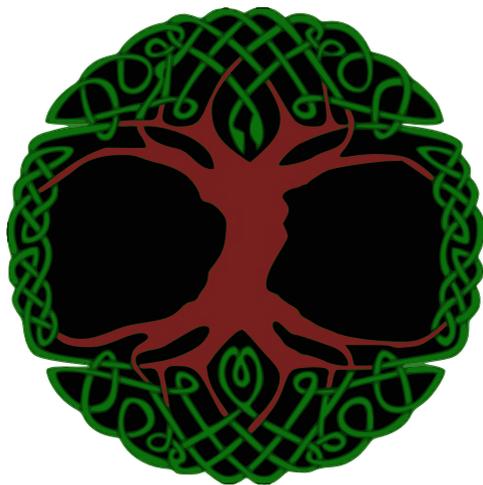


COLLECTED POEMS

OF

JOYCE KILMER

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GORETTI PUBLICATIONS 1201

Dozenal numeration is a system of thinking of numbers in twelves, rather than tens. Twelve is much more versatile, having four even divisors—2, 3, 4, and 6—as opposed to only two for ten. This means that such hatefulness as “0.333 . . .” for $\frac{1}{3}$ and “0.1666 . . .” for $\frac{1}{6}$ are things of the past, replaced by easy “0;4” (four twelfths) and “0;2” (two twelfths).

In dozenal, counting goes “one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, elv, dozen; dozen one, dozen two, dozen three, dozen four, dozen five, dozen six, dozen seven, dozen eight, dozen nine, dozen ten, dozen elv, two dozen, two dozen one . . .” It’s written as such: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, ɿ, ɸ, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 1ɿ, 1ɸ, 20, 21 . . .

Dozenal counting is at once much more efficient and much easier than decimal counting, and takes only a little bit of time to get used to. Further information can be had from the dozenal societies (for example, <http://www.dozenal.org>), as well as in many other places on the Internet.

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SUMMER OF
LOVE

To Aline

A vagrant minstrel of the street,
No poet of the laurel crown,
I kneel, dear Princess, at your feet,
And lay my book of verses down.
See all the love that lingers there,
And so, for love's sake, find it fair.

SUMMER OF LOVE

1 June lavishes sweet-scented loveliness
2 And sprinkles sun-filled wine on everything;
3 The very leaves grow drunk with bliss and sing
4 And every breeze becomes a soft caress.
5 All earthly things felicity confess
6 And fairies dance in many a moonlit ring;
7 The fleetfoot hours fresh wealth of joyaunce bring;
8 Life wears her gayest rose-embroidered dress.

9 Kind June, why bear these golden gifts to me?
10 All winter long I hear the throstle's tune,
11 All winter long red roses I can see,
12 Reading the while Love's ancient magic rune.
13 In Love's fair garden-close I wander free,
14 So take your guerdon elsewhere, lovely June.

VILLANELLE OF LOVELAND

1 Loveland is fair to see,
2 Of all kind havens best,
3 Dwell here, my Sweet, with me.

4 Here flowers bloom for thee,
5 Thy feet are rose-caressed,
6 Loveland is fair to see.

7 The violets shall be
8 Thy soft and fragrant nest,

9 Dwell here, my Sweet, with me.

7 Thou shalt not lack for glee,

8 Here life is but a jest;

10 Loveland is fair to see.

11 None shall be glad as we;

12 Ah, grant me my behest,

13 Dwell here, my Sweet, with me.

14 Now would I ask my fee,

15 Thy red heart I request;

16 Loveland is fair to see,

17 Dwell here, my Sweet, with me.

THURIFER

1 In a carven censer of burnished words,

2 Swung on a golden chain of rhythm,

3 For you I burn my heart.

IN A BOOK-SHOP

1 All day I serve among the volumes telling

2 Old tales of love and war and high romance;

3 Good company, God wot, is in them dwelling,

4 Brave knights who dared to scorn untoward chance.

5 King Arthur—Sidney—Copperfield the daring

6 And friendly souls of Meredith's bright page
7 The Pilgrim on his darksome journey faring,
8 And Shakespeare's heroes, great in love and rage.

9 Fair ladies, too here Beatrice smiling,
10 Through hell leads Dante to the happy stars;
11 And Heloise, the cruel guards beguiling,
12 With Abelard makes mock of convent bars.

13 Yet when night comes I leave these folks with pleasure
14 To open Love's great summer-scented tome,
15 Within whose pages precious beyond measure
16 My own White Flower Lady hath her home.

EADDEM

1 Sometimes within the garden of your sweetness
2 I rest and dream and think of all the years
3 Before my soul had bloomed to fair completeness,
4 Those times of shadow-laughter, mixed with tears.

5 And in my dreams I see a gentle maiden
6 Whom I once loved and whom I still love, Sweet,
7 For she is like a rose with sunlight laden,
8 And my lips ache to kiss her little feet.

9 She is so pure the very sky above her
10 Is not so fair with all its white and blue,
11 And so, my love, I cannot help but love her
12 Although my life and love belong to you.

IN FAIRYLAND

1 The fairy poet takes a sheet
2 Of moonbeam, silver white,
3 His ink is dew from daisies sweet,
4 His pen a point of light.

5 My love, I know is fairer far
6 Than his, (though she is fair,)
7 And we should dwell where fairies are
8 For I could praise her there.

THE SORROWS OF KING MIDAS

1 King Midas took delight
2 In golden vessels bright,
3 And yellow bars of ore he found most fair;
4 But he had never seen
5 The dancing, glancing sheen
6 Of sunlight on your dark and fragrant hair.

7 His wealth could buy him wine
8 Made from the purple vine
9 And sweet as all the blossom-breathing South;
10 But he could never slake
11 His thirst, nor ease the ache
12 Of his hot lips at your love-pliant mouth.

SLENDER YOUR HANDS

1 Slender your hands and soft and white
2 As petals of moon-kissed roses;
3 Yet the grasp of your fingers slight
4 My passionate heart encloses.

5 Innocent eyes like delicate spheres
6 That are born when day is dying;
7 Yet the wisdom of all the years
8 Is in their lovelight lying.

SLEEP SONG

1 The Lady World
2 Is sleeping on her white and cloudy bed.
3 Like petals furled
4 Her eyelids close. Beside her dream-filled head
5 Her lover stands in silver cloak and shoon,
6 The faithful Moon.

7 So Love, my Love,
8 Sleep on, my Love, my Life, be not afraid.
9 The Moon above
10 Shall guard the World, and I my little maid.
Your life, your love, your dreams are mine to keep,
So sleep, so sleep.

LOVE'S THOROUGHFARE

1 As down the primrose path to Love I trod
2 The golden flowers kissed my eager feet,
3 The wayside trees with singing birds were sweet,
4 The summer air was like the smile of God.
5 "Turn back!" said one, "escape the avenging rod.
6 Soon thou the deathless flames of Hell shall meet."
7 But I pressed on and thought of no retreat,
8 Till soon with fire I was clothed and shod.

9 But through the burning vales of Hell where flow
10 The molten streams of bitterest despair,
11 Made blind by pain I stumbled on, and lo!
12 I stood at last in Love's own perfumed air.
So, having reached my journey's end I know
That God made Hell to be Love's thoroughfare.

WHITE BIRD OF LOVE

1 Little white bird of the summer sky,
2 Silver against the golden sun,
3 Over the green of the hills you fly,
4 You and the sweet, wild air are one.

5 Glorious sights are in that far place
6 Reached by your daisy-petal wing,
7 Rose-colored meteors dive through space,
8 Stars made of molten music sing.

9 Still, though your quivering eager flight
7 Reaches the groves by Heaven town,
8 Where all the angels cry out, "Alight!
10 Stop, little bird, come down, come down!"

11 Careless you speed over fields of stars,
12 Darting through Heaven swift and free;
13 Nothing your arrowy passage bars
14 Back to the earth and back to me.

15 Here in the orchard of dream-fruit fair
16 Out of my dreams is built your nest.
17 Blossoming dreams all the branches bear,
18 Fit for my silver dream-bird's rest.

19 Here, since they love you, the young stars shine,
16 Through the white petals come their beams.
18 Little white love-laden bird of mine,
20 Let them shine on you through my dreams.

TRANSFIGURATION

1 If it should be my task, I being God,
2 From whirling atoms to evolve your mate,
3 With hands omnipotent I should create
4 A great-souled hero, with the starlight shod.
5 The subject worlds should tremble at his nod
6 And all the angel host upon him wait
7 Yet he should leave his pomp and splendid state
8 And kneel to kiss the ground whereon you trod.

9 But God, who like a little child is wise,
7 Made me, a common thing of earthly clay;
8 Then bade me go and see within your eyes
10 The flame of love that burns more bright than day,
11 And as I looked I knew with wild surprise
12 I was transformed—your heart in my heart lay.

UNTITLED

1 When first the golden dawn of love was breaking
2 In your white soul, I kissed your gentle hand,
3 And all my heart with strange, sweet pain was aching,
4 A wild, new joy I could not understand.

5 And now, when I your slender fingers taking
6 Keep them enslaved to my hot lips' demand,
7 I feel that same strange thirst that knows no slaking
8 But then why should I wish to understand?

MY LADY

1 The joy of pleasant places
2 Where Saturn still doth reign
3 Is in her gentle face's
4 Calm ignorance of pain.
5 The bliss of ages golden
6 In her slim hand is holden,
7 By old gods she was molden

8 Before the world knew stain.

9 Her body is an altar

7 Wherein is Love enshrined.

8 Before her worldlings falter

10 And cruel eyes grow kind.

11 Her breath is breath of roses

12 From mystic garden-closes,

13 The troubled it composes

14 Like nectar-laden wine.

GIFTS OF SHEE

1 O Shee who weave the moonlight into shimmering white strands,

2 O powerful and tender-hearted Shee!

3 While I live at home in plenty or am poor in far-off lands,

4 I will thank you for the gifts you gave to me.

5 For the silver collar that you wrought me by your magic art,

6 For the scarlet Seal that on my mouth you set,

7 For the glorious White Flower that you placed upon my heart,

8 When the sun and moon shall die I'll thank you yet.

9 For around my throat the Silver Collar of soft arms I wear,

7 On my mouth sweet lips have fixed the Scarlet Seal,

8 On my heart the perfect Flower white of deathless love I bear,

10 And these charms, your gifts, ensure my lasting weal.

11 O Shee who weave the moonlight into shimmering white strands,

12 O powerful and tender-hearted Shee!

13 Though I live at home in plenty or am poor in far-off lands,
14 I will thank you for the gifts you gave to me.

WHEREVER, WHENEVER

1 If I had lived down underneath the earth,
2 And you had dwelt among the pleasant stars,
3 I should have flown the caverns of my birth,
4 And you have riven Heaven's silver bars.

5 We owe no gratitude to wanton chance,
6 For not through him does heart cleave fast to heart.
7 Not time nor place nor any circumstance,
8 Could keep our lips, our breasts, our souls, apart.

TRIBUTE

1 Because my Love has lips that taste of glory,
2 That breathe of love, that are as red as wine,
3 My days and nights are as a pleasant story
4 Told in a valley sweet with rose and vine.

5 Because my Love has hair that smells of flowers,
6 That is as soft and cool as forest shade,
7 Therefore the tale of all my blissful hours
8 Be writ in gold and at her footstool laid.

MATIN

1 Soft purple shadows cloud love-weary eyes,
2 Dawn's saffron glow is on the tossed white bed;
3 Now passion's day, warm fragrant night is fled,
4 A cold grey shroud on Love's bright altar lies.
5 From dusky corners ghostly dreams arise,
6 The pallid wraiths of kisses newly dead,
7 They float and blend above her sleeping head,
8 Her languid red lips quiver as she sighs.

9 And so, like Adam when in fear and shame
10 He saw God's soldiery in fierce array
11 And sorrowing from Eden's threshold came
12 To bear what pains life on his soul might lay,
13 I see Dawn standing with a sword of flame,
14 And from my Eden turn in grief away.

A VALENTINE

1 My songs should be as lilies fair,
2 And roses made of crimson light,
3 To lie amid the fragrant hair
4 And on the breast of my delight.

5 Such glory is for them too high;
6 I'll scatter them adown the street,
7 And when my love is passing by
8 They will rise up and kiss her feet.

STAR O' LOVE

1 The Sun pours gold upon the waking earth
2 And makes the hills and valleys ring with glee,
3 Brings fruits and flowers to their joyous birth,
4 And paints strange colors on the foaming sea.
5 The Moon, with quivering wand of silver-white,
6 Calls forth the fairies to their circling dance.
7 Bids lovers seek their never old delight,
8 And fills the air with perfume of romance.
9 Yet, Sun, thy glory passes with the day,
10 And Moon, the dawn destroys thy loveliness;
11 But thou, sweet Star O' Love, wilt shine always,
12 Nor night nor day can make thy splendor less.
13 Fade, lordly Sun, and Moon, forget to shine,
14 Since thy white wonder, Star O' Love, is mine !

FOR A BIRTHDAY

1 April with her violets,
2 May and June with roses,
3 Young July with all her flowers, crimson, gold and white,
4 Each in place her tribute sets,
5 Each her wreath composes,
6 Making glad the roadway for the Lady of Delight.
7 Birds with many colors gay,
8 Through the branches flitting,
9 Sing, to greet my Lady Love, a lusty welcome song.
10 Even bees make holiday,

8 Hive and honey quitting,
10 Tremulous and jubilant they join the eager throng.

11 Now the road is flower-paved;
12 Timid fawns are peering
13 From their pleasant vantage in the roadside's leafy green.
14 All the world in sunlight laved,
15 Knows the hour is nearing
16 That shall bring the golden presence of the well-loved Queen.

17 Hark! at last the silver trill
18 Of a lute is sounding
19 Happy August, purple-clad, appears with all her train.
20 Sudden sweet the branches fill;
21 Every heart is bounding;
22 August comes, the kindly nurse of her who is to reign!

23 And now, with proud and valiant gait,
24 An hundred centaurs come.
25 Pan rides the foremost one in state;
26 The waiting crowd grows dumb.
27 Each centaur wears a jewelled thong
28 And harness bright of sheen;
29 They draw through surging floods of song
30 The carriage of the Queen!
31 "Hail! Hail! Hail! to the Queen in her moonstone car!
32 Hail! Hail! Hail! to the Lady whose slaves we are!
33 We of the meadows, the rocks and the hills,
34 Dwellers in oceans and rivers and rills,
35 Beasts of the forests and birds of the air,
36 Linnet and butterfly, lion and bear,
37 Daisy and daffodil, spruce-tree and fir,

34 Yield to our Queen and do homage to her!
35 Hail! Hail! Hail! we welcome thy royal sway!
36 Hail! Hail! Hail! O Queen, on this festal day!”

37 So all the world kneels down to you,
38 And all things are your own;
39 Now let a humble rhymers sue
37 Before your crystal throne.
38 Fair Queen, at your rose-petal feet
40 Bid me to live and die!
41 Not all your world of lovers, Sweet,
42 Can love so much as I.

ALCHEMY

1 I sang two little songs one day,
2 I sang them for a lady's pleasure,
3 I took her praise for wreath of bay,
4 Her smile for largess beyond measure.

5 I sang out in the market square
6 And most folk could not understand;
7 One who by chance was passing there
8 Dropped down some silver in my hand.

9 Now since the songs I gave you, Sweet,
7 Have turned to silver fair and gleaming,
8 For your pleasaunce as is most meet
10 The silver turns to song and dreaming.

WAYFARERS

1 Underneath the orchard trees lies a gypsy sleeping,
2 Tattered cloak and swarthy face and shaggy moonlit hair,
3 One brown hand his crazy fiddle in its grasp is keeping,
4 Through the Land of Dreams he strolls and sings his love songs
there.

5 Up above the apple blossoms where the stars are shining,
6 Free and careless wandering among the clouds he goes,
7 Singing of his lady-love and for her pleasure twining
8 Wreaths of Heaven flowers, violet and golden rose.

9 In his sleep he stirs, and wakes to find his love beside him,
10 Pours his load of Dreamland blooms before her silver feet,
Takes her in his arms and as her soft brown tresses hide him
Both together fare to Dreamland up the star-paved street.

WITH A MIRROR

1 Carved by a swarthy knave
2 Close by the Adrian wave
3 Came I to being.
4 To me a soul he gave,
5 In gold he did me lave,
6 To suit your seeing.

7 Mine is a pleasant life,
8 Jove bless his flashing knife,
9 Who wrought my living.

7 For me nor care nor strife,
8 Joys in my days are rife,
10 Joys of your giving.

LULLABY FOR A BABY FAIRY

1 Night is over; through the clover globes of crystal shine;
2 Birds are calling; sunlight falling on the wet green vine.
3 Little wings must folded lie, little lips be still
4 While the sun is in the sky, over Fairy Hill.
5 Sleep, sleep, sleep,
6 Baby with buttercup hair,
7 Golden rays
8 Into the violet creep.
9 Dream, dream deep;
10 Dream of the night revels fair.
11 Daylight stays;
12 Sleep, little fairy child, sleep.

11 Rest in daytime; night is playtime, all good fairies know.
12 Under sighing grasses lying, off to slumber go
13 Night will come with stars agleam, lilies in her hand,
14 Calling you from Hills of Dream back to Fairyland.
15 Sleep, sleep, sleep,
16 Baby with buttercup hair;
17 Golden rays
18 Into the violet creep.
19 Dream, dream deep;
20 Dream of the night-revels fair.
21 Daylight stays;
22 Sleep, little fairy child, sleep.

GEORGE MEREDITH

1 He listened to the mighty lyre of earth,
2 And learned the lore of soul-compelling song.
3 He pondered on the rune of right and wrong,
4 And saw the hearts of men, their woe, their mirth.
5 In him our vision had a second birth,
6 For by his words we saw as in some strong
7 Enchanted lens the conscience of the throng,
8 The font of ill, the hidden source of worth.

9 Shall Death claim him, on deathless knowledge reared?
10 Shall dreams overtake the Master of the dream?
11 Nay, his perfect love that never feared,
12 His words send through our grief a radiant gleam:
"With Life and Death I walked and Love appeared
And made them on each side a shadow seem."

“AND FORBID THEM NOT”

(“NO TRESPASSING” SIGNS IN A CHURCHYARD.)

1 Tall, bleak, austere, the mighty buildings loom;
2 Hard, bare and dull the grimy city street.
3 Here by the church is found a little room
4 Roofed with blue sky and with green turf made sweet.

5 Surely the Master of this house would smile

6 Seeing the children on His grass at play,
7 Seeing the mothers rest a little while
8 Out of the turmoil of the busy day.

9 Soon will he ask, “Where are the children gone:
10 They who should share this pleasant, sacred place?
11 No little feet are treading this soft lawn,
12 Here shines no glory from a little face.”

13 Ye in whose trust this Christian church is left,
14 Think ye that thus ye serve your Master mild?
15 None by His will are of this home bereft;
16 They love Him not who wrong a little child.

A DEAD POET

1 Fair Death, kind Death, it was a gracious deed
2 To take that weary vagrant to thy breast.
3 Love, Song and Wine had he, and but one need—
4 Rest.

VILLANELLE OF THE PLAYERS

1 Violets fade with the May,
2 Purple and fragrant they die,
3 Players live for a day.

4 What is their legacy, pray?

5 Where does their loveliness lie?
6 Violets fade with the May.

7 Actors in motley array
8 Grace of your memory cry,
9 Players live for a day.

8 Where the sad pine trees sway
8 Lonely the reft winds sigh,
10 Violets fade with the May.

11 Withered the wreaths of bay,
12 Wine-cups are cracked and dry,
13 Players live for a day.

14 Clouds of the sunset sky,
15 None shall their eulogy say,
16 Violets fade with the May,
17 Players live for a day.

THE MAD FIDDLER

1 I sleep beneath a bracken sheet
2 In sunlight or in rain,
3 The road dust burns my naked feet,
4 The sunrays sear my brain;
5 But children love my fiddle's sound
6 And if a lad be straying,
7 His mother knows he may be found
8 Where old Mad Larry's playing.

9 O fiddle, let us follow, follow,
7 Till we see my Eileen's face,
8 Through the moonlight like a swallow
10 Off she flew to some far place.

11 O, did you ever love a lass?
12 I loved a lass one day,
13 And she would lie upon the grass
14 And sing while I would play.
15 She was a cruel, lovely thing,
16 Nor heart nor soul have I
17 For Eileen took them that soft spring
18 When she flew to the sky.

19 So fiddle, let us follow, follow,
17 Till we see my Eileen's face,
18 Through the moonlight like a swallow
20 Off she flew to some far place.

THE GRASS IN MADISON SQUARE

1 The pleasant turf is dried and marred and seared,
2 The grass is dead.
3 No soft green shoot, by rain and sunshine reared,
4 Lifts up its head.

5 I think the grass that made the park so gay
6 In early spring
7 Now decks the lawns of Heaven where babies play
8 And dance and sing.

9 And poor old vagabonds who now have left
2 The dusty street,
8 Find fields of which they were in life bereft,
10 Beneath their feet.

CHEVELY CROSSING

1 Where two roads cross by Chevely town
2 A man is lying dead.
3 The rumbling wains of scented hay
4 Roll over his fair head;
5 A stake is driven through his heart,
6 For his own blood he shed.

* * * * *

7 Among the pleasant flower-stars
8 By God's own garden gate,
9 A little maid fresh come from earth
2 One summer night did wait;
8 Her poppy mouth dropped down with fear,
10 With fear her eyes were great.

11 The angels saw her sinless face,
12 The gate was opened wide.
13 She only shook her dawn-crowned head
14 And would not come inside.
15 She was alone, and so afraid
16 She hid her face and cried.

17 Her tears dropped down like sun-filled rain
18 Through stars and starless space,

19 Until at last in Chevely town
16 Where in a moonlit place
18 Her lover knelt upon her grave,
20 They fell upon his face.

21 Said he, "My love, my only love,
22 My Elena, my Sweet!
23 Through what wild ways of mystery
24 Have strayed your little feet?
25 Alone, alone this lonely night
26 Where only spirits meet!

27 "It is not my bleak desert life
28 That turns my heart to lead,
29 Not for my empty arms I mourn,
26 Nor for my loveless bed;
28 But that you wander forth alone
30 On heights I may not tread.

31 "If I could stand beside you now
32 Sin-burdened though I be,
33 I'd bear you through the trackless ways
34 From fear and danger free,
35 Not God himself could daunt the strong
36 Undying love of me!

37 "Though Heaven is a pleasant place
38 What joy for you is there?
39 Who tread the jewelled streets alone
36 Without my heart to share
38 Each throb of your heart, and my arm
40 Around you, O my Fair!

41 "I hear your sobbing in the wind,
42 And in the summer rain
43 I feel your tears. My heart is pierced
44 With your sad, lonely pain.
45 My Love ! My only Love ! I come !
46 You shall not call in vain!"

* * * * *

47 Where two roads cross by Chevely town
48 A man is lying dead.
49 The rumbling wains of scented hay
48 Roll over his fair head;
48 A stake is driven through his heart,
50 For his own blood he shed.

SAID THE ROSE

1 No flower hath so fair a face as this pale love of mine
2 When he bends down to kiss my heart, my petals try to twine
3 About his lips to hold them fast. He is so very fair,
4 My lover with the pale, sad face and forest-fragrant hair.

5 I think it is a pleasant place, this garden where I grow,
6 With gravel walks and grassy mounds and crosses in a row.
7 There is no toil nor worry here, nor clatter of the street,
8 And here each night my lover comes, pale, sad and very sweet.

9 He never heeds the violets or lilies tall and white;
8 I am his love, his only love, his Flower of Delight;
8 And often when the cold moonbeams are lying all around
10 My lover kneels the whole night through beside me on the ground.

11 How can I miss the sunshine-laden breezes of the south
12 When all my heart is burning with the kisses of his mouth?
13 How can I miss the coming of the comfort-bringing rain
14 When his hot tears are filling me with heaven-sweet love-pain?

15 There is a jealous little bird that envies me my love,
16 He sings this bitter, bitter song from his brown nest above:
17 "Was ever yet a mortal man who wed a flower wife?
18 He loves the girl down in your roots whose dead breast gives you
 life."

19 O little bird, O jealous bird, fly off and cease your chatter!
20 My lover is my lover, and what can a dead girl matter?
18 In his hot kisses and sweet tears I shall my petals steep;
20 I am his love, his only love, I have his heart to keep.

WHITE MARBLE AND GREEN GRASS

1 Starlight, sunlight, silver light and gold,
2 All are dark for Love's great flame is cold.
3 Rose wind, garden wind and morning's breath,
4 Are ye stronger than the scent of death?

METAMORPHOSIS

1 He was an evil thing to see
2 Of joy his mouth was desolate,
3 His body was a stunted tree,

4 His eyes were pools of lust and hate.
5 Now silverly the linnets sing
6 On leaves that from his temples start
7 And gay the yellow crocus springs
8 From the rich clod that was his heart.

ABSINTHE

1 I have prayed to the Christ of the merciful eyes,
2 I have prayed to the Lord of Hosts,
3 I have prayed, but in vain, for God to rise
4 And scatter these murderous ghosts,
5 These horrible, beckoning ghosts that sign
6 And beckon me where? ah, where?
7 O little green god in your crystal shrine,
8 You only will heed my prayer!

9 The breath of your mouth is a powerful wind
10 That whirls sorrow-shadows away;
11 The light of your eyes burns the bonds that bind,
12 I escape from the earth's fell sway.
13 The pallid figures in threatening line,
14 They falter and tremble and flee.
15 O little green god in your crystal shrine,
16 Shed some of your glory on me!

17 I have given you service, sincere and prolonged,
18 I have given you love ah, you know!
19 Though I pray in a fane by your worshippers thronged,

18 There is no one who worships you so.
19 My hand and my heart and my brain, ah, divine
17 Lord, master of living, I give,
18 O little green god in your crystal shrine,
20 Take these and then bid me to live!

21 By a green marble house in a garden of green,
22 Green roses bloom 'neath a green sun,
23 Where the maidens have eyes of an emerald sheen,
24 And the strife and the labor are done,
25 O there let me dwell, where the ravenous whine
26 Of the earth ghosts is soundless and dead.
27 O little green god in your crystal shrine,
28 Your heavenly dream-shower shed!

THEOLOGY

1 The blade is sharp, the reaper stout,
2 And every daisy dies.
3 Their souls are fluttering about—
4 We call them butterflies.

To J. B. Y.

1 Bitter and selfish sorrow, poverty, strife and ruth,
2 Fear of the dreadful morrow, these took away our youth.
3 Ængus is bending o'er us—we are too old to see,
4 Too old to hear before us moon-drenched songs of Shee.

5 Dreamer of dreams and lover, young as are love and dreams,
6 Show us the Shee that hover over the silver streams,
7 Give us the song and story, make us to live anew,
8 Bathed in your youthful glory let us be young like you.

THE KING'S BALLAD

1 Good my king, in your garden close,
2 (Hark to the thrush's trilling,)
3 Why so sad when the maiden rose
4 Love at your feet is spilling?
5 Golden the air and honey-sweet,
6 Sapphire the sky, it is not meet
7 Sorrowful faces should flowers greet,
8 (Hark to the thrush's trilling.)

9 All alone walks the king to-day,
10 (Hark to the thrush's trilling,)
11 Far from the throne he steals away
12 Loneness and quiet willing.
13 Roses and tulips and lilies fair
14 Smile for his pleasure everywhere,
15 Yet of their joyaunce he takes no share,
16 (Hark to the thrush's trilling.)

17 Ladies wait in the palace, Sire,
18 (Hark to the thrush's trilling,)
19 Red and white for the king's desire
20 Lovewarm and sweet and thrilling,
21 Breasts of moonshine and hair of night,

16 Glances amorous soft and bright,
18 Nothing is lacking for thy delight,
20 (Hark to the thrush's trilling.)

21 Kneels the king in a grassy place,
22 (Hark to the thrush's trilling.)
23 Little flowers under his face
24 With his warm tears are filling:
25 Says the king, "Here my heart lies dead
26 Where my fair love is buried,
27 Would I were lying here instead!"
28 (Hark to the thrush's trilling.)

JESUS AND THE SUMMER RAIN

1 Over the hills and across the plain,
2 Treading their gypsy way,
3 Ragged and penniless, vagrants twain
4 Went with a child one day.

5 Sunburnt and barefooted was the man,
6 Poor was the woman's dress,
7 Over the baby the sunbeams ran,
8 Winds gave him soft caress.

9 "Brother o' mine," said the summer rain,
10 "Brother o' mine," said he,
11 "Take you the vagabond's joy and pain,
12 Vagabond shall you be.

11 “Banned by the rich and the folk of power,
12 Outcasts shall love you well;
13 Harlots and thieves in your dying hour
14 Closest to you shall dwell.

15 “Never a home nor abiding place
16 Where you may rest your load;
17 Ever the starlight on your face,
18 Ever the open road.

19 “Brother o’ mine,” said the summer rain,
20 “Brother o’ mine,” said he,
18 “Take you the vagabond’s joy and pain,
20 Vagabond shall you be.”

THE BALLADE OF BUTTERFLIES

1 Because we never build a nest
2 And no one of us ever sings,
3 We are the butt of every jest
4 That strutting loud-mouthed robin flings.
5 Unless the field with laughter rings
6 And we are meek in our replies
7 His claws and beak to bear he brings;
8 Have pity on all butterflies!

9 Since we are of no home possest,
7 And have no joy in courts and kings,
8 And love on working-days to rest,
10 The name of “Idlers” to us clings.

11 On all our gypsy travellings
12 They follow us with jeering cries.
13 From every rose a spider springs;
14 Have pity on all butterflies!

15 A little thing is our request
16 Some peace from nets of sticks and strings,
17 An hour to feel the sunlight's zest,
18 To 'scape the deadly bee that stings.
19 From hostile fortune's bolts and slings
16 Give us release ere Summer dies
18 We dread the Winter's threatenings ;
20 Have pity on all butterflies!

L'ENVOI

21 Great Pan, kind lord of living things,
22 Look on us now with friendly eyes.
23 We pray to you on trembling wings,
24 Have pity on all butterflies!

THE CLOUDED SUN

(To A. S.)

1 It is not good for poets to grow old
2 For they serve Death that loves and Love that kills;
3 And Love and Death, enthroned above the hills,
4 Call back their faithful servants to the fold

5 Before Age makes them passionless and cold.

6 Therefore it is that no more sorry thing

7 Can shut the sunlight from the thirsty grass

8 Than some grey head through which no longer pass

9 Wild dreams more lively than the scent of Spring

ε To fire the blood and make the glad mouth sing.

8 Far happier he, who, young and full of pride

10 And radiant with the glory of the sun,

11 Leaves earth before his singing time is done.

12 All wounds of Time the graveyard flowers hide,

13 His beauty lives, as fresh as when he died.

14 Then through the words wherein his spirit dwells

15 The world may see his young impetuous face

16 Unmarred by Time, with undiminished grace;

17 While memory no piteous story tells

18 Of barren days, stale loves and broken spells.

* * * * *

19 Brother and Master, we are wed with woe.

16 Yea, Grief's funereal cloud it is that hovers

18 About the head of us thy mournful lovers.

20 Uncomforted and sick with pain we go,

21 Dust on our brows and at our hearts the snow.

22 The London lights flare on the chattering street,

23 Young men and maidens love and dance and die;

24 Wine flows, and perfumes float up to the sky.

25 Once thou couldst feel that this was very sweet,

26 Now thou art still mouth, hands and weary feet.

27 O subtle mouth, whereon the Sphinx has placed
28 The smile of those she kisses at their birth,
29 Sing once again, for Spring has thrilled the earth.
27 Nay, thou art dumb. Not even April's taste
28 Is sweet to thee in thy live coffin cased.

30 There is no harsher tragedy than this
31 That thou, who feltest as no man before
32 Scent, color, taste and sound and didst outpour
33 For us rich draughts of thine enchanted bliss
34 Shouldst be plunged down this cruel black abyss.

35 Brother and Master, if our love could free
36 Thy flameborn spirit from its leaden chain
37 Thou shouldst rise up from this sad house of pain,
38 Be young and fair as thou wast wont to be,
39 And strong with joy as is the boundless sea.

35 Brother and Master, at thy feet we lay
36 These roses, red as lips that thou hast sung.
40 And cypress wreaths above thy head are hung
41 To mingle with the green and fragrant bay.
42 We kneel awhile, then turn in tears away.

IN MEMORIAM: FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

1 She whom we love, our Lady of Compassion,
2 Can never die, for Love forbids her death.
3 Love has bent down in his old kindly fashion,

4 And breathed upon her his immortal breath.
5 On wounded soldiers, in their anguish lying,
6 Her gentle spirit shall descend like rain.
7 Where the white flag with the red cross is flying,
8 There shall she dwell, the vanquisher of pain.

BALLAD OF THREE

1 Upon the river's brink she stands
2 And tastes the dawn's white breath.
3 She wrings her slender, silver hands,
4 "God's curse on love," she saith.
5 "Love binds me with his cruel bands
6 That break not save with death."
7 "Now Geoffrey is a huntsman bold
8 And slays the mountain deer,
9 And Hugh plows up the fragrant mold
10 And plucks the ripened ear.
11 In friendship would these twain grow old
12 Did I not dwell anear.
13 "Hugh brings me grapes with sunlight sweet,
14 Like globes of amethyst,
15 While Geoffrey's fawn with snowflake feet
16 Is corded to my wrist.
17 They mutter curses when they meet,
18 Their sight dims with red mist.

17 “And it is love hath done this thing;
18 Yea, Geoffrey loves my hair,
19 And Hugh lifts up his voice to sing
20 That my sad face is fair,
21 And love strews poison in the spring
22 And fouls the pleasant air.

23 “But not for my poor loveliness
24 Shall blood of brothers flow.
25 What is one woman, more or less?
26 And what is love but woe!
27 I want no murderer’s caress,
28 So for love’s sake—I go.”

29 Lads, sheathe your knives, no use to fight.
30 The lady you would wed
31 Shall sleep alone in state tonight
32 With candles at her head.
33 Lift, friends, this figure still and white
34 And bear her to her bed.

COURT MUSICIANS

1 As when in summer-scented days gone by
2 The court-musicians, dressed in velvets gay
3 And golden silks, would on their gitterns play
4 And blend their voices with the strings’ love-cry,
5 So that the princess from her tower on high
6 Might through the rose-framed window hear their lay,
7 And make more splendid the resplendent day

8 By leaning out, her choristers to spy;
9 So now, with weary voice and violin,
10 Two court-musicians rend the dusty air.
11 Their shrill notes pierce the elevated's din,
12 And thrill a girl's heart with a pleasure rare.
For her has sweeter music never been;
They never saw a princess half so fair.

THE DEAD LOVER

1 I tire of lovely faces free from pain
2 And free from sin;
3 Here none with lips wet with the crimson stain
4 May enter in.
5 One thing I lack, and lacking it, am dead
6 A woman's heart.
7 "She cannot enter here," an angel said;
8 I will depart.

9 I have one prayer that I will make to God,
10 That I may stay
11 Where lies my body underneath the sod.
12 Then night and day
13 I shall be where my dear false love may pass;
14 It will be sweet
To hear above my head, upon the grass,
Her little feet.

THE POET'S EPITAPH

1 Dreams fade with morning light,
2 Never a morn for thee,
3 Dreamer of dreams, good-night.

4 Over our earthly sight
5 Shadows of woe must be;
6 Dreams fade with morning light.

7 Soldiers awake to fight
8 Thou art from strife set free,
9 Dreamer of dreams, good-night.

10 Day breaketh, cruel, white,
11 Lovely the forms that flee;
12 Dreams fade with morning light.

13 Thine is the sure delight,
14 Sleep-visions still to see,
15 Dreamer of dreams, good-night.

16 Pity us from thy height,
17 Dawn-haunted slaves are we;
18 Dreams fade with morning light,
19 Dreamer of dreams, good-night.

THE SUBWAY

1 Tired clerks, pale girls, street cleaners, business men,
2 Boys, priests and harlots, drunkards, students, thieves,
3 Each one the pleasant outer sunshine leaves;
4 They mingle in this stifling, loud-wheeled pen.
5 The gate clangs to—we stir—we sway—and then
6 We thunder through the dark. The long train weaves
7 Its gloomy way. At last above the eaves
8 We see awhile God's day, then night again.

9 Hurl'd through the dark—day at Manhattan Street,
10 The rest all night. That is my life, it seems.
11 Through sunless ways go my reluctant feet.
12 The sunlight comes in transitory gleams.
13 And yet the darkness makes the light more sweet,
14 The perfect light about me—in my dreams.

THE OTHER LOVER

1 I'm home from off the stormy sea,
2 And down the street
3 The folk come out to welcome me
4 On eager feet.
5 O neighbors, God be with you all,
6 But for my true love I must call;
7 She lingers in her father's hall
8 So shy, so sweet!

9 Here is a string of milky pearls

7 For her to wear,
8 An amber comb to match the curls
9 Of her bright hair.
10
11 O neighbors, do not crowd me so!
12 Stand by! stand by! for I must go
13 To put on my love's hand of snow
14 This gold ring fair.

15 Good dame, why do you block the way
16 And shake your head?
17 Must all the things you have to say
18 Just now be said?
19 O neighbors, let me pass—but why
20 My God, what makes you women cry?
21 Come tell me that I too may die!
22 Is my love dead?

23 “Nay, Marjorie's a living thing,
24 And fair and strong.
25 Yet did you wait to give your ring
26 A year too long.
27 To seek her love there came the Moon;
28 Now Marjorie at night and noon
29 Is chained and sits alone to croon
30 The Moon's love-song.”

AGE COMES A-WOOING

1 With shameless and incessant lust
2 Thy tremulous hot hands are thrust

3 Upon my body's loveliness.
4 O loathsome Age, thy foul caress
5 Puts on my heart a deadly blight,
6 Withers my hair to leprous white,
7 Binds fetters on my eager feet
8 That once on Springtime's road were fleet
9 To bear me to Love's shining goal.
10 Now bitter tides of sorrow roll
11 To drown me in a sea of woe
12 And God looks on, and wills it so!

13 Give over thy pursuing, Age!
14 Fearest thou not my lover's rage?
15 For he is young and strong of limb,
16 Thou canst not stand a bout with him.
17 Ah, surely he will laugh to see
18 So wan a suitor wooing me.
19 Then with wild scorn his heart will swell
20 And he will fling thee back to hell.

21 O Love, that stronger art than Death,
22 Enfold me from the burning breath
23 Of Age that has grown amorous,
24 That sears and blasts me. Even thus,
25 Men say, his passionate embrace
26 Spoils maids and flowers of their grace,
27 And every woman's fate is cast
28 To be his paramour at last.
29 And so all lovely things are made
30 Shameful, and in the ashes laid,
31 To die alone, uncared for. Such
32 Is the pollution of his touch.

29 Stars that have shone since Time began,
27 Rivers that saw the birth of man,
28 And mountains that are fair and green,
30 And were, when Helen was a queen,
31 White dreams that never can grow old,
32 Stories of love and glory told
33 By Homer once, and ballads sung
34 Eons ago ye still are young.
35 Tell me the secret of your youth.
36 Can any weeping fill with ruth
37 Age, that is harsh and pitiless?

38 Nay, they are blind to my distress.
39 They have not feared the grasping hand
37 Of Age, and cannot understand.
38 Love saw my whitened hair and laughed
40 And bid me drain my bitter draught.
41 While in my lover's startled eyes
42 A lurking terror strangely lies.
43 There is no place in which to hide
44 When Age comes seeking for his bride.

PRAYER TO BRAGI

1 The world-rocking roar of the thunder, the red lightning's death-
dealing flash,
2 The wind that rends mountains asunder, the tempest's sharp, blood-
bringing lash,
3 Beneficent silvery rivers that stream from the dream-laden moon,
4 And crimsoning fire that delivers bound life at the sun's freeing

noon;
5 These swell like a marvellous ocean, all throbbing and leaping and
strong,
6 O Bragi, in thy magic potion of pain and of sweetness and song!
7 The life-blood of Kvasir was taken, sharp heart-seeking knives made
him bleed,
8 But still shall his spirit awaken in singers who drink of thy mead.
9 The honey from forests of flowers, poured out as the milk from
the kine,
10 It flows through the undying hours from lips that are wet with thy
wine.
11 O Bragi, dear master of singing, song-thirsty I beg for thy dole!
12 To thy knees, a suppliant clinging, I pray for a draught from thy
bowl.

IMITATION OF RICHEPIN'S BALLADE OF THE BEGGARS' KING

1 Hey, come to me, you slipshod race,
2 Picklocks and squealing bagpipe crew,
3 Come, strumpet, knave and monkey-face,
4 Come loafers, I'm the lad for you!
5 Come ragged cloak and tattered shoe,
6 Your wild, hot liberty I sing,
7 For I am of your nation, too,
8 The poet is the beggars' king.

9 You playthings of the copper's mace,
10 You toys of wind and rain and dew,

8 You whom the yelping watchdogs chase,
10 Whom blows and noisome ills pursue,
11 Whose paltry rags the wind strikes through
12 As through some rotten paper thing,
13 To whom nor want nor woe is new,
14 The poet is the beggars' king.

15 You hoboes, whom the sun's embrace
16 Has burned to darkly golden hue,
17 You trollops, full of love and grace,
18 Whom half a hundred lovers woo,
19 You little crawling babies who
16 Just wear your hides for costuming,
18 Old toothless men with noses blue,
20 The poet is the beggars' king.

L'ENVOI

21 My subjects all and vassals true,
22 Come, give me royal welcoming,
23 May booze be plenty, bulls be few,
24 The poet is the beggars' king.

LOVE AND THE FOWLER'S BOY

(BION IV, 14.)

1 Lo, the fowler's little lad,
2 Through the woodland straying,

3 Sight of winged Love hath had
4 In the branches playing.

5 “Ah,” he cries, “a bonnie prey!”
6 Sets his bow to wing him.
7 Cupid blows the dart away
8 That to earth would bring him.

9 Now the boy in angry woe
σ Casts away his quiver
8 To his master straight doth go
10 And the tale deliver.

11 Saith the sage, “Nay, not for thee
12 Such a bird to harry.
13 From the haunted forest flee
14 Where such creatures tarry.

15 “Though it now escape thy dart
16 Let not tears be flowing,
17 It will light upon thy heart
18 Ere thy beard be growing.”

THE WAY OF LOVE

(AN OLD LEGEND.)

1 When darkness hovers over earth
2 And day gives place to night,

3 Then lovers see the Milky Way
4 Gleam mystically bright,
5 And calling it the Way of Love
6 They hail it with delight.

7 She was a lady wondrous fair
8 A right brave lover he,
9 And sooth they suffered grievous pain
10 And sorrowed mightily,
11 For they were parted during life
12 By leagues of land and sea.

13 She died. Then Death came to the man.
14 He met him joyfully,
15 And said, "Thou Angel Death, well met!
16 Quick, do thy will with me,
17 That I may haste to greet my love
18 In Heaven's company."

19 Now on one side of Heaven he dwelt
20 And on the other, she.
21 And broad between them stretched sheer space
22 Whereon no way might be,
23 The empty, yawning, awful depth,
24 Unplumbed infinity.

25 The deathless spheric melody
26 Came gently to his ear,
27 And dulcet notes, the harmonies
28 Of Seraphs chanting near.
29 He heeded not for listening
30 His lady's voice to hear.

27 The Saints and Martyrs round him ranged
28 A goodly company,
29 The Virgin, robed in radiance,
27 The Holy Trinity.
28 He heeded not, but strained his eyes
30 His lady's face to see.

31 At last from far across the void
32 Her voice came, faint and sweet.
33 The bright-hued walls of Paradise
34 Did the glad sound repeat;
35 The distant stars on which she stood
36 Shone bright beneath her feet.

37 "Dear Love," she said, "Oh, come to me!
38 I cannot see your face.
39 O will not Lord Christ grant to us
38 To cross this sea of space?"
38 Then thrilled his heart with Love's own might
40 He answered, by Love's grace.

41 "The world is wide, and Heaven is wide,
42 From me to thee is far,
43 Alas! across Infinity
44 No passageways there are.
45 Sweetheart, I'll make my way to thee,
46 I'll build it, star by star!"

47 Through all the curving vault of sky
48 His lusty blows rang out.
49 He smote the jewel-studded walls
48 And with a mighty shout

48 He tore the gleaming masonry
50 And posts that stood about.

51 He strove to build a massive bridge
52 That should the chasm span.
53 With heart upheld by hope and love
54 His great task he began,
55 And toiled and labored doughtily
56 To work his God-like plan.

57 He took the heavy beams of gold
58 That round him he did see;
59 The beryl, jacinth, sardius,
58 That shone so brilliantly,
58 And no fair jewel would he spare
60 So zealously worked he.

61 He stole the gorgeous tinted stuffs
62 Whereof are sunsets made,
63 And his rude, grasping, eager hands
64 On little stars he laid;
65 To rob God's sacred treasure-house
66 He was no whit afraid.

67 And so for centuries he worked.
68 Across the void at last
69 A bridge of precious mold did stand
68 Completed, strong and fast.
68 So now the faithful lovers met
70 And all their woe was past.

71 But soon a shining angel guard

72 Sped to the throne of gold
73 And said, "Lord, see yon new-made bridge,
74 A mortal, overbold,
75 Has built it, scorning thy desire!"
76 Straightway the tale he told.

77 Then said: "Now, Master, Thou mayst see
78 The thing that has been wrought.
79 Speak, then, the word, stretch forth Thine hand
7e That with the speed of thought
78 This poor presumptuous work may fall
80 And crumble into naught."

81 God looked upon the angel then
82 And on the bridge below.
83 Then with His smile of majesty
84 He said: "Let all things know,
85 This bridge, which has by Love been built,
86 I will not overthrow."

87 When darkness hovers over earth
88 And day gives place to night,
89 Then lovers see the Milky Way
8e Gleam mystically bright,
8g And calling it the Way of Love,
90 They hail it with delight.

TREES AND
OTHER POEMS

Mine is no horse with wings, to gain
The region of the Spheral chime;
He does but drag a rumbling wain,
Cheered by the coupled bells of rhyme.
—Coventry Patmore

To My Mother

Gentlest of critics, does your memory hold
 (I know it does) a record of the days
 When I, a schoolboy, earned your generous praise
For halting verse and stories crudely told?
Over these childish scrawls the years have rolled,
 They might not know the world's unfriendly gaze;
 But still your smile shines down familiar ways,
Touches my words and turns their dross to gold.

More dear to-day than in that vanished time
 Comes your nigh praise to make me proud and strong.
In my poor notes you hear Love's splendid chime,
 So unto you does this, my work belong.
Take, then, a little gift of fragile rhyme:
 Your heart will change it to authentic song.

THE TWELVE-FORTY-FIVE

(For Edward J. Wheeler)

1 Within the Jersey City shed
2 The engine coughs and shakes its head,
3 The smoke, a plume of red and white,
4 Waves madly in the face of night.
5 And now the grave incurious stars
6 Gleam on the groaning hurrying cars.
7 Against the kind and awful reign
8 Of darkness, this our angry train,
9 A noisy little rebel, pouts
10 Its brief defiance, flames and shouts —
11 And passes on, and leaves no trace.
12 For darkness holds its ancient place,
13 Serene and absolute, the king
14 Unchanged, of every living thing.
15 The houses lie obscure and still
16 In Rutherford and Carlton Hill.
17 Our lamps intensify the dark
18 Of slumbering Passaic Park.
19 And quiet holds the weary feet
20 That daily tramp through Prospect Street.
21 What though we clang and clank and roar
22 Through all Passaic's streets? No door
23 Will open, not an eye will see
24 Who this loud vagabond may be.
Upon my crimson cushioned seat,
In manufactured light and heat,
I feel unnatural and mean.
Outside the towns are cool and clean;

25 Curtained awhile from sound and sight
26 They take God's gracious gift of night.
27 The stars are watchful over them.
28 On Clifton as on Bethlehem
29 The angels, leaning down the sky,
26 Shed peace and gentle dreams. And I —
28 I ride, I blasphemously ride
30 Through all the silent countryside.
31 The engine's shriek, the headlight's glare,
32 Pollute the still nocturnal air.
33 The cottages of Lake View sigh
34 And sleeping, frown as we pass by.
35 Why, even strident Paterson
36 Rests quietly as any nun.
37 Her foolish warring children keep
38 The grateful armistice of sleep.
39 For what tremendous errand's sake
38 Are we so blatantly awake?
38 What precious secret is our freight?
40 What king must be abroad so late?
41 Perhaps Death roams the hills to-night
42 And we rush forth to give him fight.
43 Or else, perhaps, we speed his way
44 To some remote unthinking prey.
45 Perhaps a woman writhes in pain
46 And listens — listens for the train!
47 The train, that like an angel sings,
48 The train, with healing on its wings.
49 Now "Hawthorne!" the conductor cries.
47 My neighbor starts and rubs his eyes.
48 He hurries yawning through the car
50 And steps out where the houses are.

51 This is the reason of our quest!
52 Not wantonly we break the rest
53 Of town and village, nor do we
54 Lightly profane night's sanctity.
55 What Love commands the train fulfills,
56 And beautiful upon the hills
57 Are these our feet of burnished steel.
58 Subtly and certainly I feel
59 That Glen Rock welcomes us to her
56 And silent Ridgewood seems to stir
58 And smile, because she knows the train
60 Has brought her children back again.
61 We carry people home — and so
62 God speeds us, wheresoe'er we go.
63 Hohokus, Waldwick, Allendale
64 Lift sleepy heads to give us hail.
65 In Ramsey, Mahwah, Suffern stand
66 Houses that wistfully demand
67 A father — son — some human thing
68 That this, the midnight train, may bring.
69 The trains that travel in the day
62 They hurry folks to work or play.
68 The midnight train is slow and old
70 But of it let this thing be told,
71 To its high honor be it said
72 It carries people home to bed.
73 My cottage lamp shines white and clear.
74 God bless the train that brought me here.

PENNIES

1 A few long-hoarded pennies in his hand
2 Behold him stand;
3 A kilted Hedonist, perplexed and sad.
4 The joy that once he had,
5 The first delight of ownership is fled.
6 He bows his little head.
7 Ah, cruel Time, to kill
8 That splendid thrill!

9 Then in his tear-dimmed eyes
10 New lights arise.
11 He drops his treasured pennies on the ground,
12 They roll and bound
13 And scattered, rest.
14 Now with what zest
15 He runs to find his errant wealth again!

16 So unto men
17 Doth God, depriving that He may bestow.
18 Fame, health and money go,
19 But that they may, new found, be newly sweet.
20 Yea, at His feet
21 Sit, waiting us, to their concealment bid,
22 All they, our lovers, whom His Love hath hid.

23 Lo, comfort blooms on pain, and peace on strife,
24 And gain on loss.
25 What is the key to Everlasting Life?
26 A blood-stained Cross.

TREES

(For Mrs. Henry Mills Alden)

1 I think that I shall never see
2 A poem lovely as a tree.

3 A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
4 Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

5 A tree that looks at God all day,
6 And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

7 A tree that may in Summer wear
8 A nest of robins in her hair;

9 Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
10 Who intimately lives with rain.

8 Poems are made by fools like me,
10 But only God can make a tree.

STARS

(For the Rev. James J. Daly, S. J.)

1 Bright stars, yellow stars, flashing through the air,
2 Are you errant strands of Lady Mary's hair?
3 As she slits the cloudy veil and bends down through,
4 Do you fall across her cheeks and over heaven too?

5 Gay stars, little stars, you are little eyes,
6 Eyes of baby angels playing in the skies.
7 Now and then a winged child turns his merry face
8 Down toward the spinning world — what a funny place!

9 Jesus Christ came from the Cross (Christ receive my soul!)
ε In each perfect hand and foot there was a bloody hole.
8 Four great iron spikes there were, red and never dry,
10 Michael plucked them from the Cross and set them in the sky.

11 Christ's Troop, Mary's Guard, God's own men,
12 Draw your swords and strike at Hell and strike again.
13 Every steel-born spark that flies where God's battles are,
14 Flashes past the face of God, and is a star.

OLD POETS

(For Robert Cortez Holliday)

1 If I should live in a forest
2 And sleep underneath a tree,
3 No grove of impudent saplings
4 Would make a home for me.

5 I'd go where the old oaks gather,
6 Serene and good and strong,
7 And they would not sigh and tremble
8 And vex me with a song.

9 The pleasantest sort of poet
ε Is the poet who's old and wise,

8 With an old white beard and wrinkles
10 About his kind old eyes.

11 For these young flippertigibbets
12 A-rhyming their hours away
13 They won't be still like honest men
14 And listen to what you say.

15 The young poet screams forever
16 About his sex and his soul;
17 But the old man listens, and smokes his pipe,
18 And polishes its bowl.

19 There should be a club for poets
20 Who have come to seventy year.
21 They should sit in a great hall drinking
22 Red wine and golden beer.

23 They would shuffle in of an evening,
24 Each one to his cushioned seat,
25 And there would be mellow talking
26 And silence rich and sweet.

27 There is no peace to be taken
28 With poets who are young,
29 For they worry about the wars to be fought
30 And the songs that must be sung.

31 But the old man knows that he's in his chair
32 And that God's on His throne in the sky.
33 So he sits by the fire in comfort
34 And he lets the world spin by.

DELICATESSEN

1 Why is that wanton gossip Fame
2 So dumb about this man's affairs?
3 Why do we titter at his name
4 Who come to buy his curious wares?

5 Here is a shop of wonderment.
6 From every land has come a prize;
7 Rich spices from the Orient,
8 And fruit that knew Italian skies,

9 And figs that ripened by the sea
10 In Smyrna, nuts from hot Brazil,
11 Strange pungent meats from Germany,
12 And currants from a Grecian hill.

13 He is the lord of goodly things
14 That make the poor man's table gay,
15 Yet of his worth no minstrel sings
16 And on his tomb there is no bay.

17 Perhaps he lives and dies unpraised,
18 This trafficker in humble sweets,
19 Because his little shops are raised
20 By thousands in the city streets.

21 Yet stars in greater numbers shine,
22 And violets in millions grow,
23 And they in many a golden line
24 Are sung, as every child must know.

21 Perhaps Fame thinks his worried eyes,
22 His wrinkled, shrewd, pathetic face,
23 His shop, and all he sells and buys
24 Are desperately commonplace.

25 Well, it is true he has no sword
26 To dangle at his booted knees.
27 He leans across a slab of board,
28 And draws his knife and slices cheese.

29 He never heard of chivalry,
30 He longs for no heroic times;
31 He thinks of pickles, olives, tea,
32 And dollars, nickles, cents and dimes.

33 His world has narrow walls, it seems;
34 By counters is his soul confined;
35 His wares are all his hopes and dreams,
36 They are the fabric of his mind.

37 Yet — in a room above the store
38 There is a woman — and a child
39 Pattered just now across the floor;
40 The shopman looked at him and smiled.

41 For, once he thrilled with high romance
42 And tuned to love his eager voice.
43 Like any cavalier of France
44 He wooed the maiden of his choice.

45 And now deep in his weary heart
46 Are sacred flames that whitely burn.

43 He has of Heaven's grace a part
44 Who loves, who is beloved in turn.

45 And when the long day's work is done,
46 (How slow the leaden minutes ran!)
47 Home, with his wife and little son,
48 He is no huckster, but a man!

49 And there are those who grasp his hand,
47 Who drink with him and wish him well.
48 O in no drear and lonely land
50 Shall he who honors friendship dwell.

51 And in his little shop, who knows
52 What bitter games of war are played?
53 Why, daily on each corner grows
54 A foe to rob him of his trade.

55 He fights, and for his fireside's sake;
56 He fights for clothing and for bread:
57 The lances of his foemen make
58 A steely halo round his head.

59 He decks his window artfully,
57 He haggles over paltry sums.
58 In this strange field his war must be
60 And by such blows his triumph comes.

61 What if no trumpet sounds to call
62 His armed legions to his side?
63 What if, to no ancestral hall
64 He comes in all a victor's pride?

65 The scene shall never fit the deed.
66 Grotesquely wonders come to pass.
67 The fool shall mount an Arab steed
68 And Jesus ride upon an ass.

69 This man has home and child and wife
68 And battle set for every day.
68 This man has God and love and life;
70 These stand, all else shall pass away.

71 O Carpenter of Nazareth,
72 Whose mother was a village maid,
73 Shall we, Thy children, blow our breath
74 In scorn on any humble trade?

75 Have pity on our foolishness
76 And give us eyes, that we may see
77 Beneath the shopman's clumsy dress
78 The splendor of humanity!

SERVANT GIRL AND GROCER'S BOY

1 Her lips' remark was: "Oh, you kid!"
2 Her soul spoke thus (I know it did):

3 "O king of realms of endless joy,
4 My own, my golden grocer's boy,

5 I am a princess forced to dwell
6 Within a lonely kitchen cell,

7 While you go dashing through the land
8 With loveliness on every hand.

9 Your whistle strikes my eager ears
10 Like music of the choring spheres.

11 The mighty earth grows faint and reels
12 Beneath your thundering wagon wheels.

13 How keenly, perilously sweet
14 To cling upon that swaying seat!

15 How happy she who by your side
16 May share the splendors of that ride!

17 Ah, if you will not take my hand
18 And bear me off across the land,

19 Then, traveller from Arcady,
20 Remain awhile and comfort me.

21 What other maiden can you find
22 So young and delicate and kind?"

23 Her lips' remark was: "Oh, you kid!"
24 Her soul spoke thus (I know it did).

WEALTH

(For Aline)

1 From what old ballad, or from what rich frame
2 Did you descend to glorify the earth?
3 Was it from Chaucer's singing book you came?
4 Or did Watteau's small brushes give you birth?

5 Nothing so exquisite as that slight hand
6 Could Raphael or Leonardo trace.
7 Nor could the poets know in Fairyland
8 The changing wonder of your lyric face.

9 I would possess a host of lovely things,
10 But I am poor and such joys may not be.
11 So God who lifts the poor and humbles kings
12 Sent loveliness itself to dwell with me.

MARTIN

1 When I am tired of earnest men,
2 Intense and keen and sharp and clever,
3 Pursuing fame with brush or pen
4 Or counting metal disks forever,
5 Then from the halls of Shadowland
6 Beyond the trackless purple sea
7 Old Martin's ghost comes back to stand
8 Beside my desk and talk to me.

9 Still on his delicate pale face
7 A quizzical thin smile is showing,
8 His cheeks are wrinkled like fine lace,
10 His kind blue eyes are gay and glowing.
11 He wears a brilliant-hued cravat,
12 A suit to match his soft grey hair,
13 A rakish stick, a knowing hat,
14 A manner blithe and debonair.

15 How good that he who always knew
16 That being lovely was a duty,
17 Should have gold halls to wander through
18 And should himself inhabit beauty.
19 How like his old unselfish way
16 To leave those halls of splendid mirth
18 And comfort those condemned to stay
20 Upon the dull and sombre earth.

21 Some people ask: "What cruel chance
22 Made Martin's life so sad a story?"
23 Martin? Why, he exhaled romance,
24 And wore an overcoat of glory.
25 A fleck of sunlight in the street,
26 A horse, a book, a girl who smiled,
27 Such visions made each moment sweet
28 For this receptive ancient child.

29 Because it was old Martin's lot
27 To be, not make, a decoration,
28 Shall we then scorn him, having not
30 His genius of appreciation?
31 Rich joy and love he got and gave;

32 His heart was merry as his dress;
33 Pile laurel wreaths upon his grave
34 Who did not gain, but was, success!

THE APARTMENT HOUSE

1 Severe against the pleasant arc of sky
2 The great stone box is cruelly displayed.
3 The street becomes more dreary from its shade,
4 And vagrant breezes touch its walls and die.
5 Here sullen convicts in their chains might lie,
6 Or slaves toil dumbly at some dreary trade.
7 How worse than folly is their labor made
8 Who cleft the rocks that this might rise on high!

9 Yet, as I look, I see a woman's face
10 Gleam from a window far above the street.
11 This is a house of homes, a sacred place,
12 By human passion made divinely sweet.
13 How all the building thrills with sudden grace
14 Beneath the magic of Love's golden feet!

AS WINDS THAT BLOW AGAINST A STAR

(For Aline)

1 Now by what whim of wanton chance

2 Do radiant eyes know sombre days?
3 And feet that shod in light should dance
4 Walk weary and laborious ways?

5 But rays from Heaven, white and whole,
6 May penetrate the gloom of earth;
7 And tears but nourish, in your soul,
8 The glory of celestial mirth.

9 The darts of toil and sorrow, sent
τ Against your peaceful beauty, are
8 As foolish and as impotent
10 As winds that blow against a star.

ST. LAURENCE

1 Within the broken Vatican
2 The murdered Pope is lying dead.
3 The soldiers of Valerian
4 Their evil hands are wet and red.

5 Unarmed, unmoved, St. Laurence waits,
6 His cassock is his only mail.
7 The troops of Hell have burst the gates,
8 But Christ is Lord, He shall prevail.

9 They have encompassed him with steel,
τ They spit upon his gentle face,
8 He smiles and bleeds, nor will reveal
10 The Church's hidden treasure-place.

11 Ah, faithful steward, worthy knight,
12 Well hast thou done. Behold thy fee!
13 Since thou hast fought the goodly fight
14 A martyr's death is fixed for thee.

15 St. Laurence, pray for us to bear
16 The faith which glorifies thy name.
17 St. Laurence, pray for us to share
18 The wounds of Love's consuming flame.

TO A YOUNG POET WHO KILLED HIMSELF

1 When you had played with life a space
2 And made it drink and lust and sing,
3 You flung it back into God's face
4 And thought you did a noble thing.
5 "Lo, I have lived and loved," you said,
6 "And sung to fools too dull to hear me.
7 Now for a cool and grassy bed
8 With violets in blossom near me."

9 Well, rest is good for weary feet,
10 Although they ran for no great prize;
11 And violets are very sweet,
12 Although their roots are in your eyes.
13 But hark to what the earthworms say
14 Who share with you your muddy haven:
15 "The fight was on — you ran away.
16 You are a coward and a craven.

15 “The rug is ruined where you bled;
16 It was a dirty way to die!
17 To put a bullet through your head
18 And make a silly woman cry!
19 You could not vex the merry stars
16 Nor make them heed you, dead or living.
18 Not all your puny anger mars
20 God’s irresistible forgiving.

21 “Yes, God forgives and men forget,
22 And you’re forgiven and forgotten.
23 You might be gaily sinning yet
24 And quick and fresh instead of rotten.
25 And when you think of love and fame
26 And all that might have come to pass,
27 Then don’t you feel a little shame?
28 And don’t you think you were an ass?”

MEMORIAL DAY

“Dulce et decorum est”

1 The bugle echoes shrill and sweet,
2 But not of war it sings to-day.
3 The road is rhythmic with the feet
4 Of men-at-arms who come to pray.

5 The roses blossom white and red
6 On tombs where weary soldiers lie;
7 Flags wave above the honored dead
8 And martial music cleaves the sky.

9 Above their wreath-strewn graves we kneel,
7 They kept the faith and fought the fight.
8 Through flying lead and crimson steel
10 They plunged for Freedom and the Right.

11 May we, their grateful children, learn
12 Their strength, who lie beneath this sod,
13 Who went through fire and death to earn
14 At last the accolade of God.

15 In shining rank on rank arrayed
16 They march, the legions of the Lord;
17 He is their Captain unafraid,
18 The Prince of Peace . . . Who brought a sword.

THE ROSARY

1 Not on the lute, nor harp of many strings
2 Shall all men praise the Master of all song.
3 Our life is brief, one saith, and art is long;
4 And skilled must be the laureates of kings.
5 Silent, O lips that utter foolish things!
6 Rest, awkward fingers striking all notes wrong!
7 How from your toil shall issue, white and strong,
8 Music like that God's chosen poet sings?

9 There is one harp that any hand can play,
7 And from its strings what harmonies arise!
8 There is one song that any mouth can say, —
10 A song that lingers when all singing dies.

11 When on their beads our Mother's children pray
12 Immortal music charms the grateful skies.

VISION

(For Aline)

1 Homer, they tell us, was blind and could not see the beautiful faces
2 Looking up into his own and reflecting the joy of his dream,
3 Yet did he seem
4 Gifted with eyes that could follow the gods to their holiest places.

5 I have no vision of gods, not of Eros with love-arrows laden,
6 Jupiter thundering death or of Juno his white-breasted queen,
7 Yet have I seen
8 All of the joy of the world in the innocent heart of a maiden.

TO CERTAIN POETS

1 Now is the rhymer's honest trade
2 A thing for scornful laughter made.

3 The merchant's sneer, the clerk's disdain,
4 These are the burden of our pain.

5 Because of you did this befall,
6 You brought this shame upon us all.

7 You little poets mincing there

8 With women's hearts and women's hair!

9 How sick Dan Chaucer's ghost must be
τ To hear you lisp of "Poesie"!

8 A heavy-handed blow, I think,
10 Would make your veins drip scented ink.

11 You strut and smirk your little while
12 So mildly, delicately vile!

13 Your tiny voices mock God's wrath,
14 You snails that crawl along His path!

15 Why, what has God or man to do
16 With wet, amorphous things like you?

17 This thing alone you have achieved:
18 Because of you, it is believed

19 That all who earn their bread by rhyme
16 Are like yourselves, exuding slime.

18 Oh, cease to write, for very shame,
20 Ere all men spit upon our name!

21 Take up your needles, drop your pen,
22 And leave the poet's craft to men!

LOVE'S LANTERN

(For Aline)

1 Because the road was steep and long
2 And through a dark and lonely land,
3 God set upon my lips a song
4 And put a lantern in my hand.

5 Through miles on weary miles of night
6 That stretch relentless in my way
7 My lantern burns serene and white,
8 An unexhausted cup of day.

9 O golden lights and lights like wine,
10 How dim your boasted splendors are.
Behold this little lamp of mine;
It is more starlike than a star!

ST. ALEXIS

Patron of Beggars

1 We who beg for bread as we daily tread
2 Country lane and city street,
3 Let us kneel and pray on the broad highway
4 To the saint with the vagrant feet.
5 Our altar light is a buttercup bright,
6 And our shrine is a bank of sod,
7 But still we share St. Alexis' care,

8 The Vagabond of God.

9 They gave him a home in purple Rome
10 And a princess for his bride,
11 But he rowed away on his wedding day
12 Down the Tiber's rushing tide.
13 And he came to land on the Asian strand
14 Where the heathen people dwell;
15 As a beggar he strayed and he preached and prayed
16 And he saved their souls from hell.

17 Bowed with years and pain he came back again
18 To his father's dwelling place.
19 There was none to see who this tramp might be,
20 For they knew not his bearded face.
21 But his father said, "Give him drink and bread
22 And a couch underneath the stair."
23 So Alexis crept to his hole and slept.
24 But he might not linger there.

25 For when night came down on the seven-hilled town,
26 And the emperor hurried in,
27 Saying, "Lo, I hear that a saint is near
28 Who will cleanse us of our sin,"
29 Then they looked in vain where the saint had lain,
30 For his soul had fled afar,
31 From his fleshly home he had gone to roam
32 Where the gold-paved highways are.

33 We who beg for bread as we daily tread
34 Country lane and city street,
35 Let us kneel and pray on the broad highway

30 To the saint with the vagrant feet.
31 Our altar light is a buttercup bright,
32 And our shrine is a bank of sod,
33 But still we share St. Alexis' care,
34 The Vagabond of God!

FOLLY

(For A. K. K.)

1 What distant mountains thrill and glow
2 Beneath our Lady Folly's tread?
3 Why has she left us, wise in woe,
4 Shrewd, practical, uncomforted?
5 We cannot love or dream or sing,
6 We are too cynical to pray,
7 There is no joy in anything
8 Since Lady Folly went away.

9 Many a knight and gentle maid,
10 Whose glory shines from years gone by,
11 Through ignorance was unafraid
12 And as a fool knew how to die.
13 Saint Folly rode beside Jehanne
14 And broke the ranks of Hell with her,
15 And Folly's smile shone brightly on
16 Christ's plaything, Brother Juniper.

17 Our minds are troubled and defiled
18 By study in a weary school.
19 O for the folly of the child!

18 The ready courage of the fool!
19 Lord, crush our knowledge utterly
17 And make us humble, simple men;
18 And cleansed of wisdom, let us see
20 Our Lady Folly's face again.

MADNESS

(For Sara Teasdale)

1 The lonely farm, the crowded street,
2 The palace and the slum,
3 Give welcome to my silent feet
4 As, bearing gifts, I come.

5 Last night a beggar crouched alone,
6 A ragged helpless thing;
7 I set him on a moonbeam throne —
8 Today he is a king.

9 Last night a king in orb and crown
10 Held court with splendid cheer;
8 Today he tears his purple gown
10 And moans and shrieks in fear.

11 Not iron bars, nor flashing spears,
12 Not land, nor sky, nor sea,
13 Nor love's artillery of tears
14 Can keep mine own from me.

15 Serene, unchanging, ever fair,

16 I smile with secret mirth
17 And in a net of mine own hair
18 I swing the captive earth.

POETS

1 Vain is the chiming of forgotten bells
2 That the wind sways above a ruined shrine.
3 Vainer his voice in whom no longer dwells
4 Hunger that craves immortal Bread and Wine.
5 Light songs we breathe that perish with our breath
6 Out of our lips that have not kissed the rod.
7 They shall not live who have not tasted death.
8 They only sing who are struck dumb by God.

CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

1 No longer of Him be it said
2 "He hath no place to lay His head."
3 In every land a constant lamp
4 Flames by His small and mighty camp.
5 There is no strange and distant place
6 That is not gladdened by His face.
7 And every nation kneels to hail

8 The Splendour shining through Its veil.

9 Cloistered beside the shouting street,
τ Silent, He calls me to His feet.

8 Imprisoned for His love of me
10 He makes my spirit greatly free.

11 And through my lips that uttered sin
12 The King of Glory enters in.

TO A BLACKBIRD AND HIS MATE WHO DIED IN THE SPRING

(For Kenton)

1 An iron hand has stilled the throats
2 That throbbed with loud and rhythmic glee
3 And dammed the flood of silver notes
4 That drenched the world in melody.
5 The blosmy apple boughs are yearning
6 For their wild choristers' returning,
7 But no swift wings flash through the tree.

8 Ye that were glad and fleet and strong,
9 Shall Silence take you in her net?
τ And shall Death quell that radiant song
8 Whose echo thrills the meadow yet?
10 Burst the frail web about you clinging
11 And charm Death's cruel heart with singing

12 Till with strange tears his eyes are wet.

13 The scented morning of the year

14 Is old and stale now ye are gone.

15 No friendly songs the children hear

16 Among the bushes on the lawn.

17 When babies wander out a-Maying

18 Will ye, their bards, afar be straying?

19 Unhymned by you, what is the dawn?

17 Nay, since ye loved ye cannot die.

18 Above the stars is set your nest.

20 Through Heaven's fields ye sing and fly

21 And in the trees of Heaven rest.

22 And little children in their dreaming

23 Shall see your soft black plumage gleaming

24 And smile, by your clear music blest.

THE FOURTH SHEPHERD

(For Thomas Walsh)

I

1 On nights like this the huddled sheep

2 Are like white clouds upon the grass,

3 And merry herdsmen guard their sleep

4 And chat and watch the big stars pass.

5 It is a pleasant thing to lie

6 Upon the meadow on the hill
7 With kindly fellowship near by
8 Of sheep and men of gentle will.

9 I lean upon my broken crook
10 And dream of sheep and grass and men —
11 O shameful eyes that cannot look
12 On any honest thing again!

13 On bloody feet I clambered down
14 And fled the wages of my sin,
15 I am the leavings of the town,
16 And meanly serve its meanest inn.

17 I tramp the courtyard stones in grief,
18 While sleep takes man and beast to her.
19 And every cloud is calling “Thief!”
20 And every star calls “Murderer!”

II

21 The hand of God is sure and strong,
22 Nor shall a man forever flee
23 The bitter punishment of wrong.
24 The wrath of God is over me!

25 With ashen bread and wine of tears
26 Shall I be solaced in my pain.
27 I wear through black and endless years
28 Upon my brow the mark of Cain.

III

25 Poor vagabond, so old and mild,
26 Will they not keep him for a night?
27 And She, a woman great with child,
28 So frail and pitiful and white.

29 Good people, since the tavern door
27 Is shut to you, come here instead.
28 See, I have cleansed my stable floor
30 And piled fresh hay to make a bed.

31 Here is some milk and oaten cake.
32 Lie down and sleep and rest you fair,
33 Nor fear, O simple folk, to take
34 The bounty of a child of care.

IV

35 On nights like this the huddled sheep —
36 I never saw a night so fair.
37 How huge the sky is, and how deep!
38 And how the planets flash and glare!

39 At dawn beside my drowsy flock
37 What winged music I have heard!
38 But now the clouds with singing rock
40 As if the sky were turning bird.

41 O blinding Light, O blinding Light!
42 Burn through my heart with sweetest pain.
43 O flaming Song, most loudly bright,
44 Consume away my deadly stain!

V

45 The stable glows against the sky,
46 And who are these that throng the way?
47 My three old comrades hasten by
48 And shining angels kneel and pray.

49 The door swings wide — I cannot go —
46 I must and yet I dare not see.
48 Lord, who am I that I should know —
50 Lord, God, be merciful to me!

VI

51 O Whiteness, whiter than the fleece
52 Of new-washed sheep on April sod!
53 O Breath of Life, O Prince of Peace,
54 O Lamb of God, O Lamb of God!

EASTER

1 The air is like a butterfly
2 With frail blue wings.
3 The happy earth looks at the sky
4 And sings.

MOUNT HOUVENKOPF

1 Serene he stands, with mist serenely crowned,
2 And draws a cloak of trees about his breast.
3 The thunder roars but cannot break his rest
4 And from his rugged face the tempests bound.
5 He does not heed the angry lightning's wound,
6 The raging blizzard is his harmless guest,
7 And human life is but a passing jest
8 To him who sees Time spin the years around.

9 But fragile souls, in skyey reaches find
10 High vantage-points and view him from afar.
11 How low he seems to the ascended mind,
12 How brief he seems where all things endless are;
This little playmate of the mighty wind
This young companion of an ancient star.

THE HOUSE WITH NOBODY IN IT

1 Whenever I walk to Suffern along the Erie track
2 I go by a poor old farmhouse with its shingles broken and black.
3 I suppose I've passed it a hundred times, but I always stop for a
minute
4 And look at the house, the tragic house, the house with nobody in
it.

5 I never have seen a haunted house, but I hear there are such things;
6 That they hold the talk of spirits, their mirth and sorrowings.
7 I know this house isn't haunted, and I wish it were, I do;

8 For it wouldn't be so lonely if it had a ghost or two.

9 This house on the road to Suffern needs a dozen panes of glass,
10 And somebody ought to weed the walk and take a scythe to the
11 grass.

12 It needs new paint and shingles, and the vines should be trimmed
13 and tied;

14 But what it needs the most of all is some people living inside.

15 If I had a lot of money and all my debts were paid
16 I'd put a gang of men to work with brush and saw and spade.
17 I'd buy that place and fix it up the way it used to be
18 And I'd find some people who wanted a home and give it to them
19 free.

20 Now, a new house standing empty, with staring window and door,
21 Looks idle, perhaps, and foolish, like a hat on its block in the store.
22 But there's nothing mournful about it; it cannot be sad and lone
23 For the lack of something within it that it has never known.

24 But a house that has done what a house should do,
25 a house that has sheltered life,
26 That has put its loving wooden arms around a man and his wife,
27 A house that has echoed a baby's laugh and held up his stumbling
28 feet,
29 Is the saddest sight, when it's left alone, that ever your eyes could
30 meet.

31 So whenever I go to Suffern along the Erie track
32 I never go by the empty house without stopping and looking back,
33 Yet it hurts me to look at the crumbling roof and the shutters fallen
34 apart,

25 For I can't help thinking the poor old house is a house with a broken
heart.

DAVE LILLY

1 There's a brook on the side of Greylock that used to be full of trout,
2 But there's nothing there now but minnows; they say it is all fished
out.

3 I fished there many a Summer day some twenty years ago,
4 And I never quit without getting a mess of a dozen or so.

5 There was a man, Dave Lilly, who lived on the North Adams road,
6 And he spent all his time fishing, while his neighbors reaped and
sowed.

7 He was the luckiest fisherman in the Berkshire hills, I think.
8 And when he didn't go fishing he'd sit in the tavern and drink.

9 Well, Dave is dead and buried and nobody cares very much;
10 They have no use in Greylock for drunkards and loafers and such.
11 But I always liked Dave Lilly, he was pleasant as you could wish;
12 He was shiftless and good-for-nothing, but he certainly could fish.

13 The other night I was walking up the hill from Williamstown
14 And I came to the brook I mentioned, and I stopped on the bridge
and sat down.

15 I looked at the blackened water with its little flecks of white
16 And I heard it ripple and whisper in the still of the Summer night.

17 And after I'd been there a minute it seemed to me I could feel
18 The presence of someone near me, and I heard the hum of a reel.

17 And the water was churned and broken, and something was brought
to land
18 By a twist and flirt of a shadowy rod in a deft and shadowy hand.

19 I scrambled down to the brookside and hunted all about;
16 There wasn't a sign of a fisherman; there wasn't a sign of a trout.
18 But I heard somebody chuckle behind the hollow oak
20 And I got a whiff of tobacco like Lilly used to smoke.

21 It's fifteen years, they tell me, since anyone fished that brook;
22 And there's nothing in it but minnows that nibble the bait off your
hook.
23 But before the sun has risen and after the moon has set
24 I know that it's full of ghostly trout for Lilly's ghost to get.

25 I guess I'll go to the tavern and get a bottle of rye
26 And leave it down by the hollow oak, where Lilly's ghost went by.
27 I meant to go up on the hillside and try to find his grave
28 And put some flowers on it — but this will be better for Dave.

ALARM CLOCKS

1 When Dawn strides out to wake a dewy farm
2 Across green fields and yellow hills of hay
3 The little twittering birds laugh in his way
4 And poise triumphant on his shining arm.
5 He bears a sword of flame but not to harm
6 The wakened life that feels his quickening sway
7 And barnyard voices shrilling "It is day!"
8 Take by his grace a new and alien charm.

9 But in the city, like a wounded thing
2 That limps to cover from the angry chase,
8 He steals down streets where sickly arc-lights sing,
10 And wanly mock his young and shameful face;
11 And tiny gongs with cruel fervor ring
12 In many a high and dreary sleeping place.

WAVERLEY

1814-1914

1 When, on a novel's newly printed page
2 We find a maudlin eulogy of sin,
3 And read of ways that harlots wander in,
4 And of sick souls that writhe in helpless rage;
5 Or when Romance, bespectacled and sage,
6 Taps on her desk and bids the class begin
7 To con the problems that have always been
8 Perplexed mankind's unhappy heritage;

9 Then in what robes of honor habited
2 The laureled wizard of the North appears!
8 Who raised Prince Charlie's cohorts from the dead,
10 Made Rose's mirth and Flora's noble tears,
11 And formed that shining legion at whose head
12 Rides Waverley, triumphant o'er the years!

MAIN STREET
AND OTHER
POEMS

MAIN STREET

For S. M. L.

1 I like to look at the blossomy track of the moon upon the sea,
2 But it isn't half so fine a sight as Main Street used to be
3 When it all was covered over with a couple of feet of snow,
4 And over the crisp and radiant road the ringing sleighs would go.

5 Now, Main Street bordered with autumn leaves, it was a pleasant
thing,
6 And its gutters were gay with dandelions early in the Spring;
7 I like to think of it white with frost or dusty in the heat,
8 Because I think it is humaner than any other street.

9 A city street that is busy and wide is ground by a thousand wheels,
10 And a burden of traffic on its breast is all it ever feels:
11 It is dully conscious of weight and speed and of work that never
ends,
12 But it cannot be human like Main Street, and recognise its friends.

13 There were only about a hundred teams on Main Street in a day,
14 And twenty or thirty people, I guess, and some children out to play.
15 And there wasn't a wagon or buggy, or a man or a girl or a boy
16 That Main Street didn't remember, and somehow seem to enjoy.

17 The truck and the motor and trolley car and the elevated train
18 They make the weary city street reverberate with pain:
19 But there is yet an echo left deep down within my heart
20 Of the music the Main Street cobblestones made beneath a butcher's
cart.

19 God be thanked for the Milky Way that runs across the sky,
15 That's the path that my feet would tread whenever I have to die.
18 Some folks call it a Silver Sword, and some a Pearly Crown,
20 But the only thing I think it is, is Main Street, Heaventown.

ROOFS

For Amelia Josephine Burr

1 The road is wide and the stars are out and the breath of the night
is sweet,
2 And this is the time when wanderlust should seize upon my feet.
3 But I'm glad to turn from the open road and the starlight on my
face,
4 And to leave the splendour of out-of-doors for a human dwelling
place.

5 I never have seen a vagabond who really liked to roam
6 All up and down the streets of the world and not to have a home:
7 The tramp who slept in your barn last night and left at break of day
8 Will wander only until he finds another place to stay.

9 A gypsy-man will sleep in his cart with canvas overhead;
10 Or else he'll go into his tent when it is time for bed.
11 He'll sit on the grass and take his ease so long as the sun is high,
12 But when it is dark he wants a roof to keep away the sky.

13 If you call a gypsy a vagabond, I think you do him wrong,
14 For he never goes a-travelling but he takes his home along.
15 And the only reason a road is good, as every wanderer knows,
16 Is just because of the homes, the homes, the homes to which it

goes.

15 They say that life is a highway and its milestones are the years,
16 And now and then there's a toll-gate where you buy your way with
tears.
17 It's a rough road and a steep road and it stretches broad and far,
18 But at last it leads to a golden Town where golden Houses are.

THE SNOWMAN IN THE YARD

For Thomas Augustine Daly

1 The Judge's house has a splendid porch, with pillars and steps of
stone,
2 And the Judge has a lovely flowering hedge that came from across
the seas;
3 In the Hales' garage you could put my house and everything I own,
4 And the Hales have a lawn like an emerald and a row of poplar
trees.

5 Now I have only a little house, and only a little lot,
6 And only a few square yards of lawn, with dandelions starred;
7 But when Winter comes, I have something there that the Judge
and the Hales have not,
8 And it's better worth having than all their wealth — it's a snowman
in the yard.

9 The Judge's money brings architects to make his mansion fair;
10 The Hales have seven gardeners to make their roses grow;
The Judge can get his trees from Spain and France and everywhere,
And raise his orchids under glass in the midst of all the snow.

11 But I have something no architect or gardener ever made,
12 A thing that is shaped by the busy touch of little mittened hands:
13 And the Judge would give up his lonely estate, where the level snow
is laid
14 For the tiny house with the trampled yard, the yard where the
snowman stands.

15 They say that after Adam and Eve were driven away in tears
16 To toil and suffer their life-time through, because of the sin they
sinned,
17 The Lord made Winter to punish them for half their exiled years,
18 To chill their blood with the snow, and pierce their flesh with the
icy wind.

19 But we who inherit the primal curse, and labour for our bread,
20 Have yet, thank God, the gift of Home, though Eden's gate is
barred:
18 And through the Winter's crystal veil, Love's roses blossom red,
20 For him who lives in a house that has a snowman in the yard.

A BLUE VALENTINE

For Aline

1 Monsignore, Right Reverend Bishop Valentinus,
2 Sometime of Interamna, which is called Ferni,
3 Now of the delightful Court of Heaven,
4 I respectfully salute you,
5 I genuflect
6 And I kiss your episcopal ring.

7 It is not, Monsignore,
8 The fragrant memory of your holy life,
9 Nor that of your shining and joyous martyrdom,
10 Which causes me now to address you.
11 But since this is your august festival, Monsignore,
12 It seems appropriate to me to state
13 According to a venerable and agreeable custom,
14 That I love a beautiful lady.
15 Her eyes, Monsignore,
16 Are so blue that they put lovely little blue reflections
17 On everything that she looks at,
18 Such as a wall
19 Or the moon
20 Or my heart.
21 It is like the light coming through blue stained glass,
22 Yet not quite like it,
23 For the blueness is not transparent,
24 Only translucent.
25 Her soul's light shines through,
26 But her soul cannot be seen.
27 It is something elusive, whimsical, tender, wanton, infantile, wise
28 And noble.
29 She wears, Monsignore, a blue garment,
30 Made in the manner of the Japanese.
31 It is very blue —
32 I think that her eyes have made it more blue,
33 Sweetly staining it
34 As the pressure of her body has graciously given it form.
35 Loving her, Monsignore,
36 I love all her attributes;
37 But I believe
38 That even if I did not love her

33 I would love the blueness of her eyes,
34 And her blue garment, made in the manner of the Japanese.

35 Monsignore,
36 I have never before troubled you with a request.
37 The saints whose ears I chiefly worry with my pleas are the most
 exquisite and maternal Brigid,
38 Gallant Saint Stephen, who puts fire in my blood,
39 And your brother bishop, my patron,
37 The generous and jovial Saint Nicholas of Bari.
38 But, of your courtesy, Monsignore,
40 Do me this favour:
41 When you this morning make your way
42 To the Ivory Throne that bursts into bloom with roses because of
 her who sits upon it,
43 When you come to pay your devoir to Our Lady,
44 I beg you, say to her:
45 “Madame, a poor poet, one of your singing servants yet on earth,
46 Has asked me to say that at this moment he is especially grateful
 to you
47 For wearing a blue gown.”

HOUSES

For Aline

1 When you shall die and to the sky
2 Serenely, delicately go,
3 Saint Peter, when he sees you there,
4 Will clash his keys and say:
5 “Now talk to her, Sir Christopher!

6 And hurry, Michelangelo!
7 She wants to play at building,
8 And you've got to help her play!"

9 Every architect will help erect
10 A palace on a lawn of cloud,
11 With rainbow beams and a sunset roof,
12 And a level star-tiled floor;
13 And at your will you may use the skill
14 Of this gay angelic crowd,
15 When a house is made you will throw it down,
16 And they'll build you twenty more.

17 For Christopher Wren and these other men
18 Who used to build on earth
19 Will love to go to work again
20 If they may work for you.
21 "This porch," you'll say, "should go this way!"
22 And they'll work for all they're worth,
23 And they'll come to your palace every morning,
24 And ask you what to do.

25 And when night comes down on Heaven-town
26 (If there should be night up there)
27 You will choose the house you like the best
28 Of all that you can see:
29 And its walls will glow as you drowsily go
30 To the bed up the golden stair,
31 And I hope you'll be gentle enough to keep
32 A room in your house for me.

IN MEMORY

I

1 Serene and beautiful and very wise,
2 Most erudite in curious Grecian lore,
3 You lay and read your learned books, and bore
4 A weight of unshed tears and silent sighs.
5 The song within your heart could never rise
6 Until love bade it spread its wings and soar.
7 Nor could you look on Beauty's face before
8 A poet's burning mouth had touched your eyes.

9 Love is made out of ecstasy and wonder;
10 Love is a poignant and accustomed pain.
11 It is a burst of Heaven-shaking thunder;
12 It is a linnet's fluting after rain.
13 Love's voice is through your song; above and under
14 And in each note to echo and remain.

II

15 Because Mankind is glad and brave and young,
16 Full of gay flames that white and scarlet glow,
17 All joys and passions that Mankind may know
18 By you were nobly felt and nobly sung.
19 Because Mankind's heart every day is wrung
20 By Fate's wild hands that twist and tear it so,
21 Therefore you echoed Man's undying woe,
22 A harp Aeolian on Life's branches hung.

23 So did the ghosts of toiling children hover

20 About the piteous portals of your mind;
21 Your eyes, that looked on glory, could discover
22 The angry scar to which the world was blind:
23 And it was grief that made Mankind your lover,
24 And it was grief that made you love Mankind.

III

25 Before Christ left the Citadel of Light,
26 To tread the dreadful way of human birth,
27 His shadow sometimes fell upon the earth
28 And those who saw it wept with joy and fright.
29 "Thou art Apollo, than the sun more bright!"
27 They cried. "Our music is of little worth,
28 But thrill our blood with thy creative mirth
30 Thou god of song, thou lord of lyric might!"

31 O singing pilgrim! who could love and follow
32 Your lover Christ, through even love's despair,
33 You knew within the cypress-darkened hollow
34 The feet that on the mountain are so fair.
35 For it was Christ that was your own Apollo,
36 And thorns were in the laurel on your hair.

APOLOGY

For Eleanor Rogers Cox

1 For blows on the fort of evil
2 That never shows a breach,
3 For terrible life-long races

4 To a goal no foot can reach,
5 For reckless leaps into darkness
6 With hands outstretched to a star,
7 There is jubilation in Heaven
8 Where the great dead poets are.

9 There is joy over disappointment
10 And delight in hopes that were vain.
11 Each poet is glad there was no cure
12 To stop his lonely pain.
13 For nothing keeps a poet
14 In his high singing mood
15 Like unappeasable hunger
16 For unattainable food.

17 So fools are glad of the folly
18 That made them weep and sing,
19 And Keats is thankful for Fanny Brawne
20 And Drummond for his king.
21 They know that on flinty sorrow
22 And failure and desire
23 The steel of their souls was hammered
24 To bring forth the lyric fire.

25 Lord Byron and Shelley and Plunkett,
26 McDonough and Hunt and Pearse
27 See now why their hatred of tyrants
28 Was so insistently fierce.
29 Is Freedom only a Will-o'-the-wisp
30 To cheat a poet's eye?
31 Be it phantom or fact, it's a noble cause
32 In which to sing and to die!

29 So not for the Rainbow taken
27 And the magical White Bird snared
28 The poets sing grateful carols
30 In the place to which they have fared;
31 But for their lifetime's passion,
32 The quest that was fruitless and long,
33 They chorus their loud thanksgiving
34 To the thorn-crowned Master of Song.

THE PROUD POET

For Shaemas O Sheel

1 One winter night a Devil came and sat upon my bed,
2 His eyes were full of laughter for his heart was full of crime.
3 "Why don't you take up fancy work, or embroidery?" he said,
4 "For a needle is as manly a tool as a pen that makes a rhyme!"
5 "You little ugly Devil," said I, "go back to Hell
6 For the idea you express I will not listen to:
7 I have trouble enough with poetry and poverty as well,
8 Without having to pay attention to orators like you.

9 "When you say of the making of ballads and songs that it is woman's
work
7 You forget all the fighting poets that have been in every land.
8 There was Byron who left all his lady-loves to fight against the
Turk,
10 And David, the Singing King of the Jews, who was born with a
sword in his hand.
11 It was yesterday that Rupert Brooke went out to the Wars and died,
12 And Sir Philip Sidney's lyric voice was as sweet as his arm was

strong;

13 And Sir Walter Raleigh met the axe as a lover meets his bride,
14 Because he carried in his soul the courage of his song.

15 “And there is no consolation so quickening to the heart
16 As the warmth and whiteness that come from the lines of noble
poetry.

17 It is strong joy to read it when the wounds of the spirit smart,
18 It puts the flame in a lonely breast where only ashes be.

19 It is strong joy to read it, and to make it is a thing
17 That exalts a man with a sacreder pride than any pride on earth.
18 For it makes him kneel to a broken slave and set his foot on a king,
20 And it shakes the walls of his little soul with the echo of God’s
mirth.

21 “There was the poet Homer had the sorrow to be blind,
22 Yet a hundred people with good eyes would listen to him all
night;

23 For they took great enjoyment in the heaven of his mind,
24 And were glad when the old blind poet let them share his powers
of sight.

25 And there was Heine lying on his mattress all day long,
26 He had no wealth, he had no friends, he had no joy at all,
27 Except to pour his sorrow into little cups of song,
28 And the world finds in them the magic wine that his broken heart
let fall.

29 “And these are only a couple of names from a list of a thousand
score

27 Who have put their glory on the world in poverty and pain.
28 And the title of poet’s a noble thing, worth living and dying for,
30 Though all the devils on earth and in Hell spit at me their disdain.

31 It is stern work, it is perilous work, to thrust your hand in the sun
32 And pull out a spark of immortal flame to warm the hearts of
men:
33 But Prometheus, torn by the claws and beaks whose task is never
done,
34 Would be tortured another eternity to go stealing fire again.”

LIONEL JOHNSON

For the Rev. John J. Burke, C. S. P.

1 There was a murkier tinge in London's air
2 As if the honest fog blushed black for shame.
3 Fools sang of sin, for other fools' acclaim,
4 And Milton's wreath was tossed to Baudelaire.
5 The flowers of evil blossomed everywhere,
6 But in their midst a radiant lily came
7 Candescant, pure, a cup of living flame,
8 Bloomed for a day, and left the earth more fair.

9 And was it Charles, thy "fair and fatal King",
10 Who bade thee welcome to the lovely land?
11 Or did Lord David cease to harp and sing
12 To take in his thine emulative hand?
13 Or did Our Lady's smile shine forth, to bring
14 Her lyric Knight within her choir to stand?

FATHER GERARD HOPKINS, S. J.

1 Why didst thou carve thy speech laboriously,
2 And match and blend thy words with curious art?
3 For Song, one saith, is but a human heart
4 Speaking aloud, undisciplined and free.
5 Nay, God be praised, Who fixed thy task for thee!
6 Austere, ecstatic craftsman, set apart
7 From all who traffic in Apollo's mart,
8 On thy phrased paten shall the Splendour be!

9 Now, carelessly we throw a rhyme to God,
10 Singing His praise when other songs are done.
11 But thou, who knewest paths Teresa trod,
12 Losing thyself, what is it thou hast won?
O bleeding feet, with peace and glory shod!
O happy moth, that flew into the Sun!

GATES AND DOORS

For Richardson Little Wright

1 There was a gentle hostler
2 (And blessed be his name!)
3 He opened up the stable
4 The night Our Lady came.
5 Our Lady and Saint Joseph,
6 He gave them food and bed,
7 And Jesus Christ has given him
8 A glory round his head.

9 So let the gate swing open
7 However poor the yard,
8 Lest weary people visit you
10 And find their passage barred;
11 Unlatch the door at midnight
12 And let your lantern's glow
13 Shine out to guide the traveler's feet
14 To you across the snow.

15 There was a courteous hostler
16 (He is in Heaven to-night)
17 He held Our Lady's bridle
18 And helped her to alight;
19 He spread clean straw before her
16 Whereon she might lie down,
18 And Jesus Christ has given him
20 An everlasting crown.

21 Unlock the door this evening
22 And let your gate swing wide,
23 Let all who ask for shelter
24 Come speedily inside.
25 What if your yard be narrow?
26 What if your house be small?
27 There is a Guest is coming
28 Will glorify it all.

29 There was a joyous hostler
26 Who knelt on Christmas morn
28 Beside the radiant manger
30 Wherein his Lord was born.
31 His heart was full of laughter,

32 His soul was full of bliss
33 When Jesus, on His Mother's lap,
34 Gave him His hand to kiss.

35 Unbar your heart this evening
36 And keep no stranger out,
37 Take from your soul's great portal
38 The barrier of doubt.
39 To humble folk and weary
3e Give hearty welcoming,
38 Your breast shall be to-morrow
40 The cradle of a King.

THE ROBE OF CHRIST

For Cecil Chesterton

1 At the foot of the Cross on Calvary
2 Three soldiers sat and diced,
3 And one of them was the Devil
4 And he won the Robe of Christ.

5 When the Devil comes in his proper form
6 To the chamber where I dwell,
7 I know him and make the Sign of the Cross
8 Which drives him back to Hell.

9 And when he comes like a friendly man
e And puts his hand in mine,
8 The fervour in his voice is not
10 From love or joy or wine.

11 And when he comes like a woman,
12 With lovely, smiling eyes,
13 Black dreams float over his golden head
14 Like a swarm of carrion flies.

15 Now many a million tortured souls
16 In his red halls there be:
17 Why does he spend his subtle craft
18 In hunting after me?

19 Kings, queens and crested warriors
20 Whose memory rings through time,
21 These are his prey, and what to him
22 Is this poor man of rhyme,

23 That he, with such laborious skill,
24 Should change from role to role,
25 Should daily act so many a part
26 To get my little soul?

27 Oh, he can be the forest,
28 And he can be the sun,
29 Or a buttercup, or an hour of rest
30 When the weary day is done.

31 I saw him through a thousand veils,
32 And has not this sufficed?
33 Now, must I look on the Devil robed
34 In the radiant Robe of Christ?

35 He comes, and his face is sad and mild,
36 With thorns his head is crowned;

33 There are great bleeding wounds in his feet,
34 And in each hand a wound.

35 How can I tell, who am a fool,
36 If this be Christ or no?
37 Those bleeding hands outstretched to me!
38 Those eyes that love me so!

39 I see the Robe — I look — I hope —
39 I fear — but there is one
38 Who will direct my troubled mind;
40 Christ's Mother knows her Son.

41 O Mother of Good Counsel, lend
42 Intelligence to me!
43 Encompass me with wisdom,
44 Thou Tower of Ivory!

45 "This is the Man of Lies," she says,
46 "Disguised with fearful art:
47 He has the wounded hands and feet,
48 But not the wounded heart."

49 Beside the Cross on Calvary
49 She watched them as they diced.
48 She saw the Devil join the game
50 And win the Robe of Christ.

THE SINGING GIRL

For the Rev. Edward F. Garesche, S. J.

1 There was a little maiden
2 In blue and silver drest,
3 She sang to God in Heaven
4 And God within her breast.

5 It flooded me with pleasure,
6 It pierced me like a sword,
7 When this young maiden sang: "My soul
8 Doth magnify the Lord."

9 The stars sing all together
10 And hear the angels sing,
11 But they said they had never heard
12 So beautiful a thing.

13 Saint Mary and Saint Joseph,
14 And Saint Elizabeth,
15 Pray for us poets now
16 And at the hour of death.

THE ANNUNCIATION

For Helen Parry Eden

1 "Hail Mary, full of grace," the Angel saith.
2 Our Lady bows her head, and is ashamed;

3 She has a Bridegroom Who may not be named,
4 Her mortal flesh bears Him Who conquers death.
5 Now in the dust her spirit grovelleth;
6 Too bright a Sun before her eyes has flamed,
7 Too fair a herald joy too high proclaimed,
8 And human lips have trembled in God's breath.

9 O Mother-Maid, thou art ashamed to cover
10 With thy white self, whereon no stain can be,
11 Thy God, Who came from Heaven to be thy Lover,
12 Thy God, Who came from Heaven to dwell in thee.
About thy head celestial legions hover,
Chanting the praise of thy humility.

ROSES

For Katherine Bregy

1 I went to gather roses and twine them in a ring,
2 For I would make a posy, a posy for the King.
3 I got an hundred roses, the loveliest there be,
4 From the white rose vine and the pink rose bush and from the red
rose tree.

5 But when I took my posy and laid it at His feet
6 I found He had His roses a million times more sweet.
7 There was a scarlet blossom upon each foot and hand,
8 And a great pink rose bloomed from His side for the healing of the
land.

9 Now of this fair and awful King there is this marvel told,

7 That He wears a crown of linked thorns instead of one of gold.
8 Where there are thorns are roses, and I saw a line of red,
10 A little wreath of roses around His radiant head.

11 A red rose is His Sacred Heart, a white rose is His face,
12 And His breath has turned the barren world to a rich and flowery
place.
13 He is the Rose of Sharon, His gardener am I,
14 And I shall drink His fragrance in Heaven when I die.

THE VISITATION

For Louise Imogen Guiney

1 There is a wall of flesh before the eyes
2 Of John, who yet perceives and hails his King.
3 It is Our Lady's painful bliss to bring
4 Before mankind the Glory of the skies.
5 Her cousin feels her womb's sweet burden rise
6 And leap with joy, and she comes forth to sing,
7 With trembling mouth, her words of welcoming.
8 She knows her hidden God, and prophesies.

9 Saint John, pray for us, weary souls that tarry
7 Where life is withered by sin's deadly breath.
8 Pray for us, whom the dogs of Satan harry,
10 Saint John, Saint Anne, and Saint Elizabeth.
11 And, Mother Mary, give us Christ to carry
12 Within our hearts, that we may conquer death.

MULTIPLICATION

For S. M. E.

1 I take my leave, with sorrow, of Him I love so well;
2 I look my last upon His small and radiant prison-cell;
3 O happy lamp! to serve Him with never ceasing light!
4 O happy flame! to tremble forever in His sight!

5 I leave the holy quiet for the loudly human train,
6 And my heart that He has breathed upon is filled with lonely pain.
7 O King, O Friend, O Lover! What sorer grief can be
8 In all the reddest depths of Hell than banishment from Thee?

9 But from my window as I speed across the sleeping land
10 I see the towns and villages wherein His houses stand.
11 Above the roofs I see a cross outlined against the night,
12 And I know that there my Lover dwells in His sacramental might.

13 Dominions kneel before Him, and Powers kiss His feet,
14 Yet for me He keeps His weary watch in the turmoil of the street:
15 The King of Kings awaits me, wherever I may go,
16 O who am I that He should deign to love and serve me so?

THANKSGIVING

For John Bunker

1 The roar of the world is in my ears.
2 Thank God for the roar of the world!

3 Thank God for the mighty tide of fears
4 Against me always hurled!

5 Thank God for the bitter and ceaseless strife,
6 And the sting of His chastening rod!
7 Thank God for the stress and the pain of life,
8 And Oh, thank God for God!

THE THORN

For the Rev. Charles L. O'Donnell, C. S. C.

1 The garden of God is a radiant place,
2 And every flower has a holy face:
3 Our Lady like a lily bends above the cloudy sod,
4 But Saint Michael is the thorn on the rosebush of God.

5 David is the song upon God's lips,
6 And Our Lady is the goblet that He sips:
7 And Gabriel's the breath of His command,
8 But Saint Michael is the sword in God's right hand.

9 The Ivory Tower is fair to see,
10 And may her walls encompass me!
But when the Devil comes with the thunder of his might,
Saint Michael, show me how to fight!

THE BIG TOP

1 The boom and blare of the big brass band is cheering to my heart
2 And I like the smell of the trampled grass and elephants and hay.
3 I take off my hat to the acrobat with his delicate, strong art,
4 And the motley mirth of the chalk-faced clown drives all my care
away.

5 I wish I could feel as they must feel, these players brave and fair,
6 Who nonchalantly juggle death before a staring throng.
7 It must be fine to walk a line of silver in the air
8 And to cleave a hundred feet of space with a gesture like a song.

9 Sir Henry Irving never knew a keener, sweeter thrill
10 Than that which stirs the breast of him who turns his painted
face
11 To the circling crowd who laugh aloud and clap hands with a will
12 As a tribute to the clown who won the great wheel-barrow race.

13 Now, one shall work in the living rock with a mallet and a knife,
14 And another shall dance on a big white horse that canters round
a ring,
15 By another's hand shall colours stand in similitude of life;
16 And the hearts of the three shall be moved by one mysterious
high thing.

17 For the sculptor and the acrobat and the painter are the same.
18 They know one hope, one fear, one pride, one sorrow and one
mirth,
19 And they take delight in the endless fight for the fickle world's
acclaim;

18 For they worship art above the clouds and serve her on the earth.

19 But you, who can build of the stubborn rock no form of loveliness,

17 Who can never mingle the radiant hues to make a wonder live,

18 Who can only show your little woe to the world in a rhythmic
dress—

20 What kind of a counterpart of you does the three-ring circus
give?

21 Well — here in the little side-show tent to-day some people stand,

22 One is a giant, one a dwarf, and one has a figured skin,

23 And each is scarred and seared and marred by Fate's relentless
hand,

24 And each one shows his grief for pay, with a sort of pride therein.

25 You put your sorrow into rhyme and want the world to look;

26 You sing the news of your ruined hope and want the world to
hear;

27 Their woe is pent in a canvas tent and yours in a printed book.

28 O, poet of the broken heart, salute your brothers here!

QUEEN ELIZABETH SPEAKS

1 My hands were stained with blood, my heart was proud and cold,

2 My soul is black with shame . . . but I gave Shakespeare gold.

3 So after aeons of flame, I may, by grace of God,

4 Rise up to kiss the dust that Shakespeare's feet have trod.

MID-OCEAN IN WAR-TIME

For My Mother

1 The fragile splendour of the level sea,
2 The moon's serene and silver-veiled face,
3 Make of this vessel an enchanted place
4 Full of white mirth and golden sorcery.
5 Now, for a time, shall careless laughter be
6 Blended with song, to lend song sweeter grace,
7 And the old stars, in their unending race,
8 Shall heed and envy young humanity.

9 And yet to-night, a hundred leagues away,
10 These waters blush a strange and awful red.
11 Before the moon, a cloud obscenely grey
12 Rises from decks that crash with flying lead.
13 And these stars smile their immemorial way
14 On waves that shroud a thousand newly dead!

IN MEMORY OF RUPERT BROOKE

1 In alien earth, across a troubled sea,
2 His body lies that was so fair and young.
3 His mouth is stopped, with half his songs unsung;
4 His arm is still, that struck to make men free.
5 But let no cloud of lamentation be
6 Where, on a warrior's grave, a lyre is hung.
7 We keep the echoes of his golden tongue,
8 We keep the vision of his chivalry.

9 So Israel's joy, the loveliest of kings,
2 Smote now his harp, and now the hostile horde.
8 To-day the starry roof of Heaven rings
10 With psalms a soldier made to praise his Lord;
11 And David rests beneath Eternal wings,
12 Song on his lips, and in his hand a sword.

THE NEW SCHOOL

For My Mother

1 The halls that were loud with the merry tread of young and careless
feet
2 Are still with a stillness that is too drear to seem like holiday,
3 And never a gust of laughter breaks the calm of the dreaming street
4 Or rises to shake the ivied walls and frighten the doves away.

5 The dust is on book and on empty desk, and the tennis-racquet
and balls
6 Lie still in their lonely locker and wait for a game that is never
played,
7 And over the study and lecture-room and the river and meadow
falls
8 A stern peace, a strange peace, a peace that War has made.

9 For many a youthful shoulder now is gay with an epaulet,
2 And the hand that was deft with a cricket-bat is defter with a
sword,
8 And some of the lads will laugh to-day where the trench is red and
wet,
10 And some will win on the bloody field the accolade of the Lord.

11 They have taken their youth and mirth away from the study and
playing-ground
12 To a new school in an alien land beneath an alien sky;
13 Out in the smoke and roar of the fight their lessons and games are
found,
14 And they who were learning how to live are learning how to die.

15 And after the golden day has come and the war is at an end,
16 A slab of bronze on the chapel wall will tell of the noble dead.
17 And every name on that radiant list will be the name of a friend,
18 A name that shall through the centuries in grateful prayers be
said.

19 And there will be ghosts in the old school, brave ghosts with laughing
eyes,
20 On the field with a ghostly cricket-bat, by the stream with a
ghostly rod;
21 They will touch the hearts of the living with a flame that sanctifies,
22 A flame that they took with strong young hands from the altar-
fires of God.

EASTER WEEK

In memory of Joseph Mary Plunkett

“Romantic Ireland’s dead and gone,
It’s with O’Leary in the grave.”
—William Butler Yeats

1 “Romantic Ireland’s dead and gone,
2 It’s with O’Leary in the grave.”

3 Then, Yeats, what gave that Easter dawn
4 A hue so radiantly brave?

5 There was a rain of blood that day,
6 Red rain in gay blue April weather.
7 It blessed the earth till it gave birth
8 To valour thick as blooms of heather.

9 Romantic Ireland never dies!
10 O'Leary lies in fertile ground,
11 And songs and spears throughout the years
12 Rise up where patriot graves are found.

13 Immortal patriots newly dead
14 And ye that bled in bygone years,
15 What banners rise before your eyes?
16 What is the tune that greets your ears?

17 The young Republic's banners smile
18 For many a mile where troops convene.
19 O'Connell Street is loudly sweet
20 With strains of Wearing of the Green.

21 The soil of Ireland throbs and glows
22 With life that knows the hour is here
23 To strike again like Irishmen
24 For that which Irishmen hold dear.

25 Lord Edward leaves his resting place
26 And Sarsfield's face is glad and fierce.
27 See Emmet leap from troubled sleep
28 To grasp the hand of Padraic Pearse!

25 There is no rope can strangle song
26 And not for long death takes his toll.
27 No prison bars can dim the stars
28 Nor quicklime eat the living soul.

29 Romantic Ireland is not old.
27 For years untold her youth will shine.
28 Her heart is fed on Heavenly bread,
30 The blood of martyrs is her wine.

THE CATHEDRAL OF RHEIMS

From the French of Emile Verhaeren

1 He who walks through the meadows of Champagne
2 At noon in Fall, when leaves like gold appear,
3 Sees it draw near
4 Like some great mountain set upon the plain,
5 From radiant dawn until the close of day,
6 Nearer it grows
7 To him who goes
8 Across the country.
9 When tall towers lay
7 Their shadowy pall
8 Upon his way,
10 He enters, where
11 The solid stone is hollowed deep by all
12 Its centuries of beauty and of prayer.

13 Ancient French temple! thou whose hundred kings
14 Watch over thee, emblazoned on thy walls,

15 Tell me, within thy memory-hallowed halls
16 What chant of triumph, or what war-song rings?
17 Thou hast known Clovis and his Frankish train,
18 Whose mighty hand Saint Remy's hand did keep
19 And in thy spacious vault perhaps may sleep
20 An echo of the voice of Charlemagne.
21 For God thou has known fear, when from His side
22 Men wandered, seeking alien shrines and new,
23 But still the sky was bountiful and blue
24 And thou wast crowned with France's love and pride.
25 Sacred thou art, from pinnacle to base;
26 And in thy panes of gold and scarlet glass
27 The setting sun sees thousandfold his face;
28 Sorrow and joy, in stately silence pass
29 Across thy walls, the shadow and the light;
30 Around thy lofty pillars, tapers white
31 Illuminate, with delicate sharp flames,
32 The brows of saints with venerable names,
33 And in the night erect a fiery wall.
34 A great but silent fervour burns in all
35 Those simple folk who kneel, pathetic, dumb,
36 And know that down below, beside the Rhine —
37 Cannon, horses, soldiers, flags in line —
38 With blare of trumpets, mighty armies come.

35 Suddenly, each knows fear;
36 Swift rumours pass, that every one must hear,
37 The hostile banners blaze against the sky
38 And by the embassies mobs rage and cry.
39 Now war has come, and peace is at an end.
40 On Paris town the German troops descend.
41 They are turned back, and driven to Champagne.

40 And now, as to so many weary men,
41 The glorious temple gives them welcome, when
42 It meets them at the bottom of the plain.

43 At once, they set their cannon in its way.
44 There is no gable now, nor wall
45 That does not suffer, night and day,
46 As shot and shell in crushing torrents fall.
47 The stricken tocsin quivers through the tower;
48 The triple nave, the apse, the lonely choir
49 Are circled, hour by hour,
47 With thundering bands of fire
48 And Death is scattered broadcast among men.

50 And then
51 That which was splendid with baptismal grace;
52 The stately arches soaring into space,
53 The transepts, columns, windows gray and gold,
54 The organ, in whose tones the ocean rolled,
55 The crypts, of mighty shades the dwelling places,
56 The Virgin's gentle hands, the Saints' pure faces,
57 All, even the pardoning hands of Christ the Lord
58 Were struck and broken by the wanton sword
59 Of sacrilegious lust.

57 O beauty slain, O glory in the dust!
58 Strong walls of faith, most basely overthrown!
60 The crawling flames, like adders glistening
61 Ate the white fabric of this lovely thing.
62 Now from its soul arose a piteous moan,
63 The soul that always loved the just and fair.
64 Granite and marble loud their woe confessed,

65 The silver monstrances that Popes had blessed,
66 The chalices and lamps and crosiers rare
67 Were seared and twisted by a flaming breath;
68 The horror everywhere did range and swell,
69 The guardian Saints into this furnace fell,
6e Their bitter tears and screams were stilled in death.

6g Around the flames armed hosts are skirmishing,
70 The burning sun reflects the lurid scene;
71 The German army, fighting for its life,
72 Rallies its torn and terrified left wing;
73 And, as they near this place
74 The imperial eagles see
75 Before them in their flight,
76 Here, in the solemn night,
77 The old cathedral, to the years to be
78 Showing, with wounded arms, their own disgrace.

KINGS

For the Rev. James B. Dollard

1 The Kings of the earth are men of might,
2 And cities are burned for their delight,
3 And the skies rain death in the silent night,
4 And the hills belch death all day!

5 But the King of Heaven, Who made them all,
6 Is fair and gentle, and very small;
7 He lies in the straw, by the oxen's stall —
8 Let them think of Him to-day!

THE WHITE SHIPS AND THE RED

For Alden March

1 With drooping sail and pennant
2 That never a wind may reach,
3 They float in sunless waters
4 Beside a sunless beach.
5 Their mighty masts and funnels
6 Are white as driven snow,
7 And with a pallid radiance
8 Their ghostly bulwarks glow.

9 Here is a Spanish galleon
10 That once with gold was gay,
11 Here is a Roman trireme
12 Whose hues outshone the day.
13 But Tyrian dyes have faded,
14 And prows that once were bright
15 With rainbow stains wear only
16 Death's livid, dreadful white.

17 White as the ice that clove her
18 That unforgotten day,
19 Among her pallid sisters
20 The grim Titanic lay.
21 And through the leagues above her
22 She looked aghast, and said:
23 "What is this living ship that comes
24 Where every ship is dead?"

25 The ghostly vessels trembled

22 From ruined stern to prow;
23 What was this thing of terror
24 That broke their vigil now?
25 Down through the startled ocean
26 A mighty vessel came,
27 Not white, as all dead ships must be,
28 But red, like living flame!

29 The pale green waves about her
27 Were swiftly, strangely dyed,
28 By the great scarlet stream that flowed
30 From out her wounded side.
31 And all her decks were scarlet
32 And all her shattered crew.
33 She sank among the white ghost ships
34 And stained them through and through.

35 The grim Titanic greeted her
36 "And who art thou?" she said;
37 "Why dost thou join our ghostly fleet
38 Arrayed in living red?
39 We are the ships of sorrow
37 Who spend the weary night,
38 Until the dawn of Judgment Day,
40 Obscure and still and white."

41 "Nay," said the scarlet visitor,
42 "Though I sink through the sea,
43 A ruined thing that was a ship,
44 I sink not as did ye.
45 For ye met with your destiny
46 By storm or rock or fight,

47 So through the lagging centuries
48 Ye wear your robes of white.

49 “But never crashing iceberg
47 Nor honest shot of foe,
48 Nor hidden reef has sent me
50 The way that I must go.
51 My wound that stains the waters,
52 My blood that is like flame,
53 Bear witness to a loathly deed,
54 A deed without a name.

55 “I went not forth to battle,
56 I carried friendly men,
57 The children played about my decks,
58 The women sang — and then —
59 And then — the sun blushed scarlet
57 And Heaven hid its face,
58 The world that God created
60 Became a shameful place!

61 “My wrong cries out for vengeance,
62 The blow that sent me here
63 Was aimed in Hell. My dying scream
64 Has reached Jehovah’s ear.
65 Not all the seven oceans
66 Shall wash away that stain;
67 Upon a brow that wears a crown
68 I am the brand of Cain.”

69 When God’s great voice assembles
67 The fleet on Judgment Day,

68 The ghosts of ruined ships will rise
70 In sea and strait and bay.
71 Though they have lain for ages
72 Beneath the changeless flood,
73 They shall be white as silver,
74 But one — shall be like blood.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND THE TEXT

ALFRED JOYCE KILMER WAS born on the feast of St. Nicholas in 1112 (1886.). Most famous for his poem “Trees,” contained in this volume, he wrote a great many works over the course of his life, and after his conversion to Catholicism in 1135 (1913.), he was widely considered to be the American analogue to G. K. Chesterton. Prior to his conversion, his poetry centered on passionate and earthly love, as many of the romantics did. During that conversion and afterward, it began to focus more on nature, on people, and on the divine.

Kilmer was the fourth and youngest child of a writer mother and a physician father, and was raised in the Episcopalian church in New Brunswick, New Jersey. He took to writing very early, becoming editor-in-chief of his grammar school’s paper, winning the first Lane Classical Prize for oratory, and winning largely through this literary effort a scholarship to Rutgers College (now Rutgers University). He struggled with mathematics there, and consequently transferred to Columbia University after his sophomore year. At Columbia, his literary activities continued, and he became vice-president of the university’s literary society, associate editor of the university newspaper, and a member of the debate club. He graduated in 1130 (1908.).

That same year, Kilmer married Aline Murray, an accomplished poet in her own right, whom he had met and become engaged to while at Rutgers. Though he briefly took up a position teaching Latin at Morristown High School in New Jersey, his literary output was significant, publishing poetry, essays, and book reviews in many journals,

including *The Nation* and *The New York Times*. After only a year, he and Aline moved to New York City, where he was employed by Funk and Wagnalls writing definitions for their upcoming dictionary.

The first volume contained in this collection, *Summer of Love*, was published in 1133 (1911.). This was prior to his conversion, and thus some of the poems were inappropriate for a book of Christian verse. These poems (“Ballade of My Lady’s Beauty,” “The Princess cried; her tears fell on the ground,” “Princess Ballade,” “Love’s Rosary,” “The Use of Night,” “The Morning Meditations of Friar Hyacinthus,” and “For a Child”) have been removed. The remainder, while not his best work, are worth reading, and offer something to the discriminating reader.

By 1134 (1912.), Kilmer was a special writer for *The New York Times*, and did a great deal of lecturing. He and his family moved back to New Jersey, where he resided until his departure for France.

The Kilmers had five children; however, their daughter, Rose, was diagnosed with polio shortly after birth, and this created a difficult time for them. Under the influence of Fr. James J. Daly, the Kilmers became Catholic in 1135 (1913.). That same year, *Trees and Other Poems* was published. He also published *Main Street and Other Poems* in 1139 (1917.), in which year the United States entered World War I. Kilmer almost immediately enlisted.

After being enrolled in the 69th Infantry Regiment (the “Fighting 69th”), Kilmer, by then a sergeant, shipped to Europe for the fighting. Rose died that year, and his youngest son, Christopher, was born. Kilmer was known as a brave soldier, often risking his life and volunteering for the most dangerous rolls, particularly reconnaissance in “no man’s land.” While on one such mission, scouting a German machine gun nest at Muercy Farm near the village of Seringes-et-Nesles, Kilmer was hit in the head by a sniper’s bullet and killed instantly. He never returned to his homeland, being buried at Oise-Aisne American Cemetary, and posthumously awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French Republic.

Kilmer's poetry has often been criticized as being too sentimental and simplistic. However, these criticisms are typically levelled by the "modern" poets, whose verse is without real order, and who all too often mistake obscurity and inscrutability for depth. Kilmer is uniquely talented at saying, clearly and simply, exactly what he means in a poetic way. Some of his poetry is less than stellar; however, much of it will provide fruitful reading and should be read by many more Catholics. Our hope is that this volume will facilitate that goal.

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