

# From Distant Shores

Poems

Mary Electa Adams  
1898

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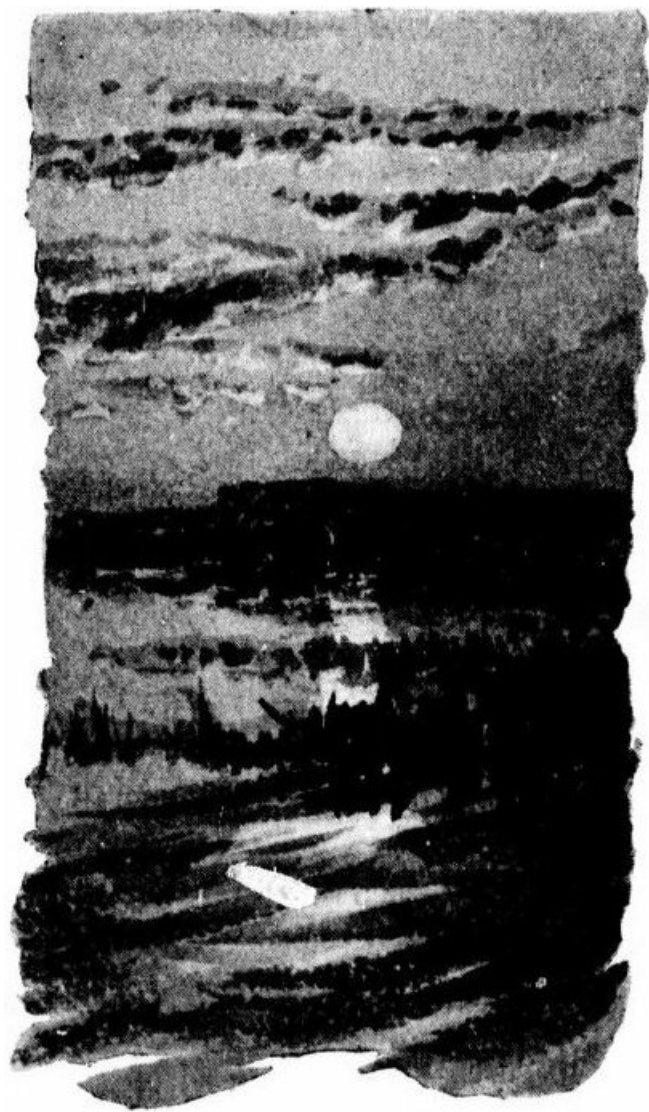
*From  
Distant  
Shores*

*Mary C. Adams*

*FROM  
DISTANT  
SHORES*

Poems

*MARY ELECTA ADAMS*



Tantramar Marshes

*By the Marshes of Tantramar.*

RECOLLECTION.

**E**vening is falling with a star:  
I wander lonely and afar  
Down by the marshes of Tantramar.

The broad, red west like a furnace glows,  
And the wind like a Titan's bellows blows,  
'Till one could not tell if it burned or froze.

Wide reaches the strand of Fundy's bay,  
A-gleam with the sinking light of day,  
As the tide-wave—spent—it rolls away.

A timbered bridge with shadows black,  
And spans awry, an ancient wrack,  
I cross it over the turbid track.

The gurgling growl of the muddy tide  
Creeps up by the bridge's leaning side,  
And a sound, like the voice of one who cried,

Turns the spectral bridge to a haunted tower,  
Where the bravest heart would be like to cower,  
If he chanced that way at a darker hour.

The grasses are moving to and fro,  
Where the wild geese cackled long ago,  
And the Frenchman builded his aboiteaux.

From up where the rivers rushed so brave,  
'Twixt the red-lipped shores, the tidal wave  
Comes crawling back to its ocean grave.

REFLECTION.

I muse on the life that has no stay;  
With the steadfast look it is here and away,  
And whither it goes I cannot say.

The years and the sea and the star are the same,  
And the broad, red west hath been often aflame,  
But it standeth still in the mighty frame.

O Eye that can see through the æons dim,  
Through the realms of space to the farthest rim,  
Where the universe stretches filled to the brim;

O Ear that can hear the gurgling tide,  
And the music of stars in the spaces wide,  
Almighty! Behold, doth aught abide?

I listen, I fear, I fall on my face;  
The darkness is coming with silence apace—  
O, who can the shadows and mystery chase?

#### RECALL.

Bow lowly, O spirit, bow low in the dust.  
Shall the coming of changes invade with distrust?  
Bow lowly, what folly to think that it must.

What folly! It shames me to round in with sense  
The limitless work of omnipotence,  
Or fear for the changes that bear us hence.

What wouldst thou, through earth and the heavens to plod?  
The universe changeless would be but a clod,  
And change is the name of the working of God.

## *Alone?*

The sunlight through the open door  
Comes in, and streams along the floor,  
The slant rays of a falling sun  
Well-nigh throughout its sultry circuit run;  
And hushed is every sound of breeze or leaf or bird,  
Save the low trill of insects, past the lattice heard,  
In the dry grass  
As the hours pass.

I sit alone, unless those forms,  
Familiar through the calms and storms  
Of many a year of summer bloom and winter rude,  
To all this loveliness and solitude,  
Command a presence here and, gliding in,  
Keep company with silence for a hymn.  
I think they do  
As falls the dew.

But be it that they dwell afar,  
Beyond the range of sun or star,  
And visit never more this pleasant spot  
We walked together, it is not forgot:  
Their image starts from every niche; 'tis there,  
Daguerreotyped upon the golden air.  
From flower and tree  
They look at me.

Low falls the sun, and paler grows  
The air, dark-thickened as he goes,  
'Till earth is blotted out beneath my gaze,  
And not an object past my vision strays;  
And sense of losing, unsought visitant,  
Hov'ring around each vacant space and haunt,  
Would break some spell,  
Yet is it well.

Sweet mocking visions! Ye would leave,  
As yonder sun the world at eve,  
No light upon the midnight of my thought,  
Deep wrapped in gloom or into frenzy wrought,  
Unless a deeper recollection on me poured,  
A wealth of knowledge in remembrance stored,  
Which giveth light  
On my heart's night.

I love you, O ye shades, but not  
With full and final love; I wot  
Ye are but pictures of an absent face—  
Not that the darksome grave doth so abase  
Beneath the damp and mouldering sod,  
But that which ever-living, ever looks on God.  
O vision blest!  
O blessed rest!

Fade, then, thou sunlight; fade, ye blooms;




Thou solid earth, fade out; the glooms  
Of nothingness are naught, this mortal sense—  
That blind—each grandeur of the sphere immense—  
How grand—is welcome to depart;  
They cannot leave to vacancy the heart,

Which sees afar,  
Past sun or star,  
Past day and night,  
The Infinite light.



## *Launch of the Hiawatha.*

 way! Thou wert meant for the wave, fair thing,  
And thou sittest like ocean bird  
On the drifting tide, with folded wing,  
Which the light wind had scarcely stirred.

How bright is the sunshine, how joyous the tide,  
And how gaily he kisses thy prow!  
Come, tell us, thou beautiful ocean bride,  
What is it he whispers thee now?

Thou wilt not? Adieu, then, good speed and away!  
But we tremblingly follow thy form.  
There's brightness and calm on the ocean to-day;  
To-morrow, the wreck and the storm.

Aye telleth the deep, the old deep, saith he  
Of the strange and the wondrous life,  
Where the ghosts of the tempests lurking be,  
And the elements laugh in their strife?

On his white-flashing mane, where the whirlwind raves,  
He may toss thee full high in the air;  
He may plunge thee in caverns of hollow waves,  
And bid thee lie down in his lair.

But gentler, for lo! there are beauteous scenes  
Which the hoary old ocean can show,  
There are things passing strange, like our wizard dreams,  
Thou shalt find them wherever thou go.

On a bright, glassy sea where the dolphins play,  
And the sunshine, on zephyrs' soft wings,  
Shall laughingly mix with the dancing spray  
Which the sea-god sportingly flings.

Or out o'er the wide ocean desert thou sail,  
Where the sea-monster follows thy track,  
And the reefs and the breakers make ocean quail,  
And echo his grim howlings back.

Thy tapering masts may be lightning wreathed,  
And the whistle of death through thy shrouds  
May chime with the thunders, hoarsely breathed  
From the low and muttering clouds.

Perchance thy dead canvas shall heavily flap  
On a windless and tideless shore,  
Where the pestilence shakes from his poisoned lap  
The deaths he is keeping in store.

Thy pennons may flutter on scented breeze  
By the groves of some Indian isle,  
Or their stiffened folds among icebergs freeze,  
Where summer may never smile.

What countries of storied romance shalt thou see?  
What lands that are lonely and bare?  
What wonders of nature unheard of may be  
In the pathway o'er which thou shalt fare?



And wilt thou come back to us old, very old,  
With dark sea-weed and shells on thy keel,  
And ask to be mingled with earthly mold,  
Thy voyaging o'er of woe or of weal?

Or, rent thy strong timbers and masts of pine,  
Shalt thou float in an open grave,  
And drift in the currents of weltering brine  
At the will of the merciless wave?

Or down, sunken down below coral and pearl,  
With the slow moving dregs of the sea,  
Rock darkling where tempests their banners furl  
And quietly sleep beside thee?

Aha! but the wild ocean hath thee now,  
And no vision so weird that may see,  
With the fingers of destiny over his brow,  
What the ocean is keeping for thee.



## *Jesus Amor Meus.<sup>[1]</sup>*

The sunlight gleams on the whitened walls  
Of the ancient fortress keep,  
And the step of midnight noiseless falls  
On those that smile and those that  
weep.

*Jesus Amor Meus.*

The surging tide of life goes by,  
But its roar is never heard;  
And beneath the sunshine of the sky  
Within those walls no breath hath stirred.

*Jesus Amor Meus.*

The king in pageantry passeth now,  
And the priest in saintly stole,  
And the toiled-stained man with sweaty brow,  
And the homeless wretch with weary dole.

*Jesus Amor Meus.*

The storm beats dark on the Lollard's Tower,  
And its massive turrets shake;  
The trembling steps of the passer cower,  
The watchman's mail-clad heart doth quake.

*Jesus Amor Meus.*

O, dread the footsteps approaching now,  
As yon black-robed forms appear:  
There's a little paleness on the brow,  
But a lofty spirit, calm and clear.

*Jesus Amor Meus.*

What wait they for by that calm, pale man,  
'Neath the daylight's open glare,  
With cross and wafer and priestly ban?  
Nor cross nor priest are needed there.

*Jesus Amor Meus.*

With demon scowl are the portals closed  
To the paths of living men;  
But on loving Arm that head reposed  
On which no day might dawn again.

*Jesus Amor Meus.*

The death-damp creeps from the mouldy wall  
On the stiffened limbs to seize,  
And the leaden shadows slowly fall,  
Like coffin-lid, the heart to freeze.

*Jesus Amor Meus.*

O spectral tortures, gaunt and grim  
With the gleam of martyr fires—  
O death in life, ye cannot dim  
The goal to which that heart aspires.

*Jesus Amor Meus.*

The lichen grows on the dungeon floor  
In the moisture dank and chill,  
And the deep-driven bolt is drawn no more,  
But graven there one readeth still—  
    “*Jesus Amor Meus.*”

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- [1] Engraved on the walls of the Lollard's Tower, London, by a prisoner under ban of the Roman Church, who, holding fast his faith in spite of entreaties and torture, was left finally to perish in solitude.





Bow River, Morley

## *Among the Foot-Hills of the Rockies.*

ome, let us walk. 'Tis of the summer day—  
The long, long summer day—the lingering  
afternoon,

And Nature here has phases all her own  
I would not miss. Swift swings the river down  
From yonder towering two-leaved mountain gates,  
O'erhung with drapery of rose and pearl,  
Past winding slopes, along the valley's length,  
In deep concealment now, now flashing by,  
Contemptuous of delay, flinging a kiss  
In passing; lost at length in hazy light.  
What hands have levelled all those terraces  
That look upon his course? Now see aloft  
Where swaths of shadow fall and slide  
Among the gold upon the dimpled hills,  
Cadenced in their vast and rhythmic sweep,  
By hollows and by seams that once were filled  
With rushing torrents. See! see how they lie  
Fold upon fold, in cycles of the past,  
Or wind or wave-swept into glorious shapes,  
And piled against the azure of the heavens.  
These undulating lines, like silenced waves  
Taken in mid-course of their unrivalled leap,  
To fix forever their unresting course,  
Seem to my eyes, in the calm evenings, still  
To palpitate away into the moving sky.

## *Remenyi's Violin.*

Pretty jewelled thing! It seemed  
To flash upon us, then to turn and wait  
In sympathy upon his downcast face,  
Speak back again, and laugh and weep and rave  
With him, as if it had an answering soul.  
And as the heart, deep-stirred,  
Turned tremulous to rest when silence came,  
Awe seized me, and I marvelled how  
The hand that fashioned it with curious care  
In old Cremona, nigh two hundred years ago,  
Reached deftly past the gulf of space and time,  
And with the artist wrought to make this tumult in my soul.



## *Refreshment.*

**H**ast thou had hours when life seemed empty all,  
And waste the garden thou wert set to till,  
Like tide-swept sands that only white and still  
Unanswering lay beneath the heaven's gray pall?  
No ripening fruit to offer at His call,  
Discouragement hath waited on the will;  
And did some human voice, that bro't a thrill  
Out of the silence, on thy hearing fall:  
"I could not rest till I had come to see  
And tell you how your life hath blessed mine own"?  
Burst a cool spring; the heart, refreshed and free,  
Went on its way under a smiling sun.  
If ever this had happened unto thee,  
Thou knowest a joy that's next to God's "Well done!"

[The end of *From Distant Shores* by Mary Electa Adams]