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THE ROSE

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

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THE ROSE

By

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

Decorated by

Emily Hall Chamberlain

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JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

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THE ROSE

IT tossed its head at
the wooing breeze;

And the sun, like
a bashful swain,

Beamed on it
through the waving trees

With a passion all in vain,—

For my rose laughed
in a crimson glee,

And hid in the leaves
in wait for me.

The honey-bee
came there to sing

His love through
the languid hours,

And vaunt of his hives,
as a proud old king

Might boast of his
palace-towers:

But my rose bowed
in a mockery,

And hid in the leaves
in wait for me.

The humming-bird,
like a courtier gay,

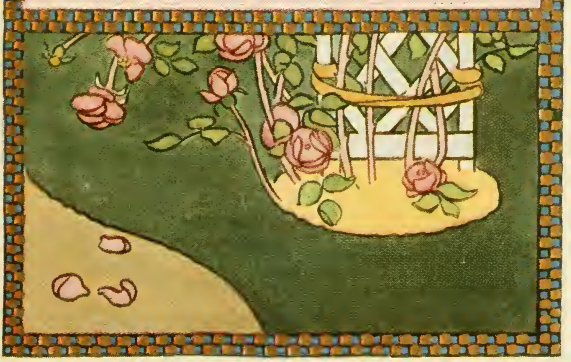
Dipped down with
a dalliant song,

And twanged his wings
through the roundelay

Of love the whole day long:

Yet my rose turned
from his minstrelsy

And hid in the leaves
in wait for me.



The firefly came
in the twilight dim

My red, red rose to woo—

Till quenched was the
flame of love in him

And the light of
his lantern too,

As my rose wept
with dewdrops three

And hid in the leaves
in wait for me.

And I said: I will cull
my own sweet rose—

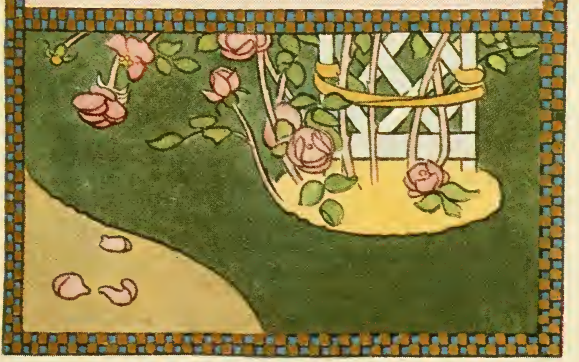
Some day I will claim as mine

The priceless worth of
the flower that knows

No change, but a
bloom divine—

The bloom of a
fadeless constancy

That hides in the leaves
in wait for me!



But time passed by
in a strange disguise,

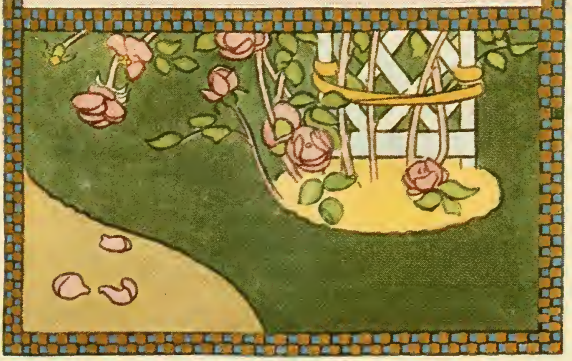
And I marked it not, but lay

In a lazy dream,
with drowsy eyes,

Till the summer slipped away,

And a chill wind sang
in a minor key:

"Where is the rose
that waits for thee?"



I dream to-day,
o'er a purple stain
Of bloom on a withered stalk,
Pelted down by the autumn rain
In the dust of the garden-walk,
That an Angel-rose
in the world to be
Will hide in the leaves
in wait for me.

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