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ECHO

Newbold Noyes



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ECHO

and Other Verses

BY
NEWBOLD NOYES



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1916

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no. 1.

TO
ALEXANDRA

Certain of the poems contained in this little book have appeared previously in the *Yale Literary Magazine*. The author wishes to make all due acknowledgment to the editors of that publication for the privilege of reprinting them.

N. N.

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ECHO AND OTHER VERSES

ECHO

(The scene is in the hills. Dusk is beginning to fall. Somewhere in the blossoms of a wild cherry tree a bird is singing its vesper hymn. Enter the little shepherdess singing.)

SONG

Whispered thy voice to me,
Clear through the breathless night;
Mockingly, tenderly,
Whispered thy voice to me;
Vainly I sought for thee.
Was it some wand'ring sprite
Whispered thy voice to me,
Clear through the breathless night?

[As she finishes singing, she has reached the wild cherry tree and stands gazing wistfully at the grey-blue hills.]

SHEPHERDESS

This surely is the spot where yestereve
I stood and heard her voice — her golden voice
That called to me across the mist-veiled fields!
We spoke; she bade me come to her; but when

I went with gladness singing in my heart
To this new friend, alas, she'd gone away,
And though I called and called, no answer
came

Through the sweet dusk. Perhaps she has
come back ;

Perhaps she did not understand. Once more
I'll call. Ah, maybe she'll be there to hear!

[*She calls*]

O little friend, have you come back again?

[*And from the hills, clear and sweet comes
a voice.*]

ECHO

Again!

SHEPHERDESS

She's there — she came once more! Ah, happy
heart!

That made me come once more to seek, though
I,

Blind doubter, feared she'd not come back to
me.

How sweet the falling dusk — no more alone!
Listen, my heart, and I'll call once again.

[*She calls*]

O little friend, I came to you last night
After we spoke, but you had flown away
As some wild sprite. Tell me, were you afraid?

[2]

ECHO

Afraid.

SHEPHERDESS

But why, ah, why. See, see; I'm just a little
girl —

A little, lonely girl. So hungry, dear,
For some one who would tend the flocks with
me,

With me walk hand in hand through those
sweet fields.

Always I sing alone. Ah, little friend,
Will you not sing with me tonight? Say, yes!

ECHO

Yes.

[She sings with Echo]

Dusk creeps across the lonely fields
On swiftly moving, velvet feet,
And all the sunkissed landscape yields
To this young lover, brave and sweet.

Today the birds and opal sky;
Tomorrow gone! The chill winds moan
To lull me to my dreams, and I
Am princess of it all — alone.

*[The shepherdess breaks off with a little
catch in her voice that is almost a sob.]*

SHEPHERDESS

The song goes on, yet I can sing no more.

Ah, little new-found friend, it's been so long
Since first I prayed for you. A lonely child,
I've watched my flocks alone; alone I've
watched

God's clouds drift by — white ships upon a sea
Of deep, deep blue. I've heard the wild birds
sing

And longed to share their song. I've watched
the dawn

Kiss blushes to the cheeks of drowsy skies,
And twilight shadows lull the splendid day
To night's young arms. Always alone I've
watched,

And wondered at the hunger in my heart.

And now you've come and oh, my heart is
glad —

You will not leave me now. You'll always
stay?

ECHO

Always stay!

SHEPHERDESS

Then now I come. Ah, swift, my weary feet,
Bear me to her whom I have sought so long.

Once more — once more! Tell me you're wait-
ing, dear.

ECHO

Waiting, dear.

[She laughs happily and exits, singing softly as she goes.]

An angel, stealing softly from the skies,
Bent down and kissed the brow of sleeping
spring,

Who stirred and, smiling, opened glad young
eyes.

And in the dawn a bird began to sing.

So you came softly to a heart that lay
Through the long night alone, nor dreamed of
spring;

And in the ruddy flush of coming day,
The world seemed sweet — my heart began to
sing.

[As her voice dies away, the birds' song is heard once more. Then everything is very still in the hushed twilight. And after a pause, very faintly in the distance comes the voice of the little shepherdess]

O little friend, I cannot find you, dear;
And I am weary, frightened, and alone.

THE ROSES OF RIMINI

How fair the garden smiled that day! The
very birds sang joyously;
Above the sunkissed marble bench each crimson
rose with passion shook,
And sunlight fell on Rimini, on Rimini, on
Rimini —
On two bowed heads in Rimini, above an open
book.

He read — and to that burning tale Francesca
harkened wistfully —
How two had loved long years ago in Arthur's
town of Camelot.
And sunset fell on Rimini, on Rimini, on
Rimini —
As hand touched hand in Rimini, fair honor
was forgot.

Then far beneath the distant hills grey shad-
ows lengthened tenderly;
Unheeded on the carven bench lay the sad tale
of Guinevere.
And twilight fell on Rimini, on Rimini, on
Rimini —
As lips touched lips in Rimini, a single star
shone clear.

The crimson roses swayed and shook, and then
they glowed more ruddily.
One stood alone with haunted eyes where heart
to heart these two had clung,
And black night fell on Rimini, on Rimini, on
Rimini —
And all was still in Rimini where late the birds
had sung.

KIT MARLOWE

KIT MARLOWE stood in the tavern hall,
Head thrown back and his ruff awry;
Stood with his back to the smoke-stained wall,
And the devil's light was in his eye,
The lace on his sleeve was stained with wine.
He laughed aloud in the candle shine;
Reckless and straight in his hot youth's pride:
"Wine! bring us wine!" Kit Marlowe cried.

He lifted the brimming cup they brought,
Brushed from his brow his curls' bright gold:
"To grey-eyed Nell who will wince at naught!"
And he drew a rose from his doublet's fold.
"Lad, dost thou envy the bee that sips
From the fair red flower of Nell's sweet lips?"
"This rose was hers?" quoth the man at his
side.
And, "Aye," as he kissed it, Kit replied.

The rose was dashed from the lips that kissed,
And another blossomed above his heart.
"Let her kiss thee now!" Nell's lover hissed;
"Let her kiss thee swift, ere thy soul depart.
Thine is the rose, but mine her pledge!"
Kit Marlowe swayed at the table's edge;
His face was white and his dark eyes wide,
But, "The rose was sweet," Kit Marlowe
sighed.

Over his heart the red stain spread,
And down 'mid the scattered cards and wine,
Wearily, slowly sank Marlowe's head:
"Aye, thine was her pledge, but the rose is
mine,
And there's that in the rose thou shalt never see,
Dreams and passion and mystery —
Nell's soul! But she'll make thee a comely
bride."
And laughing softly, Kit Marlowe died.

IN PLINY'S GARDEN

RONDEAU

FRIEND, pause a while, and dream with me
Beside this lake where Pliny dreamed,
On whose bowed head the same stars gleamed
That formed white Dian's panoply.
Old stars, doth it seem long to thee?

Strange, this same silver moonlight streamed
On gardens that as fragrant seemed.
Did these same winds plead wistfully,
"Friend, pause a while"?

Friend of my heart, it well may be
That you may pass some day where we
Together stood and little deemed
How cunningly the grey fates schemed
To part us. Then, in memory,
Friend, pause a while.

AMALFI

NESTLING in shadow, close to rocks green-grey
Where olive trees are trembling half awake,
A rose is cradled far above the bay,
Lulled by the music which the sea winds make.
The sun has clasped the world in warm embrace ;
She sleeps, and sleeping smiles in sweet content,
Beneath a canopy of cloud-spun lace
Woven from mist to fairy filament.

Only the thrush dares sing ; and as the sun
Slips drowsily into the dark'ning sea,
The crystal song thrills upward ; one by one
The stars creep forth to listen wistfully ;
The landscape fades as distant hills grow dim ;
The world has heard the golden vesper hymn.

BY THE SEA

ONCE on a summer's day I watched the sea —
A green-clad, whispering maiden, half asleep,
Whose white arms stretched across the reefs to
me,

Whose voice was music, and whose eyes were
deep.

O voice which was as her voice — voice of gold!
O eyes which were as her eyes — sweet and cold!

Then on a winter's day I watched once more:
Grey wolves that snarled and leapt and fell
away

To leap again, white fanged, against the shore
They once caressed upon a summer's day —
O thou to whom I gave my heart to hold,
Who rent thy plaything when the toy was old!

CÆTERIS PARITER

CHANCE led me from the paths my feet had
known,
And round me things unspeakable made faint
The senses, blighting with unchallenged taint
The gipsy winds of June. I stood alone
Where I had dreamed to find my path most fair,
And stared with dreadful eyes at what was
there.

I stood, heartsick until I raised my eyes:
And then I saw a little beggar-maid
Who passed with brave glance, calm and un-
dismayed,
Fixed on the sunset glory in the skies.
She walked enchanted, seeing nothing base —
And oh, the mirrored sweetness in her face.

GIPSY SONG

THERE'S a ruddy line of gold that marks where
sun and earth have kissed,
And the open trail, the trail we tread, leads to
it cross the hill,
While the valley stretching from our feet is
drenched in fragrant mist ;
All the world God gives to you and me, dear
heart, lies hushed and still.
Just a wand'ring gipsy breeze
Whisp'ring to the willow trees,
And the distance-sweetened whistling of a
lonely whippoorwill.

Gipsy maid with tangled curls and laughing
eyes that shine spring-clear,
See! the star that shines above the hills, how
far and pale and fair!
Guiding ever to the westward it is calling to us,
dear,
And the open trail, the trail we tread, is ever
leading there.
Singing joyous, hand in hand
Down the trail to Gipsy-land,
We who heard the open calling and who did not
question where.

THE GAME

FIGHT a good fight,
Play a square game,
Despise a lie,
Make a clean name,

Be glad of life,
Stick to your friends,
Pray to your God —
So the game ends.

A PORTRAIT

SONNET

A GOLDEN beam, light as a child's caress,
Fell softly on the small, pathetic face —
So white, so fair, so full of gentle grace —
And lingering, touched the quaint, high-girdled
dress
Of oddly fashioned, simple loveliness —
All pale old rose, and ivory-tinted lace.
And from the lilac shadow's soft embrace
The portrait stood in all its loneliness.

The wistful lips might almost speak, it seems ;
Whisper the tale the pleading eyes would
tell —
Eyes that have searched so long and never
found ;
Such tired eyes, so full of broken dreams ;
But darkness comes to break the fairy spell ;
The wistful lips are still in silence bound.

THE WATCHER

Ah, how long the watch I'm keeping
While my love lies softly sleeping,
Still and lovely in the moonlight, with the
 shadowed, misty veil
Of her hair to hide the whiteness
Of her shoulders. With what lightness
Rest the dark, caressing lashes on the velvet
 cheek so pale!

Dead, they say. So, patient, kneeling
I shall watch till dawn comes stealing
From the dusky purple shadows. Then from
 kneeling I shall rise.
Gently in my arms I'll take her,
As of old a kiss shall wake her,
Lest she tremble at the strangeness of a lonely
 paradise.

SONNET

HAVE done with discourse, for my heart is sick
Of empty speech and vain philosophies ;
Sick, sick — till children's songs and whisp'ring
trees
Are hollow sounds. Yet words fall swift and
thick —
Dead leaves that smother! Once my heart beat
quick
With youth and faith; and then you taught me
seize
Your false books, crying, "Virtue's born of
these!"
And strove to show me light by rhetoric.
Have done! My heart is breaking. I have
heard
You overlong. Now, doubting all things true,
I'll hear a girl's low laugh, a singing bird;
Then send your pedant teachings back to you,
Singing — ah, bravely — in the splendid truth:
"Virtue is his who holds the heart of Youth!"

DUSK

A SINGLE, thin-spun line of flaming gold
Showed where the sun had slipped away to rest ;
Beneath the lilac mountains in the west
Grey shadows deepened, blues became more bold.

Then from the velvet folds of night's grey gown,
Low to the hills a single jewel shone
Pale in the twilight, sovereign, alone —
Fairer than ever blazed in royal crown.

FAITH

WHEN the grey ghosts of despair
Clutch our dreams all young and fair,
Comrades, shall we then, despairing,
Cease to dream or trust or dare —
Yielding meekly, drifting weakly
In despair?

Nay, my comrades; we shall smile
Through the tears that would defile
Our young dreams, and bravely smiling,
Steel our hearts to strife a while.
Scoffed at, taunted — all undaunted
We shall smile!

GARDEN O' DREAMS

I KNEW a garden sweet and fair —
A sunkissed, fragrant, sheltered place ;
There were wild flowers growing there
All careless in their untaught grace.
Flowers I watched so tenderly
Were but the happy dreams o' me.

The shadows were your wind blown hair,
The sunlight was your happy smile,
A spring of dreams was hidden there —
Your eyes, cool, deep ; I knelt awhile
Thereby. Perhaps the frail wild rose
I touched was not your cheek. Who knows?

For dreams are spun from rainbow mist
And rainbow mist must some day break ;
'Twas but a red, red rose I kissed,
Most dear. 'Twas meet that I should wake,
Yet, ah ! how drear the garden seems,
Robbed of the flowers of my dreams.

SEQUOR

ONE sigh — and I shall yield my hand
To thee; then lead me through the night.
One last look back across the hills
So golden in thy glad sunlight.
A singing child is passing by —
One sigh!

One dream! There steals across the fields
The liquid warble of a thrush
So like a little maiden's song
Of long ago. The twilight hush
Did never quite so tender seem —
One dream!

TWO WOMEN

SHE passed: God's sweetest handiwork de-
filed —

A nameless woman, painted, lost to shame.
She touched his sleeve. Until he looked, he
smiled;

Then called her by a vile, unmentioned name.
*She did not blush. Her words were strangely
low:*

“ When I was young you did not treat me so.”

He passed. There came a little hast'ning maid
Who sang because her heart was brave and
sweet,

Who raised her eyes — untroubled, unafraid —
And smiled upon the woman of the street.

*I saw her blush and shudder — understood
That haunting ghost of her lost womanhood.*

THE HYMN

THIS love, my lady, is a throbbing hymn
Sung softly in the temple of each soul
When dusk does shield — the glaring day grown
dim —

Two voices blended to a perfect whole;
Where strength and weakness are dissolved in
one

To sing more sweetly 'neath the golden sun.

So sweet the song of liquid moonlight seems.
Ah, dear, the splendid rise in passion's sway!
Hark how it drifts to that sweet land of dreams
Called Home, where little, star-eyed children
play;

Where you and I may rest awhile, and then
Sing gladly on until the last amen;

THE DESERTED GARDEN

BELoved, last night I sought thee 'neath the
stars

In that still garden where all waits for me,
Yet was I held without by shadow bars.
Canst thou not hear my song — wilt thou not
see?

Ah, Heart o' Mine, thou didst not know 'twas I
Who sang my heart out yestereve to thee;
Thou didst not turn thy head. I heard thee
sigh,
“Strange that a bird would sing so wistfully.”

And when, as was thy wont, thy lips were
pressed
Against our flower, Sweet — I, as of old,
With trembling hands thy wind blown hair
caressed —
I heard thee whisper, shrinking, “I am cold.”

Oh, I have come so far to know thee blind!
And sung so sweet, to find thee strange and
cold!
The drooping rose is all that I may find;
I dreamed thou wouldst be waiting as of old.

INFANTUS AMOR

HOPE, with glad eyes and ruddy golden hair,
Beseeching — died ;
Next, she who stood so sure and tall and fair,
Whom men called Pride ;
And his young Faith, white victim of Despair,
Fell at their side.

Then Youth, his golden Youth, so brave and
wild,
Fled far away.
Only a naked, blinded, shiv'ring child —
Too young to pray,
Who sang no more, whose rose wreath was de-
filed —
Lived out the day.

MAID MARION

MAID MARION, the kind sun sinks, all ruddy
gold, beyond the hill.

The woods are hushed. A single star on night's
grey gown shines pale and far.

A thrush's song — the wind's caress —

Your hand in mine — and oh, how still

The woodland dusk. Ah, Marion, how happy
hunted outlaws are!

Outlawed, they say! I read my laws in you
clear eyes so sweet, so brave.

Unfettered! Yet my heart is bound in two
small hands so soft and brown.

In Nottingham the sheriff's men have dubbed
me "The Enchanted Knave"—

A sorry knave, Maid Marion, who trembles at
a maiden's frown.

Maid Marion, the crystal song that yonder
thrush sings unto you,

The whisp'ring birch, yon murm'ring brook,
the message of the dying sun —

What do they say, these staunch old friends
whom, trusting, I have found most true?

The brook, the sun, the birch, the thrush —
each sings two words: "Maid Marion!"

HOLLY

HOLLY I send to my lady so fair, holly I send
her today;
For like the holly, my lady is jolly — oh,
blithe is my lady and gay.
Laughter as sweet as the sleigh bells at dawn,
eyes clear as stars above snow,
Playful and teasing, bewitchingly pleasing, and
— wholly elusive, you know.

Wholly elusive! The fates seem abusive I've
followed my lady so long —
Followed her laughter that comes drifting after
her, sweeter than ever was song.
Yet there's an end to the journey, I guess; and
if she smile at the end,
Smiling I'll greet her there, and 'twill be sweeter
there — hence this glad holly I'll send.

TO DOROTHY

I SEND my pen with stern command
To write the things I fain would say;
So take it in your slender hand
And bid the poor thing write away.

Think of the things that it might write!
Tenderly foolish — most unwise;
Give it a chance some lonely night,
Out of the reach of spying eyes.

And if it fails in this, my trust,
Lay it upon some shadowed shelf,
Buried in shame and drifting dust,
And I will tell you all — myself!

GRANDEAMUS IGITUR

I saw the tides yearn upward through the night
Toward the young moon they loved all
rev'rently,

I saw my flowers' love for golden light,
The stars that gaze throughout eternity
Upon the sleeping world. Their patience
seemed

So beautiful. This, then, was love, I deemed.

Aye, beautiful. And yet tonight I know
That love of man for maid is not as theirs.
The swift desire — the singing heart — and oh,
The wonder-joy of man who loves and dares
To touch and hold his goddess! Stars and sea,
What joy of yours can match that ecstasy?

DREAMS

IN the land of sunny dreams, almost ages past
it seems,
I believed in tiny fairies as all other kiddies do;
But I'm older now, you see — grown up fast
and horridly —
And I don't know where my little friends have
all gone to.

I was king and you were queen, as today we
might have been
If we hadn't grown so critical and most out-
rageous wise —
Might be back in fairyland, playing joyous,
hand in hand,
Happy in our tiny kingdom in the land beyond
the skies.

Barefoot king and blue-eyed queen — you and
I and meadows green.
Sweetheart, do you still remember each long,
happy day back there —
Each wild, happy plan we made; trusting,
laughing, unafraid,
With a royal crown of daisies on your sunkissed,
golden hair?

But all that has gone before; gone — and
locked the fast closed door,
And we mayn't go back because we heard what
other people said;
Gone our castles, starlit, fair; gone our fairy-
land back there —
To the distant hills where children's dreams lie
broken now and dead.

THE BLUE BIRD

LOVE came! Love came! It was wild and
free;

It rested a moment upon my hand
As a bird might nestle. So tremblingly
I held it close, sought to understand
That my winged dream had come home at last.
Dear, was it strange that I held it fast?

Aye, I held it fast; and the hands that sought
To comfort a little and teach it stay,
Bruised and frightened this love that brought
Heaven awhile, so it flew away.
And I search the dusk for its wild, fleet wings —
But out in the darkness my lost love sings.

ASHES

WE knelt by the fire, you and I, and the heat
of the glowing brands
Crept from its red, red heart of flame out to our
shiv'ring hands —
Out to our hearts till the chill was gone, and
the quiv'ring scarlet flame
Had seared with a brand we two called love.
Slowly the grey dawn came.

We knelt by the fire and watched it die, ashes
of bitter shame.
It had burned so warmly throughout the night!
Now, as the grey dawn came,
The flame that had burned so warm grew dim;
the coals that had glowed so red
Faded before our shiv'ring hands. One of us
whispered, "Dead";
And the echo that came to the whispered word
was all that the other said,

JOURNEY'S END

ALEXANDRA, little lady from an age forgotten
now —

Age of crinolines and lilacs, age of candlelight
and peace —

There was kindness in the magic that has
brought you here somehow,

For I, too, was near forgetting. Even dreams,
when starved, must cease

To enchant us. Then the fragrance of my
dream was born anew,

And the search seemed glad and hopeful for I
knew my dream was true.

For my dream was of the Southland; there were
lilacs everywhere,

And their fragrance drenched the starlight;
there was music hushed and sweet.

So she came, my dear Dream Lady, came and
found me waiting there

Where the willow bent above us. Low she
curtsied. At her feet

I had knelt. We are forgetting that it is no
shame to kneel

To the things we hold most sacred — to the
faith we know is real.

Ashen-gold her hair — the wooing of the breeze
had lured a curl
Till, a rebel from its bondage, it lay softly
'gainst her cheek.
All the gentle poise of woman, all the shyness
of a girl!
Do you wonder that 'twas kneeling that I raised
my eyes to speak —
Raised my eyes and met the pity of her gaze,
wherein I read
That the dream I dared was shattered ere the
gentle words were said?

What was said there 'neath the willow need not
matter here today,
Save the vow that, cross the border, lead by all
that never dies,
I should find her in the starlight, kneel as I
knelt there, and pray
That the weary search be ended — read my
heaven in her eyes.
So I seek — nor have forgotten that dim garden
long ago,
With my Dream Girl in the starlight where the
lilac blossoms grow.

Alexandra, little lady from an age forgotten
now —
Age of crinoline and lilacs, age of candlelight
and peace —
There was kindness in the magic that has
brought you here somehow,
For I, too, was near forgetting. Even dreams,
when starved, must cease
To enchant us. Now the fragrance of my
dreams is born anew,
And the search seems glad and hopeful for I
know my dream is true.

AUTUMN LEAVES

I WATCHED the leaves fall softly yesterday,
Dull red and tarnished gold from yonder tree;
And as I watched, a gipsy breeze at play
Bore them I knew not whither — tenderly.

So we, as spring and summer pass us by,
Dance in the sunlight on the rugged trees,
And are, untaught from whence we came, or
why,
Whirled breathless back to His eternity.

HOW THE ROSES WERE FIRST MADE SWEET

My fairies had lit the silver moon and hung it
with gentle care
At the tip-tip-top of the willow tree in the
Garden-of-Happy-Dreams
Ages and ages ago, my dear. And only the
fairies there
Know of the magic which happens then; and,
curious though it seems,
No one save me has ever heard the tale which
the fairies tell
Of "how the roses were first made sweet by a
little Dream-girl's spell,"
For the fairies say that the world would jeer
If it knew the stories they tell me, dear!

The fairies had fashioned a perfect rose in that
garden of long ago,
And when it was finished the fairy queen had
summoned her elfin band;
So, clad in raiment of rainbow mist tinged with
the sunset's glow,
They gathered. She said, "In the uttermost
parts of this cynical, mortal land,
There dwells a maiden. Her heart is young; all
that is sweet is she;

She shall touch our rose with her gentle hands
that it, too, sweet may be."

Oh, but the fairy queen was wise!

But, then, she had seen the maiden's eyes.

Bound in a thousand moonbeam chains the lit-
tle Dream-girl came.

And her eyes were deep with a maiden's dreams,
her smile was a sacrament,

For all she knew of this earth was joy, nothing
of tears or shame.

And straight to the roses, waiting there, with
eager steps she went;

Kissed each rose with her warm, red lips; passed
with her velvet feet;

And when she had gone, the starlit night was
suddenly wondrous sweet

With the fragrance of each enchanted rose:

So my fairy says — and my fairy knows!

The roses my Dream-girl kissed that night, the
roses which she made sweet,

Bloomed and died. But the fairy folk — my
fairies who never die —

Gathered the petals. Fairy wings, eager and
light and fleet,

Bore them away long years ago. Now from the
starlit sky

They have brought them back to me; whis-
pered low, so nobody else could hear,

“Take them to her who caressed them once.”

And so I have brought them, dear.

And oh, I am sure you will understand

And that you believe in a fairyland!

A THREAT

A MAIDEN of your temperament
Was surely made for sentiment,
And not to be so continent

With all her maiden charm.

So 'twould not be impertinent
If I should — quite by accident!
Speak forth in accents eloquent.

It should not cause alarm.

For, dear, this fact is evident —
That you were made for sentiment,
And so your danger's imminent;

I can't repress my heart!

So, when the time proves provident
For you and me, the incident
That you *may* call most impudent
Will happen ere we part.

MICHAELMAS

TRIOLET

I SEND this sprig of mistletoe
To you. Then bind it in your hair.
'Tis glad, mad Michaelmas, and so
I send you this sprig of mistletoe.
The world is Love's today, you know,
And Love is pleading, "Take his dare."
I send this sprig of mistletoe
To you. Then bind it in your hair.

ST. VALENTINE'S

TRIOLET

HE bears a message back to you —
Dan Cupid does — a happy vow,
So short, yet, oh, so brave and true!
He bears a message back to you;
He smiles when he had read it through;
I wonder are you smiling now.
He bears a message back to you —
Dan Cupid does — a happy vow.

THE SEA GULLS

AN ancient saga tells us how the moon,
Drifting in silver splendor 'mid the stars,
Was loved by and did love the restless sea
With love that was as hopeless as 'twas great.
For though the moon dipped nightly toward
the sea,

And though the sea forever sought the moon,
Some cruel god whose heart was cold to love
Ordained the longed-for kiss should never be.
Then weeping softly in her great despair,
The silver moon sent tears through endless
space

To search forever for the pulsing heart
That lies deep, deep below the sobbing sea.
And as the moon's tears neared the restless deep
They turned from liquid moonlight to white
birds,
And from the sorrow of the weeping moon
God fashioned with His hand the first sea gull.

And still in hopeless eagerness they search
With plaintive, wistful cries for that great
heart
That throbs and surges toward the waiting
moon.

THE SONG OF THE STARS

KNOW you the song that the pale stars sing
Where the snow lies deep and white,
And you greet the sting of the keen, pure air
On a northern winter's night?
When the whole world sleeps save you alone,
And the ghosts of the pine trees stir and moan,
*Oh, hark to the song that the pale stars sing
When the trail lies clean and white!*

They sing the song of a million years
Of waiting and watching there.
'Tis a song of infinite tenderness,
Never a note of despair.
They have seen us shatter our sacred dreams,
But oh, how trusting their low song seems —
*'Tis the lilting song that the pale stars sing
When the trail lies clean and white!*

They have seen men falter and curse and fall,
And they whisper of love and truth.
They know the fetters that bind us all,
But they sing of our unstained youth.
So, weary of scoffing and sick with pain,
Step out on the northern hills again
*And hark to the song that the pale stars sing
When the trail lies clean and white!*

SHE SMILED

SHE smiled — the grey day changed to gold
For me, as always at her smile ;
And by that smile made sudden bold,
Restraint did quit me for a while,
Because it really seemed, you see,
My lady's smile was meant for me.

She listened when I spoke, and slow
Elf-laughter crept into her eyes ;
I saw it there, alas, and so
Gone was my world of sunny skies,
Which was not strange because, you see,
I knew my lady smiled *at* me !

QUESTION AND ANSWER

SHE said, "Nay; tell me, friend; the justice
show

In the grim truth. A butterfly is born
To live but one brief day. Then if the morn
On which the dark is shattered and the glow
Of life shows flame be drab — and bleak winds
blow

If it should rain — till, bruised, with brave
wings torn,

It welcomes night and death: may it not scorn
The myths of sunlit worlds? 'Twere fairer so.
Within it surged the glamour of its hopes;
It did not understand a world of pain.

Where were the singing birds, the gentle slopes
Where daisies grew? — Naught but the cruel
rain.

It dreamed of flowers and of golden flight —
And found the day more bitter than the night."

I answered, "Yet the storm that crushed its
dreams

Of what life held for it was naught but rain
Life-laden, bearing hope and faith again
To some forgotten primrose. Little streams
Sang sweeter for its coming. Nay, it seems
Their song did cheer the butterfly, the pain
Of death made glad, for each unsightly stain

On earth was cleansed to greet the next sun-
beams.

And oh, the wonder-joy of the unborn
When life displays the freshened, sunkissed
earth!

And oh, their gladness on each golden morn
Of the tomorrows, soaring from their birth!
Should not the butterfly by faith foresee
The plan of some all-wise divinity?"

She asked. I saw her puzzled, hopeless eyes,
And answered — though I knew my words were
lies.

A PASSING THOUGHT

WATAKUSI — wasuki — masu
Means in ardent Chinese, " I love you,"
But I think should I say it
In any such way it
Would hardly appeal, dear, to you!

VENDER OF DREAMS

VENDER of dreams am I, come from the skies.
Youth, would you care to buy, you with glad
eyes?

All of my fairy hoard spread at your feet,
Dew drenched, for you outpoured — dreams
brave and sweet.

Dreams of a shadow face, dreams of worlds
won;

All at your feet I place — would you buy one?

Pay with a golden smile, pay with a kiss —
All of yon starlit pile, all yours for this!
They are your heritage shaped 'mid the stars.
Buy! ere the hand of age, blundering, mars,
For with each smile you buy youth's paradise!
Vender of dreams am I, come from the skies.

SONNET I

SEE, in the dusk I seek my altar, dear —
A shadow image in the dim half-light
Of you whom we have knelt to. Now, at night
I kneel alone and know the haunting fear
Of one who kneels when what is dead lies near.
Dead Love — and I, a trembling acolyte,
Still seek to keep Love's altar draped in white,
To cleanse each stain with a forbidden tear.

Your picture is my altar. You have taught
Me all I know of heaven; so today
I cannot seek new gods, and still I kneel
To what is tarnished. For all faith were
naught
Could the blind world now win my faith away —
Faith in the faltered words, "No; this is real."

SONNET II

ONLY an old, old song that will not die,
But sings itself forever in my brain,
A lilting melody — again — again —
As once you sang it to me, dear. And I,
List'ning tonight as once before, must lie
And know at last that each low, tender strain
Is but a part of all the mocking pain
Of memories that will not out. Yet why?

Only a song you sang. And yet I see
You singing, dear, in the soft dusk, your hair
Stirred by a vagrant breeze. It seemed to me
Some little angel — lost — was singing there
To keep her heart still brave. 'Tis but a song,
Yet somehow all seems strangely blind and
wrong.

SONNET III

THREE things had I on which I sought to build
My faith in all the universe. These three
Were all that stood between the dark and me ;
Yet, having them, my world seemed ever filled
With happiness, and all fierce doubt was stilled.
My God was one, to whom all rev'rently
I knelt ; my love, the second ; finally,
There was my friend. Too full my cup? It
spilled.

And now I know my God was strangely blind,
Else why had her feet stumbled? Now at last
All love a quaintly woven myth I find ;
When once the ecstasies of dreams are passed,
The grey fates weave — we may not ask what
end.
Three things had I. Now one remains — my
friend.

SONNET IV

LAST night I knelt alone in hopeless prayer,
And to me kneeling, came a shrouded guest
Whose eyes were shadowed with a great unrest.
Methought that in another world somewhere
I'd seen them happy. Now with tearless stare
They gazed upon me. Close to her thin breast
A wreath of withered roses now she pressed,
And to her knees rippled her unbound hair.

I strove to speak. Was it some dream long
gone
In which I knew this girl? Then at her feet
She cast the roses — slowly trod thereon,
The withered roses, once so brave and sweet!
“Who are thou, friend?” I whispered brokenly.
And, “I am Love,” a low voice answered me.

THE VALKYRIES' RIDE

Out of the North we ride, we ride ;
Swinging along 'neath the blood red sky,
Eagerly, silently, side by side ;
And a thousand years of whiteness lie
At our feet as we race with a slackened rein —
Valkyries, choosers of the slain !

Swifter, swifter ; the ride is long !
Look, where the snow is trodden and red !
Hushed the clamor of battle song ;
Men of the North have fought and bled,
And falling, laughed ! They shall fight again —
Valkyries, choosers of the slain !

See where the ravens float and weave !
Those whom we seek are not alone,
For women must wait and watch and grieve.
Aye, we are here — hear the wounded moan !
Choose ye well ; we must on again !
Valkyries, choosers of the slain !

Back to the North we ride, we ride,
Swinging along 'neath the flaming sky,
Eagerly, silently, side by side ;
And a thousand years of whiteness lie
At our feet as we race with a slackened rein —
Valkyries, choosers of the slain !

VERSE

God bless you! Merry Christmas, dear my
friend!

What if the phrase be ancient? Even so,
The thousands who have whispered it, I know,
Each had no purpose save that in the end
The phrase, made sweet throughout antiquity,
Should bear the happy wish to you from me.

God bless you! Merry Christmas! If today
This wish which I proclaim to be mine own
Because 'tis clearly meant for you alone,
Be echoed — and I doubt not that it may
Be so; if thousands whisper, “Bless you,”
too —
'Tis well! The world-wide wish will be for you.

THREE FLOWERS

THREE flowers alone 'neath a willow once
grew —

Larkspur and rose and a lily so fair;
And I alone in the whole world knew
Of the three little flowers that grew down
there.

'Twas a red, red rose and a lily white,
And the color of larkspur most every one
knows;
And they grew and were sweet in the warm sun-
light,
The lily and the larkspur and red, red rose.

Three flowers now grow in my dreams, most
dear —

Rose and lily and larkspur blue;
And I alone know the three are here —
The brow and the eyes and the lips of you!

Anita, Anita! The white lilies fade,
And the larkspur droops, and red roses must
die,
But the flowers the warmth in a boy's heart
made
Will live forever! Do you know why?

SHE ENTERED IN

I BUILT a temple in my heart
For my new love. And oh, 'twas fair.
All marble white and gold it was —
Proud angels sang forever there.
And when the splendid work was done
There came a maid with tangled hair.

She entered in — my boyhood's love —
And smiled a trembling, wistful smile;
Then stood and looked with frightened eyes —
The angels hushed their song awhile.
She shivered in the silent place
Which childish hands might ne'er defile.

She touched the gold — it turned to dross;
The marble crumbled 'neath her hand;
Only a wasted ruin lay
Where once a temple used to stand.
And then she fled on velvet feet
Into a mystic shadow-land.

And on the crumbling ruins there,
I built a little, sheltered shrine;
White roses hide the marble now,
There is no gold save God's sunshine.
And I am waiting, little maid,
For thee to claim what now is thine.

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