

*Out of the  
Wilderness*

*Wilson MacDonald*



**\* A Distributed Proofreaders Canada eBook \***

This eBook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the eBook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the eBook. If either of these conditions applies, please contact a <https://www.fadedpage.com> administrator before proceeding. Thousands more FREE eBooks are available at <https://www.fadedpage.com>.

This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. IF THE BOOK IS UNDER COPYRIGHT IN YOUR COUNTRY, DO NOT DOWNLOAD OR REDISTRIBUTE THIS FILE.

*Title:* Out of the Wilderness

*Date of first publication:* 1926

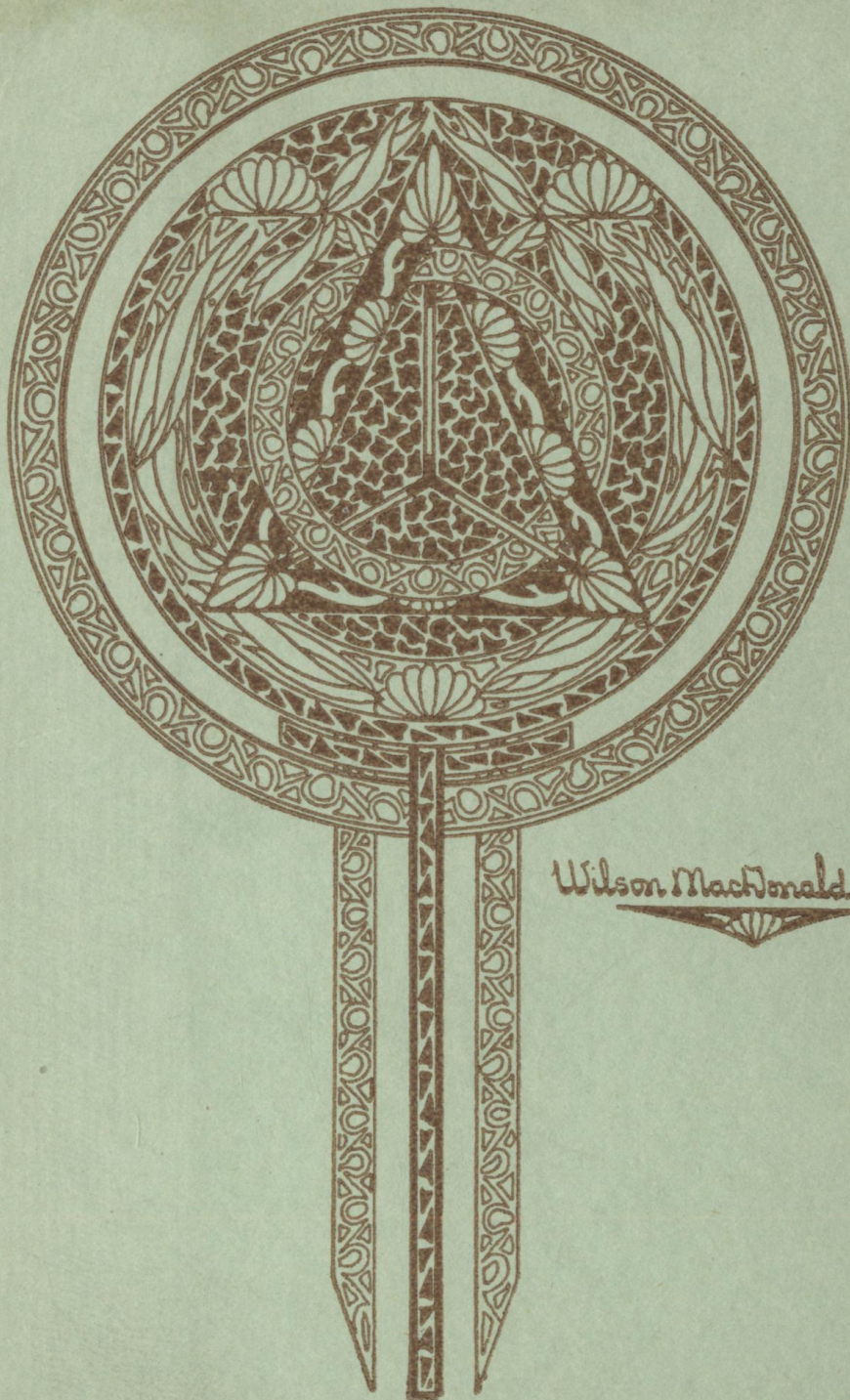
*Author:* Wilson Pugsley MacDonald (1880-1967)

*Date first posted:* May 26, 2020

*Date last updated:* May 26, 2020

Faded Page eBook #20200557

This eBook was produced by: Al Haines, John Routh & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <https://www.pgdpCanada.net>



Wilson Macdonald

# OUT OF THE WILDERNESS

By

WILSON MACDONALD



Decorations by the  
author



The Graphic Publishers Limited



OTTAWA

Copyright, Canada, 1926  
by Wilson MacDonald, Toronto

Copyright, United States, 1926  
by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York

Author's Edition, October, 1926  
First Edition, October, 1926  
Second Edition, Revised November, 1926

Produced in the Dominion of Canada

TO MY SISTER  
VIOLET

Poems included in this book have been reprinted from *The Canadian Journal of Religious Thought*, *The Canadian Magazine*, *Contemporary Verse*, *The Dalhousie Review*, *The London Mercury*, *The McMaster University Monthly*, *The Montreal Star*, *Scribner's Magazine*, *The Theosophical Magazine*, *The Toronto Globe*, and *The Toronto Saturday Night*.

# CONTENTS

## THE BOOK OF THE WILDERNESS

	PAGE
OUT OF THE WILDERNESS	<a href="#"><u>3</u></a>
A SONG OF THE UNRETURNING	<a href="#"><u>7</u></a>
A SONG TO THE VALIANT	<a href="#"><u>8</u></a>
THE CALL	<a href="#"><u>11</u></a>
THE LOON	<a href="#"><u>13</u></a>
THESE FRIENDS OF MINE	<a href="#"><u>16</u></a>
THE SONG OF THE SKI	<a href="#"><u>17</u></a>
M'SIEU	<a href="#"><u>20</u></a>
LARANOWA	<a href="#"><u>23</u></a>
MUSKOKA	<a href="#"><u>25</u></a>
I HEARD A WOODMAN GRIEVE	<a href="#"><u>31</u></a>
AN ADVENTURER'S SONG	<a href="#"><u>32</u></a>
NOVEMBER	<a href="#"><u>33</u></a>
THE BERRY PICKERS	<a href="#"><u>37</u></a>
THE WAR IN THE GORSE	<a href="#"><u>39</u></a>



THE SONG OF THE WINDING ROAD	<a href="#">40</a>
OAKS	<a href="#">45</a>
BIRCHES	<a href="#">48</a>
IN A WOOD CLEARING	<a href="#">51</a>
FEBRUARY THE FIRST ON THE PRAIRIES	<a href="#">54</a>
A SONG OF LONESOMENESS	<a href="#">57</a>

## THE BOOK OF MAN

I LOVE OLD THINGS	<a href="#">61</a>
IN THE FAR YEARS	<a href="#">64</a>
IN HOWARD PARK	<a href="#">65</a>
WHO ARE THESE SPIRITS?	<a href="#">74</a>
FALLEN	<a href="#">75</a>
ENGLISH BAY	<a href="#">76</a>
THE MAKER OF DREAMS	<a href="#">78</a>
COME HERE NEVERMORE	<a href="#">81</a>
THE GARMENT	<a href="#">83</a>
ON THE STAIR	<a href="#">84</a>
TWILIGHT AT CRESCENT BEACH	<a href="#">85</a>

THE UNSUNG PASSION	<a href="#"><u>86</u></a>
YOU ARE A HAVEN	<a href="#"><u>87</u></a>
MAGGIE SWARTZ	<a href="#"><u>88</u></a>
YLETTE AND YVONNE	<a href="#"><u>89</u></a>
UNSATISFIED	<a href="#"><u>92</u></a>
A SONG OF TWO HOUSES	<a href="#"><u>93</u></a>
SAINT CÉSAIRE	<a href="#"><u>95</u></a>
GRADUATION DAY	<a href="#"><u>97</u></a>
I WONDER	<a href="#"><u>100</u></a>
HAECKEL OF JENA	<a href="#"><u>102</u></a>
AND NO ONE SHALL FORGET	<a href="#"><u>108</u></a>
WHY NOT I?	<a href="#"><u>109</u></a>
THE SONG OF THE FLASHING DOOR	<a href="#"><u>111</u></a>
CHRISTMAS DINNER AT CHILDS'	<a href="#"><u>114</u></a>
THREE O'CLOCK	<a href="#"><u>117</u></a>
EXIT	<a href="#"><u>119</u></a>
THE SONG OF A PLUTOCRAT	<a href="#"><u>122</u></a>
SEA HARVEST	<a href="#"><u>124</u></a>
TRINITY COLLEGE, TORONTO	<a href="#"><u>126</u></a>

THE TOLL-GATE MAN	<a href="#"><u>129</u></a>
THE THREE RIDERS	<a href="#"><u>132</u></a>
HE HAS KEPT FAITH WITH BEAUTY	<a href="#"><u>135</u></a>
CENTRE STREET	<a href="#"><u>136</u></a>
THE SHOE-COBBLER IN HEAVEN	<a href="#"><u>138</u></a>
ON HIS GOLDEN-WEDDING DAY	<a href="#"><u>144</u></a>
AN EVENING SONG	<a href="#"><u>145</u></a>
NIAGARA	<a href="#"><u>146</u></a>
FOG	<a href="#"><u>151</u></a>
SIR GEORGE PARKIN	<a href="#"><u>152</u></a>
O SWEET TRANSLATOR	<a href="#"><u>154</u></a>
GHOST HORNPIPES	<a href="#"><u>155</u></a>
THE UNDYING BEAUTY	<a href="#"><u>157</u></a>
OFF JUAN DE FUCA	<a href="#"><u>158</u></a>
AS A WHITE MOON	<a href="#"><u>161</u></a>
A STREET SONG	<a href="#"><u>162</u></a>

A GYPSY SONG	<a href="#"><u>165</u></a>
THE SONG OF THE REBEL	<a href="#"><u>167</u></a>
THE UNBURIED DEAD	<a href="#"><u>172</u></a>
FIRST SONG OF A VAGABOND	<a href="#"><u>174</u></a>
SECOND SONG OF A VAGABOND	<a href="#"><u>175</u></a>
THE PUPPETS	<a href="#"><u>176</u></a>
THE SONG OF THE HEMP	<a href="#"><u>182</u></a>
MOURNERS	<a href="#"><u>186</u></a>
NINETEEN TWENTY-SIX	<a href="#"><u>188</u></a>
THE GOLDEN CROSS	<a href="#"><u>190</u></a>
VOLGA	<a href="#"><u>196</u></a>
LLOYD-GEORGE	<a href="#"><u>199</u></a>
THE SONG OF THE NEW COMMUNITIES	<a href="#"><u>200</u></a>
THE MASKED BALL	<a href="#"><u>206</u></a>
WESTWARD	<a href="#"><u>208</u></a>
THE LAST PORTAGE	<a href="#"><u>210</u></a>

# Out of the Wilderness

## OUT OF THE WILDERNESS

I, a vagabond, gypsy, lover forever of freedom,  
Come to you who are arrogant, proud, and fevered with civilization—  
Come with a tonic of sunlight, bottled in wild, careless acres,  
To cure you with secrets as old as the breathing of men;  
Come with the clean north wind in my nostrils,  
To blow out the dust and the smoke of your lives in a great blast of  
    beauty;  
Come with a chaos of wild-flowers, grouped in a lovely disorder,  
To shame all your gardens of maddening, cloying perfection.  
I have in my veins all the sweet unrest of the wild places,  
And if you toss me aside I will come hither again on the morrow;  
For I am a force that you cannot deny;  
I am an offering that you finally must accept,  
For I am the herald of new things in a new land.

If you knew what savagery I have endured  
That you might know peace;  
If you knew how often mine eyes have been blinded  
To give you light;  
If you knew how many times mine ears have been deafened  
To give you sound;  
If you knew the chains and manacles I have worn  
To give you freedom,  
Then would you open the doors you have closed in my face  
And recant all you have spoken against me  
And drink my song to the full measure of my cup.

I am a renegade, laughing at rules and laws,  
And my whims are my king and my royal family.  
I am an adventurer, delving in joy and sorrow  
And love and friendship and the white quarries of truth.  
I am a plunderer, taking all that the sages have left me  
And adding thereto, that the children to come may have peace.  
I am a highwayman, stealing the gold of the dawn  
And the star-heavy, blue-purple robe of the night.  
I hold up the wind for its fragrance and wrestle the sea  
With my brown, naked arms, for the tang of its salt.  
I am a pirate, a gay, laughing, profligate pirate  
Sailing the seas of delight, where my loot  
Is diamonds of sunlight and the cold pearls of the moon.

My song is a lily in darkness, keeping the whiteness of truth  
To guide the lost soul of the night up to dawn.  
My song is a cactus that stings him who touches,  
With misunderstanding, its sharp, biting needles,  
But blesses with beauty of yellow and crimson and all flaming colors  
Whoever beholds it with wisdom and love.

My song is a roseate rug, yet not of the Orient.  
Here is the weave of it: seaweed, curled black with salt,  
Under the cold, high cliffs of Gaspe;  
Pine-shadowed snow, at the dome of the Selkirks,  
Burning with suns and flaming with moons and remaining forever;  
Sands from the restless and changeable dunes of Wasaga;  
Slim, hardy reeds in the broad, lonely marshes  
Where James Bay falters between her allegiance  
To land and the gray, green of water;  
Gold suns that slip from the world at Alberní,  
Warming the seas with their fires;  
Threads of blue mist from the indolent valleys  
Of the low, lovely, lounging Laurentians;  
Sighs of the hemlock and snow-loving tamarack,  
Where the trees march to the south in Saskatchewan;  
Firs that leap up from dark Capilano  
Where music glides down a long stair to the sea;  
Orange and purple and crimson and bronze  
From the gay palette of gorgeous October  
In the lake-lyric land of Algonquin;  
Shadows from deep, frosty fissures whose waters  
Slip from their turbulent life to the hill-cradled Shuswap;  
Leaves of the red-limbed arbutus and roses of yellow and red,  
Leaning low to the sea in Victoria,  
The all-lovely lyric of cities.  
And, through all these colorful threads of my song,  
Tolerance, truth, and the kiss of full brotherhood!

I am the herald of new things in a new land.  
The light of my song blinds the bats and the night-owls.  
I tear from all men their false trappings  
And they in their anger revile me.  
The disciples of Cant feel my words in their hearts,  
As a dead tree that knows not sunlight from moonlight.  
Like the dancing of rain upon water  
I run with a song in my feet.

Who then shall hear me?

Men with brown limbs who rise up with joy to the sun

At the dawn; children who know a pure song

From their own flowing rhythm of flesh;

Old men who hunger for youth;

Young men who thirst for the blue, living waters of life.

I am forever the foe of Intolerance,

Hating her soul with a hatred undying.

I am a renegade, I am a highwayman,

I am a plunderer, I am a vagabond.

I am a pirate, a gay, laughing, profligate pirate

Sailing the seas of delight, where my loot

Is diamonds of sunlight and the cold pearls of the moon.



## A SONG OF THE UNRETURNING

To-night a crimson sun  
With no attendants by  
Goes down in lonely splendor  
An orange waste of sky.  
Never in all the years  
Garbed thus will he go from me:  
Red is the sea-gull's wing  
And blood-red is the sea.

Never again will the clouds  
Group in this austere way;  
Never again will love  
Be as it is to-day;  
Never again will the waves  
Break as now on the shore:  
Nothing in earth or heaven  
Comes as it came before.

High Beauty will never return  
In the same hood and gown,  
Whether the rose grows red  
Or the old oak burns brown,  
Or the blue rain dances swiftly  
Down the green-aisled sea,  
Or whether on gray, winding roads  
My love walks with me.

## A SONG TO THE VALIANT

I'll walk on the storm-swept side of the hill  
In my young days, in my strong days,  
In the days of ardent pleasure.  
I'll go where the winds are fierce and chill—  
On the storm-swept side of the daring hill—  
And there will I shout my song-lays  
In a madly tumbling measure.  
Hilloo the dusk,  
And hilloo the dark!  
The wind hath a tusk  
And I wear its mark.  
The day's last spark hath a valiant will:  
Hilloo the dark on the wind-swept hill!  
From the hour of pain  
Two joys we gain—  
The strife and the after-leisure.

When the fang of the wind is bared and white,  
In the strong days, in the wild days,  
In the days that laugh at sorrow,  
I love to wander the hills at night—  
When the gleaming fang of the wind is white—  
Nor yearn a whit for the mild days,  
Or the ease of life to borrow.  
Hilloo the whine  
In the pungent cone  
Of the dreaming pine  
On the hill alone!  
The bare trees moan with a dead thing's cry,  
And their skeletons crawl along the sky,  
Like a dinosaur  
Who would live once more  
In the flesh that blooms to-morrow.

I'll walk on the sheltered side of the hill  
In my old days, in my cold days,  
As the sap of life is waning.  
I'll find a road where the trees are still—  
On the sheltered side of the placid hill—  
And dream a dream of the bold days  
When the leash of Time was straining.  
Adieu the snows,  
And the fang that rips!  
And hilloo the rose  
With her velvet lips!  
Where the brown bee sips with his gorgeous lust  
I'll pay earth back with her borrowed dust;  
Nor shall I grieve  
At the clay I leave,  
But joy in the gifts I'm gaining.

Lord, hear Thou the prayer of a poet's soul,  
In his fire days, when his lyre plays,  
And his song is swift with passion!  
Give to him prowess to near the goal  
While his limbs are firm and his sight is whole.  
Make brief his stay in the dire days  
When the paling heart is ashen.  
The storm-swept sides  
Of the hill belong  
To the soul that rides  
To the gates of song;  
May his days be long where the wild winds play;  
On the sheltered side let him briefly stay.  
When his muse grows dumb  
Let the darkness come  
In the Orient's fine, swift fashion.

## THE CALL

A gray wind wails  
At the world's cold edge  
And its song is all for me:  
It calls me away  
From the drab-hooded town  
To the surf of the last lone sea.

A white cloud floats  
With its empty car,  
And it bids me mount and go  
To the clean, sweet lands  
Where the strong elks feed  
At the milkless breasts of snow.

The town's voice sounds  
Like a harlot's laugh,  
But a virgin's blush is there.  
And the great, gaunt rocks  
Are a kinder couch  
Than a woman's breast and hair.

The bitterns cry  
At the world's cold edge,  
But their notes are sweeter far  
Than the warmest word  
On a false maid's tongue  
In the land where false things are.

A rude, brown hut  
I will build some day  
In that land of purple flowers,  
And my comrades shall be  
The sky and the wind  
And the cool, young heart of showers.

Gold rain runs there  
Down a green, cold sea  
And its feet are silver-shod;  
And there's not a word  
In the mouth of space  
That mocks at the dream of God.

A gray wind wails  
At the world's cold edge  
And its song is all for me:  
It calls me away  
From the drab-hooded town  
To the surf of the last lone sea.

## THE LOON

All night, since that rich farewell of the sun,  
The weedy shores of this unchristened lake  
Have heard thy daring laughter; all night long  
Wild echoes with their fading strength have run  
Over the sounding rock and muffling brake,  
A maddened and incorrigible throng  
That seek the woodland's silence to destroy;  
Until that sylvan spirit of content  
Is angered at thy mockery of joy  
While Night is at her starry sacrament.

In this august cathedral, where no jest  
Disturbs the holy anthem of the pine  
Or those low wind-sonatas of the leaf,  
Thy cry is like an uninvited guest  
Who soils the rubric and invades the shrine  
With some profaning word of unbelief.  
What bold derision goads thee to this mirth?  
Rue of the endless silence or high scorn  
For those dull souls that crowd one rood of earth:  
Pale amours from the twilight to the morn?

Or art thou some old mortal here set free  
To mock the trite conventions until doom  
With that erosive satire which destroys?  
The servile as of yore, with bended knee,  
Curl to the purple princes and make room  
For dupes that move like masquerading toys.  
From sullen wombs of women still outflow  
Choice morsels for the lusty lips of war;  
The drums blind reason: youth will rise and go  
To mock that travail which their mothers bore.

Shallow is grief that weeping can subdue;  
And wintry is the woe that refuge takes  
In silence or in laughter; in thy call  
Some sorrow of dead years dost thou pursue  
Across the choric marshes of these lakes,  
Or shadowed by some shoreland's granite wall?  
Is one who mixed her beauty with cold lies  
The maiden of thy scorn? I laugh with thee—  
Last victim of the falsehood in her eyes,  
Last sad receiver of her treachery.

Ease thou my soul, O prophet of the wild!  
The copper moon is heavy in the reeds  
That fan it slowly upward to the sky—  
And all the wood is guileless as a child;  
Wan is the air with ghosts of feathered seeds  
That will not let the soul of summer die.  
But who of men shall heed this loveliness,  
Or who shall hear this pleasant night's refrain!  
The rose in vain puts on her crimson dress,  
In vain is poured the cooling cup of rain.

To-night, like gloomy scythes, the raven wings  
Of some avenging hawk mow down the light  
That tethers this dark planet to the moon;  
The whip-poor-will from deep retirement brings  
Her lyrics to the archives of the night,  
Stored well with many an unremembered rune,  
And sighs of lovers dead a thousand years  
And stars that fell when Hesperus was young  
And all those cold, imperishable tears  
Forgotten in the darkness and unsung.

Cool are the ages with these night-born tears  
That feed the dark Cocytus with their flow;  
And, richer for this weeping, men go on.  
And some return as bards and some as seers;  
And some, like thee, release their flood of woe  
In laughter through the darkness to the dawn.  
And I, as one old grief invades my heart  
With all her sad attendants in a throng,  
Command my lamentations to depart  
Along this easeful avenue of song.



## THESE FRIENDS OF MINE

To-night I come back from the silent places  
And all the sweets of loneliness resign;  
And waiting here to greet me are the faces—  
The cheering faces of these friends of mine.

I find the words I long ago have spoken  
Safe in the tender guarding of their care.  
They kept my image in their hearts unbroken  
And clean of all the stains of life I wear.

The gypsy trail was pleasant to my going;  
The solitude was sweet as amber wine.  
And yet I only loved this vagrance, knowing  
I might turn back to these old friends of mine.

How firm their hands are in my hour of sadness!  
How cool their voices to my soul's deep scars!  
Beneath the moon they greet me in their gladness,  
And warm the bloodless current of the stars.

O Life, my heart is not for riches yearning,  
My prayers are always humble at thy shrine;  
For this is wealth: to know my foot's returning  
Is always music to a friend of mine.

## THE SONG OF THE SKI

Norse am I when the first snow falls;  
Norse am I till the ice departs.  
The fare for which my spirit calls  
Is blood from a hundred viking-hearts.  
The curved wind wraps me like a cloak;  
The pines blow out their ghostly smoke.  
I'm high on the hill and ready to go—  
A wingless bird in a world of snow:  
Yet I'll ride the air  
With a dauntless dare  
That only a child of the north can know.

The bravest ski has a cautious heart  
And moves like a tortoise at the start,  
But when it tastes the tang of the air  
It leaps away like a frightened hare.  
The day is gloomy, the curtains half-drawn,  
And light is stunted as at the dawn:  
But my foot is sure and my arm is brawn.

I poise on the hill and I wave adieu:  
(My curving skis are firm and true)  
The slim wood quickens, the air takes fire  
And sings to me like a gypsy's lyre.  
Swifter and swifter grows my flight:  
The dark pines ease the unending white.  
The lean, cold birches, as I go by,  
Are like blurred etchings against the sky.  
One am I for a moment's joy  
With the falling star and the plunging bird.  
The world is swift as an Arab boy;  
The world is sweet as a woman's word.  
Never came such a pure delight  
To a bacchanal or a sybarite:  
Swifter and swifter grows my flight,  
And glad am I, as I near the leap,  
That the snow is fresh and the banks are deep.

Swifter and swifter on I fare,  
And soon I'll float with the birds on air.  
The speed is blinding; I'm over the ridge,  
Spanning space on a phantom bridge.  
The drifts await me; I float, I fall:  
The world leaps up like a lunging carp.  
I land erect and the tired winds drawl  
A lazy rune on a broken harp.

Child of the roofless world am I;  
Not of those hibernating drones  
Who fear the gray of a wintry sky  
And the shrieking wind's ironic tones,  
Who shuffle cards in a cloud of smoke  
Or crawl like frozen flies at chess,  
Or gossip all day with meddling folk  
In collar of starch and a choking dress.  
Come, ye maids of the vanity-box,  
Come, ye men of the stifling air:  
The white wind waits at your door and knocks;  
The white snow calls you everywhere.  
Come, ye lads of the lounge and chair,  
And gird your feet with the valiant skis  
And mount the steed of the winter air  
And hold the reins of the winter breeze.

Lord of the mountains dark with pine!  
Lord of the fields of smoking snow!  
Grant to this vagrant heart of mine  
A path of wood where my feet may go,  
And a roofless world to my journey's end,  
And a cask of wind for my cup of wine,  
And yellow gold of the sun to spend,  
And at night the stars in endless line,  
And, after it all, the hand of a friend—  
The hand of a trusted friend in mine.

## M'SIEU

The Ottawa is a dark stream;  
The Ottawa is deep.  
Great hills along the Ottawa  
Are wrapped in endless sleep.  
And, where the purple waters turn  
To seek the valiant north,  
At Mattawa I found a road  
And on it wandered forth.

The road was made for free men  
And fenced alone with wood;  
And every blossom at its edge  
Declared that life was good.  
It wound in love about the rocks  
And 'round and 'round the trees;  
It went asearch for loveliness,  
A vagrant with the breeze.

A mile away from Mattawa  
The road breaks in a clearing;  
And near by is a whitewashed hut  
And fields in gold appearing.  
And from this place came out a maid—  
A winsome maid of ten—  
And I have never hope to see  
A fairer child again.

She came along the roadway  
In that fair summer hour,  
And softer grew the pine-songs  
And fairer bloomed each flower.  
And when she passed she raised her eyes,  
As bluebells do at dawn,  
And cried, "M'sieu," and courtesied low,  
And then went swiftly on.

My heart, that leaps not lightly now,  
Thrilled wildly at the word:  
A poem with a lovelier sound  
I never yet had heard.  
I would have clasped her to my heart—  
This little woodland belle—  
But all I did was blush a bit  
And stammer “Mademoiselle.”

When I went back to Mattawa  
And thence to Montreal,  
I heard, on every wandering wind,  
That little maiden’s call.  
And when the empty words of men  
Leave faith a thing forlorn,  
I’ll think of Mademoiselle’s “M’sieu”  
And that fair summer morn.

The Ottawa is a dark stream;  
The Ottawa is deep.  
Great hills along the Ottawa  
Are wrapped in endless sleep.  
And when the purple days return,  
Go, all ye weary, north,  
And find the road to Mattawa  
And on it wander forth.

## LARANOWA

Laranowa of the Mohawks, lovely Iroquois,  
Elemental, winsome, gentle, shy and daring child!  
Would I call thee back from freedom to our warping law?  
Would I see thy maddening beauty with our ways defiled?  
Dashing through the splashing dew with a joyous mind,  
Thou dost race the morning matins down the crooning air.  
Like a laggard to thy running leaps the carolling wind;  
Like a shaft of midnight is thy hair.

Would I stop thy flaming foot, burning strength and grace?  
Would I turn thy lyric going to this prose of mine?  
Dusky is the twilight beauty of thy swarthy race—  
Like the deeper, richer glowing of a darker wine.  
Men would teach thee, who hast wisdom at the fountain source;  
Painted women shrug their shoulders when thou comest near.  
Thou art free and strong and tameless—they a spent-out force.  
Thou hast still thy pagan blushes when the gods appear.  
Laranowa, in thy motion I can count the cost  
Of this carnivalian crowding of our prisoned feet.  
Thou dost skim along a pathway, where the rocks are mossed,  
Lightly going as a zephyr winnowing o'er the wheat.  
Elemental, winsome, gentle, shy and daring child,  
Fearless of the silent darkness and her starry awe,  
Heiress of the woodland's largess, sweetheart of the wild—  
Laranowa of the Mohawks, lovely Iroquois!

## MUSKOKA

Chide not the leisure of this drifting moon,  
Nor blame the lazy loitering of stars  
That pass above these isles of bearded stone;  
Nor wonder should the slowly wheeling cars  
Of Algol and Arcturus crave the boon  
To ever here remain—  
And Night pause like a nomad who has found,  
In woodlands strung with moonlight whose pale rain  
Descends to earth with neither scent nor tone,  
The haven whither agelong she was bound.

Dark are these groping waters, dark as wine  
From a wild cherry's heart; a light wind comes  
With speed of fire around a wooded turn  
Within whose drowsy haunts a partridge strums  
In dreams, disturbing slumber of the pine.  
Here the white poplars boil  
Above the moon-fires kindled in a pool  
Wherein the dying hemlock pours its oil  
And where the brown, decaying fronds of fern  
Lie in a dreamless slumber, sweet and cool.

Against the soft, gray ashes of a cloud  
The red stars burn and fade like dying coals.  
And, lured by them beyond the shore's deep shade,  
My slim canoe draws near unguarded shoals  
Where white waves dance about me in a crowd  
Nor ever tire of song.  
And on the burning beauty of this flood,  
Around which quiet and dusky waters throng,  
I pillow drifts of light against my blade;  
And all the Redman's lust is in my blood.



No hue is on the canvas here outrolled  
Save one frail touch of amber on the sky,  
Spilled by the yellow moon in her slow flight.  
The high, dark shore, where pine and hemlock sigh,  
Seems like a drift of shadows, deep and cold,  
Washed hither from the gloom  
Of countless nights in ages passed away.  
Brave is the task that brings once more the bloom  
Of that wine-flower of morning, and delight  
Of feathered choirs and furry hosts at play.

How rich is silver, fallen with sweet grace  
Upon the ebon velvet of this lake!  
How fair the throat of water bared to heaven!  
This hour I long will keep for Beauty's sake  
And store its memory like old, treasured lace.  
And on December nights,  
When it is hard to think of life as kind,  
And when the frozen tempest coldly smites,  
The fingering of this pattern fair shall leaven  
The gray and frosty reaches of the wind.

In one forgotten cove on Tobin's shore  
My frail canoe crawls up the crying sand;  
And here I watch the lights of Windermere—  
Strange lights the stars can never understand.  
Here a forsaken dwelling evermore  
Dreams of its kinder past,  
While tides of moonbeams wash its broken doors;  
And all its ancient order stands aghast  
That any vagrant storm may enter here  
Or any stranger wander on these floors.

Here once I came with one who softly leaned—  
As softly as this moonlight—on my arm,  
And we, together, climbed the groaning stair  
In this old wreck of wood, and felt alarm  
When at our touch the slender flight careened;  
And in the dark her hand  
Came searching for my own, and I could feel  
Her hair against my temples softly fanned.  
And that was long ago: she still is fair,  
But I am touched with wounds that cannot heal.

And yet to-night I have a lovely dream  
Which in our lives too often is destroyed  
When love is granted all her dear desires.  
So long one phantom face have I enjoyed  
That, should it bloom in flesh, the holy gleam  
Might never shine again!  
Her grace is ever with me in the wind,  
Her hair is in the falling of the rain;  
And Beauty that is absent never tires  
The changeful fancy of the human mind.

Sweet is the mossy earth to wounded life  
When in the heart regrets and griefs abound;  
And so I rest and read the starry scrolls,  
Until a loud thing comes like a frothing hound  
And cuts the waters swiftly as a knife,  
And clear above its roar  
Swift, unharmonious music, mad, profane,  
Blasphemes above the sobbing of the shore;  
And they who sing are dull, demented souls  
Whom Beauty calls for evermore in vain.

For them the hemlock vainly broods and sighs;  
Nor do they ever heed the poplar's mirth  
When it is roused by sudden wind; they care  
For not one wistful wonder of the earth:  
No lovely thing is lovely to their eyes.  
When the white-surpliced choir  
Of singing waters marches up the sand  
Or when the wild rose with her tongue of fire  
Laps the cool vintage of the northern air  
They never dream, nor love, nor understand.

Muskoka! Who hath syllabled in tones  
More lovely than this mellow Indian cry,  
Born to the rhythm of fire and dancing feet  
And copper silhouettes against the sky!  
O land of lyric trees and epic stones!  
To-day thy granite shores  
Are presses making wine of all my dreams—  
The purple wine that here in music pours.  
Drink thou, O weary heart, the grapes are sweet,  
And pure the flow as these cold, woodland streams.

Drink thou some winter night when the white moon  
Tires for her couch of waters, and the air  
Grieves for the dance of wind on laughing leaves;  
Drink and forget the heavy heart's despair,  
Knowing the joy of summer cometh soon—  
And, having drunk my song,  
Lie down and dream that paradise of hours  
When the tired sun will once again be strong  
And when this blessed haunt of Eden weaves  
Her rugged grass and slow and hardy flowers.

## I HEARD A WOODMAN GRIEVE

I heard a woodman grieve the fate  
Of all condemned to level lands,  
Whose treeless acres vainly wait  
A gift of leaves from Beauty's hands.

And yet some compensating Mind  
Doth even crown their loss with gain—  
And where no tree retards, we find  
A richer sunlight on the plain.

Too soon the woodman's day is gone;  
But they, who on the prairies dwell,  
Shall know an unobstructed dawn  
And give the day a full farewell.

## AN ADVENTURER'S SONG

I have tried the strength of the salt surf where the last sun leaves the  
world;  
I have walked Ontario's lilac lanes, in the late May's wistful weather.  
I have breasted winds off Labrador where the whole sea-strength is  
hurled;  
I have bound, high up in the Selkirks, blue and gold flowers together.  
I have roamed in lands where blue lakes gleam like the fallen tears of  
gods;  
I have trailed the cold Saskatchewan to the undiscovered places.  
I have heard the gorse on Beacon Hill breaking their golden pods;  
I have watched the blue St. Lawrence lave the grim Laurentian bases.  
I come sun-tanned from a great marauding of wind and wave and tree;  
And the copper hue of a savage face peers upward through my singing.  
And all that I love is in my song: the tang of the great West Sea  
And the loon's laugh and the gull's shriek and the pale star's swinging.

## NOVEMBER

Some nomad yearning burns within my singing  
For that bleak beauty scorned of lute and lyre,  
That loveliness of gray whereon are winging  
The last wild lyrists of the marsh and mire.  
And, lest that migrant choir  
Should wing away all music from the land,  
By one forgotten lake I chant this song;  
And that cold passion of her choric sand  
Shall to my muse belong.

This lake, unnamed in June, is still more nameless  
Amid this ruined grandeur of the year,  
These roofless, pillared temples where the tameless  
Young Winter soon will chase her frosty spear;  
And where even now I hear  
The prelude of her long and ghostly wail  
In boughs that creak and shallows that congeal.  
And, like a child who hears some ghostly tale,  
A strange delight I feel.

I saw the year pass by me like a dancer:  
The imp of April and the child of May,  
The modest maid of June with her soft answer  
To every wooing wind that blew her way.  
And now, this autumn day,  
When the high rouge of leaf no more conceals  
And there is none to pipe a dancing theme,  
A woman old, with heavy toes and heels,  
Plods by me in a dream.

Let others pour their opulence of roses  
To please their high-born ladies of the tower;  
Rather would I the thin, wan hand that closes  
In grateful love about my simple flower.  
While comrade singers shower  
With wonderment of word and garish phrase  
The luscious year, that moves from plough to plough,  
I rest content to twine mine austere bays  
About November's brow.

Here, in this cheerless womb, is born the glory  
Of June's white-woven whorl of scented hours.  
And here, within this mist supine and hoary,  
Is dreamed the foot of April's dancing showers.  
Here, where the black leaf cowers  
Against the dusky bosom of the earth,  
Is drawn the milk that feeds the dawning year;  
And Flora plans, herself, the rhythmic birth  
Of spring's new chorus here.

Above my nameless lake the broken fingers  
Of those once-hardy reeds are jewelled with ice;  
The mallard duck, despite this warning, lingers  
Until the gripping air is like a vice.  
The year hath tossed her dice  
And lost the Indian summer, and the loon  
Chills, with her wintry laughter, the bleak skies—  
And, where a meagre sun is doled at noon,  
A wounded pheasant dies.

And, lest these hueless days should pass despairing,  
The rose hath garbed her seeds in orbs of red—  
The last warm touch of pure, autumnal daring  
In all this frosty garden of the dead.  
The quail, to hardship bred,  
Frames her soft eyes with tangled brush and brier,  
And woos us with the contrast; and the hare,  
Urged by the weasel's probing eyes of fire,  
Leaps from her peaceful lair.

This is the hour when the bold sun is sleeping  
On his last couch—and here his lady comes,  
Cold as a cloud that will not melt to weeping,  
And breaks the flutes and muffles all the drums,  
And the last warmth benumbs.

I know the road she walks to greet her lord  
By the strange rustle of her silken dress;  
Or do I hear the oak-tree's phantom horde  
Of dead leaves in distress?

O troubadours of spring! O bards of gladness,  
Who in the scented gardens love to throng!  
So loath are ye to sing the hour of sadness  
When all the world is hungry for a song,  
And nights are strange and long,  
That I, in this pale hour, have called mine art  
To hymn that beauty, scorned of pen and tongue;  
For God Himself hath set my song apart  
To praise His worlds unsung.



## THE BERRY PICKERS

Through the uncombed grasses  
Of the ungroomed North  
The brown berry-pickers  
Come gaily forth—

Come where the purple  
Makes a royal sward  
For an uncrowned king,  
For an unknown lord.

I can hear a tune  
As their fingers play  
In the clean, warm air  
Of a summer's day.

Brown-eyed Agnes,  
Swift-footed Kate,  
Are picking blueberries  
For my cold, white plate.

Any berry's flavor  
Would taste very good  
If plucked by brown fingers  
In a frayed, wild wood.

Mary has a fair eye  
And a trim waist:  
I touch her dark beauty  
In this berry's taste.

Sweetest is the berry,  
Sweetest to the tongue,  
When the berry-pickers  
Are blithe and young.

Dwellers of the wilderness  
Long have understood  
Old crones should never gather  
Berries in a wood.

## THE WAR IN THE GORSE

At a certain time of the year a popping as of miniature artillery can be heard in the gorse. The yellow of one variety of broom is tipped with red. The broom and the gorse are the same.

The warm, yellow gorse is a child of the noon  
When the lava of sunlight is gold.  
But the white broom is born in the reign of the moon  
When the lava of beauty is cold.

And the white gorse at dusk goes to war with the gold:  
By the sun and the moon are they led—  
And the white is the victor, for, lo! we behold  
The wounds where the yellow gorse bled.

The lava of moonlight goes back to its queen,  
The lava of gold to its king;  
And the broom takes again its old banner of green,  
And there's peace on the hill until spring.

## THE SONG OF THE WINDING ROAD

*The mourners come from the last dead rose,  
Crying: "Beauty is gone."  
But I go up where the north wind blows  
Out of the gap of dawn.  
And I turn a key of the frozen snow  
In a phantom gate to the road I go.*

There is a road that doth wind and wind  
For love of the hills about it lying,  
And there I go with my cares and bind  
Their burden up with a pine-tree's sighing.  
Alone I go and leave behind  
A dead, cold rose and the mourners crying;  
And there, in a hueless tome, I find  
That Beauty's birth is at Beauty's dying.

When the yellow leaf in sorrow passes  
Back through the door that set it free,  
When the sapless brown grows dark on the grasses  
I'll turn to the bloom that few shall see.  
I'll go where the barren bushes flare  
With formless buds and with hueless dyes;  
And out of the peopled void I'll bear  
A spirit flower for a poet's eyes.

There is a loom, by the cold winds plied,  
That garbs the souls of the garden's dead,  
And there's not a bush on the countryside  
That blooms not white where it flaunted red.  
But the hosts deny this phantom dress  
That hath no form and that hath no hue;  
And the world is full of a cold distress,  
And the mourners doubt and the doubters rue.

There's a friend who comes when a friend departs,  
    (Hear me now while my muse is strong)  
And up from the field of broken hearts  
    There floats forever a pure white throng.  
And a white bud burns when the red flower goes;  
    And a white bird sings when the blackbird leaves—  
And her wings are spread when the north wind blows  
    And the east wind grieves.

“Mourners,” I cry, “come up with me!”  
    And they will not come, but still I call;  
And tire no more than the climbing sea  
    That leaps in vain up the brown cliff's wall.  
And I shall sing when there's not a song  
    In all of the wastrel woodland, crying:  
That Death is weak and that Life is strong,  
    And Beauty's birth is at Beauty's dying.

The relay runners are on the height,  
    And they race with Time and his flaming car;  
And the red sun tosses at dusk his light  
    To a cold young moon and her comrade star.  
And the graves that take are the wombs that give;  
    And the vale of tears is the fount of laughter;  
And the deaths we die are the lives we live  
    In the gypsy joy of a wild hereafter.

There is a road that doth wind and wind  
    For love of the hills about it lying,  
And the mourners pass to its peace and find  
    A fount of grief where the snow is flying.  
And the pale leaf sings on the phantom tree;  
    And the wood is warm with dancing hosts—  
But the sightless mourners do not see  
    One slim, pale limb of the dead year's ghosts.

When the rose is dead  
Two roses lift to the winds their red:  
    The rose that was and the rose to be.  
    And I find two souls in the barren tree.  
And the cold winds burn with the blooms of May;  
    And crowded with feet is the printless snow.  
And elfins dance in a roundelay  
    Wherever I go, I go.  
And the things I see you'll some day find  
When you walk my road that doth wind and wind.

When the first frail flame of the woodland dies  
    The mourners weep with the April rain,  
And their tears blur many a glad surprise  
    That rises up from each flower slain;  
And the mourners wail, when the summer's done,  
    For the green leaf's sap, and they cannot see  
    The last brown leaf in the wind-swept tree  
Hold high its hand to the last warm sun.

The march of beauty breaks not its rhyme  
    For one cold hour in a dismal dawn;  
    And the rarest wines of Avalon,  
In the hours unloved of men, are mine.  
And the scoffers scoff and I hear the blind:  
    "Will never the poet cease his crying?"  
But I shall run as this road, and wind  
    For love of the hills about me lying.

I sing not red and I sing not blue,  
But I sing their pure, white residue.  
    When the flame is out I will go and gain  
    A new, sweet joy where her light was slain.  
And I, at the tomb of each dead night,  
    Roll back the stone where the sleeper lies,  
    And watch the souls of the Masters rise  
And walk in the morning's clear, cold light.

The first dawn gazed in the great Deep's face,  
And then stood high on her jewelled toes,  
And plucked the dark at the edge of space  
Where long it bloomed like a dull, black rose.  
And the mourners wept for the dead flower's hue,  
And wailed so long for a lost delight  
That Pity brought back the rose of night  
To hold their tears in a cup of dew.

I sing where never a man hath sung:  
I dare of themes which they long passed by.  
My rune is strange as the red pine's tongue  
That dulls its song in the soft June sky,  
But bursts in passion when winds are cold  
And clouds are tossed in a pagan blare,  
And when all the face of the world is old  
I'll sing a song of the young and fair.

Adieu, dear road that dost wind and wind  
For love of the hills about thee lying!  
For the dead town calls with her careless blind,  
And I must go, for her heart is crying.  
And I bid adieu to the vagrant snow,  
To the dusky pines aloofly sighing;  
And come back here, that you too may know  
That Beauty's birth is at Beauty's dying.

## OAKS

No flaming hue is here,  
For no youth is in the fold—  
They are old, very old,  
And they garb in russet and gold.  
The burning maples are near;  
The pine is a sound like a tear:  
One is too sombre, one is too gay  
For this autumn holiday.  
The mists are cold on the low ponds  
And the frost is chill;  
But the world is warm with crimson and bronze  
Where the oaks stand on the hill.

The yellow willow leaf  
Has gone to an early rest;  
The leaves of the elm  
Marched on at a wind from the west.  
Only the oak leaves remain  
With their brave russet and gold:  
Their fires shall burn to the edge  
Of the winter's cold.

What do the oak leaves think  
In this rich, thoughtful hour?  
Are they doleful at going  
From so fair a bower?  
Or sad as a limner  
Who, in sight of the prize,  
Must give up forever  
His long-beloved dyes?  
Or do they wonder  
Who, when they are dead,  
All others having gone before,  
Shall make their last bed?



Russet and bronze and gold,  
You shall not leave  
Without fitting mourners  
To weep and grieve.  
The rose-pod is yet burning  
In the quiet roadside air:  
When the oak's bronze goes out  
There will be some one to care.

Shall we go to sleep—  
To the unbreathing Deep—  
Like black weeds touched with frost?  
Nay! Age is the time for bright colors,  
Though life be the cost.  
Youth is a fine adventure,  
But it's rare to be old  
And to go to the Master of Colors  
In russet and bronze and gold.

## BIRCHES

The tidal darkness floods the lonely land,  
Leaving its stain on sky and field and wood,  
Save where the silver birches palely stand—  
A cold and phosphorescent brotherhood  
That age-long have the dark and gloom withstood.  
I find my pathway by their gentle glow;  
Their laughter drowns the hemlock's woful whine.  
They are a valiant company to go  
So boldly mid a nubian group of pine.

Brave is the laughter of their limpid leaves  
In presence of that primal oligarch;  
And strange the daring spirit that conceives  
Their moony misalliance with the dark.  
Are these the offspring of some ancient arc  
That stumbled through the clouds, some giant moon  
Whose beams were frozen and must aye remain  
To gaze as violets on the blue of noon,  
Nor evermore their former state regain?

Like slim and naked damsels of the wood,  
Where all are proudly gowned in tan and gray,  
Their tresses gathered in a silver snood,  
The birches, nude and chaste, salute the day,  
And rouse the prudes to spurious dismay.  
O for a power to set their clean limbs free  
To rhyme, in teasing flesh, their sealed desire,  
Or dance their prisoned feet in ecstasy  
On that fell form of puritanic ire!

I raise my goblet, with this winking wine,  
Not to the toasts that often meet the ear,  
Not to the burning maple nor the pine  
That keeps her august vesture through the year  
Lest any woodland doubter should have fear;  
But to the silver birches in a row  
I lift my cool and amber chalice high,  
And drink the columned beauty of their snow  
That in the rains of April does not die.

Fine rebels of the shadowland are they.  
Make me their comrade rebel! May I hold  
Their stainless beauty in the dark, and may  
I meet the massive blackness of the wold,  
Sandalled as they with shade and helmed with gold.  
What axe shall dare assail their gallant band,  
Or dim their silver torches, shining clear  
To make the cooling lilies understand  
Some spirit, kindred to their own, is near!

Once more the tidal wave of black withdraws  
And hides within the ever-shadowed wood;  
And the avenging morning overawes  
With light a cold and traitorous multitude  
That still with thoughts of midnight are imbued,  
But hails a group of birches that alone  
Of all the earth rebelled the imperious Night,  
And mocked the Ethiopian on her throne  
With brave, unarmored companies of white.

## IN A WOOD CLEARING

### I

All night I wearied utterly of the pillow of darkness  
In hope of the dawn, knowing it should bring me,  
In one soft word, a joy that is past understanding.  
Now stirs the morning breeze with thoughts of the clover  
Bent by the bees, with thoughts of the balsam-trees;  
But I go with dreams sweeter by far—with dreams of a maiden  
Sloping to loveliness up from her finger-tips.

High in the wilderness there is a clearing  
That gluts itself all day with the sunshine.  
Here is the rain soonest forgotten; here the slim shadows  
Of bending trees run in and away again,  
Like children at play. Here I come this high morning,  
Robed in the freshness of dawn, and here I wait  
In a delicious confusion, knowing not whether  
'Tis my heart that beats or her step that falls  
On the wood mosses of gray, green, and silver.

And here, splashed by sun, I sit wondering  
Which shall bend lower the head of the clover—  
The bee or the wind: the transparent dragon-flies,  
Hovering, watch with me, and the birch leaves applaud,  
Their green-gloved fingers joyously clapping.  
She comes now out of the wood, her long hair tossing  
Darkness out of its tangle. The woodpecker thumps  
On the tree to out-distance my heart.  
Now I know who taught the willow its grace  
And the flower its abundance of sweetness—now I know  
Where the curve in the wind found its pattern.

### II

All day we sat in a clearing, under a great tree,  
Holding the leash of the runaway hours in our hands.  
Sometimes we shut our eyes and offered vague guesses  
Which was the voice of the lake at our feet,  
And which was the cry of the cool, liquid poplar—  
That mimic of water. Thus we were startled by dusk  
Ere we were quite aware the young dawn had departed.  
How easily slips night into the forest; it is black wine  
Into black wine. What a fine tussle with light in this clearing  
Hath darkness! Proudly it gains this place.

It was she who spoke first of the home-going—  
Perhaps, in a woman's way, just to be sure in her heart  
That I was reluctant to leave her. So we stayed:  
Stayed till the bronze moon grew pale from its climbing,  
Stayed till the night was an octoroon lovely to see.  
The air was so silent that even the whip-poor-wills dared not sing;  
Nor could we hear aught save the rhythmic advance of our hearts  
And the wash of her hair that fell about me like rain.

## FEBRUARY THE FIRST ON THE PRAIRIES

The page is snowy white, the pen is dipped,  
And yet unwritten is this manuscript—  
Save for a scattered letter leagues apart.

But through this frail beginning I can peer  
On days when all this wilderness shall hear  
The rhythmic throbbings of the human heart.

The heavens are bare; no clouds are on her face  
To make the laggard sun increase his pace  
Above the rusted hillocks bare and red.

The yellow straw-pipes, spearing through the ice,  
Are lovely from an ancient sacrifice;  
They gave and hear the nations breaking bread.

The prairie lands are spread to-day for me  
Like frozen billows on a pulseless sea  
That waits the golden wheat's releasing tide.

Here, in his largest mood, the artist tries  
To catch the amber glory with his dyes,  
And sees, with aching soul, his task defied.

Bolder, the poet, with a stronger hand  
Anoints with song this little-laurelled land,  
Weaving the west winds wildly in his rune.

He sees the cattle stand with moveless tails,  
And heads together, to outwit the gales  
That blow the bronze of summer from the moon.

He sees, beside a ridge where poplars grow,  
A bronco coldly nosing in the snow,  
And gains the prairie vastness from his form.

He sees the patient straw-stack, brown with rain,  
A giant, ripened mushroom of the plain  
Whose stem is worn by rubbing flank and storm.

Here, while the blizzard aches its heart in sound,  
The cattle move like driftwood, 'round and 'round,  
Yea, 'round and 'round as in a whirlpool's reach.

And, in a nook that lulls the wilder whine,  
A shaggy bush claims kinship with the pine  
And meets the gale with boldness in its speech;

Or, with a thought for some far woodland, dense,  
Her branches wail against an old offense—  
Complaining of the hoof that brought them here.

No lordly tree this land shall ever dare;  
And yet, unfearful of their valiant fare,  
Soon, in this vast, shall frailest flowers appear.

Where Might doth falter, Beauty enters in;  
Where Pride shall fail, Humility shall win.  
And this will be until the heavens are old.

And here, to prove the adage, I shall pass  
When April kindles beauty in the grass  
And warms these frozen fields with red and gold.

## A SONG OF LONESOMENESS

When you are out in the Westland and grow lonesome for the East  
You can drown your care in the champagne air and the sky's eternal  
feast.

But when you are back in the Eastland and are hungry for the West  
You cannot find, in the peopled towns, a crumb for your deep unrest.

When you are lost in the sage-brush, and grow weary for the rose,  
The day dies down on a heap of flowers and the night with fragrance  
flows.

But when you are choked in a crashing street, and yearn for the mesa's  
moan,

There isn't a hole where you can crawl and talk with your God alone.

When you grow tired of the spinning-wheel, that weaves in the town  
her loom,

You cannot flee from her gnawing voice, which sings in your ear like  
doom.

But when you tire in the joyous West, at the sunset's crimson bars,  
You can ease your head on a couch of wind and cover your limbs with  
stars.

My heart is away in the wild-lands, my soul is lost in the West—  
The tribe of her countless wild-flowers is marching across my breast;  
The wing of her crooning wild wind is cool to my fevered eyes.  
I'm full of a savage thirst for blue and the endless sweep of skies.

I would away from the town to-day and out where the clean stars shine

—  
The wind in my ear like a sweetheart's voice, the air on my tongue like  
wine.

And when I lie at the sky-line's rim, where I and this life must part,  
You will find the sage-brush in my hair and the cactus through my  
heart.



# THE BOOK OF MAN

## I LOVE OLD THINGS

I love old things:  
Streets of old cities  
Crowded with ghosts  
And banked with oranges,  
Gay scarfs and shawls  
That flow like red water.

I love old abbeys  
With high, carved portals  
And dim, cool corners  
Where tired hearts pray:  
I join them in the silence  
And repair my soul.

I love old inns  
Where floors creak eerily  
And doors blow open  
On windless nights,  
And where heavy curtains  
Dance a slow waltz.

I love old trees  
That lift up their voices  
High above the grasses.  
They do not sing  
At the light wind's bidding:  
They chant alone to storms.

I love old china,  
Knowing well the flavor  
Of great, strong men  
And fair, sweet women  
Lurks at the rim  
Of each deep brown bowl.

I love old books  
Frayed from the searching  
Of truth-hungry fingers:  
Their warm, soft vellum  
Leads me up through sorrow  
Like a dear friend's hand.

I love old men  
And old, dear women  
Who keep red cheeks  
As the snows of winter  
Keep the round red berry  
Of the winter-green.

I love old things:  
Weather-beaten, worn things,  
Cracked, broken, torn things,  
The old sun, the old moon,  
The old earth's face,  
Old wine in dim flagons,  
Old ships and old wagons—  
*Old ships and old wagons*— (This line softly.)  
Old coin and old lace,  
Rare old lace.

This verse  
to be  
chanted.

## IN THE FAR YEARS

What have I to give?  
Nothing that you can take.  
You have no lips for that bread  
Which my hands can make;  
That pure, living bread  
Which the gods break.

It is a strong bread  
That few mortals favor;  
But somewhere in the far years  
You will catch its flavor:  
Like a sweet incense  
Will rise its old savor.

But not for you; another,  
Clad in white apparel,  
Will catch up her dark hair  
In a clasp of beryl  
And carry that bread past your door,  
Singing a sweet carol.

# IN HOWARD PARK

## TO MY MOTHER

When I was but a child my mother, Anna MacDonald, died at Decewsville, Haldimand County, Ontario. She was a woman of great beauty of character and much loved and admired by every one who knew her. In our little community she was the centre of culture and her talent in music was known far beyond the border of the village.

Although I was but seven years of age when she took leave of me, my grief was that of a person far beyond my years. I had lost not only a mother but a comrade and a friend, and the readjustment of life seemed an almost impossible task. My father did all he could to make me forget my grief and he finally sent me to Toronto, where I was received by relatives.

On one historic day I was introduced to Howard (High) Park, and the beauty of these wooded acres fairly set my youthful soul on fire. Here was the place I had dreamed about in all my rambling through books. On that hill which slopes down to Grenadier Pond I fancied I could see dryads and fairies, and the old Howard homestead, with its hint of the forgotten past, filled me with the most glamorous fancies.

When I was sixteen I came back to my “Sweetheart of the Wood” and wooed her for one memorable summer, always singing to her one delightful rune that eternity shall not make me forget.

A few years later I visited this shrine under the weight of another grief—a grief to which the heart is never quite reconciled.

For many years I lived in the great West Country and, although I had found many new loves near the voice of the greatest of oceans, yet the yearning for my beloved Howard Park was always awake in me.

In the autumn of 1920 I went into the sacred sanctuary and began the poem which here follows. As I wrote the “hooded acorns were tapping at my feet.” The poem here born was finished in May of the year 1924 under the shadows of the great mountains that guard the lovely village of Revelstoke, British Columbia.

I seldom go now to Howard Park, for the blasphemy of the motor-car has driven away all its fauns and dryads and gnomes; and only on stormy days do they dare come back to their old haunts.

# I

Call me away not yet a vagrant while!  
The tide of years so seldom bears me here.  
Call me not back to walk the crashing street,  
Until the color blanches from the year  
And the sun dims his dial!  
Then, in the gray November, will I go,  
Back to the weary wash of human streams,  
Back to the droning town, and when the snow  
Is blurred by marching of young April's feet  
Here will I come and dream again my dreams.

Fine is the fabric of these dreams of mine—  
It fades not with the using, for its thread  
Was stained immortal colors in my breast.  
Here, at my mother's passing, was I led;  
And here I reared a shrine  
Whereon to soothe my deep, unhealing pain;  
And here I sought to find in a child's way  
The trembling warmth of one dear lip again.  
And here, past many a mile-stone pointing west,  
I come with that same seeking heart to-day.

Ah, one unhealing pain! what aching grief  
With this supreme bereavement can compare?  
For, though I ease my wounds with flower and fern,  
With nature's mystic anodyne of air,  
With music of the leaf,  
With merriment of stars and warmth of sun,  
With that near-human kindness of the rain,  
With winds that curve about me as I run  
Like my lost mother's arm: still do I yearn  
One peerless gift and yearn it all in vain.

Youth's grief is strange; through all my childhood days  
My hungry soul was pauper for a kiss.  
And so I took as comrades the warm flowers  
And wooed the soul of their eternal bliss,  
And sought the silent ways,  
And ran with dryads, shaping at my whim,  
And pressed the cooling pine against my woes.  
And now, here, oft I come when life is dim  
And dusty with the years, and in these bowers  
Fill with my blood again each withered rose.

Yea, often here I wander when the blame  
And praise of men is weary on my heart,  
And chant those shyer fragments of my song  
Whose simple beauty has transcended art  
To light a purer flame.  
And once I came here in the matchless May,  
And heard my mother's dear, applauding hands,  
And sang for her alone that darling day;  
And came away at even clean and strong  
And girded for my soul's divine commands:

Girded to endure once more the witless mirth  
Of blind Misunderstanding's callous cry  
And all this late apostasy to Truth;  
To stand, an outcast lyrist, and defy  
The songless choir of earth;  
To find so seldom what thou did'st possess—  
The miracle of love, the untroubled eyes,  
And that serene, unconscious loveliness  
That burns in woodland roses and in youth  
Ere our unlearnèd wisdom hath made wise.

With golden leaves my garish hour is cloyed:  
And yet what woodland opulence shall suffice  
For one lost word of lips too early mute?  
Even loveliest autumn cannot pay the price  
For life too soon destroyed.  
But, better than grievous wailing, let us find  
Some wealth of noble yearning to atone,  
Some holy beauty of a heart resigned.  
Adown the air now falls the summer fruit  
And never more sweetly did the winds make moan.

## II

There is a road and proudly at its side,  
With cooling vision of Ontario's Lake,  
The homestead of the Howards crowns a hill.  
Here, in a youthful fancy, I did take  
The woodland as my bride:  
Nor ever in the years 'twixt then and now,  
Though all the world about me grew unclean,  
Have I relaxed the ardor of that vow.  
Even as then the air to-day is still,  
But the great trees have darker cloaks of green.

Two massive oaks, that guard the homestead's door,  
Invite us where their shadows cool like rain.  
Here let us sit alone, where none may see,  
And wash away the city's yellow stain;  
And dream how, on this floor,  
Two frosty acorns in their cold distress  
Slept in the earth and grew up side by side,  
Feeling through nights of gloom the soft caress  
Of perfect understanding such as we,  
The mortals of our day, have been denied.



What cups of light were gaily tossed away!  
What clouds were freed to cool these thirsting tongues!  
What winds pressed firmly with their shaping bands!  
What tempests blew the bellows of these lungs!  
In the late hours of May  
Full often have these ancient trees reclad  
Their barren limbs—a laggard robe to don—  
And heard the willow chiding, she who had  
Taken her green from April's hueless hands:  
But these shall keep their robes when hers are gone.

Yea, these shall feel the thin October rain,  
Turned to fine snow, hiss coldly on their leaves,  
And see the willows, naked in their prime,  
And watch their garments floating in the eaves;  
And know that all we gain  
By easy effort shall not long endure.  
But here the air to-day is ribbed with heat,  
And the full-statured, crimson asters cure  
Our grief as summer passes to the rhyme  
Of hooded acorns, tapping at her feet.

There was an hour these oaks bewailed their fate  
And stood like guiltless men condemned to die,  
And heard the distant axe in birch and pine;  
And nights of old were bitter with their cry.  
But now no more they wait,  
For one high morning brought their glad reprieve:  
“Here shall the tide of dwellings never flow;  
Here shall the woodland looms forever weave  
Robes of the purple phlox and columbine  
And plumes of fir and lilies of warm snow.”

So silent are this homestead's storied walls  
That it doth seem the nobler age we lost,  
Here, at these doors, is tethered like a steed  
That waits the mount who long ago hath crossed  
Beyond her whinnied calls.

And yet how near is that black tide that swirls  
At Yonge and Queen, from dawn to midnight stars:  
The frowning men and gaudy, painted girls  
Who lean their joys upon a broken reed  
And burn their souls to drive their flaming cars.

Through sunken suns and faded moons I fly  
Back to the gold of those forgotten hours  
When love was sure and simple in its plea.  
Here came a lover once with gift of flowers  
That pleased a maiden's eye,  
And up the winding road they took the light  
Out of the Night's high hand, and found their way.  
And she was gowned in fragrant dress of white;  
And comrade-rebel of the dark was she  
With hawthorn and the apple-blossom spray.

That was an age of fine belief in Christ;  
And these two lovers lived in quaint content  
Until upon the maid the darkness fell.  
Then in a few, sad years her comrade went  
To keep with her a tryst.  
And here I dwell in this Gotham ease  
Where words are light and love is soon defiled,  
And where the former lovers of the trees  
Come not to vespers at the woodland's bell  
But everywhere are by false gods beguiled.

There is a tomb to which the pilgrims go,  
And here, amid its peace, our lovers sleep;  
And you can read the legend of their names  
Writ, on a stainedè stone, in letters deep.  
Bright is their bed below,  
For through their dumb, eternal weight of clay,  
The voice of youth, emancipated, drones;  
And they can hear this blessedè sound of play  
Above their heads at dusk, when sunset flames  
Upon their couch and fires the crimson cones.

I leave the tomb and mount the gentle hill  
Until I reach a garden drenched in red  
That tames the purple asters and the blue  
Forget-me-nots that fleck the garden's bed—  
And wonder what could fill  
This narrow sward with loveliness so deep,  
Unless some crimson cloud had floated nigh  
And here had fallen in a rosy heap;  
For in this garden I behold each hue  
That warmed last night the solemn evening sky.

Along the northern margin of the park  
There is a field of few and scattered trees  
From which the browning acorn now is hurled.  
Here, as a youth, I took the hours of ease,  
And lit the sacred spark;  
And to this day if I my lyre take down,  
And chant a song<sup>[1]</sup> which once I chanted here,  
This field arises in its cloak of brown.  
And oft in gardens half-way 'round the world  
Have I, in music, bade this scene appear.

Call me not then away a vagrant while!  
The tide of years so seldom bears me here.  
Call me not back to walk the crashing street,  
Until the color blanches from the year,  
And the sun dims his dial!  
Then, in the gray November, will I go  
Back to the weary wash of human streams,  
Back to the droning town, and when the snow  
Is blurred by marching of young April's feet  
Here will I come and dream again my dreams.

---

[1] The “song” is “Sue Dear”—a song with atrocious words but a lovely melody.

## WHO ARE THESE SPIRITS?

Who are these spirits grouping  
Forever at my door,  
Clamoring, persistent,  
Unwelcome evermore?  
These are mine ancient follies  
Come again to me;  
Their feet are moving at my door  
Like a cold sea.

My cudgel failed to mark them  
Or put their hosts to rout.  
I ran my broadsword through their hearts  
And drew it, bloodless, out.  
I called to them in anger  
But they cried back in scorn:  
“O but for you, O but for you  
We had never been born!”

And so I threw my cudgel down,  
I broke my broadsword's blade  
And sang a simple song or two  
About a pretty maid;  
And all my ghostly visitors  
Went swift away from me:  
Their feet no longer haunt my door  
Like a cold sea.

## FALLEN

I placed the first wild wonder in her eyes,  
The first high word upon her lips; I led  
Her footsteps out beyond these living dead  
Who never trembled at the dawn's surprise.  
I girt her with the proverbs of the wise,  
And roused within her bosom all the gods.  
And then she fled me for the village clods,  
And on one clumsy bosom now she lies.

I move in sorrow, comrade of the sun,  
Who gilds the rose and sees its color fade,  
To feed the first mad wind that Aura brings.  
And grief is mine as Heaven grieved for one  
Who plunged to blackness, and, amid that shade,  
Lures the lost angels with his godlike wings.

## ENGLISH BAY

I want to go to English Bay and see the old tugs towing:  
The black tugs, the strong tugs, the tugs of sturdy soul—  
The pigmy craft that draw the large  
Obedient boom and docile barge,  
With pride of their important charge in every movement showing.

It's, O, to be on English Bay,  
By the high tide or the low tide,  
With a singing, swinging west wind blowing;  
With a day of sea-delight  
And a hundred hills in sight  
With their summits wild and white in the rich air glowing.

I want to go to English Bay and hear her friendly voices:  
The chug-chug, the sea-laugh, the wind against the bows;  
To hear the humble craft salute  
The sea-patricians on their route,  
And watch the gulls dive low and loot until my heart rejoices.

It's, O, to be on English Bay,  
By the high tide or the low tide,  
With a singing, swinging west wind blowing;  
With the sea-lure in my soul  
Of the lusty waves that roll  
On their tearing, biting goal where the rocks are showing.

Some day I'll go to English Bay and wrap again about me  
Her wild winds, her wet winds, her winds of sudden whim.  
And then, perchance, at close of day  
A maiden whom I love will say  
How very lonely English Bay has been for years without me.

It's, O, to be on English Bay,  
By the high tide or the low tide,  
With a singing, swinging west wind blowing;  
With a day of sea-delight,  
And a maiden's lips at night  
And her circling arms of white, till the dawn comes glowing.



## THE MAKER OF DREAMS

He puts his fingers on our dumb,  
Cold life and starts to play;  
The maker of our Dreams has come  
To bide with us a day.

He leads us far away from home  
And down a rhyming road.  
He pillows us on fragrant loam  
Where never man abode.

His voice is strong and strangely sweet;  
It hath a god's control.  
His heart is like a cool retreat  
For every weary soul.

He takes us with his silent tread  
To meadow-lands of June,  
Where pales the dandelion's head  
To silver of the moon.

His distaff is the golden grain,  
His eyes are blue, like smoke.  
Upon his shoulders lies the rain  
Like a well-fitting cloak.

You hear the hum of centuries  
Drone grandly in his talk.  
The wash of space is in his eyes,  
And æons in his walk.

The maker of our Dreams is here,  
To bide with us a day.  
His steps are like the sounds that cheer  
When children are at play.

He makes the earth a laughing child  
That knows not right nor wrong;  
He lifts us up with music wild  
And lays us down with song.

Grim, crooked shapes at his advance  
Grow godlike in their forms.  
He bids the foot of Beauty dance  
Along the rim of storms.

He paints a crimson, gypsy stain  
Upon the hueless mouth.  
His voice is cool as summer rain  
Across a month of drouth.

The scripture of his lonely tracks  
Each woodland loves to tell.  
His laughter drips like molten wax,  
To seal the lids of Hell.

To-night our hearts can laugh at fear,  
Our souls be pagan gay;  
For he who makes our Dreams is here,  
To bide with us a day.

## COME HERE NEVERMORE

Pale is your scarf  
In the cool night blowing—  
Pale as the pennon  
From a ghost-ship at sea.  
Cold, proud maiden,  
Who disdained my loving,  
If you cannot love me  
Come not back to me.

I feel your breath  
In my new love's kisses;  
It chills my lips  
With a fierce, cold pain.  
Dear, proud maiden,  
Who disdained my loving,  
If you cannot love me  
Come not back again.

Come not in dreams,  
With your wintry manner,  
Leaving my spirit  
Broken at the dawn.  
Cold is the moonlight  
Falling on my pillow;  
Yet colder is my heart, dear,  
After you have gone.

Last night a girl,  
With quick, clear laughter,  
Passed by my window  
Like a swaying rose:  
She had all beauty  
For a lone heart's craving—  
An anodyne sweet  
For a world of woes.

I warmed her lips  
With strange, wild kisses;  
I told my lyre  
Of her dark, rich charms;  
I held her close  
And, when I looked upon her,  
There lay my old love  
Dead within my arms.

The moon is white  
On the silver rose-leaf;  
But she I loved  
Comes through a broken door.  
And, O, I cry  
Like wind in a willow:  
“If you cannot love me  
Come here nevermore!”

## THE GARMENT

I made a garment of kisses  
For her lips and eyes;  
The garment was woven  
From a fount of sighs—  
And she'll wear my garment  
Until one day dies.

Then will she toss it away  
And another shall bring  
Her silks and a high name  
And a costly ring  
Such as no bard or seer  
Ever could bring.

And when she grows tired  
Of the prince and his play  
She'll hunt for that garment  
Which she tossed away—  
The garment of kisses  
I wove her that day.

But she will not find it  
Wherever she searches—  
Down the cool aisles  
Of the high, pillared churches,  
Or out where the wild rain  
Lashes the birches.

## ON THE STAIR

With pleasant rhythm breaking at her heels  
My lady now descends the ample stair:  
I cannot see her, but the dark reveals  
A lily of pure beauty in her hair.  
So white that lily is which she doth wear  
That I, who look upon it from afar,  
See it descend the midnight-haunted air  
As lovely as a slowly falling star.

Mine, mine is she no longer; from that day  
Until the gloomy shadows of this hour  
I have not felt her arms, her lips, her eyes.  
And, lonely now, I walk the woodland's way,  
Over the frosty tombs of fern and flower,  
Knowing that star will no more light my skies.

## TWILIGHT AT CRESCENT BEACH

The tide has swept the aching flats  
And hid their barren shame once more,  
And in the dying wind she chats,  
Of deep-sea gossip, with the shore.

The sun, an alien soul at noon,  
Becomes more intimate with earth;  
And, floating high, a lonely moon  
Waits eagerly the first star's birth.

A slim, black shape creeps up the sea,  
And oar-locks gulp like living things;  
And birds come winging over me  
With day's last effort in their wings.

The crimson banks of cloud ascend  
And all the former red is gray.  
The rowers near; I watch them bend  
And turn with song their toil to play.

And, as I seek my chair and fire,  
Somewhere beyond that sea's last cry  
Strange songsters of a tropic choir  
Sing pæans to a morning sky.

## THE UNSUNG PASSION

They sing, the bards, in many a lyric cry  
The passion of the eagle's wing, of trees  
That lash the unruly air, of waves  
That thunder. But what bard has risen to sing  
The unexpressive passion of mute stone  
Or grief that hides in immobility?

And yet I doubt not in pale marble, cold  
And insensate as it may seem, there lurks  
A yearning that its cool and quiet stone  
Most utterly belies—a yearning bold  
As any mortal knows—to run the hills  
Even as a young wolf, or know the joy  
Of a wind tiptoeing over roses  
Or a shy bank of lilies at white noon,  
Or go as water on a long descent  
Careless and singing. And in some mad hour  
Of the earth's deep passion this stone will shatter  
Into fine dust upon the startled air,  
And take that motion which a marble mould  
So long denied its spirit, and go forth  
Exultant—with all the mocking stillness  
Of its age-long prison a strange memory.



## YOU ARE A HAVEN

You are a haven to me  
From the storm's rage:  
Whatever woe may come to me  
Your lips assuage.  
I rest in your arms  
As a sailor ashore  
Rests in a white cottage  
With a rose-hung door.

When the evening comes  
And my lips are tired  
Of the crying flute  
That my song inspired—  
O dear, incomparable  
Welcome and full rest  
On the high and low tides  
Of your sweet breast!

How dull, companionless,  
Were those years ere you came  
With the rose of your lips  
And your cheeks all aflame.  
No lake, at a mountain summit,  
Fed from the proud skies,  
Ever reflected more of heaven  
Than your quiet eyes.

## MAGGIE SWARTZ

People seldom smiled at little Maggie Swartz:  
One look at her put the spirits out of sorts—  
Freckles on her nose, her hands all warts—  
Just the kind of maiden no gay youth courts.  
Her eyes were narrow and a washed-out gray;  
Her hair was skimpy and brushed the wrong way,  
And hid like a waif behind her large, fat ears.  
You couldn't look on Maggie Swartz and keep back tears.

No one ever left a kiss on Maggie's wide mouth:  
Her life was as barren as a field in drouth;  
Yet everything within her that was hidden from view  
Was lovely as a rose and as fragrant, too.  
Her thoughts were as pure as the dawn upon the sea,  
But through those ugly eyes and mouth they couldn't get free—  
And no one had a kinder heart anywhere about:  
O, if God had only made her inside out!

## YLETTE AND YVONNE

Ylette and Yvonne were twins who dwelt in a cottage near Cadboro Beach, Victoria, British Columbia. What one would do the other always would do; if one wept the other wept, if one laughed the other laughed. I often talked to them as they played on the shore, and one day Ylette, who had dug a deep hole in the sand, remarked that she was digging the hole to free a lover who was imprisoned there.

Ylette was born the same day as Yvonne;  
And one is with us still and one is gone—  
And which one was the lovelier none could say,  
For each was lovely in her own sweet way.  
And some would say Yvonne was fair and yet  
Less lovely than Ylette.  
And some would say Ylette was fair but shone  
Less clearly in her beauty than Yvonne.

My garden was the place  
That seemed to suit their grace;  
And, if my bushes missed a rose, I knew  
Two roses less  
Would there unfold their flaming loveliness—  
For it was true  
What one would do the other maid would do.  
And both at work and play  
What one would say the other maid would say:  
And no one ever saw them walk apart,  
For each was keeper of the other's heart.

Along the sands I've traced their footsteps four  
Like dimples on the shore,  
And found each youthful gypsy with her hand  
Plunged in a well of sand,  
And watched them dig with ardor that they might  
Free some imprisoned lover from his plight;  
For every hidden place where they would look  
Was filled with faces from some fairy-book.

And so the saying grew:  
“What one will do the other maid will do.”  
And it was sweet to see  
The kinship of their movement’s artistry,  
And, in this age when comradeship is rare,  
To hear their steps go rhyming up the stair.

One day Yvonne brushed down  
A treasured plant for which I knew renown,  
And in the sudden moment of my wrath  
I drove her from my path.  
And as she went with eyes and spirit wet  
I saw the dear Ylette  
Run to her side and weep as though her heart  
Had all been torn apart:  
And then I learned the hasty words I’d sown  
Had hurt two buds far lovelier than my own.

But God, who knew this saying to be true,  
“What one will do the other maid will do,”  
Foresaw that hour and its attendant pain  
When both should love and one should love in vain—  
And, fearing for the sorrow of that day,  
He took Yvonne away.

To-night there was a storm,  
But, snug and warm,  
In folds of down was wrapped Ylette’s fair form—  
And as she slept  
Her mother crept  
And kissed her lips and eyes and hair, and wept;  
And, in her sleep, the child  
Reached out her arms and smiled.

“What one will do the other maid will do”:  
And it was true  
Yvonne reached out her arms in Heaven too,  
And hearing, in the depths below, those kisses,  
Knew there are earthly joys an angel misses.

## UNSATISFIED

I dreamed the gates of Heaven were opened wide,  
And whosoever desired therein might pass;  
And, night and day, there came a weary mass  
Of spirits, nor was any soul denied:  
The harlot and philosopher, side by side,  
The glutton and the faster, men of rhyme  
Whose hearts held not a hint of place or time,  
And clods, gorilla-mawed and evil-eyed.

Sorrow seemed ended for a season, and then  
Some trace of grief grew audible in the light  
That washed like golden waves along the sky.  
It was the wailing of the souls of men  
Who hungered for the vanished gloom of night,  
And thirsted, at Truth's fountain, for a lie.

## A SONG OF TWO HOUSES

I'm going up where a poor man dwells  
In a log house on a side-road  
Where no one thinks of going.  
I'll find my way by the gay bluebells,  
And, when it's dark, by the asphodels  
That like white stars on the side-road  
Through deeps of gloom are glowing.  
The poor man's house has a single chair;  
Its floors are hard and its walls are bare,  
And the only wealth that you'll find there  
Is a cup of wisdom flowing.

I'm going up to a rich man's door,  
To a stone house on the high-road  
Where marble steps are shining.  
I'll find my way by the blatant horn,  
The vineyard's purple, the yellow corn,  
To the stone house on the high-road  
Where I at noon am dining.  
The rich man's house has carven glass  
And candlesticks of heavy brass  
And carpets soft as summer grass  
And walls of rare designing.

But should the dawn of a sad day break  
On my cold heart, on my tired soul,  
To-day or yet to-morrow,  
I know whose bread my hands will break;  
I know whose gifts I'll gladly take  
To my cold heart and my tired soul  
If I have need to borrow.  
The rich man can all things command,  
But all his gifts are in his hand,  
And seldom can he understand  
The lonely heart of sorrow.

## SAINT CÉSAIRE

A village quaint is Saint Césaire,  
With homes that brew their own content.  
Her single spire points high in air  
To show where her departed went.  
No town she knows save Montreal,  
And that is farther off than Heaven.  
The parish priest is straight and tall  
Although his years are sixty-seven.

This padre is a kindly chief  
Who bravely lifts the common care,  
The gray hairs of the parish grief  
Are numbered in his whitened hair.  
He knows not any change of creed,  
Nor days of doubt, nor nights of worry,  
But plants the old and silent seed  
Amid the gardens of our hurry.

If you should go to Saint Césaire,  
And let no scorn betray your eye,  
The gentle priest will show you there  
Men unafraid to live or die.  
You'll miss the city's silk and ease  
That indolence delights to cherish;  
But more enduring gifts than these  
Are heaped upon this humble parish.

Afar, the airplane drones her path;  
The angry motor shakes the town;  
The swift leviathan, in wrath,  
Ploughs the green ocean up and down—  
But here is still the plodding horse  
And slow quatre-rous and rustic staring:  
Yet here is freedom from remorse  
That follows in the paths of daring.

If brick and stone and gold are wealth  
Then Saint Césaire is poor, in truth.  
But if there's gold in love and health,  
In age that keeps the soul of youth,  
In youth that holds its fevered way  
Serenely 'mid the days of folly,  
Then Saint Césaire is rich to-day  
Beneath her mistletoe and holly.



## GRADUATION DAY

Written after watching the graduation exercises at a Toronto young women's college.

June, O thou magical, whimsical June,  
Blow with thy fragrance of breath through this rune  
Torrents of blossoms to darken the moon!  
Oft have I come unto thee in the past,  
Shaping my lips for the musical blast,  
Only to find thou wert gone, and my cry,  
Like a swift-fashioning cloud in the sky,  
Floated away with its fragments to die.

Last night the moon was a blossom-blurred light,  
Last night the wind was a dead poppy's soul,  
Yet without sorrow I jilted the night  
And in a warm, crowded chapel I stole.  
Moons will look down through the blossoms again,  
Winds full as sweet will come after the rain,  
But this proud summit of youth comes no more:  
They that go shall not return by this door.

Thirteen young ladies made lovely by roses?  
Nay, making lovely the roses they wore!  
Was there a girl (as the first chapter closes)  
Knew of the beauty she left at the door?  
Now they have passed to the rigid and narrow  
Path of our years, to the care and the task.  
Soon would they barter the kingdom of Pharaoh  
Just to wear youth for a day as a mask.

Let us reopen the door they came through,  
Lest we forget all the glory they shed—  
See that disdain at the splash of the dew,  
And that fine, sixteen-year toss of the head—  
See that strong faith they will lose and regain  
Up through philosophies tangled with briars,  
Fashioned with sorrow and moulded with pain,  
Till they shall reach the invisible choirs.

Here is a maid very winsome and fair:  
To-night she will look in her glass and prepare  
To fold up her girlhood in braids of her hair—  
And O, I, a lover of beauty would hold  
The strands for a day in their freedom of old.  
Ye lovers with me—let us lift up our glasses!  
Fair seventeen passes—she passes—she passes.  
She is gone to the bride and the mother—and yet  
I sometimes think God has His hours of regret.

June, O thou magical, whimsical June,  
Cease not to blow through this gypsical rune  
Torrents of blossoms to darken the moon!  
We, who walk down to the grave on each breath,  
Find all our triumphs are gateways to death.  
O, what a prodigal spender is Time!  
Here is a purse he is spending to-day:  
All this young blood with its tropical clime,  
All these slim throats with their lyrical chime,  
All these love chancels of brown and of gray—  
All that is fairest he tosses away.

Grief—'tis a moment's pure passion—no more:  
What if they do not return by this door?  
Youth, the eternal, is waiting somewhere;  
Christ, the All-lovely, is evermore fair.  
There is in guardianship now of thy Lord  
All the lost treasures which Time hath outpoured.  
All the dead suns from their couches of fire  
Some day will flame at His whim and desire.  
Some day the long-sleeping lilies will rise  
Under the warmth of the love in His eyes.  
Then shall we see them again in pure white,  
Fair, even fair as these lilies to-night.

## I WONDER

I wonder if amid this strife,  
That stabs my heart with pain,  
The lover's perfect hour of life  
Will e'er be mine again.  
The wine is purpling on the hill  
And beauty knows no ending;  
But there's a glass I cannot fill  
Till God hath done His mending.

I looked on beauty, cold, austere,  
And then a maid went by  
And colored all my whirling year  
With warmer tints of sky;  
She left me then without a smile,  
Without a word of sighing,  
And now I march an endless mile  
And watch the colors dying.

Chide me not if I linger long  
Beside a hidden brook  
And dream it hath a purer song  
Where one did downward look;  
For if the Man of Wounded Hands  
Returned, would He not tarry  
A tender moment in the lands  
That knew the feet of Mary!

I wonder should a maiden rise  
With all my lost love's charms  
Would I find light within her eyes  
And peace within her arms?  
Or is there none in all the land  
To heal my ancient sorrow—  
No lip or eye or gentle hand  
To sweeten my to-morrow!

## HAECKEL OF JENA

Who would dispute with thee? Virchow applauds thee  
With no more vigorous hands than mine own.  
Man is a vertebrate, primate, placental:  
Galen to Lavoisier knew no analysis  
Keener than that of magnificent Haeckel.  
Who in the embryo now shall out-atom,  
In the to-morrow of further divisions,  
Haeckel the learned and Haeckel the daring!

Now that I've granted the greatness of Haeckel,  
Calling him splendid—a monarch of reason—  
Let me proceed with a thrust at his bosom.  
Surely a poet may ride against Haeckel  
Since Haeckel dared ride in the face of the gods.

Master of atoms and master of reason,  
Haeckel the proud and Haeckel the daring,  
Here I propound to your wisdom a fable  
Whispered to me by the gods you have banished.

Lived in the Kingdom of Jena a mason  
Who could go up to the oldest of castles,  
Place his hard fingers on stone and in crevice,  
And in a trice tell whence was the quarry.  
Better than this—his hands could discover,  
From the hard mortar that held all together,  
Just in what period did the proud structure  
Mount to the heavens and lean on the moon.  
Many times men did behold the great mason,  
Many times heard him declaim on the ruins;  
Always however he spoke of the substance,  
Always the mortar and always the granite,  
Always the breadth and the depth of the towers.

Under the battlements stood a young poet,  
Purpling his lips in the vineyard of beauty;  
Blind was his soul to the age of the mortar,  
Blind to the girth of the moat and the wall.  
Drenched in cold moonbeams he burst into music:

*“Mystical castle, that rose when the builders  
All were asleep,  
Thou art a shepherd and up in the cloudlands  
Are grazing thy sheep.  
The tower is thy vigil, the wind is thy horn—  
There is peace in its rune—  
And there’s peace in the way thou dost lean through the night  
On the brow of the moon.  
Mystical castle, I know all thy story,  
I know all thy pain,  
And I know why the soft showers have left on thy battlements hoary  
Their piteous stain.  
I know why the winds that caress thee so gently  
Seem ever to weep;  
And I know why the silver-hued ivy is touched  
With so restless a sleep.  
Names do not matter, mon chéri—  
Call her Yvonne for the sound;  
Seer in mine eyes doth behold her,  
With hair to the ground:  
Velvet to velvet her foot doth press soft on the lawn,  
And a voice cries, ‘Yvonne!’  
And the breath of the great guard, Marcella,  
Is heavy and deep,  
And his brow’s purple-veined—  
And up in the tower are the lords and the ladies asleep  
And the mastiffs are chained.*

*And soon is she safe through the gateway, soon is she far  
On the echoing road  
With her lover, the brave and the gentle. The cool morning star  
From its lordly abode  
Illumes them well over the border, where none can pursue,  
From the great to the least;  
Wet high to the knees by the opulent orbs of the dew,  
They seek out a priest—  
And he joins their young souls with a word and a prayer  
And the amber-white round of a ring,  
And their blessing is chanted high up in the air  
Where the birds are a-wing.*

*O mystical castle! more real than the brick and the stone and the  
mortar,  
More real than the girth of the wall,  
Down the cool aisles of the years you are calling, are calling,  
And sweet is your call.  
My hands are as sure as yours, O ye masons who finger the stone,  
But your task is not mine!  
I measure the tears and the sighs and the joy and the laughter  
That poured like rich wine.  
The lovers are dead but I know where they passed  
For the leaves are fairer in places;  
And the more fragrant boughs are the boughs that caressingly  
Fondled their faces—  
Yea, I know they are dead from the mournful,  
Long sweep of the grasses,  
And I know they still live from the calm of the cloud  
As it passes.”*

Whom then shall ye follow: the craftsmen of science  
Who move ever inward with knife and with lens,  
Or bards of the ages who move ever outward,  
Ever outward and upward with the spirit of song?  
Who but a poet may answer those secrets  
Kept from proud Haeckel by mountains of atoms!  
Hear then his song of this flesh habitation:

*“Mystical castle of rose-tinted beauty  
Lodging my soul,  
The weave of thy fabric I know not, nor care I  
For aught save thy goal.  
I know thou hast harbored the wandering spirits  
Of clods and of seers;  
And I know thou hast power everlasting to mount  
From the ruins of years.  
Down through the atoms he goes, carefully, slowly,  
Haeckel the daring;  
Up through the atoms I rise, swiftly and surely,  
Never despairing.  
Who goes in shall lose God at the end—  
Who goes out  
Shall burn in the fury of sunlight, the coldness of starlight  
His evil of doubt.  
This is the secret no mason shall know  
And all poets shall gain—  
It knows the invisible weave of the wind,  
The staccato of rain.  
Away with the lenses! Up with the telescopes!  
Fling outward your reason!  
To see one pale star, at the dawn, without love  
Is the summit of treason.  
Immortal am I, for my dreams are immortal,  
Although, in their gleaming,  
They hold but a hint of the plan of Jehovah’s  
Magnificent dreaming.”*

Science has slain all the gods; but the poets  
Have lifted them back to their thrones in the heavens.  
Man is a vertebrate, primate, placental:  
What know the masons or Haeckel beyond this?



## AND NO ONE SHALL FORGET

Three black crows  
And a white crow:  
Which will you remember?

Three white crows  
And a black crow:  
Which will you forget?

I sing of snowflakes  
Late in June,  
Of roses in December.

I sing the fool  
An epic grand,  
The sage a triolet.

And all shall listen  
When I sing,  
And every one remember.

And all shall love  
To hear me sing,  
And no one shall forget.

## WHY NOT I?

If the flower can draw blue from the sky

Why not I?

If the leaf can draw green from the sun

Why not I?

All the colors of heaven are fain to be won:

Come now to the capture—the chase is begun!

If the flower can draw gold from the heart of the sun

Why not I?

All things we would gain must be won by pursuit:

Loose now for the capture the hounds of your soul!

The gray sap is running away from the root

And the tree's highest leaf is its ultimate goal.

There's a word for the dumb,

There's a hue for the blind,

And he, who despairs not, shall find.

The gardens of heaven are lonely for men—

The stars almost plead for a glance from your eyes.

And though this that passes comes never again

Yet no one goes weeping when loveliness dies.

There are wings in the air

Which the lowly may wear;

There are harps in the wind everywhere.

The girth of the sky

Is yours for the asking, to wear on your brow.

The strength of the sun

Is a gift which is held as a prize to be won:

Let us seek for it now,

You and I!

Let us mine the day through

In those quarries of blue,

For the miners who come to the task are too few.

If the flower can draw blue from the sky

Why not I?

If the leaf can draw green from the sun

Why not I?

All the colors of heaven are fain to be won:

Come now to the capture—the chase is begun!

If the flower can draw gold from the heart of the sun

Why not I?

## THE SONG OF THE FLASHING DOOR

The Door is flashing to and fro;  
The light leaps out in amber streams.  
I gather up a shaft and go  
Back to the sleeping hosts below  
And thread the light within their dreams—  
And then I seek again the glow  
Where the Door flashes to and fro.

The Door that flashes leads to Heaven,  
And none have seen it opened wide;  
But some have gathered up, as leaven,  
A golden portion of its tide—  
And it is woven in my song  
With earthly fibres, lest its light  
Should blind the timid human sight  
With blazings bright and strong.

His eyes are darkened still with sin,  
His ears are deadened to the Call,  
Whoever says he wandered in  
The blazing doors and learned the All.  
The creeds were writ with blood and hate,  
With here and there a golden glow  
That filtered through the jewelled Gate,  
The Door that flashes to and fro.

To one in every host is given  
A glimpse beyond the flashing Door—  
A daring glance—and he is driven  
Back to his subterranean floor.  
But in his hair the light will burn;  
His eyes will wear the holy glow;  
And blinded hosts will rise and yearn  
The living Light he brought below.

Sometimes an outcast, with a cry  
Of joy beside his dying fire  
Sees the swift portal flash on high,  
And runs to tell the hosts of Tyre;  
And hears the high priests mock and jeer,  
The jesters laugh, the wise men roar—  
And finds not any man to hear  
His message of the flashing Door.

If you would know what burns inside  
The Door that flashes to and fro,  
Bid swift adieu to creed and pride,  
And wash your linen white as snow,  
And go as any simple child  
Who filches pearls upon the shore,  
And you shall gather, undefiled,  
Some beauty of the flashing Door.

Some day I'll hear the cymbals crash,  
The bugles break the frightened air  
And see the golden portals flash  
With light that even for them is fair:  
And through the door I'll pass, and on,  
And on, beneath the sunless skies,  
Until I find the Eternal Dawn—  
The shining of the Master's eyes.

## CHRISTMAS DINNER AT CHILDS'

Yesterday the merchant-men  
Slew an army of young trees,  
All for the benedicts  
With children at their knees;  
But none for the bachelors:  
I am one of these.

Patter, patter 'round the world,  
From the early dawn  
Children's feet will tramp my heart  
Till this day is gone—  
All last night their diamond eyes  
Through my dreaming shone.

Every whiff of evergreen  
On the scented air  
Tells my heart what might have been  
Had a word been fair:  
Twenty winters old to-night  
Is my soul's despair.

Turkey has a lonely taste,  
On the Christmas Day,  
Without loving hands to baste  
All the loneliness away.  
Was he jesting—he who placed  
On this card a holly spray?

To the waitress: "Bring me, Miss,  
Christmas dinner, table d'hôte."  
But I'd rather order this:  
Two young arms about my throat,  
Little rosebuds in a kiss,  
Fingers tugging at my coat.

Few are here to-night to dine:  
Thank for that the god of Fate!  
“Merry Christmas” on a sign  
Does not ease this crash of plate  
Or the winter winds that whine  
At the slowly-swinging gate.

Comes a ghostly merchant-man:  
“Here, my lad, ’s your evergreen;  
Weight it with the gay things  
From the Might Have Been.  
Even in this hueless place  
It will have a lovely sheen.”

I hung it with the broken words  
Of a thoughtless maid,  
I lit a censer of her smiles  
And saw the slim smoke fade  
In fear of that cold crash of glass  
And metal serenade.

I took a rose, that once she wore,  
And a gown of lovely gray,  
And hung them high and for a while  
My heart was very gay;  
And all our unborn children laughed  
About me in their play.

Crash of silver, smash of plate,  
And the vision is no more:  
Long, white tables, cold, sedate,  
And the slowly-swinging door—  
Mock accoutrements of state  
Of a lonely bachelor.

Yet to-night had held for me  
All for which my spirit longs:  
Little children at my knee  
Chanting me their joys and wrongs—  
All were mine had I not given  
To my land a hundred songs.

THREE O'CLOCK  
October 17, 1923



My brother met me at a prairie inn  
Near lands where rust and hail had broken his life—  
And in my room we talked, and he seemed thin  
About the eyes; he spoke of his dead wife  
And how his baby had grown, and then he said:  
“Were you at father’s funeral?” and I,  
Not having heard that our dear father was dead,  
Gave, in my heart’s abyss, one soundless cry.  
“Have you not heard?” and when I answered, “No,”  
My brother waited ere his words would flow—  
“He went away over three weeks ago.”  
The prairie wind outside grew swiftly cold;  
The slanting yellow of an October sun,  
That but a moment before looked rich with gold,  
Became a jaundiced hag, most miserable, old,  
And all my days seemed utterly undone.  
Long silence followed, unassuaged by tears,  
But into this space of time came all my years,  
To hold one sad reunion in my breast.  
I knew my brother’s thoughts, for they were sown  
With my own sudden sorrow and his own.  
When I found words I said in a quiet tone:  
“A nobleman, our father, is at rest;  
The world is cold to greatness; it is best.”  
And then came memories of my childhood days,  
And I once more, with my wood-loving dad,  
Went through a grove of Haldimand, ablaze  
Lest any leaf’s departure should be sad.  
My father could tell a tale in a master’s way;  
And often, by some road, at the close of day  
I would rest upon the ground or on a stone  
And listen as he spoke of gnomes or fairies.  
And now he was gone and from the prairies  
I heard the tragic wind’s unbroken tone.  
(Ah! the prairies are very lonely near November.)  
“Brother,” I spoke again, “I cannot remember  
One word unkind our father ever said  
To any of his children: we were not driven, but led.”

Still moaned the wind, and 'neath my garment's cloth  
The throbbings of my watch were wild and loud—  
They beat like hammers of some savage Goth  
Or like the feet of a disturbing crowd.  
I read the blurring dial: "Ah, I must go,  
I read to the students at the school at three."  
"Can you not cancel this?" "Ah no, ah no;  
My father would have wished that I should go,  
I will take his brave spirit along with me."

## EXIT

Easily to the old  
    Opens the hard ground:  
But when youth grows cold,  
    And red lips have no sound,  
Bitterly does the earth  
    Open to receive  
And bitterly do the grasses  
    In the churchyard grieve.

Cold clay knows how to hold  
    An aged hand;  
But how to comfort youth  
    It does not understand.  
Even the gravel rasps  
    In a dumb way  
When youth comes homing  
    Before its day.

Elizabeth's hair was made  
    To warm a man's breast,  
Her lips called like roses  
    To be caressed;  
But grim the Jester  
    Who gave her hair to lie  
On the coldest lover  
    Under the cold sky.

But Elizabeth never knew,  
    Nor will learn now,  
How the long wrinkle comes  
    On the white brow;  
Nor will she ever know,  
    In her robes of gloom,  
How chill is a dead child  
    From a warm womb.

O clay, so tender  
When a flower is born!  
Press gently as she dreams  
In her bed forlorn.  
They who come early  
Must weary of their rest—  
Lie softly, then, as light  
On her dear breast.

Unflowered is her floor,  
Her roof is unstarred.  
Is this then the ending—  
Here, shuttered and barred?  
Nay, not the ending;  
She will awake  
Or the heart of the earth  
That enfolds her will break.

Easily to the old  
Opens the hard ground:  
But when youth grows cold,  
And red lips have no sound,  
Bitterly does the earth  
Open to receive  
And bitterly do the grasses  
In the churchyard grieve.

## THE SONG OF A PLUTOCRAT

Grieve not for me, dear friend, when men shall curse me  
And women revile me in their unkind way;  
Nor think my woes and poverty accurse me,  
For I am monarch of both night and day;  
Nor wail my wounds in battle, they will heal  
At the warm touch of sunlight—their hurt shall go  
When the rain runs on my roof and the winds blow  
And the red leaves dance in a reel;  
Nor even for my passing have thou tears,  
Unless I go, like a coward, full of fears.

But grieve if in my heart wonder should ever cease  
At waters tumbling earthward in glad release  
With hunger for the sea; and likewise give me pity  
Should I unlatch one door with laggard hands  
When Beauty calls me from the loveless city  
To the sweet vagrance of the lonely lands;  
And greet me with thy tears should I grow cold  
To chivalry, or should one gesture of mine lose its grace  
In the royal presence of the poor or old,  
Or should I turn to truth an unwelcome face,  
If tears were no more possible to mine eyes,  
Or daybreak brought no wonder of surprise;  
And wear thou sable for me evermore  
Should I hold life or song a careless reed,  
Or should the waters of my love recede  
And leave old comrades like a forsaken shore.

Sweet wounds there are and triumphs that bring woe:  
Grieve not for me, I have chosen the harder way;  
Nor would I retrace one step and elsewhere go,  
Nor my more noble yearnings disobey.  
Upon my roof the slowly-tapping rain  
Is anodyne sufficient for my pain.  
Grieve not for me: I cannot be undone,  
With the strong wind my friend and the quiet sun.

## SEA HARVEST

The sea has furrows  
But no ploughman's tracks.  
What will be sown there?  
Stout fishing-smacks,  
Sailors with hazel eyes  
And hair like flax,  
Men who loved too well the sea's lore.

What will they reap there  
From this strange seed?  
Tears salter than the frost  
On the seaweed,  
Widows of the water's toll,  
Of the storm's greed—  
Old widows who will love no more.

When the sea is turned  
Like cold, ploughed loam  
There's weeping and wailing  
In every sailor's home.  
What will the drag-net  
Bring in its comb?  
Sad are the vigils on the shore.

Call the sailors' wives  
Back to the farms  
Where tired women sleep  
In strong men's arms,  
And they'll go weeping  
For the sea's alarms  
And nights of waiting on the shore.

Those who love to spin  
Will keep to their spinning,  
Saints to their prayers,  
Sinners to their sinning,  
Every one to the track  
Where they made beginning:  
Strange are mortal souls forevermore.

## TRINITY COLLEGE, TORONTO

I wrap about me this cold cloak of rain,  
    Fibred with sullen smoke and woven with wind,  
    And come from marble and stone, which never sinned,  
To these old walls of honored scar and stain,  
These bricks with human laughter in their grain,  
    These scripted towers of humble girth and reach,  
    This ivy that would give her dumb walls speech.

Late is the autumn afternoon: dim light  
    Wakens a cloudy window here and there,  
    Enhancing but the gloom of hall and stair  
Up which an old man comes with waning might—  
Lengthened has grown each day for him that flight,  
    As twilight shadows lengthen when the sun  
    Feels that his splendid course is nearly run.

Each summer these cold hallways yearn for sound,  
    And wonder why the silence is so long,  
    Wonder why youth and comradeship and song  
Should die to one old warder on his round.  
And then, when peace in quietness they have found,  
    Comes red October, letting silence out  
    And bringing back the joy of laugh and shout.

But soon no more will youth come here again:  
    No more will classic droning drowse the ear  
    With lyrics of a far, forgotten year;  
No longer will brown, campus-loving men  
Prove hateful squares and angles with the pen;  
    No more will midnight frolic hear the roar  
    Of her own restless foot upon the floor.



High, on a prouder campus, they have wrought,  
In this old patriarch's form a noble pile,  
Clean of the etching wind and tempest's guile,  
Gripping in granite strength the ancient thought,  
But bringing not that moveless thing they sought—  
That drab, historic bloom which Time commands,  
That loveliness which is not made with hands.

Not to the grander structure can they call  
The patient script, by sun and rain designed,  
Which on the parchment of old walls we find,  
Nor that patrician gloom of room and hall,  
Nor the proud spirit brooding over all,  
Nor dark and musty crannies with their store  
Of buried dreams and unremembered lore.

Nor can they bear away with cunning art  
The legendary touch and fabled sound  
Of that invisible edifice which is bound  
With phantom brick and mortar of the heart,  
That is not bought nor sold on any mart,  
Or those dim wraiths of faded smiles and tears  
And hopes and disappointments of dead years.

How can they call one footstep from that stair  
That will not give up memories that are sweet,  
Or hope upon some mimicked flight to greet  
Our deathless scholar,<sup>[1]</sup> shy yet debonair,  
Who teased such quiet lyrics from the air,  
Who loved the phrasing of these ancient trees  
That washed against his sleep like inland seas!

Around the old, gray buildings creeps the night,  
As though she felt a kinship with their gloom;  
Afar, the blatant clocks of commerce boom  
And all the hueless acres wake with light.  
The grim, old watchman crawls his dreaded flight  
And worms through darkness to his early bed,  
Nor heeds the ghosts that follow in his tread.

[1] “Our deathless scholar” refers to Archibald Lampman.

## THE TOLL-GATE MAN

They tore down the toll-gate  
By the songless mill,  
But the gray gate-man  
Takes toll there still;  
And he takes from all  
Whether or not they will.

Few people see him,  
With his moonlit hair,  
Taking with ghost palms  
The old, slim fare.  
But the whole night long  
He waits sadly there.

In winter on the snow  
I can hear his shoes  
Crunching me welcome,  
Crunching me adieus:  
But wherever he goes  
He leaves no clews.

Strange coin I pay him,  
Minted in my soul—  
Tears I caught long ago  
In a silver bowl,  
Sighings for a lost love:  
These I pay for toll.

Strangely does his hand come  
Out of the thin wind,  
And strangely is the night air  
About his shoulders pinned.  
So white his hair is you would think  
His soul had never sinned.

The fool goes by him,  
In a blazing car,  
Sighing: "How lonely  
These crossroads are."  
But the old gate-man  
Will follow him far.

Follow him until he pays  
As men paid of old;  
But not with cold silver  
And not with warm gold,  
But with that treasure  
Which is life to hold.

On dark, wet nights  
In the slanting rain  
The gate-man bends  
With an old, old pain;  
But on warm, clear nights  
He grows straight again.

They tore down the toll-gate  
By the songless mill,  
But the gray gate-man  
Takes toll there still;  
You can see his moonlit hair  
From the next far hill.

# THE THREE RIDERS

## I

Three men went riding *down* a hill  
When the stars were bright and the winds were still.

Their tunics were red and their helmets were gold  
And with scented wood were their sandals soled.

Their horses' flanks were like moistened silk,  
Their horses' teeth were as white as milk.

The meadows around were sweet as a song,  
But the road smoked dust as they passed along.

And two men whispered after a time:  
"We'll leave the road with its dust and grime,

"For here our tunics will soil and fade,  
And freeze the eye of some haughty maid."

So they left the road for a cool retreat,  
But the third went on through the dust and heat,

Went on and on past meadow and town,  
Until his red tunic was frayed and brown.

He saw strange things and he felt hard blows;  
He touched a thorn but he gained a rose.

The gold of his helmet no longer shone,  
But his soul had something to feast upon.

Many and many a year did he roam  
And his face was bronze as he turned home.

## II

Three men came riding *up* a hill  
When the stars were bright and the winds were still.

And two looked fine as upon that day  
When they went *down* the hill and away.

They had spent the years in a cool retreat,  
Away from the dust and the grime and the heat.

Their tunics flashed red and their helmets shone,  
But their souls had nothing to feast upon.

The garb of the third was frayed and torn,  
And the two men laughed at him in scorn.

And they met a maiden whose hair fell down  
On her shoulders like rain on a marble town.

And the two fine fellows in tunics of red  
Bowed to the maiden fair, and said:

“What shall we do with this sad clown  
Whose helmet is bent and whose robes are brown?”

“We kept away from the strife and din  
That we in your eyes might favor win.

“But he, poor fool, went travelling far;  
And his face is covered with many a scar.”

And the maiden cried: “In a near-by store  
There are twenty fine tunics of red, and more.

“But I cannot buy in the great, wide town  
A garment like his that is frayed and brown.”

And she called aloud, and her eyes were stars:  
“Come here, O man with the lovely scars!”

And she bathed his wounds and she gave him bed,  
And covered with kisses his dark, bronze head.  
“O women are strange,” the other two said.

## HE HAS KEPT FAITH WITH BEAUTY

If I have erred, O Lord, in love and pleasure

Let this for all my failings make amend,  
Whether at noon of toil or eve of leisure:

“He kept high faith with beauty to the end.

“He loved her not in days of splendor only

But in the gray of fogs, the dark of rain;  
In droning streets or woodlands wild and lonely  
She never called his poet-heart in vain.

“The gray moth growing grayer in the moon-ray,

The brown bee growing browner in the sun,  
The strong hills burning amber in the noonday,  
Or vales at dusk—he loved them every one.”

Great God, when Thou dost grieve my wayward faring

Let this one virtue all my sins defend;  
And may I hear Thy voice at last declaring:

“He kept high faith with beauty to the end.”



## CENTRE STREET

Centre Street is very drab,  
Drab of look and drab of talk:  
There the maidens look like chalk,  
There old women leer and gab,  
There each doorway shows inside  
Breeding-grounds of fratricide.  
When I pass the fumes pour  
From each window, from each door—  
Sullen fumes, musty fumes,  
As from sudden-opened tombs.  
“Nothing,” cried I, “pure and sweet  
Ever came from Centre Street.”

There’s a doorway, to disgrace  
All the others in this place,  
Here the foulest woman’s skirt  
Lifts in instinct from the dirt.  
This door would I hurry past  
To escape its evil blast;  
But instead of smells astounding—  
Sullen fumes and choking gases—  
Came the loveliest of lasses  
From the doorway bounding.  
Nothing cleaner or more fair  
Ever burst on summer air:  
White shoes and white socks,  
Pink cheeks and pink knees,  
And pink sash to match these,  
And the daintiest of frocks.

The sun was shining, it was noon:  
The pretty maiden passed me by  
Like a lovely butterfly  
From a drab cocoon;  
Or like a gull which, at one stroke,  
Swings from a ship's smoke,  
With no hint of gray or black  
On its clean and glowing back;  
Or like lilies white that come  
From the marsh's bronze scum.  
Swiftly did she go, and sweet  
Was the music of her feet  
On the cobbles of Centre Street.

## THE SHOE-COBBLER IN HEAVEN

Near the white heart of Heaven's blaze of glory  
I hid beside the shadowless jasper walls,  
I clomb the amber stairways draped with throngs,  
I scanned the feasters in the banquet halls,  
And listened to the poets in rune and story;  
And, still athirst, I drank the deific songs  
Of Heaven's untiring choir  
Which played on lyres of linden strung with flame,  
Salvaged from dying suns:  
But from the utmost of their benisons  
I found no quenching of my thirst or shame.

Wandering, with aching hunger in mine eyes,  
I found a garden cropped by fearless fawns,  
And feasted there on roses with rich dyes,  
Gathered for me by singing amazons  
Who danced, more swiftly than the falling fountains,  
On the wide, languid lawns.  
I watched their white limbs cool the golden glow  
That through all Heaven did flow  
From the Lamb's throne to the clear glacier mountains—  
I watched their eyes atone each absent star;  
Their foreheads were of some immortal snow,  
Their cheeks the rise and fall of cinnabar:  
They danced and grew not weary and I, accurst,  
Left them with no abatement of my thirst.  
Dark, deep, arboreal  
Gardens along Heaven's wall  
That hold forever the massive shade at bay,  
And guard lest any waif of night  
Should invade the halls of light  
And bring pollution to the unshadowed day!  
Down your still, mossy lanes I cooled my tongue  
In bracken pools with winter at their core;  
I curved my lips for the wild grape that hung  
Its purple like a royal ambassador;  
And still my hunger grew  
And hideously before me my thirst stood,  
And back to the light I flew,  
Nor sought again the darkness of that wood.

One took me by the hand  
And led me down a gracious gallery  
Whose chanting walls were pure chalcedony,  
With arches of sardonyx girt and spanned.  
Here the amazing angels swiftly played  
On golden harps their warm, unanguished songs  
That bore no hint of sorrow or of shade.  
They sat in groups or stood in companies  
Or walked in white-robed throngs,  
Chanting unpenitential litanies;  
And swiftly from the gallery I freed  
My thirsting soul, and by that shadowless wall,  
Which one had measured with a golden reed,  
I leaned against the jasper, still accurst  
With that strange, parching fury of my thirst.

And some one said:

“Cast up your hungering vision overhead  
Past all the twelve foundations that resist  
The occult fancy of a cabalist:  
Sapphire and emerald and amethyst  
Crowning a jasper plinth—  
The eighth a beryl, the eleventh a jacinth.  
The yellowing topaz warms for you alone;  
A thousand suns are imprisoned in this stone;  
In this one gate of pearl twelve moons are kept.”  
I looked and bowed in weariness my head,  
My eyes, from blazing beauty tired and red:  
If one could weep in Heaven, I had wept.

Came unto me an angel slim and tall:  
“What do you seek, O Comrade? Whom do you call?  
All that the heart desires is here.” “Not all.”  
“Whatever you desire, pray command.”  
O, Angel of God, you would not understand.  
Look at these marks of shame upon my hand,  
These fingers hard and red  
From awl and leather and thread.  
Only to mortals can a soul explain  
The aching of the ragged feet of rain,  
The weeping of the wind, the anguish of pain.”

And then he led me upward to a throne  
About whose base the leaves of palm had blown,  
Cast hither by the lovers of the Lamb,  
Who marched behind a blazing oriflamme  
And sang hosannas loud—  
Their robes as white as noonday on a cloud.  
But what I yearned was not the thronèd King:  
My lips were mute of praise, nor could I sing.

And from the Prince of Heaven Himself I fled,  
Waking wild echoes on the amber stairs  
From whose far base came up the newer dead,  
Urged skyward by earth’s orisons and prayers.  
But one foot quickened echoes on mine own;  
The singing had ceased; the Lamb had left His throne.  
He called my name and fragrant was His breath  
With cedar-wood He carved at Nazareth.

Hosannaed, deified,  
He came to me with His old earthly stride,  
His white robe flowing wide  
And open at the crimson on His side.  
He showed the bruise of stones upon His feet  
And where His hands had calloused from plough and saw—  
The long, white hands that plucked the bearded wheat  
And broke the hateful tablets of the Law.  
His words were fountains and His eyes were bread;  
I bathed in every cooling word He said  
Until my hunger had gone, my thirst was dead.  
“Comrade,” cried Jesus, “let us walk alone,  
At times my soul grows weary of a throne;  
Sometimes I yearn the cool of evening sand  
And the strange quiet of the desert land.”

Topaz and shining beryl!  
High Heaven at full carol  
No longer affrighted me, no more I fled:  
In Him was all my yearning answered.  
The dancing amazons  
On the untended lawns  
Were swift and lovely in their pale apparel—  
I felt not any shame  
For my awl-blunted fingers, my cobbler’s bend:  
If shining companies a Carpenter could acclaim  
Should my old leather and thread and wax offend?

Erect and unafraid,  
I sound my sandals down a colonnade  
Whose pillars, shining through an amber mist,  
Were carved from deep, wine-purpled amethyst  
Where the dead violet toms her soul.  
By the clear stream of life I drink  
Out of a graven bowl;  
And past that tree, which bare  
Twelve manner of fruit in air,  
With lips unsated I no longer slink.  
I show my fingers to bright companies,  
In shining robes, in the white galleries—  
My thread-worn fingers show I to them all,  
Crying to angels in the banquet-hall:  
“His were the plane and saw; mine were the leather and awl.”



## ON HIS GOLDEN-WEDDING DAY

Love burned once in your cheeks where now, as ashes,  
A pallor, no less lovely, greets mine eyes.  
Once, where the twilight plays behind your lashes,  
Stood windows open to the morning skies.

I do not find your beauty has diminished:  
Rather does it increase with every year.  
True loveliness shall grow till life be finished;  
And they alone shall fade who sin or fear.

I would not give that love with which I love you  
For all the passion that my youth could show.  
There is no single star that shines above you  
But keeps some secret we alone may know.

All that is best in youth joins in migration  
And leaps the bounds of passion and of sense:  
Age holds the miracle of adoration  
When soul meets soul upon love's eminence.

## AN EVENING SONG

If from my painting one hue,  
If from my singing one line,  
If from my building one true  
Hint of design;

If from my carving one curve,  
If from my wisdom one phrase  
The Master sees fit to preserve—  
Joyous my days.

May this be said of me:  
“He gave to sound one cry,  
To life one memory  
That would not die.

“He took from strife her sword;  
He gave to peace his breath.”  
May this be said, O Lord,  
Of me at death.

Happy is he who at last  
Hears the immortal choir  
Gather one note of his blast  
From the destroying fire;

Or who knows that, at night,  
When the dusk curtains fall,  
He has left one guiding light  
In the King’s hall.

## NIAGARA

This poem refers not only to Niagara Falls but to the entire Niagara River.

Thy mother, Erie, loves each furious form:  
The crash of water and the howl of wind  
Are ever in her mind,  
For she is called the sweetheart of the storm.  
And thou, Niagara, art thy mother's child—  
And with thy restless spirit now I go  
The world's most tragic water-way, and lo!  
Like thee to narrow ways unreconciled.

And yet thine early childhood was serene  
And fraught with blackened quays and humble craft,  
And often thou had'st glimpses of pure green  
Where tourists sang and laughed;  
But soon thy mother's whisper bade thee rise  
And hurl thy laggard body toward the skies—  
And thou did'st then forget  
All else save wildness and the haste of life,  
And that far, roaring, curving parapet  
That called thee to its strife  
And then thy feet the maddest race began  
That ever waters ran—  
Madder than oceans in their wildest hour,  
And moving without plan,  
Even as chaos ere the worlds began.

If till the mountain snows  
Could melt into the beauty of one rose,  
That ermine bloom would not more lovely be  
Than this pale flower I see—  
This curving verdure, crashing into white  
More lovely than pure light  
And colder than the spirit of the night.

Here all the fury since the world was young  
Is chanted on one tongue.  
Here all the beauty since the earth was born  
Is beaten, bruised and torn.  
Here all the passions of the stifled cries  
Of sages, who were martyred, wildly rise.  
Here is the protest in the daring art  
Of all true poets of the rebel-heart.

To westward of thy cataract's tired spray  
I watch now thy descent at break of day,  
Gaining the thrill of war without its sorrow  
And feeding sweet disorder to my soul—  
And in my rhyme you'll find upon the morrow  
The tamelessness of thy great river's roll.  
And, as I wait, I plead for power to be,  
For but one flash of time, a part of thee!  
To taste the full nutrition of that kernel  
Whose passions never die  
But keep the fury of a storm eternal,  
While days and years and æons wander by.

There is a tiger in thy veins, thy tongue  
Is white and furred and thou hast often drawn  
A draught of human blood and coldly flung  
Full many a broken body to the dawn;  
The tiger's eyes are in thy water's gleam,  
The tiger's purr is in thy warning call,  
A tiger leaps when thy soft-footed stream  
Takes her long plunge from off thy granite wall.

Come, Chaos, toss thy wildness in my pen!  
Sound thunder and flash lightnings in my heart!  
That I, the most peace-loving of all men,  
May limn thee as thou art  
In that wild leap of water where is caught  
A thousand rivers in a single thought.

Before that plunge thy spirit hungered strife,  
But in that wayward moment came to thee  
The deeper beauty of that passive life;  
And now thy spirit flows from madness free—  
And here, at night, it wears the stars once more  
And learneth of the passing sky and shore.

Thou goest now in peace—but not for long,  
For soon thy mother's spirit doth advise,  
And goads thee to another, wilder song  
Than thy first furious pæan of surprise;  
And then the sinew of some hidden brawn  
Pulls at thy throat and thou art downward drawn.

Drawn in that coiling whirlpool's silent fold,  
The last adventurous plunge of thine begins.  
Thou comest here a youth and leavest old  
And weary of thy tempest-loving sins.  
Thine enemies were visible before:  
The rock, the leap, the narrow way of stone;  
But here a foe is eating at the core  
Of all the seaward passion thou hast known;  
And we, who know the foe that smites within,  
See, with full joy, thy waters rise and win.

Yet one more tragic run and thou art soon  
Where thou dost hold inviolate the moon;  
Here thou hast time to note the clouds that pass,  
The crimson bank and sloping fields of grass.  
Here, with an old man's eyes,  
Thy gaze is turned forever to the skies—  
I stand at Queenston and behold thy face,  
Veined like blue marble and from passion cool,  
And on it not one sorrow for that race  
From Erie to thy serpent-winding pool.

Niagara! I have run a course like thine.  
Like thee I've marched to beauty through great throes.  
Like thee I lost the stars, and doubtings rose  
About the slender moon's nocturnal sign.  
Yet I went forward when my doubt was strong,  
And never ceased my song,  
But took with joy the valiant leap of life  
And gained the peace that cometh after strife;  
Nor kept it long ere I was called to fight  
A more insidious might—  
The enemy that takes the victor's crown,  
The coiling whirlpool that drags ever down—  
And I have beaten this with furious blows,  
And hurled its slimy winding from my soul:  
And soon I'll wear like thee the sunset's rose  
And then, like thee, go smiling to my goal,  
With all my stars of faith alight again,  
To prove I have not passed this way in vain.

## FOG

“Sound the horn, brother;  
A fog comes this way.”  
“There is no fog, comrade;  
Clear is the day.  
Never rode a high sun  
In warmer skies.”  
“The fog grows thicker,”  
The old man cries.

“Pile the logs high, brother;  
The wind blows cold.”  
“The wind is warm, comrade,  
As the wood-marigold.  
The lads have bared their arms,  
The lasses their throats.”  
“Nay, nay; the wind, brother,  
Like a thin wraith floats.”

Now the fog is falling  
Like ghostly rain,  
And the winds are calling  
For the summer's slain;  
And the horns sound hoarsely  
And the logs pile high—  
But who needs their comfort  
When he walks high  
On an amber ledge of sky?

## SIR GEORGE PARKIN

When a great tree goes down beneath the weight  
Of its own years, in ripeness of completion,  
We keep a noble sorrow, not akin  
To that despair which sounds the grievous passing  
Of lovely, young and incompleting life:  
And when a great man comes at last to earth,  
Urged by his own magnificence of years,  
The hour is not for sorrow or regret;  
And yet it is not free from loneliness—  
The groping ever for departed hands,  
The waiting for a word that will not come.

This mighty fugue of life is built on chords—  
Some loud, resounding, some quiet as light,  
Some that seem discord until our hearts are tuned  
To the advancing harmony of Time;  
When Parkin went he left a gap in the rhythm  
Of the great song. His going was a loss  
To chivalry, and the fine-mannered years  
Stumbled into his sleep. On friend or foe  
He cast no shadow of intolerance,  
And took your way of thinking with a warmth,  
Or differed with you as a gentleman.

O Youth, your burning wine is in my blood!  
May I keep this forever—it is good.  
Yet sometimes I have seen, in an old man's face,  
That sparkle which is valor in old wine.  
Here was one whose flow of soul had gained,  
In the cool cellars of near eighty years,  
A flavor of great richness. Lay him down,  
This fine aristocrat of our young land,  
And fold about him that bright cloth of gold  
Which all his days have woven for this hour.



## O SWEET TRANSLATOR

Gray is the sky,  
    Yet no gray I see;  
The wind has a sad cry,  
    Yet not sad to me;  
Summer dies by the dull fires  
    Of the last roadside flowers,  
But in my heart is April  
    And the cool feet of showers.

O blessèd thief  
    Who has stolen away  
The woe from the wind,  
    The drab from the gray!  
O sweet translator  
    Of every word of grief  
Into the warmth of joy  
    And strong belief!

Frail are your hands  
    For so strong a part,  
Yet you have conquered  
    My unconquerable heart.  
You have done, O so swiftly,  
    What the gods failed to do:  
You have made the hills strong again  
    And the stars true.

## GHOST HORNPIPES

To break their long sleep,  
One hour each night  
The dead, drowned sailors  
Are given respite.

But not before the last flesh  
Is torn from their skulls  
By the deep-sea shadows  
Of the high-air gulls.

One hour each night  
They have power to rise  
And gaze through the caverns  
Of their once-warm eyes.

Then they do all things  
That in life were sweet:  
They dance slow hornpipes  
With their fleshless feet—

Tap, tap; bone to board,  
Their joints creaking loud!  
One who died in his bed  
Dances in a shroud.

Every sunken ship's deck  
Knows these phantom throngs:  
They swing on wet ratlines,  
Singing old songs.

One hour each night  
And then back to sleep:  
Their eyes' black sockets  
Make the scared fish leap.

Flesh at the hornpipes  
Is a merrier note  
Than bones at the hornpipes  
On a sunken boat.

Every time I hear the wind  
Make a doleful roar  
I know dead sailors dance  
On the ocean floor.

One hour each night,  
Leagues down the sea,  
Their clanking, phosphorescent bones  
Make high revelry.

But not until all flesh is torn  
From their salted skulls  
By the deep-sea shadows  
Of the white, swift gulls.

## THE UNDYING BEAUTY

Give me the loveliness that is undying:  
The comrade look of welcome in mine eyes,  
The echo in my spirit for the sighing  
Of every broken soul beneath the skies,  
The healing in my voice for pain or sorrow,  
The beating in my heart for grief or love,  
The open hand for all who come to borrow,  
The judgment that is tempered from above.  
Give me the deeper mind of understanding:  
The feet that know the course and will not swerve,  
The courage for the sceptre of commanding,  
The humble heart contented but to serve.  
Then come Old Age to crown my life's adventure;  
Come wrinkles—I will wear them without tears:  
My blood I'll pour with joy to sate the Quencher;  
My flesh I'll give to feed the hungry Years—  
But when the gulls are high in heaven flying,<sup>[1]</sup>  
And all my waning hours are white with snow,  
Give me the loveliness that is undying,  
And I will let all other beauty go.

---

[1] When winter approaches, the sea-gulls fly high.

## OFF JUAN DE FUCA

Off Juan de Fuca lies a cove  
Rimmed round with rock and paved with shale,  
And here the quinqueremes of Jove  
Once dipped their canvas to the gale.

And here at last each roving soul  
Gave dreams of warm Olympus up,  
Forgot the bacchanalian bowl  
And Ganymede's carven cup.

Dark pines with cloisters cool and deep  
Rose high above this blessed cove,  
That Ida here might never weep  
To wander in her gloomy grove.

And elsewhere all the cove was warm  
With motes that danced their golden feet  
To make Apollo bless the storm  
That drove him to this fair retreat.

The rocks that rimmed this cove were crowned  
With grass whose green was almost lost  
Amid a group of daisies, bound  
For Beauty's yearly Pentecost.

Thor beat his hammer on the rocks,  
And praised their battling with the tide;  
And sad Medusa sheared her locks,  
For nothing ill could here abide.

And no one mourned for Thessaly;  
Nor was their full contentment strange,  
For, looking southward, all could see  
The new Olympics, range on range.

Here from their beds of purple shale,  
And fanned by winds too shy to croon,  
They saw these mountains press their pale,  
Cold foreheads to a colder moon.

And one day came command from Jove  
To lift the sails and man the oars  
And leave for evermore this cove  
For far and less Elysian shores.

“To go,” he thundered, “all are loath;  
Yet came in vain, who did not learn  
Even the gods will sink in sloth  
If they have naught for which to yearn.

“And here, where waters gently lave,  
Forgetful of the outer roar,  
The soul to peace becomes a slave,  
And sweet unrest is nevermore.”

Off Juan de Fuca lies a cove  
Rimmed round with rocks and paved with shale;  
And here the quinqueremes of Jove  
One lovely summer’s day set sail.

And here come I a morn in May,  
a slope where Flora ran  
And where the daisies, white and gay,  
Once cooled the fevered feet of Pan.

## AS A WHITE MOON

As a white moon comes to a lonely cloud,  
Dark with the grief of many unshed tears,  
She came to me; and even as that orb  
She flooded me with light and then passed on,  
Leaving my darkness greater than before.  
Now all my days are like a miser's hand,  
Counting the secret wealth of that rich hour  
When her sweet presence I knew. The memory fades not  
With hurry of the hours but gathers beauty  
From my sad musing's wonder. I have seen  
Her once in all these empty years: she passed  
As any stranger, and yet farther away  
Than any stranger could be. Nothing to her  
Was that warm pledge she gave a winter's night  
Under the constant stars, nor those sweet hours  
We walked in the cool moonlight of a dream,  
Whose waking came too soon, too sadly soon.

Springs have come with their pale flood of green,  
And summers with their darker, deeper tides,  
And winters have washed white three times the world  
Since that amazing hour, and many a day  
Have I rejoiced in power of my forgetting,  
Yet only to fall back on my remembrance,  
And find it easier to suffer than forget.

## A STREET SONG

Rare wine is theirs  
Who have no taste for wine;  
For them who have no hunger  
Great herds of kine;  
For hearts that have no craving  
Delight and laughter  
In the days that were—and now,  
And in the days hereafter.

But Thirst must walk  
The hot, unwatered lands;  
And Hunger must stalk  
With white and empty hands;  
And Rest must move forever,  
And Peace assemble  
Where the great guns boom and crash  
And the brown rocks tremble.

No love have I  
Whose heart was made for loving;  
No lands have I  
Whose foot was made for roving.  
Lonely now I walk the street,  
Cold with alien faces—  
Lonely from the long defeat  
And the yearning, bitter-sweet,  
For the silent places.



# THE BOOK OF THE REBEL

## A GYPSY SONG

Let Art awhile a gypsy be,  
And words a vagrant throng—  
Let all the lure of Romany  
Come dancing up my song;  
Come dancing zigzag on the breeze  
Like whimsy thistle-down,  
And caring less than it to please  
The idlers of the town.

Let Art refresh our pallid schools  
With crimson of the heart—  
Let her forsake her cramping rules  
And tear her measured chart;  
And let her outcast brood of sound,  
That know the scoffer's sneer,  
On savage lute and lyre astound  
The little bards of fear.

Let Art regain her virgin flaw  
And lose her studied grace,  
And run, a maiden nude, to awe  
The soulless market-place;  
Let her tired hair unfold its braid  
And lie along the wind,  
Until again we see the maid  
The Masters once designed.

We blush at passion in our runes,  
And daring fancies shun;  
Yet rather than an age of moons  
Would I an hour of sun.  
The droning scholars far too long  
Have ruled the rhymes of men:  
Bring back the wayward flights of song  
And errant bards again.

## THE SONG OF THE REBEL

Take me by the hand, you storm winds, take me madly by the hand;  
Lead me out beyond the regions where the little rules command.  
Lead me far beyond the city  
With its hundred aisles of pity;  
Take me as you take the legions of the dead leaves from the land.

I am sick of sniff and snivel; I am tired of withered prayers;  
I would go where not a coward or a weakling ever dares.  
Hurl me then beyond that station  
At the rag-end of creation  
Where the huts are snow-embowered and the arctic heaven flares.

I am weary of these females with the chatter of the ape,  
With the wisdom of the gander in their gossip and their gape,  
Turning virgins into harlots  
Youths of beauty into varlets  
With the brimstone of their slander and their tongue's unpunished rape.

Better far a dusky savage, with clean hunger in his heart,  
Than the inner shrine of Learning with the mildew on its art.  
Better far the tom-tom's beating  
Than this academic bleating  
That retards the spirit's yearning with a soul-destroying chart.

Take me by the hand, you storm winds, take me fiercely by the hand:  
Lead me far beyond this prating where my spirit may expand.  
In the truthful, silent places  
I will waken phantom faces  
And forget the world of hating and the gossip-ridden land.

I am choking, O my lover, O you wind against my doors!  
Lead me to the freer breathing of the little-peopled shores,  
Far from these unlovely alleys  
To the cedar-scented valleys  
Where the mighty streams are seething and the tameless rapid roars.

Lead me far beyond these kingdoms that are lousy with their lords,  
Out amid the kingly silence and the world's untitled hordes,  
Far away from Piccadilly  
And the Duke of Willy-Nilly  
And his children weak and silly—far from creeds and bloody swords.

Half the bodies draped in satin have the inner breed of sluts;  
Half our rulers need the sunshine for the poison in their guts.  
There is something in the birches  
For the hungry soul that searches  
That should empty all your churches lying idly in their ruts.

Better far a godless bastard, with his freedom in his hands,  
Than the scion of the ages, bound and gagged with iron bands;  
Better far the fool's digression  
Than the rigid Scotch confession,  
Smeared with crimson of the sages who obeyed not its commands.

Silence, how I cry for silence! But the gods have hemmed me 'round  
With the clamor of the builders and the street's unceasing sound.  
All I hate to me is given  
And my soul is driven, driven  
In a battle that bewilders and where evil deeds are crowned.

Here the dullards wrap in satins; here the fools are draped in lace;  
Here the sages, weak with hunger, walk the valleys of disgrace.  
Here the soul of mammon bosses,  
Nailing gods and seers to crosses;  
Here the hand of commerce tosses vitriol in the prophet's face.

Better far the cosmic silence than our folly's cultured note;  
Better ages back of Lilith than the lie within the throat.  
While the Pharisees are praying  
Truth and Honor have gone straying,  
And each jackass does his braying in a cleric tie and coat.

Lead me by the hand, you north winds, as you lead the flakes of snow;  
Carve me with your touch of wonder as we wander to and fro;  
Leave me far beyond the border  
Of this civilized disorder  
Where the soul is rent asunder by the thrust of friend and foe.

I am coming, O my lover—but I know my words are wild,  
For I cannot find the gateway to the regions undefiled.  
So I turn me back with sorrow,  
But I'll go with you to-morrow  
To the wilderness, and borrow back the freedom of a child.

## THE UNBURIED DEAD

They wear velvet grave-clothes,  
Purple and blue and red;  
For they are unaware  
That they are dead.

The scarecrow in the field,  
Blown by the wind,  
Than these unburied dead  
Is not more blind.

They breathe and have no breath,  
They see and have no sight;  
On them the sun and stars  
Waste all their light.

Their flesh is like a stone  
That sepulchres them in:  
When it shall break they'll come  
Out starved and thin.

Sometimes a living man  
Goes walking with these dead  
And tries to speak a word  
The prophets said.

But these sleep far too well  
Ever to hear his cries;  
The light hath fled for aye  
Their soulless eyes.

At twilight oft I go  
And sit beside a tomb,  
And sing to joy once more  
My heart of gloom.

And when my feet return  
    Unto the paths men tread  
I feel as one who goes  
    Back to the dead.

## FIRST SONG OF A VAGABOND

Pour not pity upon his head  
Who hath no meat, or wine or bread;  
But give him well of your gift of sorrow  
Who never had need to beg or borrow,  
And yet who hungers amid his store,  
And starves and dies at his granary's door.

Pity not him that has no bed  
To soothe his limbs or ease his head,  
But pity those spirits without number  
Whose beds are soft and who cannot slumber—  
Whose limbs are cooled by their linen's snow,  
Yet never an hour of rest may know.

Vagabond you and vagabond I,  
Pillowed on grass and roofed by the sky,  
And yet with slumber upon our pillow  
And a servant's hand in the fanning willow!  
The vagabond's morsel is never sour,  
The vagabond's couch is never hard;  
There is no room in the castle's tower  
So fine as ours in the roofless yard.



## SECOND SONG OF A VAGABOND

Give thou this day to paganry thy heart,  
And burn thy fool conventions in the sun.  
A vagabond of freedom, rise and run,  
And every prohibition tear apart.  
Come, bid adieu to all that stifles art:  
Kiss lovely women ere their beauty dies;  
If truth is cold—then warm thy soul with lies  
More lovely than a decalogue or chart!

Commandments are the safeguards of a fool.  
The dreamer heeds them not, for he has found  
One law in love that banishes them all.  
His days are truant to all creed and rule;  
And vagrantly he goes as that wild sound  
When loons cry laughter at a world in thrall.

## THE PUPPETS

I walked into a cathedral's eternal twilight,  
Waded down an aisle flooding with sweet music  
And whispered to a mortal at my side:  
"Whom do you worship, pilgrim?" and the pilgrim said:  
"I worship the Christ."

With the sweet music bathing my temples,  
And trickling like cool waters into the caverns of my heart,  
I took a resting-place in the great, solemn sanctuary.  
"I am full of worship," I said, "and I must worship something.  
I will learn of the Christ and perhaps I will worship Him."

"I will tell you of Christ," said the worshipper.  
"Nay, tell me not," I cried, "for I have read many histories of Him.  
But, pilgrim, histories may lie, so I will learn of Him  
From the actions of these who are His followers."

And I watched the proud and the poor come into the place of worship.  
And the proud assembled in the high places,  
And the poor sat timidly in the shadows of the pillars.  
And the proud chanted with a loud voice,  
And the poor could scarcely be heard.

Then uprose a company of singers and they sang,  
In the clear bird-tones of the morning of life:  
"Glory to God in the highest."  
And the worshippers heard them not as they sang,  
Because of their interest in one another.  
Then a mortal, not unlike other mortals, came out and declaimed:  
"Christ is God: will ye take the Christ into your hearts?"

And I arose and spoke unto the astonished multitudes:  
“If Christ is God then are the heavens debased;  
If Christ is man then is our manhood degraded,  
For I behold He loveth the rich and despiseth the poor;  
He loveth the fine garments of men  
Better than the sweet incense of holy music—  
Else why do the rich occupy all the high places in His house,  
And why do so many notes of praise fly unnoticed unto God?”  
And I passed out of the twilight temple into the morning of full light.  
And as I departed I broke a puppet image of their Christ  
On the hard pavement of the portals of their holy place.

Other voices, singing in unison, greeted me;  
And I went into a sanctuary full of light.  
Here the rich also held the more comfortable seats,  
But the poor were bold and unashamed.  
And a flippant creature with great power of lung  
Trilled her own glory in the face of God.  
And a mortal, not unlike other mortals, stood up and declaimed:  
“Christ is God: will ye take the Christ into your hearts?  
For if ye receive Him not into your unholy souls  
Then shall the fires of hell consume you forever.”  
And the men in the high places said “Amen” first,  
And the men in the low places repeated “Amen.”  
And then young men and women arose, one after the other,  
And they all said with the same fervor: “I love the Christ.”  
And I knew they spoke thus because fire is hot  
And eternity is a long time.

And I arose and spoke also unto these peoples:  
“If Christ is God then are the heavens debased;  
If Christ is man then is our manhood degraded;  
For I behold He loveth best those that speak the loudest,  
He loveth a strong voice that lacks praise  
Better than the poor, unmusical notes of the faithful.”  
And, as I passed out of this temple into the sweet morning,  
I picked up another puppet image of the Christ  
And broke it on the hard pavement of the portals  
Of their holy place.

Many holy places did I visit on that morning,  
And every holy place possessed its puppet Christ,  
And I left a dozen portals littered with fragments.  
And still the day was young and I was full of worship.  
“Something must I worship,” I said, and I went into the fields  
And fell asleep under the trees and dreamed a dream.

In my dream I beheld all the broken puppets scattered over the field.  
Then like a dead leaf in the wind an eye of one puppet arose  
And an ear from another moved over and joined it.  
And each broken puppet made its contribution;  
And soon did a perfect figure appear. Then it moved,  
Straightened into magnificent stature, and said:  
“Lo! I am Jesus.”

And I asked: “Dost Thou love the rich better than the poor?”  
And He smiled a great smile and said unto me:  
“Art thou not poor and am I not come hither unto thee  
Even at an hour when the temples are filled with worshippers!”  
And again I said: “Jesus, tell me, art Thou God or man?”  
And the figure replied: “Sayest thou I am God or sayest thou I am  
man?”  
And I answered “God” and He stooped and kissed me.  
And then I repented and said “Man,” and He kissed me again;  
And the last kiss was sweeter than the first.

And He arose and said: "Follow Me,  
And thou shalt hear what the churches think of the Christ."  
And the first church He entered was the mightiest church of all—  
And He announced himself unto the people, saying:  
"I am the Christ."  
And the assembled ones arose and cried with one voice:  
"Thou hast the hair of Christ but thine eyes are not His eyes;  
Depart, for thou art an impostor."  
And He left them with an old look of sorrow upon His face—  
A look which a multitude of men on the Mount of Olives had once  
    beheld.  
And so He passed on to another body of worshippers,  
But they too cried:  
"Thou hast the eyes of Christ but not His hands."  
Thus none of the people would receive Him,  
And He passed back to the field as lonesomely  
As ever He passed through the weeping trees of Gethsemane.

And I awoke from my dream  
And looked to see where the broken fragments were piled,  
But where I dreamed they lay  
Stood a mute chorus of white daisies, nodding in the wind.  
And from their assent I knew that God was well pleased  
With His Belovèd One,  
Even as He had been well pleased with Him of old.

## THE SONG OF THE HEMP

In a certain northern country called Canada, in the savage year 1919, certain barbarians took one hour and eleven minutes of God's time to hang an Italian named Antonio Sprecaze.

The stubbled Hemp-field called the wind  
That passed with moistened eyes:  
“Go down to Bordeaux Gaol and find  
Where he, the dead man, lies.  
Tell him my fields are shamed to-night  
Beneath the autumn skies.

“Tell him if I had known my strands  
Would weave a hangman's coil  
My seed had never groped its hands  
Up through the choking soil,  
My fields had never burned at night  
Their lamps of silver oil.

“Was it for this I drank the sun  
Out of the Noon's high cup?  
Was it for this I lay against  
The mammalled wind, to sup?  
Was it for this I braved the dark  
Till the bronze moon came up?

“Blest is the golden wheat that gives  
Red blood to good or ill,  
And blest the weed that wastes her seed  
Upon the gypsied hill.  
But I must stand with cursèd hand,  
For I was born to kill.

“To-night a cooling summer breeze  
Blows down from Saint Hilaire.  
It blows to Bordeaux Gaol and through  
Her chamber of despair.  
It blows across a grave whose sides  
A coat of quick-lime wear.

“It blows on your own sleeping boy  
And cools his fevered head;  
Perhaps, when you are gone, he’ll go  
Less early to his bed—  
When you are gone, some time, at dawn  
His hands may too be red.

“Or yet his hands may not be red  
But clean of ill design,  
And still he’ll swing—a breathless thing—  
Upon the hangman’s line,  
And join the guiltless host who poured  
Their pale unripened wine.

“I am the Hemp; God made me strong  
To swing the flowing sail,  
To hold the mast against the blast  
He made me stout and hale.  
And now He walks my stubbled fields  
And weeps for Bordeaux Gaol.

“They took my strands and made the rope;  
They made it white and strong—  
Perhaps he too had done the same,  
In Naples, to a song,  
Before his strangely-ventured life  
Had stumbled on the Wrong.

“I felt my fibre ’round his neck:  
His veins grew hard and black—  
His tongue flew out and, with strong hands,  
They could not force it back—  
It was a shame to keep outside  
Men waiting with a sack.

“An hour he battled with my rope—  
An endless hour of Time.  
It was a shame to keep outside  
The men with sack and lime.  
And yet I held so firm, his mouth  
Was dribbling with his slime.

“Was it for this I drank the sun  
Out of the Noon’s high cup?  
Was it for this I lay against  
The mammalled wind, to sup?  
Was it for this I braved the dark  
Till the bronze moon came up?”

The stubbled Hemp-field called the wind  
That passed with hurried stride:  
“Go down to Bordeaux Gaol and find  
The man they killed,” she cried—  
“Tell him my fields lie shamed to-night  
Beneath the moon’s white tide.”



## MOURNERS

If you are sure I'm down in Hell  
Wear mourning when I die,  
And crape the door and toll the bell,  
And cast a doleful eye,  
And shun the road of the dancing leaf,  
Where laughter loves to dwell;  
For reason waits behind your grief  
If I am down in Hell.

But if you think I'm up in Heaven,  
Beyond the clouds' white ships,  
Put on a robe of colors seven  
And a new song on your lips,  
And ring the bells with a hand gay,  
And lift the red flags high  
For one who tossed his flesh away  
To prove he could not die.

Away with these barbaric rites  
Bequeathed us like a curse:  
The tolling belfry that affrights,  
The black and gloomy hearse,  
The granite shaft and marble vault,  
The weeping march from *Saul*,  
The slow procession that doth halt  
Beside the abbey wall.

Upon our doorsteps lies each day  
Some wounded child of Truth;  
And Beauty burns its soul away  
With every step from youth;  
And Honor dies and no one cares;  
Yet when our dust would sleep  
The men go chanting woful airs  
And all the women weep.

Mark not my body's final bed,  
Nor let the place be known,  
Nor light it with one rose of red,  
Nor weight it with a stone.  
But take my songs where'er you go  
And sing them to the sky,  
And from their beauty you shall know  
A poet cannot die.

## NINETEEN TWENTY-SIX

How shall we keep it—  
This power we have gained?  
“With steel-lipped guns  
And with men well trained,  
With wave-smashing battleships,  
With wind-smashing aircraft,  
Red rum on our hips,  
Battle-songs on our lips:  
That’s the way we’ll keep it,”  
The War Men laughed.

But the world is heavy  
With a dead, cold host  
Who died sword-weary,  
Who died gun-weary,  
Who died ere their time  
To the deep, dull rhyme  
Of the War Man’s boast

These did not keep it—  
The power they had gained  
With full-throated gun-song,  
Blood-spouting bayonets  
And men well trained:  
These did not keep it—  
The power they had gained.

And here we stand,  
NINETEEN TWENTY-SIX,  
Hemmed in with steel guns  
And full of the old tricks;  
Holding here a hand-grenade,  
Holding there a crucifix.

## THE GOLDEN CROSS

If the indignities and cruelties that were heaped upon conscientious objectors during the Great War were fully revealed, they would form a fitting sequel to the atrocities of the Inquisition. Historians have carefully kept silence on this subject, but the spectacle of men being driven insane by the brutality of military officials, because they believed in the message of One, Jesus of Nazareth, will not recommend our civilization to the more humane ages that are to be.

We hold in memory all the whiter moons,  
And store them with the red and golden eves,  
With the dew-drinking morns, the higher noons  
That brew their languid dreams in cooling leaves.  
And thus I keep one night from Lethe's arms,  
For that white flower she wore—  
That mystic, moon-blown lily whose pale charms  
Fell on the stained stone and blackened wood,  
And on the yellow pavement where I stood  
By Notre Dame and her wide, open door.

It was a Sabbath evening, calm and cool;  
And from the great cathedral poured that stream  
Of older children, passing out from school,  
To laugh and weep, and some—a few—to dream:  
An uninspiring sea of heavy eyes,  
Tired in an iron age,  
And lost to every wonder and surprise—  
Lost to the wildness of a winter's day,  
Lost to the fragrant loveliness of May,  
Lost to the poet's lyric, laughing page.

Were there then none among these mortal men,  
Whose voices droned in that great, common choir,  
To rouse the sullen flowing of my pen  
With that pure passion of the Doric fire?  
And then, in spirit alien to the throng  
That filled the narrow aisle,  
A youth of strangest beauty passed along,  
And some one turned and shouted: "That is he—  
A dog of peace—the poet, Paul Dupris."  
And Paul, who heard them, answered with a smile.

There rose the Mount of Olives in that look,  
And I drew near and spoke the poet's name;  
And he, as though he knew me, gently took  
My arm and walked with me until we came  
To flaming woodlands slowly sloping down  
From that pine-pillared hill  
That holds her silence proudly from the town.  
And there we talked of themes unknown to men:  
Of how the will of Christ would come again  
When khakied hosts no more went out to kill.

I learned to know him well within that hour,  
And to his humble dwelling we returned—  
A darkened haunt on Bleury, where the flower  
Of his high, musing spirit long had burned.  
And in a room of simple taste and fare,  
And 'mid her vellum choir,  
Whose magic songs have eased a world's despair,  
Before a luscious board of fig and date  
And amber honey, curving on the plate,  
We eased the frugal heart of our desire.

I saw him often in that passing year:  
There seemed no secret place but knew him well.  
Sometimes I caught him standing rapt to hear  
The plaintive tone of some wood vesper-bell—  
And often, on the road to Saint Hilaire,  
When the gold tides of wheat  
Wash the hot sandals of the summer air,  
And the frail flowers have lost their power to dance,  
I've heard him chanting runes of ancient France;  
And always, when I met him, life grew sweet.

And once he held me in as strange a tale  
As haunts the fragrant pages of romance:  
How, in a woodland nook called Ardenvalle,  
A maid once trembled at his swift advance;  
How, oft, he passed the girl and how her fear  
Grew gentler, day by day,  
Until he knew she cared to have him near;  
And how, upon her path, a fallen glove  
Brought forth the word that led them up to love;  
And how her heart had cast that love away.

He opened wide his coat and I could see  
A long, white feather pinned against his heart.  
“This was her gift of scorn,” he said to me,  
“And 'tis forever, I know well, we part.  
I had not gone to fight in this world woe,  
Because of words One said  
By Galilee, two thousand years ago.”  
A mile we walked and spoke no more, and then  
We parted and I saw him not again  
Until the night when blood was on his head.

It was a winter evening, gaunt and lean,  
And shouting men were passing by my door;  
And, carried on the breezes cold and keen,  
I heard the poet's name above the roar.  
And in the human tide I bathed my feet  
And came to Notre Dame—  
And there, upon the street's white-woven sheet,  
I saw the lifeless form of Paul Dupris,  
And on his breast, for any eye to see,  
The feather she had given for his shame.

“They killed him,” sobbed a woman, “for he cried:  
‘There is no sword in Christ's diviner law.’ ”  
“God grant him peace, which here he was denied,”  
Whispered a gaunt old riverman in awe.  
And some new Mary of our later day,  
Sad for the spilled life-wine,  
Dewed, with her tears, the stone on which he lay.  
And the white moon dropped the rare flower she wore  
Upon his breast; and through the abbey's door  
Came music, searching for a soul divine.

But in my dreams that night an angel knelt  
Beside the dead, and touched the badge of shame,  
And in her tapered hands I saw it melt  
And change into a cross whereon his name  
Was burned in living letters, pure as light  
At dawn upon the sea;  
And it was made from gold of flawless white  
Such as no cave of earth was ever known  
To hold within its coldest depth of stone;  
And it was graved: “For valor; Paul Dupris.”

And, in my dreams, that messenger divine  
Cried sadly to the hosts, now cowed and still:  
“When will ye learn that man may grow so fine  
That Hell’s own legions could not make him kill?  
This man was more to Nature than her flowers,  
And dearer to the spring  
Than April and her lilt of laughing showers;  
Richer to autumn than her cloak of gold.  
And, if the winds could speak, their tongues had told  
How at his feet a wounded bird would sing.”

The years have passed and now I walk alone  
Along fair Côte-de-Neiges and up the hill,  
And by the river marges making moan,  
And in the deeper woods of Cartierville.  
And once I sought, upon a summer’s eve,  
The acre of his rest—  
And found another soul had come to grieve;  
And watched her, through the scented, swaying trees,  
Pour out her grief in white anemones  
And lilies wet from no fair woodland’s breast.



## VOLGA

Age is in their wasted features;  
Terror dulls their piercing cries:  
Little children, loved of Jesus,  
Falling, nevermore to rise.  
Look, the sunlight now is pouring  
In their cups of sunken eyes!

We, who feel our tables groaning  
With their wealth of meat and grain,  
What care we of gentle children  
By the breath of famine slain?  
What to us the tombless graveyards  
On Samara's frozen plain?

All day long the white-rimmed Volga  
With a ghastly meal is fed.  
All night long she moveth seaward  
With her crop of bloated dead,  
Holding up their sores in pity  
To the cold moon overhead.

Frozen sores with awful gaping;  
Twisted faces carved with pain;  
Wasted limbs and swollen bellies:  
Here are Russia's sleeping swain.  
Can we on the day of Judgment  
Cleanse our garments of this stain?

Miles and miles of moonlight glowing  
On a far more ghostly hue;  
Miles and miles of smoking snowbanks  
With dead hands protruding through:  
Dumb, dead hands that plead in silence  
To the soul in me and you.

There's a land where sorrow's children  
    Never knew the foot of play—  
I can hear them slowly, slowly,  
    In their ghostlike bodies pray  
For the crumbs our burdened tables  
    In the feast-hour cast away.

Olga might have been your daughter:  
    O her wealth of golden hair!  
When you think of children's laughter  
    Can you leave her dying there  
Where the Volga waits to take her  
    On that last ride of despair.

Everywhere tall pines are moaning,  
    In that land of awful curse,  
And they sway like plumes of blackness  
    On a never-moving hearse;  
And the music of their grieving  
    Wanders wildly in my verse.

We can rub our hands as Pilates  
    But, from that far wailing shore,  
God will bear the Volga's burden  
    Unto every Christian's door;  
And the dead upon our thresholds  
    Will remain forevermore.

But the preachers go on praying  
    And the little peoples die;  
And the children, frail as moonlight,  
    Vainly, with their thin lips cry,  
Vainly plead their swollen faces  
    To a sullen winter sky.

And the Volga moves to seaward  
    With her crop of bloated dead,  
Holding up their sores in pity  
    To a cold moon overhead;  
For the nations have forgotten  
    What the Master, Jesus, said.

## LLOYD-GEORGE

His boyhood held high vision of the gods,  
And many years of manhood found him true  
To one lone purpose which his spirit knew  
To be with most existing things at odds.  
And then he wearied of the ungrateful clods,  
And, sipping a royal favor, found it sweet;  
And now, oblivious wholly of the street,  
And traitor to his heroic years, he nods.

The brave young man of Manchester turned away  
To hear the singing sirens of applause  
And lie against their bosoms and their hair;  
Nor knew there comes an inevitable day  
When Triumph with her fickle soul withdraws  
And, going, leaves but silence and despair.

## THE SONG OF THE NEW COMMUNITIES

I hear the sound of the breaking of glass,  
The crushing of stone, the falling of bridges,  
The hurrying of people to and fro.  
I see the last Reactionary sitting upon a pile of dead men  
Which his own hands have slain,  
And hear him plead to save his soulless flesh.

Then I stand in the midst of a great, beautiful silence,  
And I hear the calmness broken by the marching of distant feet,  
And out of the Unknown comes a magnificent host,  
Sun-helmed, and leaning on the staff of the wind;  
And these are the men who shall make the New Communities.

And they shall come without sword in either hand;  
And their garb shall be as humble as the gray of the wren,  
But their songs shall come down the spiral stair of the nightingale:  
Their feet shall be shod with sandals, scented  
With the pungent beauty of the paths they pursue;  
They shall separate and each man shall go to his own acre,  
And, wherever they go, the yellow corn to the young dawn shall sing.

In that day shall the cities shrivel and the iron rust,  
And the picture-houses shall lock up their doors;  
The flaming magazines will cease to oil their presses,  
The gramophones will hush their gnawing voices;  
And no flag shall fly to separate the wind  
Or to keep the tide of peoples apart.  
And gold and silver shall be then no more;  
And the fools shall call in their ships from the air,  
And the pleasure motors from the highways;  
And men shall walk, as Enoch walked, with God.

Now do we see the materialist almost at the summit of his power:  
Then shall we see him on his last couch of gold.  
Even now he goes over the dizzy heights  
To the quick pathway of his sure descent—  
And when he goes only his kind shall mourn.  
But not until after he is gone shall the hand hold charity,  
The brow burn wisdom, the foot scatter kindness,  
Or the yellow corn sing freely to the young dawn.

In the New Community all shall be given cloth for their garments,—  
Which may be fashioned after the wearer's own taste,  
But no one shall add to these garments, or exchange,  
Lest the old idolatry of ribbon and beads return.  
Then will the eye go searching for the soul  
In every passing mortal, and comradeship shall be chosen  
From preference for one weave of spirit over another;  
And none shall crave for jewels, for all shall see  
The finger's tapering beauty and the neck's white, sloping charm  
Formed in the image of an unjewelled God.

And the youths, who now so unevenly  
Start in the race of life, shall toe a line together;  
And privilege will come to none or to all,  
And knowledge will not be whispered in favored ears  
But from the housetops will it gladly speak.  
Then shall the genius wear his crown of bays;  
Then shall the studious gain his larger portion;  
Then shall the dullard find no fair excuse,  
And change his dullard ways for shame of men.

And there shall be no prisons in the New Communities,  
For all who break the law are sick or rebels,  
And here shall no cause for rebellion be found,  
And the sick will be washed in a great sea of grass,  
And their bodies shall be perfumed with wild flowers,  
And the fingers of love will straighten their foreheads,  
And the outcast look will be kissed away from their eyes.

And the tables in the New Communities will be spread with white  
linen,  
With oaten cakes and figs and the honey-in-comb,  
With greens that crisp in salad of the dew,  
With nuts and red-cheeked apples, to make glad;  
And the sun's rays alone shall serve the feast,  
And pot and pan and oven shall be no more.

The lamb will no more look up wistfully at the descending axe  
And the birds will sing blithely over the banquet-hall.  
And none shall use unripened things or condiments;  
And thirst shall call to the udder and the bubbling spring  
And to the purple vineyards on the hillside;  
And the feasters shall arise from the table with bright eyes,  
Their breath shall be pure as the breath of the ox,  
Their teeth shall be white as the teeth of savages,  
Their blood shall make rose petals of their limbs.

In those days shall no rail be laid in all the world;  
But the highways will be broadened and the roads smoothed to glass,  
And all the motors will whirl in the public cause.  
Then few things will be imported into any land:  
The north shall send furs and grain to the south,  
And the south shall send nuts and cotton and fruit to the north.  
Then the grain will be crushed again between stones,  
And the pecan-tree shall stand in every orchard—  
And each community shall be a world unto itself,  
And dress after its own pleasure and live after its own heart.

And in each community I see five great temples,  
Like five great fountains flowing with moonbeams—  
And their shining domes shall suck all the light from the moon  
And leave it a bloodless thing in the morning sky.  
The pillars of these temples shall lift nobility  
Out of the grovelling soul, and their domes shall expand thought  
And free her from her warped confines forever.  
And the first temple shall echo with the feet of Pan;  
And Terpsichore shall stand at the portals of the second,  
With Euterpe, gowned in white rhythm, at her side;  
And they who rob the rainbow shall slant their easels  
In the unhindered beauty of the third;  
And the fourth temple shall surround a solitary Cross,  
Lest any man forget the price One paid  
To lead the world up to the New Communities.  
Then through a great doorway, made of stone and brass,  
Shall we pass into the fifth temple, and, having passed,  
Find ourselves domed with blue sky and comraded by trees  
And cloaked with the spindrift of white, breaking waters;  
And there shall each man walk sun-helmed,  
And girdled with tall grasses and leaning on the staff of the wind.

And they shall walk without sword in either hand.  
Their garb shall be humble as the gray of the wren,  
But their songs shall come down the spiral stair of the nightingale;  
Their feet shall be shod with sandals, scented  
With the pungent beauty of the paths they pursue—  
And, wherever they go, the yellow corn to the young dawn shall sing.

## THE MASKED BALL

The heralds of dawn are blowing at the last star;  
When it goes out the masks will come off  
And the dancers will lean homeward on their weariness.

All who dance at the Ball of Life are masked  
Save the children and the poets and dreamers  
And a few old men and women.

Sometimes a daring soul tugs at his mask;  
And the smart young fellows chide him and he hesitates,  
And the gay young ladies taunt him and he desists.

No man can see God through a mask:  
No man can enter Heaven who is masked:  
But God and Heaven are small things at the Masked Ball.

When the masks are tossed away I shall see  
The lovely, grown hideous—the hideous, lovely.  
O, the joy when I shall behold nakedness of soul!

Then shall I observe the courage of the coward  
And the timidity of the brave man.  
O, the joy when I shall behold nakedness of soul!

Then shall I discover the purity of harlots  
And the lewdness of men at their morning prayers.  
O, the joy when I shall behold nakedness of soul!

A mask is a hiding-place from truth,  
From virtue, from honor:  
It hates the nudity of love and the nakedness of kindness.

At the Masked Ball the false are the proudest  
Of flesh, and their limbs are all beauty—  
Their breasts are abundant, their fingers are tapered.



But when the masks are torn from their eyes  
Their flesh will be foul and their limbs will be laggard,  
And their breasts will be milkless and withered.

If Jesus should come to-day He would say:  
“Tear off the masks.”  
And the Pharisees would lift another cross against the sky.

Masks, masks, masks!  
How He hated them—this Man of the Desert  
Who came once and danced with us at the Masked Ball.

Comrades, I warn you the Masked Ball is near an end—  
The heralds of dawn are blowing at the last star;  
When it goes out the masks will come off  
And the dancers will lean homeward on their weariness.

## WESTWARD

In one swift leap of shining steel  
Three thousand miles were tossed away;  
And now, at eventide, I feel  
Once more the sands of English Bay.

Last night my swaying couch was spread  
So very near the journeying stars  
That I could almost feel their tread  
Above our long, luxurious cars.

O wildest joy that man can reach:  
To swing at noon through blazing snows  
And hear, at eventide, the speech  
Of sea-waves chanting to a rose.

Who dropped these rails from star to sea  
Had surely felt the cascade's thrill;  
Had known the eagle's ecstasy  
In that long mounting of the hill.

O shining rails that led me far  
To tilt in larger lands with Fate!  
The spirit of the evening star  
At both our comings is elate.

How sweet to race the rising sun  
That flees with me the shambled East!  
Better the banquet just begun  
Than debris of an ancient feast.

O blessed fount of beauty broken  
For him who dwells beside the sea:  
In weary hours my heart has spoken  
Only forever there to be.

And yet, amid warm gardens fraught  
With heavy blooms of tropic dyes,  
I sometimes have a yearning thought  
For sullen winds and frozen skies.

And sometimes, where the arbutus flings  
Away her bark at winter's call,  
My hands upreach for ice that clings  
Against the coldest mountain wall.

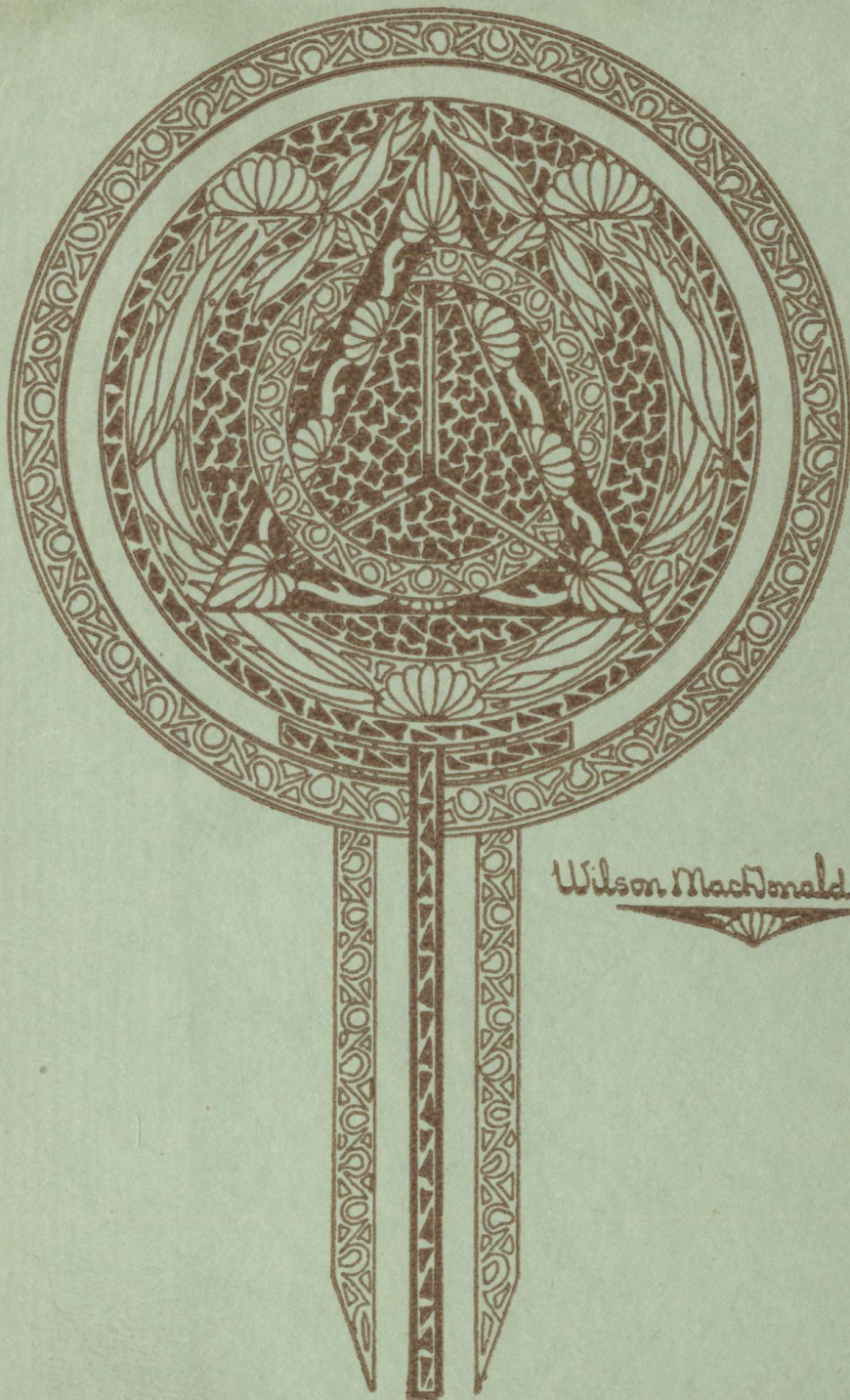
What contradictions haunt the steel  
That tossed three thousand miles away!  
At dawn the star-dust on my heel;  
At night the sands of English Bay.

## THE LAST PORTAGE

Age shall never come near my soul,  
With his bent form and his dim eye  
And his beard of yellow flowing;  
Young as the ancient seas that roll  
I shall go to my valiant goal,  
Whether a blue or a grim sky  
Waits for my hour of going.  
Sandalled with loam  
And helmed with sun  
I'll turn home  
When my day is done:  
The last hill won shall hear me sing  
A song as bold as an eagle's wing—  
A song that dares  
A world of cares  
And the tempests 'round me blowing.

The youngest thing in a youthful world  
Is a young soul in an old heart;  
Full statured at the ending.  
Through the flaming years is my spirit hurled—  
A homing stone in an alien world,  
That leaps to God like a flung dart  
Back from His love's own sending.  
To-night the veins  
Of the world are white,  
For her blood now drains  
At the door of night:  
I warm my sight at the painted cloud,  
My heart beats strong and the wind beats loud—  
And here outrolled  
Are caldrons of gold,  
And all for my pleasant spending.

As the stars go out so let me go  
With a quick leap and a clear light  
And a joyous understanding—  
My form erect in the driving snow  
And the winds that over the borders blow,  
Whether by day or by drear night  
I make my lonely landing.  
You shall not know  
That I am old  
By word of woe  
Or hands grown cold;  
But swift and bold, as when a boy,  
I'll make the Last Portage with joy—  
And I'll find there  
White-robed and fair  
The Lord of Life commanding.



Wilson Macdonald

## TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Inconsistency in accents has been retained.

Inconsistency in hyphenation has been retained.

[The end of *Out of the Wilderness* by Wilson Pugsley MacDonald]