In a rippling, changing, tremulous sea.

Storm Toll at Point Sur, California

Loud beats the wave on the barren coast,
Wild flies the spray, and free,
Over pinnacled rocks where the sea-fowl host
Alone brave the raging sea.

And now, aloft, from the snow-white tower
On those dark heights that lonely rise,
The warning light but mocks the hour
As the derelict despairing lies.

Remembrance

(To the Palace of Fine Arts of 1915, San Francisco)

Upon the low and level lands
That bind the broad, forever curving bay,
Forlorn, a melancholy palace stands,
So fair in one brief yesterday!

The Painted World

(Dedicated to the Palace of Fine Arts, San Francisco)

These dark, wild years! Do we strive in vain?
There lasts forever greed for gain!
Age-old sorrows! Ancient pain!
The nations, blind, still war for power.

Forsake the world for one brief hour,
And far from idle sound and clamorous crowd,
Enter these solitudes where the masters reign
In the dim-lit halls of their domain.
What forest scenes arrest the sight!
What holy lands! What rare delight!
These wind-blown meadows, all abloom,
Have, too, their song and rich perfume!
Here moonlight floods some soundless sea
In calm and deathless mystery!
There towards the sun and far away,
Dreaming in some enchanted vale,
'Mid lofty trees forever still
Upon their steep and silent hill,
How fair the towering castles loom
Deep rose-glowed by the dying day!
Or this alpine lake, whose magic blue
Forever reflects in constant hue,
'Neath sunset sky and burning cloud,
All motionless, some golden sail!
Dear God! What peace! How from all else apart
In beauty lies immortal art!

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Obvious printer errors have been corrected.

[The end of *Poems* by Milton S. Ray]