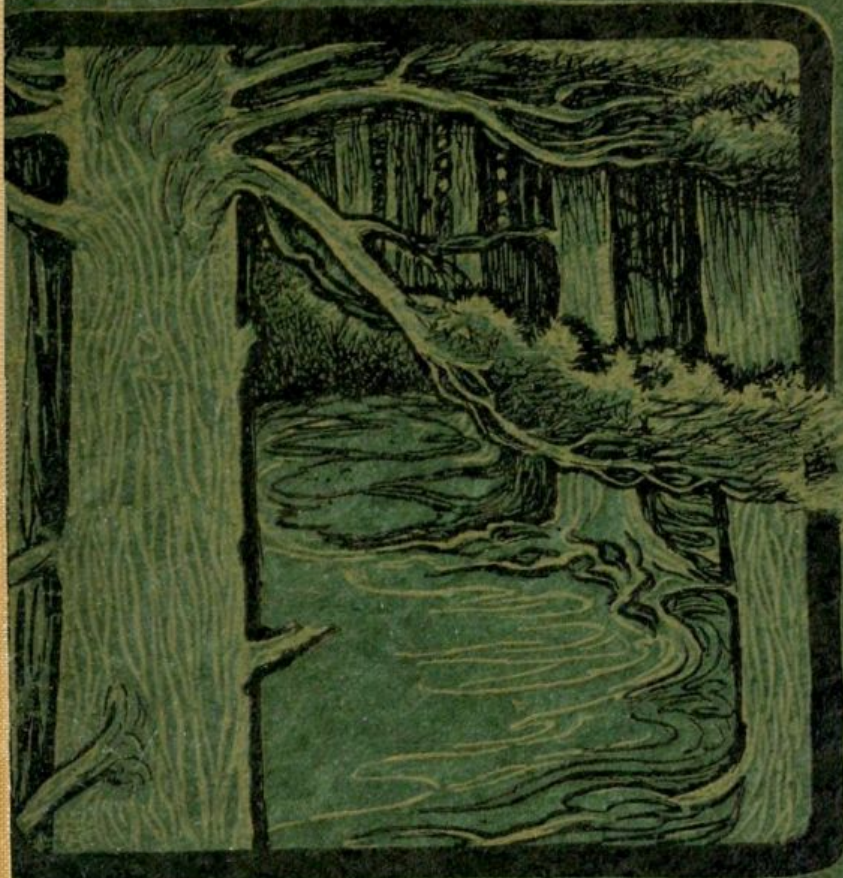




W. Borealis



Duncan Campbell Scott



Toronto · Wm Tyrrell & Co ·

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VIA BOREALIS

BY DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT

WITH DECORATIONS BY A. H. HOWARD R.C.A.



TORONTO • W^M TYRRELL & CO



TO

PELHAM EDGAR

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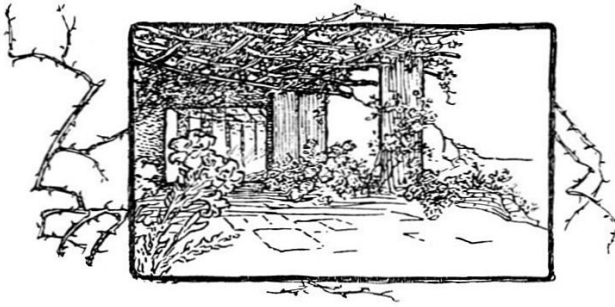
FAR in the east the rain-clouds sweep and harry,
Down the long haggard hills, formless and low,
Far in the west the shell-tints meet and marry,
Piled gray and tender blue and roseate snow;
East—like a fiend, the bolt-breasted, streaming
Storm strikes the world with lightning and with hail;
West—like the thought of a seraph that is dreaming,
Venus leads the young moon down the vale.

Through the lake furrow between the gloom and bright'ning
 Firm runs our long canoe with a whistling rush,
While Potan the wise and the cunning Silver Lightning
 Break with their slender blades the long clear hush;
Soon shall I pitch my tent amid the birches,
 Wise Potan shall gather boughs of balsam fir,
While for bark and dry wood Silver Lightning searches;
 Soon the smoke shall hang and lapse in the moist air.

Soon shall I sleep—if I may not remember
 One who lives far away where the storm-cloud went;
May it part and starshine burn in many a quiet ember,
 Over her towered city crowned with large content;
Dear God, let me sleep, here where deep peace is,
 Let me own a dreamless sleep once for all the years,
Let me know a quiet mind and what heart ease is,
 Lost to light and life and hope, to longing and to tears.

Here in the wilderness less her memory presses,
 Yet I see her lingering where the birches shine,
All the dark cedars are sleep-laden like her tresses,
 The gold-moted wood-pools pellucid as her eyes;
Memories and ghost-forms of the days departed
 People all the forest lone in the dead of night;
While Potan and Silver Lightning sleep, the happy-hearted,
 Troop they from their fastnesses upon my sight.

Once when the tide came straining from the Lido,
 In a sea of flame our gondola flickered like a sword,
Venice lay abroad builded like beauty's credo,
 Smouldering like a gorget on the breast of the Lord:
Did she mourn for fame foredoomed or passion shattered
 That with a sudden impulse she gathered at my side?
But when I spoke the ancient fates were flattered,
 Chill there crept between us the imperceptible tide.





NCE I well remember in her twilight garden,
She pulled a half-blown rose, I thought it meant
for me,
But poising in the act, and with half a sigh for
pardon,
She hid it in her bosom where none may dare to
see:
Had she a subtle meaning?—would to God I knew
it

Where'er I am I always feel the rose leaves nestling there,
If I might know her mind and the thought which then flashed
through it,
My soul might look to heaven not commissioned to despair.

Though she denied at parting the gift that I besought her,
Just a bit of ribbon or a strand of her hair;
Though she would not keep the token that I brought her,
Proud she stood and calm and marvellously fair;
Yet I saw her spirit—truth cannot dissemble—
Saw her pure as gold, staunch and keen and brave,
For she knows my worth and her heart was all atremble,
Lest her will should weaken and make her heart a slave.

If she could be here where all the world is eager
For dear love with the primal Eden sway,
Where the blood is fire and no pulse is thin or meagre,
All the heart of all the world beats one way!
There is the land of fraud and fame and fashion,
Joy is but a gaud and withers in an hour,
Here is the land of quintessential passion,
Where in a wild throb Spring wells up with power.

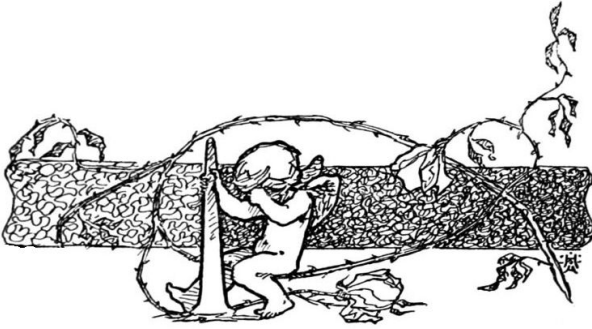
She would hear the partridge drumming in the distance,
Rolling out his mimic thunder in the sultry noons;
Hear beyond the silver reach in ringing wild persistence
Reel remote the ululating laughter of the loons;
See the shy moose fawn nestling by its mother,
In a cool marsh pool where the sedges meet;
Rest by a moss-mound where the twin-flowers smother
With a drowse of orient perfume drenched in light and heat:

She would see the dawn rise behind the smoky mountain,
In a jet of colour curving up to break,
While like spray from the iridescent fountain,
Opal fires weave over all the oval of the lake:
She would see like fireflies the stars alight and spangle
All the heaven meadows thick with growing dusk,
Feel the gipsy airs that gather up and tangle
The woody odours in a maze of myrrh and musk:

There in the forest all the birds are nesting,
Tells the hermit thrush the song he cannot tell,
While the white-throat sparrow never resting,
Even in the deepest night rings his crystal bell:
O, she would love me then with a wild elation,
Then she must love me and leave her lonely state,
Give me love yet keep her soul's imperial reservation,
Large as her deep nature and fathomless as fate:

Then, if she would lie beside me in the even,
On my deep couch heaped of balsam fir,
Fragrant with sleep as nothing under heaven,
Let the past and future mingle in one blur;
While all the stars were watchful and thereunder
Earth breathed not but took their silent light,
All life withdrew and wrapt in a wild wonder
Peace fell tranquil on the odorous night:

She would let me steal,—not consenting or denying—
One strong arm beneath her dusky hair,
She would let me bare, not resisting or complying,
One sweet breast so sweet and firm and fair;
Then with the quick sob of passion's shy endeavour,
She would gather close and shudder and swoon away,
She would be mine for ever and for ever,
Mine for all time and beyond the judgment day.

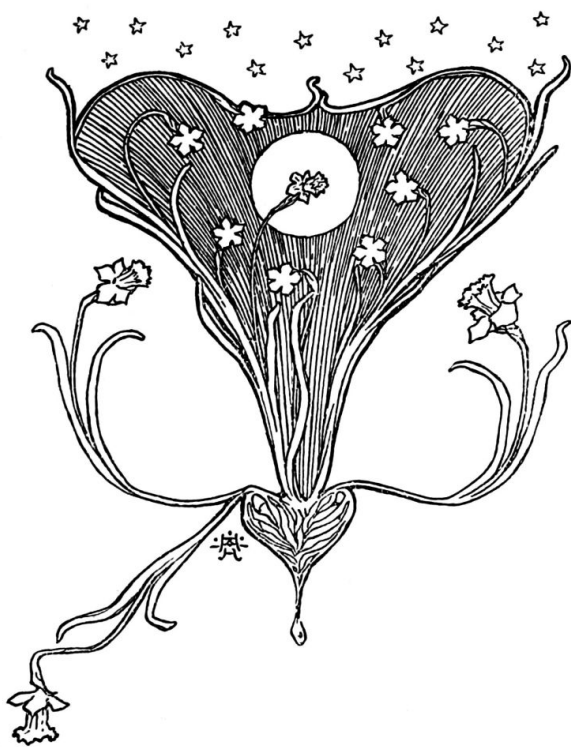


AIN is the dream, and deep with all
derision—

Fate is stern and hard—fair and
false and vain—

But what would life be worth without the vision,
Dark with sordid passion, pale with wringing pain?
What I dream is mine, mine beyond all cavil,
Pure and fair and sweet, and mine for evermore,
And when I will my life I may unravel,
And find my passion dream deep at the red core.

Venus sinks first lost in ruby splendour,
Stars like wood-daffodils grow golden in the night,
Far, far above, in a space entranced and tender,
Floats the growing moon pale with virgin light.
Vaster than the world or life or death my trust is
Based in the unseen and towering far above;
Hold me, O Law, that deeper lies than Justice,
Guide me, O Light, that stronger burns than Love.







HERE in the pungent gloom
Where the tamarac roses
glow

And the balsam burns its perfume,
A vireo turns his slow

Cadence, as if he gloated
Over the last phrase he floated;
Each one he moulds and mellows
Matching it with its fellows:
So have you noted
How the oboe croons,
The canary-throated,
In the gloom of the violoncellos
And bassoons.



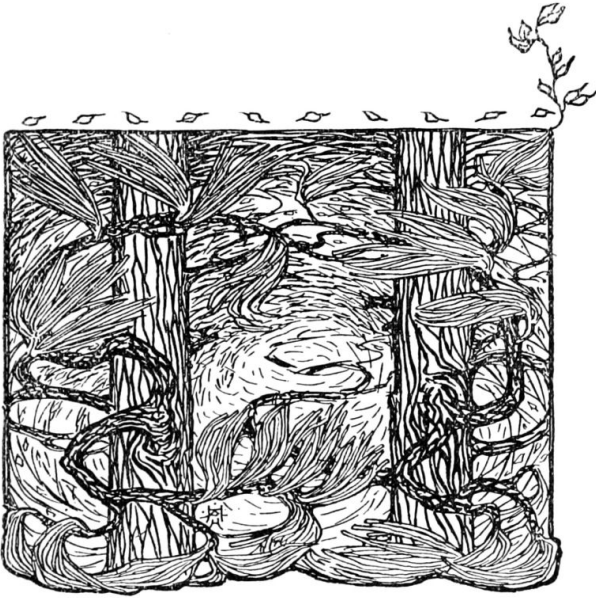
HUT afar in the thicket forest
I hear a sound go free,
Crashing the stately
neighbours

The pine and the cedar tree,
Horns and harps and tabors,
Drumming and harping and horning
In savage minstrelsy—
It wakes in my soul a warning
Of the wind of destiny.



My life is soaring and swinging
In triple walls of quiet,
In my heart there is rippling and ringing
A song with melodious riot,
When a fateful thing comes nigh it
A hush falls, and then

I hear in the thickset world
The wind of destiny hurled
On the lives of men.



HE is free of the trap and the paddle,
The portage and the trail,
But something behind her savage life
Shines like a fragile veil.

Her dreams are undiscovered,
 Shadows trouble her breast,
When the time for resting cometh
 Then least is she at rest.

Oft in the morns of winter,
 When she visits the rabbit snares,
An appearance floats in the crystal air
 Beyond the balsam firs.

Oft in the summer mornings
 When she strips the nets of fish,
The smell of the dripping net-twine
 Gives to her heart a wish.

But she cannot learn the meaning
 Of the shadows in her soul,
The lights that break and gather,
 The clouds that part and roll,

The reek of rock-built cities,
 Where her fathers dwelt of yore,
The gleam of loch and shealing,
 The mist on the moor,

Frail traces of kindred kindness,
 Of feud by hill and strand,
The heritage of an age-long life
 In a legendary land.

She wakes in the stifling wigwam,
Where the air is heavy and wild,
She fears for something or nothing
With the heart of a frightened child.

She sees the stars turn slowly
Past the tangle of the poles,
Through the smoke of the dying embers,
Like the eyes of dead souls.

Her heart is shaken with longing
For the strange, still years,
For what she knows and knows not,
For the wells of ancient tears.

A voice calls from the rapids,
Deep, careless and free,
A voice that is larger than her life
Or than her death shall be.

She covers her face with her blanket,
Her fierce soul hates her breath,
As it cries with a sudden passion
For life or death.



NIGHT BURIAL
IN THE FOREST





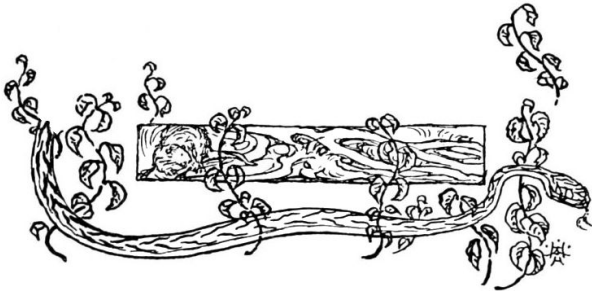
AY him down where the fern is thick and fair.
Fain was he for life, here lies he low:
With the blood washed clean from his brow and
his beautiful hair,
Lay him here in the dell where the orchids grow.

Let the birch-bark torches roar in the gloom,
And the trees crowd up in a quiet startled ring
So lone is the land that in this lonely room
Never before has breathed a human thing.

Cover him well in his canvas shroud, and the moss
Part and heap again on his quiet breast,
What recks he now of gain, or love, or loss
Who for love gained rest?



HILE she who caused it all hides her
insolent eyes
Or braids her hair with the ribbons
of lust and of lies,
And he who did the deed fares out
like a hunted beast
To lurk where the musk-ox tramples
the barren ground
Where the stroke of his coward
heart is the only sound.

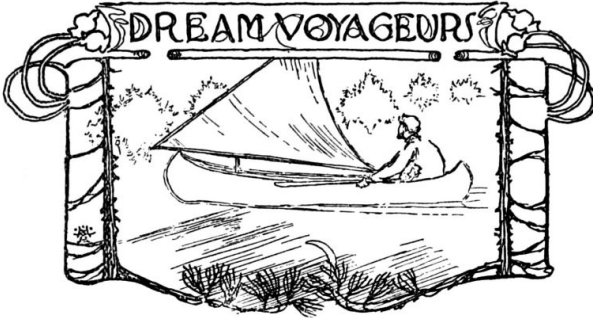
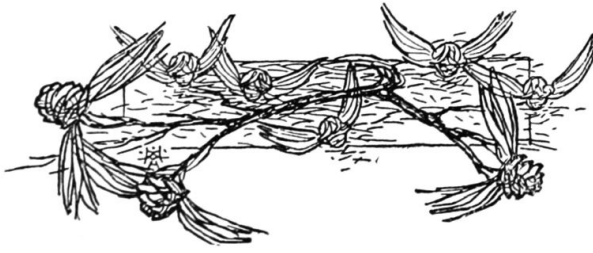


Haunting the tamarac shade,
Hear them up-thronging
Memories foredoomed
Of strife and of longing:
Haggard or bright
By the tamaracs and birches,
Where the red torch light
Trembles and searches,
The wilderness teems
With inscrutable eyes
Of ghosts that are dreams
Commingled with memories.



LEAVE him here in his secret ferny tomb,
Withdraw the little light from the ocean
of gloom,
He who feared nought will fear aught never,
Left alone in the forest forever and ever.

Then, as we fare on our way to the shore
Sudden the torches cease to roar:
For cleaving the darkness remote and still
Comes a wind with a rushing, harp-like thrill,
The sound of wings hurled and furled and unfurled,
The wings of the Angel who gathers the souls from the wastes
of the world.



To ports of balm through isles of musk
The gentle airs are leading us;
To curtained calm and tents of dusk,
The wood-wild things unheeding us
Will share their hoards of hardihood,
Cool dew and roots of fern for food,
Frail berries full of the sun's blood.

To planets bland with dales of dream
A tranquil life is leading us,
We shall land from the languid stream,
The musing shades, unheeding us,
Will share their veils of angelhood,
Thoughts that are tranced with mystic food,
Still broodings tinct with a seraph's blood.



REEP into my heart, creep in,
creep in,
Afar from the fret, the toil and
the din,
Where the spring of love forever
flows,

As clear as light and as sweet as the rose;
(Creep into my heart),
Where the dreams never wilt but their tints refine,
Rooted in beautiful thoughts of thine;
Where morn falls cool on the soul, like sleep,
And the nights are tranquil and tranced and deep;
Where the fairest thing of all the fair
Thou art, who hast somehow crept in there,
Deep into my heart,
Deep into my heart.



The shore-lark
soars to his
topmost
flight,
Sings at the
height
where
morning

springs,
What though his voice be lost in the light,
The light comes dropping from his wings.

Mount, my soul, and sing at the height
Of thy clear flight in the light and the air,
Heard or unheard in the night in the light
Sing there! Sing there!

THE END

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

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

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Illustrations have been modified and parts of some of the original illustrations have been removed.

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[The end of *Via Borealis* by Duncan Campbell Scott]