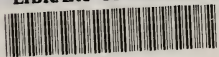




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no 1

To
MY MOTHER AND FATHER
AND
SARA HUFF
I AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATE
THESE VERSES

Many of the poems in this volume originally appeared in *The Boston Transcript*, *American Poetry Magazine*, *Ainslee's Magazine*, *Los Angeles Graphic*, *Contemporary Verse*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *The Colonnade*, *McCall's Magazine*, *New England Magazine*, *The Designer*, *Modern Priscilla*, *Femina Magazine*, *Boston Daily Advertiser*, *Boston Herald*, *The Multitude*—Chicago, *Springfield Republican*, *Christian Advocate*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Youth's Companion*, *The Lyric*, and *Good Housekeeping*. The author desires to express her appreciation of the Editors' courtesy in allowing their publication.

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SPRING SONG

I have heard a River's singing
And the music of a Tree.
Now Life may clip my winging
And lay her yoke on me.

Yet I shall still remember,
Long after I am dead,
The stir of leaves in April
And what the River said.

DAWN PAINT

March! and turn of the year to Spring!
Gusty wind and a driving sleet.
Lean, my Heart, to your listening . . .
Click of the gate and marching feet!

What if across the years Love came
Unheralded tonight, and laid
His hand in yours, breathed low your name—
Heart! are you fluttering, afraid?

Footfalls stepping across the stars—
Lean and listen, and slake your fill!
Ghostly creak of the pasture bars!
Dream-blown note of a daffodil!

March! and turn of the year to Spring!
Wind and flame and a cleansing tide!
Turn, my Heart, to its blossoming.
Saddle its beauty! RIDE!

LOVE WALKS IN APRIL

If we could fling back time tonight, Beloved,
Cut clean the snarls of malice with a sword,
Snuff out false pride, and let the winds of April
Surge us with pity, temper us with God,

If we could take the cattle trail at twilight
For one last ride together, You and I,
In the old way, with clinking spur and laughter,
Whisper and song, as in the days gone by,

Tell me: would scent of sagebrush on the prairie,
Or thunder of the River running blue,
Or stir of sap on amber-blazoned ranges
Mean more than "just another spring" to you?

Trailing the dusk, could breath or blare of beauty
Wake you and break you—make you understand?
Then, oh come back! and finish out the journey,
Saddle to saddle—riding—hand in hand!

WHEN SPRING COMES BACK TO
GILEAD

When Spring comes back to Gilead,
I wonder will she find
Her flaming squills of April
That once she left behind?
Will there be jonquils blowing,
And amber whirring bees,
And dainty petaled shimmering
Of dogwood trees?

When Spring comes back to Gilead,
In blazing whirl of white,
With tripping toe—and singing
Across the scented night,
Out of her world of lovers,
Oh, will she miss us two,
If we should fail this year to keep
Our rendezvous?

When Spring comes back to Gilead,
O Heart of Me, who knows
But pride may be forgotten
In every flower that blows,
And hearts that now are yearning
May flame to life—and sing,
When Spring comes back to Gilead,
And warm lips cling!

SOUVENIR

Out of Love's ashes
Rose a fairer dawn.
Out of Love's silence
Sweeter song was born.

A wood thrush caroled in the lane.
The poppies flamed the wheat again.

Just this!—yet I who had put away
Life, as a gift of yesterday,

Clutched it back
And found its scars
Burnished gold
Of a myriad stars.

IN MARCH

When March winds whistle through the eaves,
And willows crackle in the lane,
And the cold snow with flurrying grace
Drifts to my window-pane,

I should be lonelier than the hills
But for the thought of You that springs
Like a white crocus in my heart—
And sings and sings!

DOGWOOD

The dogwood never blooms in spring
But in my heart a song is born
Of witchery. For less a thing
The dogwood never blooms in spring.
Bud, bole, and leaf, and flashing wing,
And You beside me in the dawn!
The dogwood never blooms in spring
But in my heart a song is born.

THE ROSE THAT KEPT THE SPRING
ALIVE

The little hothouse rose, my Dear,
Has lost its bloom since then.
And many an April day of cheer
Has come and gone again.

Yet still I hold its petals' dust.
Ah! can you ask me why?
You who would keep my dreams from rust,
And still my passion's cry?

Across the silence of the snows,
Through icy blizzards' drive,
Your little April hothouse rose
Has kept that spring alive.

AFTER PARTING

Left foot! right foot!!
So—the parting's over?
Trailing through the fragrant dusk
Arm in arm again.
Left foot! right foot!!
Jessamine and clover,
And dripping scent of lilac-musk
After the rain!!

Once you would have laughed along
With a merry madness.
Once you would have flung your song
High on its wing.
Once you would have thought it wrong,
Dear, in your gladness
Not to have thrilled to
The pulse of the spring!

Left foot! right foot!
Life brings many changes.
Maybe you are thinking I
Am not just the same
As in the dream-days of
The blue-purple ranges
When we lit our altars by
The sunset's flame.

Heigh-ho-nonny-o!
Well, we are together!

April—Marching

Little matters that the glow
May have left Life's hue,
Or that dreams and passion go
Drifting down the heather.
Left foot! right foot!!
Still—I have YOU!

WITH AUGUST DAYS

With August days I have you back again.
The blush of poppies crimsoning the wheat,
The wild soft sobbing of the summer rain,
And whirr of south wind winnowing the grain
Are things we knew and loved together, Sweet.

With August days I have you back again.
It needs must be, we loved them so, we two.
And in your coming, Dear, I drown my pain.
Your look, your voice, your touch are mine again,
And all the harvest yields the peace of you.

PRISONER

After you went—when the first spring came,
Yellow and gold like a wild young flame,

I closed my heart and I cried: "I'm free!
Never again your kiss for me!

Or voice, or touch, or look, or vow,
Or step, or song! I am finished now!!

Free! free!!"—Then April dawned
With dogwood bloom and violet wand,

Plum tree white and jonquiled hill,
Red-cap, lark, and whip-poor-will.

And I knew I had spoken a lie—a lie,
For no one was ever less free than I,

Since Love is only a bondaged thing
That cannot forget—in spring!

AT TWILIGHT

Twilight at the end of day,
Trembling sunbeams on the wall,
Tinted shadows laced with gray,
Creeping in, and shrouding all.

Yonder hangs your pictured face,
Roseate in its glow of hope—
And beyond, a little space,
Buds an April heliotrope.

Dusk will deepen in a while,
But the darkness of the hour
Can not rob me of your smile,
Or the fragrance of your flower.

THE PRINCESS

I wonder if she thinks of them—
Those halcyon days of playtime,
When fields were gemmed with jonquil gold
And violet amethysts,
How oft she came to "Sherwood,"
To "Sherwood" green with May-time,
Where frowsled yeomen jousted
In the fragrant orchard lists.

April—Marching

So tall she seemed—and stately,
So sweet yet so commanding,
I used to think if Robin Hood
Came back but for a day,
To watch her crown our childhood
With her dear understanding,
The vision of his own love
Would fade quite away.

Would fade like merry magic
On the pleached breezes carried.
Maid Marion—nay, nor Little John
Could hold his heart in fee,
If once he heard the Princess sing
In “Sherwood” where we tarried—
In “Sherwood” green with May-time,
And fair as Arcady.

So deep she grew a part of us
In days of make-believing,
That even now in dreams sometimes
I’m in the lists again,
Wearing her favor on my breast—
A scarf of crimson weaving,
To win my spurs of knighthood
In a world of doughty men!

SARKI

Today when Sarki came
And stood before us with the flame
Of love and life and laughter in her face,
A sudden tensioned silence held the place
From gallery to gallery. Why, I thought,
Should Sarki choose a theme so strangely fraught
With tragic hopelessness—Sarki whose grand,
Brave, laughter-loving soul could hold the wand
Of merry magic o'er a winter's day
Until its grayness burgeoned into May.

The song was Tosti's passion-shaken cry
To dying summer—that divine goodbye
Of love to hope. As Sarki sang, we heard
The heart sobs of a woman anguish-stirred
Beyond what life can bear. We saw
Sarki's own quivering unmasked soul, with awe,
Singing itself to faintness of despair
As the last cadence trembled through the air:

*"A pleading look! a stifled cry!
Goodbye forever. Goodbye! Goodbye!"*

Why in unguarded moments, God, I ask,
Must souls tear down their superficial mask,
And fling the lie to happiness
In their distress?

April—Marching

Almost I wish I had not learned to know
That Sarki 'neath her laughter hid a woe
As deep as Rachel's. Now through all my years
I'll hear in surface-laughter rain of tears,
And see beyond the sunny autumn flowers
Flecking the meadows through the mellow hours,
The tawny forests wailing dismal breath
Of wild sad music, undertoned with death
Like Sarki's laughter—Sarki, glorious, gay,
Who broke our blindness in her song today!

LOVE ME!

Love me, that I may hear
In all the winds that blow
A little song of ecstasy
From out the Long-Ago.

Love me, that I may see
In April's bluest skies,
As it were only yesterday,
The glory of your eyes.

Love me, that I may feel—
Oh unforgotten bliss!
In the warm fragrance of the sun,
Dear Heart, your kiss.

VALENTINE

When trees were icicled in white,
I heard you sing.

Without was winter, cold and bright.
Within was spring.

You never sang again to me,
O Heart of Mine,

Yet each year brings with memory
A Valentine!

WORDS THAT YOU HAVE SPOKEN

Words that you have spoken
Come back to me like music,
Trailing tones of loveliness
For the four winds to share:
Whispers low and broken
That quicken me to battle,
Or place a rainbow in my heart,
And on my lips—a prayer.

Words that you have spoken
Are pulse and wine to hunger.
I know no emptiness of heart
Or weariness in power
When they come back in token
Of beauty unforgotten,
To snatch from out eternity
One shining April hour.

THE GARDEN GATE

I know a little garden gate,
Where crimson roses are.
And early morn or evening late,
Its latchstring stands ajar,
Awaiting through the hours blown
Above a summer's day
A gentle touch it has not known
Since You went away.

I know a little garden gate.
Come back, my Sweet, come back
From hollow hills grown desolate
Along Life's wind-swept track.
Beyond a thousand lonely miles
The hungry heart of me
Is calling You across Love's aisles
To Arcady!

THOUGHTS

My thoughts are yellow butterflies
That flitter in the grass,
And You a wind across the skies
That hails them as they pass.

My thoughts are dust-white moths that blow
On frail wings of desire,
And You the golden candle-glow
That kindles them with fire.

LIFE'S GARDEN

Kisses once I thought so sweet,
Stolen in the braken—
Colin's, mischievous and fleet,
And Philon's passion-shaken,

Now are but as thistle-blow
Scattered down Life's garden—
Little ghosts of Long-Ago,
Craving tender pardon.

Kisses once that made me wise
Now have lost their leaven
In the kiss of baby eyes
Drawing faith to Heaven!

YOUR NAME

A name is but a simple thing,
Yet yours means this to me:
The glad wild wonder of the spring
In bird and blade and tree,
Life that is quenchless, hopes that know
No doubting—hold no fear,
But keep where purple violets blow
A rendezvous with cheer.

Death has no place where worship shines.
Tears have no place in song.
Give me a little road that winds
A silver stream along,
With latticed cot, and chimney-flame,
Hearth-smoke and trampled sod—
And but the mention of your name
Will quicken it with God.

POPPIES

Bright poppies in a waving mass,
A wind-swept field—a laughing lass,
An autumn sky with clouds on wing,

Oh what a simple little thing
To think of down the wake of years!
To think of through a mist of tears!

TO ONE DISTANT

Because you wrote,
I feel the distance spanned
Between our singing selves
Across the miles.

You've tipped the rose-jar.
Lo! and from your hand
Are scattered petals
Through my garden aisles!

IN JAPAN

If you will come with me some spring,
When April's forged her gold,
And all the woods are burgeoning
Above the forest mould,
I'll be your comrade as of old,
And in Love's caravan
Will take you gypsying to my fold
In far-away Japan.

Oh Love, Love, Love! you and I together!
Hand in hand to roam Japan
Through all the fragrant weather!
Love, Love, Love! oh sometime cross the sea
And take a Pippa's holiday
In old Japan with me.

We two will seek our heart's ease there
Where white tea roses blow
Their perfumed petals through the air
In fairy flakes of snow;
And we will watch the lanterns glow
Beneath the opal moon,
While painted junks glide to and fro
Along the blue lagoon.

Oh Love, Love, Love! you and I together!
Hand in hand to roam Japan
Through all the fragrant weather!
Love, Love, Love! oh sometime cross the sea
And take a Pippa's holiday
In old Japan with me.

PERPLEXITY

All the streams o'erflowing
From the April rain.

Gentle breezes blowing
Through the reeds again.

Thrushes northward flying
To their rendezvous.

All the woodlands sighing
Just a hint of YOU.

Flowers sweetly breathing.
Insects on the wing.

Oh—why should I be grieving
In the spring?

ROSEMARY

Remember you the day I first came down
To gay New York—an April loiterer?
And You, all muffled in a waving fur
Of costly maribou that caped the brown
Silk, shimmery draperies of your gown,
Surprised me, as I came with pulse astir
Swift from the docks—where all the ferries were
Tooting our gladness to the towering town?

New York was ours! the barrel-organ's air,
The clean, white sparkle of each granite spire
That reared its head up to the noonday's fire,
And every murmuring crowded thoroughfare
Sang of our love—and crowned us with desire
To seek in Arcady release from care!

HAD I HAILED YOU IN THE RAIN

Had I hailed you in the rain,
Passing by,
Would we suffer now such pain,
You and I?

Swift! a sudden glance of fire!
Through a mist
Eyes held eyes in mute desire
Till they kissed.

I had known you worlds before.
Love can tell.
Yet I let you pass my door,
Knowing well

We might never meet again,
You and I,
Just like that in the rain,
Passing by.

Now I'm trying to forego
All regret.
Maybe it were better so.
Dear!—and yet——?

WISTARIA

A sprig of wistaria hangs from your picture.
A meaningless token to all but ourselves.
I doubt if our secret be ever discovered
By even the smartest of fairies and elves.

A sprig of wistaria? A touchstone of magic!
How simple a token can banish despair!
Why, Sweet, I believe that this moment I'm hearing
The click of the gate—and your step on the stair!

MUSIC IN THE NIGHT

Music! low liquid music in the night!
Tones that return
Like winging birds, to waken old delight
From memory's urn.

Across the tides of melody, your face!
My cup o'erflows
As through the dark impenetrable space
Your vision glows.

LOVE'S COMPLETENESS

Strong as the flail
Of a gale
On the seas—

Deep as Death's power
In the hour
That it frees—

Rich as the gold
In the mold
Of a star—

Free as a bird
Faintly heard
From afar—

Glad as all living,
All giving,
All cheer—

So do I measure my love for you, Dear!

BECAUSE OF YOUR DEAR FAITH

Because of your dear faith, when days are long,
And all the starless hours of the night
Pass, like the lingering echoes of a song,
Into the silence of the new dawn's light,
I shall be able with a smile to greet
The sadness that Life holds, and call it sweet.

Because of your dear faith, I shall not mind
The long drear years that hold our souls apart.
But putting all Grief's vestiges behind,
I'll dare the battle with a singing heart,
Filled with the hope which only Love assures
To prove my worth in God's eyes—and in Yours!

THE GRAY STONE CHURCH

The gray stone church I used to know
In Brooklyn days long, long ago,
Still stands imposing to the view,
Facing the broad elmed avenue.

I would go oftener there to pray
With others at the end of day.
But somehow, somehow kneeling there,
My courage wavers even in prayer,

For from the choir-loft I see
Ghost faces smiling down on me—
And hear ghost voices lingering yet
In songs the church can not forget.

BALLYCLAIR

As I rode into Ballyclair,
Lo! all the spring was flinging
A robe of jonquiled tapestry
Where fallow meadows lay;
And down the little homeland road
The tanagers were winging,
Flashing scarlet meteors
Beneath an April day.

Hawthorn whiter than the snow,
And honeysuckled garden!
Swift! it seemed a voice called
Above the kettle's croon:
"Macushla! Macushla!"
Till sweeter than God's pardon,
It purged the homing heart of me,
And set the world in tune.

VAGABONDIA

Twilight is lacing the branches.
Dusk's on the hill.
Carry me back, Vagabondia,
When it is still.

Back to the glow of the clapboards
Silvered with stars,
Back to the croon of the hinges
Creaking the bars.

There will be frost on the asters,
Wind in the leaves,
Whispers and fluttering footfalls
Under the eaves,

Little gray ghosts in the garret—
You and I know
Ghosts couldn't leave the old cabin,
Loving it so.

We will be ghosts, Vagabondia,
Ages from now,
Guarding it—chimney and rafter,
Gable and bough.

But for tonight we were better
Lost in its dream.
Carry me back, Vagabondia,
Back to the gleam

Of "Rosemary" spangled with moonlight,
Lintel and sill
Shedding the rays of her candles
Over the hill!

DREAM VINEYARD

Back within my heart's dream vineyard
There's a cabin in the lane,
Where grim Time has hung his cobwebs
Lightly on the window-pane,
And the chimneys on the rooftop
And the shingles on the eaves
Are as sear and weather-beaten
As the autumn-showered leaves.

Yet to me as I roam
Over memory aisles toward home,
That little wind-swept cabin
Wears a halo in the gloam.

For I see it always studded
In the glow of setting sun—
Kettle-croon, out-blowing curtains,
Hearth-smoke when the day is done,
Mother standing in the dooryard,
Clothed in all her simple grace,
Waiting with the light of welcome
In the radiance of her face!

April—Marching

How her beauty wraps around me!
How her truth upholds me yet!
How the memory of her quickens
Little scenes I can't forget—

Dust-white road and hedge-trimmed ivy,
Oxen lowing at the plough,
Bumbling of the bees at noonday,
Blackbirds trilling from the bough!
Is it wonder as I roam
Over memory aisles toward home,
That the little wind-swept cabin
Wears a halo in the gloam?

SHIPMATE

Shipmate! my shipmate!!
The flying spume is hoary.
The decks tonight are strewn with stars;
The tide swings high.
And the years like ghostly galleons
Glide by in spectral glory
From ports of unforgetten spars
Across a sunset sky.

Shipmate! my shipmate!!
Our sails are set for dawning.
The wind is lashing froth and foam.
The seagulls swirl.
And our dreams ride by in pageantry
With benison and warning
Like aery pilots drifting home
Upon a cloud of pearl.

Shipmate! my shipmate!!
Forever and forever
I shall remember, when I'm dead,
The troths we've made . . .
To sail beyond the Pleiades,
Just You and I together,
When the last port has trumpeted
The singing stars' crusade.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM HUFF—G. A. R.
ON HIS 87TH BIRTHDAY

There's a white battalion marching
Through the wilderness and prairie,
With drums that thunder jubilee
And banners pricked with scars;
And they're flinging songs of triumph
To the four free winds of heaven,
And setting camp-fires gleaming
In an acreage of stars.

Left foot! right foot! rank on rank of khaki!
Left foot! right foot! rank on rank of blue!
Soissons! Cambrai! Metz! and Argonne!
Richmond! Gettysburg! and Shiloh!
Young and old, they're swinging nearer,
Cheering someone—is it You?

For I've caught their broken phrases—
"William Lewis Huff, Crusader!
Soldier of the great Republic!
Woodsman! Plainsman! Pioneer!
Christian of unswerving duty!
Patriot of granite courage!
Blazer of old trails to freedom!
Patriarch without a peer!"

April—Marching

And their song is like a whirlwind
Blowing all of truth before it.
And their coming is a sacrament of
Altar wine and bread.
And their presence, though unbidden,
Is a benison from Sinai
That rolls the tides of silence back
Between the Quick and Dead.

For it's left foot! right foot!
Sherman! Grant! and Farragut!
Left foot! right foot!
Hooker! Lee! and Schley!
Lincoln in his old shawl!
Washington and Sheridan!
Roosevelt with his Eagle Son
Now are trooping by!

Singing:

“Happy Birthday, Comrade!
Peace and Love and Honor bless you!”

Singing:

“God and Glory crown you
In the gloaming!”

THE ROAD TO CAVERLEY

Christmas in America!
Goodbye to troop and bivouac!
My heart has saddled Pegasus
To ride the stars tonight—
The white stars of Carchemish
And Babylon and Nineveh
That crown the Christian highways
With their galaxy of light.

And maybe from their orbits
I shall find the road to Caverley,
The little silver river-road
That winds beyond the sea,
Where rafters ring with carols
And windows glow with candles,
And the War is long forgotten,
And the flags blow—free!

For America is calling,
Plain and mountain, vale and desert.
There are altars in her wilderness,
And anthems in her streams,
And a deeper love of hearthside
Since our Legion marched to glory;
And a kinder love of neighbors,
And a purer love of dreams.

So it's ship me far from Coblenz
Where my heart can feast in furlough!
The latch is up! the board is set!
And the four winds sing
Of the homing road to Caverley
That leads to peace and freedom,
Where comrades walk in brotherhood,
And Jesus Christ is King!

THE MOTHER

“Dead,” you say? Nay! nay!!
Alive as I am now, today.

There's her tea-pot on the stand
With her blue cup near at hand,

Waiting for this afternoon
When I'll sing her favorite tune

To her, as she sips her tea
Oh so very daintily!

Souls that learn so well to live
Never die—but stay, to give.

So hers like God's benison
Lingers with us every one.

All the flowers of her choice
In the garden breathe her voice.

April—Marching

And the sunshine of the place
Keeps alive her radiant face.

Hush! beneath the willow bough
Where the veery's singing now,

Ghostly soft her rocker creaks.
Succurre Miseris! and she speaks

Gently, sweetly to my youth
With her tender lips of truth:

“Faith in love—no more, no less,
Means my Everlastingness!”

CRADLE SONG

Cradle song and kettle croon
And whisper of the lilacs!
Silver plies my needle
On your wee white hem.
Dainty as the petals
In a peach-bloom garden,
Sweet enough for Mary's Son
Born in Bethlehem!

Here a stitch! and there a stitch!
Threading dreams of wonder,
Weaving in a tiny tuck
Homage for a king,
Doubting if in all the world
Life possesses magic
Half so dear and beautiful
As Babyhood in Spring!

Babyhood in Spring! and all the earth
A cloak of samite!
God who etches April hills
Delicate with lace,
Fashion Thou my Baby's life
Shining as his raiment,
Fastening the warp and woof
Firm with Truth and Grace!

SPRING IN THE FACTORY

Spring has come with all her beauty!
And it's I would know the meaning
In the springtime of a cottage
With a paneled sitting-room,
And a smiling sweet-faced mother
Standing by the lintel's greening,
Where there's not the burr of motors
Or the thrumming of the loom.

Spring has come with all her fragrance!
And it's now I whiff the blowing
Of the violet-laden breezes
And the meadow mignonette,
And the peach-bloom and the clover
And the cherry-petals snowing,
Till I quite forget the fibre,
And the stench of human sweat.

Spring has come with all her music!
Bobolink and thrush and veery,
Fluted whistle of the plowboy
And the croon of babes at play—
Sweetness drowning out the treadles
And the sneers of foremen leery.
Spring has come! goodbye to factory!
Now my soul takes holiday.

BOARD FOR TWO

Oh I will set my board for two,
And clean my house today,
For I am breaking bread with one
Who has been long away—
With one who comes a thousand miles,
Gift-laden to my feast,
Trailing a wake of rosemary
From an Arabian East.

Winged white dreams of yesterday,
Memories showering like leaves,
Spring's first robins caroling
Their welcome from the eaves,
The kettle's croon, the marsh's tang,
And toy ships freighted out to sea—
These, the gifts my guest will bring
Across Love's aisles to me.

So I will set my board for two,
And clean my house today,
For I am breaking bread with one
Who has been long away—
With one who comes by caravan
Of golden argosy
Across the bourne of desert years:
The Child I Used to Be.

BOYHOOD'S TOWN

TO J. T. W.

Just an argosy of memories!
Apple blossoms pink and white
Falling through the dusk of April
In the drowsy stir of night!
And a gleam of ships at harbor,
Silver sails against the west!
And the turquoise Parker River
Ribboning the Old Town crest.

Sixty summers since you gypsied
With your whittled willow lute
Down the apple-blossomed highway
In the month of bloom or fruit,
Scrambling up the hill of vision
Over bramble bush festoons,
To re-count the haystacks dotted
On the shining sandy dunes.

Oh the Joppa oyster shanties!
And the quaint old lighthouse set
On the reefs beyond Plum Island,
Winking "wicked" at you yet!
And the turnpike road to Rowley,
And the slender steeple spires
Of the churches silhouetted
In the summer sunset fires.

April—Marching

Sixty years are fleet in passing.
Sixty more—and you may be
The most talked of poet-laureate
Winging through Eternity.
Singing not so much of heaven,
Jasper street and harp and crown,
As of merry mortal memories
Of your boyhood town:—

Butterflies and chirping crickets!
Pollen-laden bumblebees!
Birds that filled old nests with singing
In the shade of leafy trees!
Ships of vision weighing anchor!
Barges at the ocean's brim,
And the pipes of April fluting
To a freckled boy named "Jim"!

THE RETURN

My heart has heard a knocking
On its iron-bolted door.
My soul has heard the whisper
Of a voice from other years:
"Ah open! open! open wide!
And take me in once more
Who come from golden yesterdays
To reconcile your tears!"

A sweet, familiar haunting tone!
A hand of magic touch!
"Ah open! open! open wide!
Since once you loved me so.
I stand a pleading mendicant.
Ah take me in as such,
Before the embers deaden
And the wick burns low."

My heart has heard a knocking.
And I've let the exile in.
My soul has heard a whisper.
And I've listened to its plea.
And now my little house of dreams
Is swept of grief and sin,
For my lost childhood's self has come
To live again with me.

TO MY GRAND-DADS

I wonder if they've ever met
In some Elysiumed haven—
My grand-dads, Yankee-born and Welsh,
From Derry and Dunraven;
And meeting, maybe found my name
Within their hearts engraven.

Dear simple, true, old-fashioned men!
With hearts no frost could harden,
Each trailing in his wake a song
As tender as God's pardon,
One from his little coffee shop—
One from his Celtic garden!

LONELINESS

Among a million people
I walked—alone,
Hemmed in by tower and steeple,
And walls of stone,

Lonelier than on prairie,
Or on the sea,
For neither God nor fairy
Could talk with me.

OLD SONGS

Where are they gone? and will they come
Comforting, tremulous back to me?
Soft as the lush of rain in some
Sweet April Arcady?

Like purple violets on a hill,
Will they come back at hint of spring?
Oh! tell me, tell me if you will,
And ease my hungering!

AUTUMN

Yellow light upon the leaves!
Hoar frost on the garden lane!
Autumn wind among the eaves
Whistling loud above the rain!

Love, oh Love, why did you go?
It was never thus before
That the autumn chilled me so
When the wind swept round my door!

INCONSISTENCY

Death can not leave me lonely
Or hold strange fears for me,
For I have found in April
Love's immortality.

But should one faith forsake me,
Or gilded idol fall,
Then were my whole world ashes
And life—a thrall!

A PRAYER IN APRIL

Lord, if I find grace today
In Thy sight, divide, I pray,
Half my share—no more, no less—
Of the Spring's white loveliness
With the halt, the deaf, the blind,
And the sorrowing of mind.

Joy of wind and flame of tree,
Racing clouds in canopy,
Cresting wave and whirring wing,
Pulse of every singing thing
That may fill their senses deep
With Thy presence e're they sleep.

Amen.

INVOCATION TO THE NEW YEAR

I have set my words
To the tune of birds
To echo o'er crag and lea.
I have sung my birth
To the sons of earth.
Ride on! ride on with me!!

Ye have trampled me down with your leaden feet,
But I rise from the ashened pile.
Ye have scoffed my name in the market street
Where mingle the rank and file.

My gifts ye have thrown to the demoned swine.
My face ye have hid from view.
But the gifts were free and the gifts were thine,
And I'm bringing them back to you.

I'm bringing them back in the mad, glad spring
Of the lilacing April hours.
I'm bringing them back on the swallows' wing,
And in rain-bleached autumn flowers.

And whether ye erred in days long sped,
Wherever the trail shall wind,
This year, the dead shall bury their dead.
We'll cast no glance behind!

April—Marching

For I've set my words
To the tune of birds
To echo o'er crag and lea.
And I've sung my birth
To the sons of earth.
Ride on! ride on with me!!

Out from the war-doomed chaos where blow
Bugles that mobilize foe on foe,
Down from the sodden fields where run
Rivers too red to catch the sun
As it pierces a war-cloud there and here,
Ray upon ray—bier upon bier,
Oh like a chain-bound slave set free,
Turn from the past and ride with me!

Ride! Ride!! Ride!!
Till the east and the west are one.
Ride! Ride!! Ride!!
Till the infinite fight is done.
Turn your face from the ebbing tide.
Past is past and today's your guide.
Look to your saddle nor turn aside!
Spurs to your charger! Ride!!!

THE NEW-BORN

Out of the dusk of centuries I come,
To make you glad.
A little naked mendicant of love,
Bringing from golden pools of mystery
Laughter and song.

My body is a lily drenched with sun.
My heart a crystal goblet
Brimming with rich nectar
For your lips to sip.
My soul a note in tune with all the spheres.

Guard me with tender wisdom while you may,
For I am greater than the sea and stars,
The seasons and the flowers of the field,
And all the myriad miracles of man.

Swift! at my birth were blended life and death.
Creation's song flashed at my coming.
Now in my hands I hold
The balance-scale of emptiness and joy.

Generation upon generation of poets
And generation upon generation of painters
Have visioned me with simple reverence
Out of the glad recesses of their souls.

April—Marching

Fairies and elves have they created for my pleasure
And dream-worlds founded for my joy,
Till I can follow in my fancy's flight
A shooting star, a silver drop of rain,
Or virgin flake of graceful flurrying snow.

Take the rich gift I offer—
All beauty and all holiness combined:
The trinity of love and faith and hope.

I am God's message sent to mother hearts
To open them—and let His glory in.

MY HEART IS LIKE A HUNGRY BIRD

My heart is like a hungry bird
That has no heart to sing,
Since all the year you've sent no word,
No thought or anything.

No happy voice across my aisles
To cheer my hungering—
Only the snow-drifts, miles on miles,
That never knew the spring.

GYPSY LAD

O Gypsy Lad, whom I have never met,
Can you not hear me calling plaintively
Above the April rain and larks' duet,
And lilac-laden winds of Arcady?

The trail is rough but oh divinely fair
That leads me dreaming through the lanes of youth;
I am so sure you will be waiting there
When I have crossed the border-land to Truth.

I am so sure now as I sing alone,
That in some far-off blossoming of May
You'll hear my song—You whom I've never met,
And fill my hunger in your glad wild way.

CHASTISEMENT

I did not know, Dear Heart.
I did not know
That Love, mere Love
Could pain one so.
Nor that in doubly
Darkened ways
I should go exiled
All my days!

I close my eyes—
And memories bring
The pressure of your lips
That cling!
June memories
Of stars and night,
And crushing arms
That hold me tight!

Now I must wait
The long years through
In agony
Of wanting you.
I who had thought
Mere Love a game,
Until war woke me
To my shame!

IN GREENWICH VILLAGE

1918

Sometimes at sunset, coming through the square,
In the cold splendor of a winter's day,
I find myself half-wondering in play
If I shall find you at our window there,
Waiting my coming—doubting still the truth
War woke me to last April when you went—
And Greenwich Village sped your regiment.
The law of battle is unkind to youth!

Now when before the empty hearth I sit
And close my eyes, the deadened ashes, Dear,
Flare like red poppies, magically lit
By the warm kiss of sunny atmosphere.
Cool fingers o'er my fevered eyelids flit—
And with the breath of poppies, you are near!

TO A WAR TIME STRIKER
(From a Crippled Soldier on Furlough)

I

You can call me rampant moralist and war-mad
preaching freak,
A brainless financier and a butter-in of law,
But I'd rather be myself, at that, than show the
yellow streak
Of him who calls a strike on work that's pushing on
the war.
For I'm used to fighting soldiers, not the kind who
feed their purse,
And grouch at weary carcasses and battle by the
clock.
I come from flaming Flanders where the unforgiven
curse
Is the piker whose desertion proves his country's
stumbling-block.

So ship me back to the trenches
Behind me the sand-bag's rim,
Where there's blood and mud in stenching flood
Under the rocket's glare,
And men who are men are fighting,
Loyal and staunch and grim,
Scorning to quit till they've done their bit
In championing Right "out there."

April—Marching

II

There's a plaguy sight of difference according to
battle code
Between the plain deserter-guy who "funks" it for
the Huns
And him at home who crumples up beneath war's
extra load,
Calling a strike that ties up work on ships or clothes
or guns,
Putting a traitor's service-price on duty to his flag,
Commercializing faith to God and free humanity,
And daring in his idle sloth with pompousness to
brag
A kinship with his valiant brothers fighting oversea.

So ship me back to the trenches
'Neath the red rain's avalanche,
Where the cry "More pay and an eight-hour
day"
Will faint in the bugle's call,
And men who are men are dying,
Glad of the privileged chance
To prove the worth of their soldier birth
In a Common Cause for All!

April—Marching

III

It is pleasanter here in the factories and the ship-
yards and the mills
Than it is out there in the dug-outs where the rats
and the lice abound,—
For there isn't the carnaged chaos and the horror-
shaken thrills
Of the death-fumed gas or the bloody wire or the
mangled corpse-strewn ground.
Yet I'd rather be there in the mêlée, a cog in the
great machine,
I'd rather brave death a thousand times in the
brunt of the foe's advance,
Than play the rôle of the striker here at a time when
my act might mean
Defeat for the lads who are holding our line in the
furnaced hell of France.

So ship me back to the trenches,
Where the lure of a higher law
Than greed and pelf and Ego self
Is ruling the dreams of youth.
Where life is seen at its crudest,
Bleeding and bruised and raw,
But strong and wise through the sacrifice
Of men who have died for Truth!

FOR KING AND COUNTRY

Boom! Boom!
Through fields dyed red,
Past the sound of women's weeping,
On! until the last has bled
From the foul-jawed cannon's reaping,
Father, brother, husband, son,
In the murky trenches lying,
Cold and stark, when day is done,
For King and Country *dying*.

Boom! Boom!
The dank mists rise
On the youngest-born recruiting.
Joy a'glow from lips and eyes
Through their gay disputing.
How the fife and trumpet thrill!
What care they for crimson sating?
Glad and resolute they drill
For King and Country *waiting*.

Boom! Boom!
Oh shame to spend
Blood that pulses from a nation!
Boom! oh wanton crime to rend
From a hungry child its ration!
Babes and children underfed,
Not a crust of bread for halving!

April—Marching

Sucklings to the still-born dead,
For King and Country *starving*.

Boom!
The distant hills loom black.
Now there's worse than death foreboding.
War brides tremble on the rack
Of a lustful despot's goading.
Holy Mother! purge their shame!
They must bear for cannon's feeding
Soldier sons without a name,
For King and Country *breeding*.

King and Country!—Country, King!
When this pentecost of sorrow
Gleaned from temporal gluttoning
Shall have slaked itself tomorrow,
There will still be left, unspent,
Strong in habit, undismaying,
Old, old women, worn and bent,
For King and Country *praying!*

THE WHIRLWIND

The field is stubble tonight,
Parched and withered in harvest.
Seared from the blast of the fiery cannon.
Ghostly soft, it billows rough in the moonlight.

The ground is decked with the limp forms
Of a thousand corpses.
They mock at the moon's paleness
And warm the earth with their blood.
But the breath of their bodies is gone,
Snuffed out by the whirlwind.

When dawn comes, the sun will hunger
For the light of their laughing eyes
And the shout of their singing voices.
And the red poppies that kiss their silent faces
Will miss, when the bugle calls,
The crunch of their heavy marching
Through the wheat.

AN UNKNOWN GRAVE

Unmourned, unclaimed, unrecognized by all,
Within his grave
He lies, with no dear comrade near to call
His young heart brave.

And yet above his unmarked resting place
A skylark wings
In upward flight, and from ethereal space
His requiem sings:

"Who dies in France for freedom, freedom gains
Unchained, unfurled.
His monument war's flaming poppied lanes.
His grave the world!"

THE VOLUNTEER

“It isn’t your war,” I told the lad,
When that flame-wraithed August came.
“It isn’t your fault if the Kaiser’s mad,
And his gray hordes filched with shame.
Stay home and harvest the golden wheat,
And answer the hunter’s call,
For the wilds of the west are safe and sweet,
And why should you leave it all?”

Now all I have left are his fishing rods,
His gun and his hunting net,
And his Billiken god who sits and nods
At a bust of Lafayette,
And his eloquent letters in boyish hand,
Acclaiming with happy boast
His regiment’s part in the glorious stand
Of Kitchener’s fighting host.

And I who said that it wasn’t his war—
It’s proud I am of him now
For the call he heard and the light he saw,
And the pledge he made—and his vow.
And though he’s asleep in the hills of France,
At peace from the flame and roar,
I know when the last drum sounds “advance”
He will lead his men once more!

THE SINGING SERGEANT

We saw them carry his stretcher in
Under a hail of fire.
His blood was smearing the ground they trod
Red as the poppies' bloom.
But there wasn't a chance in the hell-mad din,
A moment, to inquire—
Charging with bayonet-point and sword—
Of the singing sergeant's doom.

So we "carried on" like avenging hounds
And "strafed" the Boches under.
It was like the singing sergeant's voice
Kept trumpeting the way
Through cursing sounds of human mounds,
And Gothas spitting thunder.
It made the saints of heaven rejoice—
The way we made them pay.

And this we learned in our wild advance,
Where the red rain was falling,
Wondering how was our sergeant chum,
And whether his race was through:
They could bury him deep in the fields of France,
But his soul would bide our calling,
Leading us on till Kingdom Come,
And the last drum beat tattoo.

For it isn't the body that turns the tide,
But the soldier spirit in it.

April—Marching

So—when we found him behind the line,
Like a sepulchred bandaged ghost,
It wasn't the death in his face we spied,
Palloring more each minute,
But something of life we couldn't define,
Like the flame of a spirit-host.

It was like he was teaching the stars their place,
Flinging the dark defiance.
For sudden, "'oo's dead?" he challenged us then.
"Come! pipe us a chune you've learned,
To prove the pep of the Celtic race, and
The h'army's just reliance
In singin' men's bein' fightin' men,
And death but a furlough earned."

Then up we drew to the sergeant's cot,
And soft our voices blended:
*"The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain——"*
It was a hymn we'd sung a lot,
When France was first defended.
*"His blood-red banner streams afar.
Who follows in His train?"*

"'oo follows?"—quick! with courage girds—
The pipes of April fluting.
The singing sergeant, clear and slow,
Wound up the martial strain,
And plucky came his last words,
With bandaged hand saluting,
*"'oo patient bears 'is cross below
'e follows in 'is train!"*

IN THE NIGHT

Often when the autumn rain
Beat against the window-pane,
And the cold gust driving fast
Shook the shutters with its blast,

I would snuggle to your breast
Like a frightened bird, oppressed,
Till the pressure of your arms
Crushed out all my dread alarms.

Then your finger-tips would trace
Gently, lightly o'er my face,
And your breath like April air
Stir the tangles of my hair.

Heart to heart throbbed. Not a word
Broke our quietude—nor stirred
But my fear, all unexpressed,
War would claim you with the rest.

Haven free from rock or reef,
Silence lulling past belief,
Let me come once more, once more,
When the wind howls round the door.

Let my frozen spirit claim
Warmth from heaven's altar-flame,
Where your love will vigil keep,
Till I sleep—till I sleep!

WAR CHRISTMAS—1915

Dyed in the hue of more than holly's red,
War Christmas breaks upon a world reviled
With mammon lust and hate unreconciled
Over the ranks of Europe's slaughtered dead.
Music is silenced. Peace and joy are sped.
And where the Magi seek the Holy Child,
They find an empty manger sore defiled,
And Christ bowed o'er it with a thorn-crowned
head.

Far from the east sound armies' marching hosts,
The blare of bugles and the cannons' roar,
The hollow rap of hunger on the door,
And wailing dirges of a billion ghosts.
Christmas is dead! Nor love nor pity stills
The anguished cries from Europe's calvaried hills.

LA PANNE

Outside La Panne stretched dreary mile on mile,
Villas agleam with red and yellow tile,
Set on the sands at random, carelessly,
While ever nearer, nearer boomed the sea,
Washing with ebb and flow its flood of salt
Upon the dunes with every tidal halt.

La Panne, the royal village, in its plight
A ruin, yet a memorable sight!

Oh time will come when all the world will sing
Of Belgians at this seacoast hungering
A winter through, their army two-thirds spent,
Their soldier-king heading his regiment,
Himself sore wounded—and their gracious queen
Forced when the suffering grew too keen,
To pawn her jewels for her soldiers' bread.

And time will come when Belgium's flaming red
Of baptism will give her power to raise
The crumbled altars of her former days,
And teach the world a nation's greatness rests
Not in her armament of temporal quests,
But in her power to keep her soul so free
That it can claim with Christ's identity.

THE RED CROSS

I saw them pass among the littered dead,
Poet and peasant, marchioness and priest,
A cosmic army, cowering the beast
Of battle with their Christ-like tread.
Their sign—the brassard with its cross of red.
The vision of them, when the guns had ceased,
Was like a sudden sunrise in the east,
Mocking the memory of a storm just sped.

Like peace astride the wonder of a day,
Riding with spur from out night's leaden dross,
They came to save what guns had failed to slay.
One flag! one creed! one goal! to bear their cross
Of Christian mercy through the jaws of hell.

PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS—1914

Just for today, O Lord of Hosts, we ask
That peace of Christian mercy rule Thy seas,
That guns be silenced from their carnaged task,
And foe meet foe in canceled enmities.

Just for today, God of our Fathers' might,
Lead to Thine altars crumbled and defiled
Thy soldier-heroes by the Bethlehem light,
That in their armistice they find Thy child.

With more than holly are Thy fields dyed red.
With more than hunger stand Thy folds at bay.
Yet by Thy cross, we will not count our dead
If Thou wilt rule the God of All today.

Amen.

GOD'S GHOST

God's ghost moves through a shattered host.
The captains raise their song:
"Now God is Might and champions Right
Against Oppression's wrong."

God's ghost moves through a shattered host—
A cosmic force abroad.
In vain, kings mould for power and gold
A racial demi-god.

From coast to coast through curse and boast
Where Slav and Teuton reel,
Drunk from the flood of human blood,
And crush God under heel,

The ghost moves through each shattered host,
Too sad to smite or shield—
While streams flow red—and Christ lies dead
On every sodden field!

A YANKEE PRIVATE SPEAKS

Oh war is a marvelous leveling game,
And I wouldn't have missed this chance
Of taking my place when the summons came
In the fighting ranks of France,
To bivouac under a flame-shot sky
With men of a world new-made,
Who challenge and battle and jest and die
In the march of a great crusade.

I wonder what we will ever do
When the old life claims us back,
Yank and Tommie and French Poilu,
Bound to the beaten track.
I wonder will pals be the same pals then
As they are in the trenches here,
And if I'll find Jim, by the test of men,
Still brother and chum and peer.

Jim, who only twelve months ago
Was wasting his days in play,
Spending a million a year or so,
And quaffing his life away,
Wobbling home at morning's stir
With the grouch of a chronic fop,
And cursing at me, his dad's chauffeur,
For letting his trotters flop.

But that's all past. Oh war's the thing!
It's tinker and millionaire,
Butcher and baker and underling,
Cut on the self-same square,
Rigged in the self-same khaki shirt,
Fed on the self-same chow,
Spewed with the self-same blood and dirt,
Pledged to the self-same vow.

And Jim and me on the self-same plane,
Leveled by war's queer spell,
Pals to the death, through joy and pain,
Heaven and flaming hell—
A world removed from the narrow life
Of squabbling sects and creeds,
Where men are judged in a farcial strife
By chattels instead of deeds.

So war's the thing! I claim once more,
When you take it with Jim and me,
Drafted as "65354" and "65353,"
With never a hint for remembrancer
Here where the rockets flare,
That once I was known as his dad's chauffeur,
And Jim as a millionaire!

THE LANCERS OF LOUVAIN

There's a slow and rhythmic clattering
Of cavalry's shod feet.
We can see the Belgian standards drawing near.
There's a singing, singing, singing
Down a Belgian seacoast street,
And a ring of loud hosannas, cheer on cheer.
Oh you scarce can hear the music
Of their piccolo and fife
For our loud, ecstatic jubilation strain,
As we look upon their dwindled ranks,
Returning from the strife—
The dashing doughty Lancers of Louvain!

Mark their caprioling chargers!
How their blooded nostrils flare!
Mark the troopers! how they ride with backs erect!
Invulnerable, man and beast,
To ravishing despair,
Riding, riding, ever riding,
Like the God of Hosts' elect.
With the valiant light of ages
Smouldering in their eagle eyes,
And their visages all battle-seared with scars,
Dying, they will pay the blood-price
For their country's sacrifice—
For Louvain laid low in ashes 'neath the stars.

April—Marching

There's a marching, marching, marching
Down a Belgian seacoast street,
By the waters as the sun swings low.
And the fainter, fainter echo
Of their cavalry's shod feet
Leaves our writhing spirits crucified in woe.
They are riding on to battle,
Far away where fields are red.
O God, in Thy great mercy, ease our pain,
And we'll worship at Thine altars
Till their last recruits have bled
For the gold unsullied glory of Louvain.

CHATEAU-THIERRY

Tramping down the dusty roads
Between the bronzing wheat fields,
Khaki-clad and mirth-mad,
Laughing all the way,
With sixty pound of outfit—
Helmet-hats and gas-shields—
Marching and manœuvering
As though they found it play!

Weary? not a bit of it!
Hope was high ahead of them!
Treading past the meadowed plains
Of poppy-crimsoned sheen,
Shouting: "Bill, we're coming!
So set your guns to thrumming,
For you'll meet in Château-Thierry
The United States Marine!"

None could guess who saw them pass
They were not "seasoned shock-troops,"
Flinging zest and merry jest
With every martial stride.
Yankee to the core of them!
Marching past the River loops,
Bound for Château-Thierry
On the south Marne side!

April—Marching

And there they made their stand
Above a row of white-roofed houses,
Left amid the ruins now
That mark their battle-graves,
Holding back the powers,
For thirteen hell-flamed hours,
Of the sweeping, irresistible
Fiend-furied German waves!

I wonder in the years to come
Will history record them
With pride, for having turned the tide
In rolling back the Huns,
There in Château-Thierry
Where the saviored French now laud them,
Guarding the Paris Highway
With their barricade of guns!

Fearless and redoubtable!
Young and gay and heart-free!
Girded with the faith of France,
Faces to the light,
In their strength uniting—
Glorious in their smiting—
Viking and Crusader,
And Troubadour and Knight!

RED EASTER

This is a spring that has no Easter day.
Even the little children must be told
That all the beauty of the world is sold,
And in the grim gray ranks of War's array
Christ's carols turn to knells of loud dismay.
For women's tears, nor kingly power nor gold
Can resurrect those forms the trenches hold.

Ah children, murmur softly at your play,
Lest your sweet mirth like poisoned darts be sped
Swift to the widowed mother-hearts, reviled
Twice over as they clasp their still-born dead.
Pray, children, for the world's unreconciled.
You are our only lilies undefiled.
The others are incarnadined too red.

LINEN MUSK

When London lanes are thrumming
With the quickening of spring,
And London air is humming
With the lilt of larks on wing,
I see the hawkers coming
And I hear the hawkers sing:

“Linen musk! Linen musk!”
Sweet as April air!
“Linen musk! linen musk!”
Clean and fresh and fair!
Pungent scent of spices,
Dreams of purple dusk!
Down the pleached alleys
Hawking linen musk!

There is no time for dreaming
On a carnaged battle-plain—
Yet somehow, through the gleaming
Of the batteries' red rain
I see the home hills teeming
With English spring again!

And the hawkers cry: “Linen musk!”
Sweet as April air.
“Linen musk! linen musk!”
Clean and fresh and fair!
Pungent scent of spices,
Dreams of purple dusk!
Through the fields of Flanders
Trailing linen musk!

RESIGNATION

Last night the long, long dreaded message came,
Cabled from France, while I was in your room,
Smoothing your clothes; fingering in the gloom
Dear trophies of your boyhood: book and game,
Trumpet and drum and tarnished picture-frame
Holding your hero—Kitchener of Khartoum—
Gone like yourself, martyr of battle-doom,
On the long furlough, past the sunset's flame.

And now some corner of a Flemish field
Has wrapped you in its poppied sepulchre,
Hiding with glowing beauty every scar.
All Flanders is your grave. And *you* the yield
I give with pride to the great Harvester,
Bright as the sun-gold of your service-star.

PALM SUNDAY IN THE TRENCHES

Jesus, Jesus, Carpenter's Son,
Which way has the battle run?

My head is hurt and I can not see.
There's a curious smoke round this sycamore tree,

April—Marching

Where I climbed as soon as the cannon ceased
To watch you pass on your milk-white beast.

There is no day of Palms for them.
They never heard of Jerusalem.

Jesus, Jesus, Master! Friend!
Are you coming soon to heal and mend?

The long white road is thickly lined.
There never were so many maimed and blind

Waiting to watch you pass, like me
Proud of your King's identity.

Friend and foe on the grim divide—
So many times are you crucified.

Jesus, Jesus, Nazarite!
Touch your thumbs to my dimming sight!

Quick! your arms! Enfold me now!
I am falling from the sycamore bough.

Day of Palms! and roadside strewn
With sheaf-like bodies beneath the noon!

I'm glad—my mother—told me of you,
Jesus of Nazareth, Comrade true!

BEN ARAD

A guard of troopers rode at dawn of day
Out through the open portals of Life's flame.
And gay Ben Arad led them on their way
To win their crown of joy through wealth and fame.

By dint of savageness that courted strife
Smouldering deep within each Arab heart,
They won in time the glint they thought was life,
Only to find that joy was not a part.

At last they journeyed homeward, bent and old,
With spirits broken and with hearts demure.
But old Ben Arad, so the story's told,
Went forth again, alone, to feed the poor.

And give and serve, unquestioning the cost,
Finding thereby the joy the others lost.

ROYALTY

Silver and gold have I none.
Station nor kin nor fame.
All I possess are the Sun,
Beauty and Song and Flame.

Over my head the Stars,
Under my feet the Sod!
Yet am I richer than Czars
And free as a God!

THE CITY

Yesterday even I hated your power,
And cowered in fright from your lust.
I prayed that your pinnacled towers might totter
And crumble your buildings to dust.
I turned from the din of your garrulous pavements
O'er-teeming with traffic and drays,
And thought of you only as sullen and sordid,
And seething in human affrays.

Then somewhere I found myself shrouded in stillness
Remote from the hubbub of life,
Where flowers and forests and bird-notes and
 breezes
Afforded reprieve from your strife.
I walked on a carpet of mosses and lichens.
I lifted my eyes to the sky.
But my soul was not sated with beauty or silence.
I wanted my brethren by.

The heart of me yearned for your passionate
 breathing,
O City of dizzying height!
For your cruel demanding, unpitying cry
That resounds in the deep of the night.
O strange and alluring, ineffable spirit!
My dominant pride is o'erthrown.
I had rather be slaved with your publican million
Than enter Christ's kingdom—alone.

PHARISEE

All the fashion thoroughfares
Are glittered with your show.
Break a path—You Publicans!
For their gilded file.
Ermine-trimmed, immaculate,
With artificial glow
Crimsoning their cruel lips
Curved in mocking smile.

*Pharisee! O Pharisee! are you not afraid
For the unwashed ragged soul under your
brocade?*

Lily hands that never work!
Eyes that never cry!
Bodies strong and beautiful
As the Greeks of old!
Every day Beelzebub reviews you
Passing by.
While the puny underlings
Die to coin you gold.

*Pharisee! O Pharisee! at the final knell
What can save your silly soul from the blast
of hell?*

Vindicate your selfishness.
Within these ample states

April—Marching

Have you gleaned your yellow hoard
Honestly and fair?
Have you paid for servitude
Decent living rates?
Or let your toilers rot and starve
For want of Christian care.

*Pharisee! O Pharisee! guard against the tolls
You will be held answerable for in murdered
souls.*

Though your shallow hearts be free
From conscious lust and greed.
Though you never waste your time
In low debauchering,
Yet the while you worship God
With Euphuistic creed,
What about His children
On your highways, hungering?

*Pharisee! O Pharisee! jewels, silk and lace
Pass through mangled bleeding hands ere they
lend you grace!*

All your tinsled ornaments
And all your filigree,
All your idle vaunting
Of a vermin-eaten power
Cost the world a billion souls
In woe and harlotry.

*O Pharisee! but you shall pay
The price—in Judgment-Hour!*

MAGDALENE

She'd never known the larks' call
Trilling through the dawning,
Or plucked the nodding poppy buds
Crimsoning the wheat.
She'd never learned the simplest prayer,
Or heard the mildest warning
Of tempest-strong temptations
She would some day have to meet.

She who dreamed of better things
Saw her railers offer
Jagged stones for leavened bread,
Vinegar for wine.
Society, the arrogant, the merciless,
The proper,
Smothered in her stunted soul
All hint of the Divine.

To pay in pain her sin's price
She bowed beneath the goading
Of dreary prison servitude,
Branding deep as fire!
She, the luckless hungerer,
So careless to foreboding,
Alive to every tingling pulse
Of passionate desire.

And now her sister Magdalenes
Are calling to her—calling
Softlier and kindlier
Than all the saints of God,
Heedless of the gray dawn,
Singing, laughing, brawling,
Down the leery lane of lies
The Pharisees have trod.

CELIA

She knew the music of the spheres.
She knew the whisper of the trees.
And in her sleep at times her soul
Voiced saddest threnodies
To spring and sylvan song and lute,
And love, sown over-late for fruit.

It may be I should not have heard
Her blessed sleep confessionals.
It may be I should not have shared
With her the stars' recessional.
Yet through their light I've found in prayer
Her sacrificial altars there!

SLIVERS

Hippodrome Clown

Crowned with a name that only he
Of all his kind could bear with grace,
Unspoiled by cheap publicity
That conned his name from place to place,
He played the clumsy fool, and hid
So well beneath his painted smile
A heart that all the Fates had chid,
The world looked on and laughed the while.

Laughed till his mimic days were done,
Till swift and tragically late,
It recognized in Thalia's son
The elements that made him great.
But now—for this is life—his worth
That reached the depths of those who see
Will loud be sung about the earth
In immemorial threnody.

A child of freedom-loving ways,
A youth who could not offer less
Than perfect balance all his days
Of truth and human tenderness.
A prince of clowns! whose memory wakes
So many dreams of fun again
That through our tears the laughter breaks
Like summer sunshine through the rain.

IN MEMORIAM

Her spirit lives and moves among us still,
Bringing to each who claimed her once as friend
The comfort now of knowing her short life
Was such a glorious means to a great end.

We can not count her length of life by years.
Her days are measured by the lasting good
Which silently but surely she performed
In deeds reflecting noble womanhood.

A sudden gust may smite a half-blown rose
And strew its petals on the garden bed.
The fragrance stays. With every gentle breeze
We quaff its perfume though the rose is dead.

So we, her friends, whom she has left behind,
Still feel her living presence ever near—
A scented zephyr from the aisles of time
To sweep our gardened memories with cheer.

TO CHARLES FROHMAN

Your work is done. And yet across the space
The sighing sea-waves seem to lisp your name
Softly with awe, as conscious of your fame,
They feared to stir the vengers of your race.
For you were doomed by treacherous disgrace
That sent the breach through *Lusitania's* frame
To die, before a single warning came—
You who were born to meet death face to face!

April—Marching

Yet, now, for all death's issues, you are ours!
The stage, more plastic, lies within your reach,
Purged by your truth, and tempered by your powers
The players pass before the waiting throng
Sustained as if your lips had still the speech
To tune their effort into endless song.

LINCOLN

He came when statesmen had forgot
How common was the human lot,
And just, equality—and hot
Grim war and hate;
Or what made law divine and what
Made nations great!

Like one who, purged of sham and fears,
Still fronts the sun, though anguished years
Are darkening in a vale of tears
His span of life,
For all that Freedom pioneers
He stemmed the strife.

So strong! so meek! through all the lanes
Of garnered life his memory reigns
Sweet as a psalm. And naught remains
But what empowers
Truth's deep unutterable gains
Which he made ours.

DOG-PAL

You can't have gone so very far.
It seems you must be hidin'.
Maybe you've chased a shootin' star
Or bayed the moon's deridin'.

You crazy little wild hound-pup!
All night I've been hallooin'
And whistlin' for you! There's your cup,
And oatmeal gruel stewin',—

Your collar hangin' from the shelf
All scratched from furious itchin',
So sated with your doggish self,
It's smellin' up the kitchen!

And over by the pantry door—
Your shredded crimson pillow,
White pokin' through the holes you tore
The day I used the willow.

It can't be you have gone for good!
It seems you must be playin'
Some naughty trick of puppyhood
On me for my dismayin'.

A half-chewed shoe, a stolen chop,
A new-uprooted garden,
A murdered cat or scratched-up crop
Are acts I well might pardon.

April—Marching

But never comin' home again
Through game- and fishin' season,
Trailin' the hills in sun or rain,
Is nothin' short of treason!

It's sheer ungratefulness! It's sin
That sets my heart to achin'
With missin' of you barkin' in,
Your long, straight tail-piece shakin'.

With missin' of you rushin' on,
Ears forward bent, eyes gleamin'—
Just you and me, at gypsy dawn,
With the red sunrise streamin'!

Sure you can't have gone so far!
It seems you must be hidin'!
Maybe you've chased a shootin' star
Or bayed the moon's deridin'.

But O Dog-Pal, where'er you are,
My love, my love's abidin'!

A BIRDCAGE COMEDY

I heard you singing in your tarnished cage
For the song's sake, not the pittance wage
That mortals sing for. You had naught to gain
Cooped in your narrow prison. Yet you trilled
Sweet as a skylark till your rapture filled
The tawdry store behind the window-pane.

Listening, I wondered if your lyric soul
Dreamed, if indeed birds can, of sunny hours
And joyous winging among tropic flowers
Where carking capture never pierced its dole.

Perhaps beyond the bondage of your wires
You joined your warble to the lilting choirs
Of happier birds, perched on some tangled branch
Of forest-jungle, confident and free,

Waking the treetops with mad minstrelsy.
At least, as glad as theirs your avalanche
Of merry carols fell. Who watched you hop
From perch to perch in caged imprisonment
Seemed feign to look upon your strange content
As but a comic trifle of the shop.

MOTHER O' MINE

Yours is the face that always smiled
With virgin sweetness through its tears,
And silvered like a halo light
The wake of all my childhood's years,
Mother o' mine.

Yours is the heart where warmth so burned
With passion's holy love of truth,
That once to feel its beating served
To temper all my wayward youth,
Mother o' mine.

Yours is the soul—ah purging grace!
That sweetens still my days with good,
Till even in my dreams I link
God with your sacred motherhood,
Mother o' mine!

TRIBUTE TO THE SPIRIT OF MOTHER-
HOOD

O Mother, through your spirit's dear returning
You keep us now as pure as in that spring
When from your sacred lips we took the learning
That changed our seed-time to first blossoming.

April—Marching

O Mother, in your spirit's purging fire
Our souls as tempered are as in that June
When toward the distant goals of our desire
You sent us forth to keep the world in tune.

Oh, through the wealth of your full harvest's
reaping
Our joy so deepens that when day unfurls
Her crimson dawn, and wakes the east from
sleeping,
Our eyes can smile and change their tears to pearls.

Mother, we feel you watch your children weaving
Out of your strands of life a mesh of gold,
Weaving the memories, that past all believing,
Brighten the meaning of your days untold.

The world grows calm. Through your soul's dear
returning
The woodnotes throb more softly in the night.
The red rose burgeons with a deeper burning
And birdlings gentlier fold their distant flight.

Eternal Mother! ever, ever gazing
On us, your children, from your quiet rest,
Your radiant smile has set the pathway blazing
That leads the Pilgrim toward the purple west.

“TRAUMEREI”

A cello's carol calls me in the dark,
I'm back at Gallironti's where we dined,
Keen for a gypsy-free Bohemian lark,
Where all the tables should be richly wined.
I see around me faces deeply lined—
Crude painted faces; lazy opiate eyes,
And hear their empty mocking mirth that lies!

Above the clinking glasses and the din
Of screeching ragtime, haunting, floats the tune
Of tender “Traumerei”—played by a thin,
Half-crazy, famished minstrel of the moon.
A hint of heaven! forgotten all too soon.
Your eyes seek mine, and through a silvering mist
Opens your soul and call my own to tryst.

And now those same notes reach me in the dark!
I'm back at Gallironti's where we dined,
Keen for a gypsy-free Bohemian lark,
Where all the tables should be richly wined.
Yet not of these does “Traumerei” remind.
Dear Love, I only see your seeking eyes
That hold my own in fields of Paradise!

SOFT IN THE APRIL DUSK

Soft in the April dusk,
Fragrant and fair,
Lilies and lilac-musk
Scenting the air,
Comes the dear face of her,
Crowning lost dreams.
Ah! but the grace of her
Quickens, it seems,
Swifter than April hours
Sun-kissed with light,
Surer than silver showers
Misting the night,
All the dear garden flowers—
Once, our delight!

Glad-souled the eyes of her
Challenge my fears.
Rich-toned the voice of her
Comforts and cheers.
Rose-soft the lips of her
Kiss back my tears.
Thus through my visioning,
Tender and sweet,
Comes she—a bird on wing—
Sudden and fleet,
Making my winnowing years more complete.

HERO WORSHIP

I question neither "where" nor "why":
I only know He's gone,
Swift as a rainbow from the sky
Where God's glory shone.

And now I'll take the trail He lit
Where silver sunsets gleamed,
Wiser for having loved a bit,
Gladder for having dreamed.

What if I never glanced His sight,
Or heard His footfall's stir?
Must one be born a Canaanite
To be a worshipper?

ORTHODOXY

They told me I should seek the grail
At the white surpliced chancel-rail,
Kneeling in prayer, with thought intent
Upon the blessed sacrament.

So orthodox were they—and I,
A child whose freedom touched the sky!

Swift to the desert then I turned
And sought God where the white sands burned.
I found Him comrade-like and wise.
I found the Grail-Cup in His eyes,
And drank deep of its wine.

“All roads lead to Palestine”
God said.
“But neither You nor They
Can make the journey in a day.”

IDENTITY

I can not wear a humble mien
Or walk a humble mile,
Who know the ways of things unseen
And court the red dawn's smile.

My soul is sister to the sky.
My heart—to earth and sea.
A thousand years may tiptoe by
And leave no mark on me,

Who hold a lease on loveliness,
A kinship with the stars,
And cloak my dreams in royal dress
When Sleep lets down the bars.

YOUTH'S REQUIEM

What a comrade Youth has been
All the blossomy way.
Now I call my frail dreams in
From their maiden play.

Dreams of life that woven are
On a flaming loom,
Threaded to a silver star,
Warp and woof a' bloom.

Youth so joyous! Youth so fleet!
Age shall never know
How I'll hold your passion, Sweet,
Down the years that blow.

PHILOSOPHY

In spite of sin, in spite of scars,
In spite of all my past may hold,
I'll thread my future to the stars
And weave a cloak of gold.

For Love and Law have fashioned this—
That out of sorrow Peace shall spring,
And souls that burst their chrysalis
Shall fly on gorgeous wing.

GLADNESS

Gladness is—what?
Singing of spring with birds on the wing?
Perish the thought!

The day may be dark
With the sun at its noon.
And birds may sing only regret
In their tune.

What of the sunshine?
What of the flower?
What of time? What of space
In the blank of one hour?

Unless in this chaos
Of living and learning
Comes Love with his magic
And measureless yearning!

Fills the lark with his trill!
Tints the rose with his blush!
Brings to life what lay still
Just before in Death's hush!

Ah—Gladness is that!

CHALLENGE

Challenge I fling to the morning.
Challenge I fling to the noon.
Challenge I fling to the night wind
When the day wanes soon.

Life, I will fight to the finish.
Broken, I'll still defy.
And drain my cup to the bitter dregs
With a laugh when it's time to die.

But lest you brand me a coward
Because if I dared to pause
For a thought of the joy that might have been
Or a dream of the faith that was,

I might lose my grip like a puppet
And drivel in sore disgrace,
Life, I hurl down the gauntlet
And battle you face to face!

Though there's little to gain by living,
And nothing to lose by death,
The world shall not dub me "quitter"
As long as my soul draws breath.

For the moment my senses stagger
I'll summon with bugle-blare
The ghosts of the world's great women
To quicken me—fire and prayer!

April—Marching

Brunhild and Maria Theresa,
Alcestis, Pompilia, Ruth,
Jeanne d'Arc, Boadicea and Vashti,
St. Agnes—Patron of Truth!

And they, if my spirit waver,
Will metal my courage, Life,
For the test of the thickest tumult
That ever was born of strife.

So up! and to arms! and meet me!
Nor think you can claim your due
Because you have flayed and scarred me,
And broken my heart in two.

Undaunted, I fling you my challenge
To ring to the ends of earth.
Life, I was born to conquer!
And Death shall but prove my Birth!

A THANKSGIVING PRAYER

From rosy dawn till dusk when purple twilight
Brought to each Pilgrim heart a deep sweet peace,
Wafted the murmuring strain of prayer and praises
Whose vibrant harmony can never cease.

Men with strong hearts! women with souls of
virtue!
Only a small, small band, but true and tried!
Mindful to thank their Maker for the triumph
That made men's souls through Freedom sanctified.

God of our Fathers, from the mad confusion
And din and roar of life let men's minds stray
To bless this Pilgrim heritage of freedom
That makes each soul a citadel today.

Grant that our prayer may waft its strain of praises
High, high to heaven, till every vibrant chord,
Grown faint at last, down from the heights may
echo
A nation's "alleluia" unto God.

PRAYER FOR COURAGE

When loneliness shall fill my cup,
God, keep me unafraid
To hold my proud head—smiling—up,
And march as on parade!

SEA WAVES

In June I heard the sea waves call
Across an ebbing tide,
More desolate than wind or storm,
And more unsatisfied.

Yet oh I loved their hungry song,
For to the heart of me
They sang of golden summer dreams
Long drifted out to sea.

SONG OF A COUNTRY LANE

My heart feels only pity
And my soul feels pain
For folk in the city
When it's spring again,

Where it's brick for a feather,
And wall for a tree,
And stone for a heather
And moth for a bee.

April—Marching

A city shares no glory
With field and brook,
Or fathoms the old story
Of the Holy Book

From wide white spaces
Or blue gold hills,
Or young lambs' faces
Or April squills.

And that is why I pity,
When spring shuts down,
The folk in the city
And folk in the town

Who never searched a rafter
For a phoebe's nest,
Or laughed spring's laughter,
Or shared spring's zest.

For a city men can fashion
With their hands and brain
Of steel, stone and passion
And sweat and pain—

But meadow, field and prairie
And hill and lea
God made with aid of fairy
For such as me.

THE SONG SPARROW

The song sparrow's come to my orchard again.
Dear little Quaker-Coat, simple and cheery!
And caroled his prelude to spring in the rain,
Banishing doubt from my heart winter-weary.

The March dirges howl round his iced perch.
Sleet crackles down in a shivering sally.
But only of larches he sings, and of birch
Burgeoning green with the bloom in the valley.

Of murmuring whisper astir in the leaves,
Dew in the dawn on the hills pearly-heathered,
And sedges and hollyhocks bent to the breeze,
Swaying to troubadours gaudier feathered.

Dear little Song Sparrow, humble and true!
Championing happiness, vanquishing sorrow,
Could I but pattern my faith after you,
Glad would I welcome the gift of tomorrow!

*Sweet! sweet! sweet!!
Life is very fair.
Sweet! sweet! sweet!!
Love is everywhere!*

JONQUILS

A jug of jonquils sweet
On a tenement sill in spring
Far down on Hester street.
A jug of jonquils sweet!
But oh what a tender treat!
How their yellow trumpets sing
To those who pause on their beat
Glad-eyed and wondering!

BLUEBIRD

Bluebird, bluebird, in the spring,
Set my heart to caroling
As I watch your beauty gleam
Over meadow-land and stream.
Teach me how to quell despair,
O thou Turquoise of the Air,
How to keep my dust-fringed eyes
Clear, to see the starry skies.
Never other bird for me
Sings with such sweet ecstasy.
Never other bird but you
Turns my grayness swift to blue.
All the winter long I yearn
For your flashing glad return,
To ease my soul of hungering,
Bluebird, bluebird, in the spring.

TO A BIRD IN FLANDERS

When Flemish fields were white with spring,
I heard a birdnote sound
A clarion to the slumbering
Beneath God's battleground.

It winnowed through the April leaves.
It tuned the countryside.
It trembled through the bluebell sheaves
Like music on a tide.

It sang of Flemish pastorals
From dear dead days of old—
Of lowing cattle in their stalls
And sheep within their fold,

Of shepherds on the high hilltops
And plowboys in the lea,
And sunshine quickening the crops
From valley to the sea.

And not one note of martial stress
Or caroled hint of wrong!
Only a glad forgetfulness
Of everything but song!

Across that Flemish field it poured,
And as I caught its strain,
I felt my spirit sheathe its sword
And faith come back again!

THE TAVERN

I built a tavern in my heart
Of memory-woof and rafter,
Where I could smoke a pipe of dreams,
And drink a cup of laughter.

And all along the broad highway,
And low among the heather,
I called my absent comrades back
To break bread together.

I built a tavern in my heart,
And this—my only reason:
To keep love's hearth-fire burning bright
From season unto season.

WANDERER'S SONG

I still might be a stay-at-home
With eyes that look behind,
A grumpy, *dumpy stay-at-home
With worn-out rusty dreams
If I had had like some lads
A mother deaf and blind
To lure of gypsy roamings where
The Highway gleams.

I still might be a stay-at-home
If when the choosing came,
(I mark me yet the hearth-fire,
How snug it was and bright!)
My mother had not read my heart
Youth-rent with dream and flame,
And sent me battle-girded forth
To feast and fight!

I still might be a stay-at-home
But oh how better far
To roam the gorgeous gypsy world
With singing soul on wing,
Hearing in stir of vine and bough,
Breaker and wind and star,
My mother's benison that crowns
My journeying!

THE FORK OF THE ROAD

It's little we know what Fate decrees
When two straight roads diverge,
And each is a fair Hesperides
That calls with a gypsy urge.

We may come to the fork of a road in spring,
Crowned by a cobalt sky,
And choose the "right" for our journeying
With never a question "why"—

But it's little we know when the acorns fall
Under the red oaks' flame,
That if we had followed the "left" road's call,
Life would have been the same.

WOODS IN MARCH

At Ponkapoag a budding birch
Flashed scarlet through the snow.
At Houghton's Pond, on icy perch
Two robins twittered low.

And out upon the Blue Hill Road,
In spite of wind and sleet,
A little hint of April glowed
From unexplored retreat!

At Ponkapoag my heart took flame.
At Houghton's Pond it woke.
But when to Blue Hill Road I came
It leaped to song—and broke

Into a myriad notes that swirled
Like fairy folk on wing,
To tell the sleeping winter world
That I had found the spring!

A CYCLE OF SEASONS

January—

The year's birth or the soul's,
Whiche'er it be,
New pathways trail their glory
To the sea.
New days dawn brighter
And new hopes hold store
Of love and laughter
And an open door!

February—

February, though we blame
You for being too severe
Sometimes with us, just the same,
You have given us Leap-Year,
Good Saint Valentine's and fun,
Lincoln, too, and Washington.

March—

No cloud so dark, but what behind
Its lining silver hovers.
No March so wild in storm or wind,
But somewhere one discovers
A clump of pussywillows shined
And Spring's first crocus lovers.

April—Marching

April—

Lute notes of April!
Lark and daffodil!
Shadow and silence
Over violet hill!
Leafing of branches,
Flowering of vine!
April is God's month.
That's why Love's divine.

May—

May, you appear like a bride of delight,
Clothed in your loveliness, shimmering, bright.
Hair the sun's glory, and eyes the sky's blue,
Slippers the tinselled pale silver of dew,
Veil the cloud patches, and dress the soft glow
Of apple- and cherry- and pear- and peach-
 blow.
I wonder how Nature can give you away,
Beautiful, blossoming, wonderful May!

June—

I'd like to fill a rose-jar
With red June roses,
And ship them on a silver spar
Upon a dream away,
To bear the summer's passion
In magic fairy fashion
To where the lonely-hearted are
From Cairo to Cathay.

April—Marching

July—

Elderberry! huckleberry! blueberry vine!
Wild currants on a bush, red as wine!
Honied hills of clover! waving fields of rye!
Who wouldn't be a rover—in July!

August—

A blackbird trills from a boxwood spray.
A locust drones in the green.
And a merry little cricket,
Hidden in the hay,
Strums on his tambourine.
They say that in August the "dog days" come,
But there's never a plague of dogs.
Oh it's heigh-diddle-diddle
To the insects' fiddle
For the bees and the beetles and the frogs!

September—

A pocketful of memories!
A bagful of song!
A russet road's a glad road
To trail along,
With the hum of the grain sheaves
Bent to the breeze,
And the crisp sharp crackle
Of feet in the leaves.
The snack of the fire
In days frost-cool,
And the shout of the children

April—Marching

Going back to school—
A russet road's a glad road
But only he
Can listen to its symphony
Who travels—free!

October—

Harvest Moon, what do you spy?
Grain fields gleaned, and bins stack high.

Harvest Moon, what do you know?
The sower's joy in things that grow.

Harvest Moon, what do you ween
Is the richest harvest you have seen?

*Golden deeds sown wise in youth,
Grown in age to the fruitage truth.*

November—

November! and a white ground
With tracks in the braken!
Musk ox and beaver!
Caribou and hare!
Love's song of living,
The glory of Thanksgiving,
And the strapping and the trapping
Of the game in its lair!
The frost in the crepuscule
From white stars shaken!
November!—and a white ground
With snow in the air!

December—

Swift the year's winging!
Holly and fir,
And star in the east for the worshipper!
Garner its measure:
Gladness and sorrow,
Travail and treasure,
Now ere tomorrow!
Swift the year's winging!
Joy be its leaven!
Take the road—singing.
God's in His heaven!

PRAIRIES

Prairies, that our love may last,
Let me wander forth awhile,
To the city's multitude
Of towered Babels, mile on mile.

Back to palaces of steel
Where all day long men ply their trade,
Back to canyoned avenues
Where pomp and poverty parade.

Prairies, that our love may last,
Let me wander forth awhile
To feast or hunger with the crowds,
Ere I forget to smile.

QUATRAIN

He lives most wisely who can truly say,
When toil is ended, and the day is done,
That one kind thought or deed throughout the day
Has moved his dark world nearer to the sun.

BRIDGES

He stood and watched from the bridge of love,
Pleading, sad,
As I crossed over the bridge of fame,
Hopeful, glad.

And I thought: "I will drink to its very lees
This cup of life that my selfhood sees,
Ere I lose my power to win and please.
Mere love can wait till tomorrow!"

* * *

I drank the chaff that men call "success."
Prouder then
I turned my steps from the land of Self
Home again.

And I thought: "I'll be glad now of Love's dear
care.
I'll rejoice at the sight of him, waiting there."
But oh! when I looked, the bridge was bare—
And love had died of his sorrow.

THIRD AVENUE

Third Avenue is overrun
With human trafficking and drays,
And where the sun slants overhead
The trestles intercept its rays.

Yet from the sidewalks grim and gray
The Hebrew children laugh and sing,
Dotting the dreary stretch of miles
Like lilies in the fields of spring.

And sometimes here and sometimes there,
Pursuing phantoms in the street,
They scatter, as 'twere morning mist,
The misery of them they meet.

THE CALL OF THE ROAD

Give me one fleeting glimpse of country road
With spiral swerve
And moonlit silhouette of fir and pine
On crusted curve!
Give me the sheen of snow-clad hill,
The tinkling sleighbells' silver trill,
And I'll forget the shriek and shrill
Of crowded city's roar.

April—Marching

Give me one fleeting glimpse of country road
With morning dew
Beading the tansy and the mignonette
With pearly hue.
Give me the chirping cricket-call,
The goldenrod along the wall,
And I'll return—whate'er befall—
To paradise once more!

WAX WINGS

Out where the sky and the snow-capped hills
Meet in a line of blue,
There startled a vision of silver sheen
That shrouded the peaks and all between
In a mist of pale gray hue.

I watched and nearer, nearer came,
Like phantom-flashing ghosts,
The wax-wings in a murmuring wave,
So musical and unafraid
I blessed their whirring hosts.

