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GIFT OF  
Marion Randall Parsons

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# THE DANCE OF THE SEASONS



By *HARRIET* MONROE



To Marion Q. Parsons  
and

Edward T. Parsons,

from their friend  
and fellow hiker  
of the Sierra Club,

Hamil Monroe

(who must climb Panassus,  
because she can't get to  
the top of Whitney.)

Chicago:

Jan. 27th, 1912

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# THE DANCE OF THE SEASONS

By HARRIET MONROE

*Designs by*  
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EY



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GIFT

Mrs. Marion Randall Parsons

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*To K. McD. H.*

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## THE DANCE OF THE SEASONS

### I—SPRING

*Allegro*

Wake! wake!

Out of the snow and the mist,  
In rain-wet, wind-blown gauze  
Of amber and amethyst  
Cometh Spring like a girl.  
Trembling and timorous  
She peers through the thin white thaws,  
Afraid of the winds that whirl  
Down paths all perilous  
Where her so tender feet are softly going,  
Where the rich earth awaiteth her lavish  
sowing  
Of green and purple and white  
In the gardens of day and night.

Hither she cometh—

Behold her, the wraith so frail!  
The chill gray storm benumbeth  
Her delicate fingers pale,  
And looseth her hair from its fillet of pearl.

THE DANCE OF THE SEASONS

Her soft dew-frosted eyes—  
The virginal eyes of a girl—  
Gaze at the foam-veiled skies,  
Search for the sun who hideth  
His amorous glowing face,  
For the spirit of life that glideth  
Unseen through every place.

Blown! blown—  
Hither and yon,  
Dashed by the winds that groan,  
Lashed by the frost-elves wan,  
Whipped by the envious ghosts of old years  
    long gone,  
That chatter and sigh  
Of the ruin nigh,  
Of death and darkness and sorrow that come  
    anon.  
Yet bold and brave  
She dares—the young Spring—to dance on  
    that ancient grave,  
To dance with delicate feet  
On the world's despair and defeat,  
On the Winter that covereth all  
With an ashen pall.

THE DANCE OF THE SEASONS

Lo, she lifts the cover—  
A corner of that icy pall she lifts.  
Lo earth, great-hearted lover,  
Smiles upward through the dew-bespangled  
    rifts.  
And shining sunbeams, pages of the day,  
Roll up the mantle, bear it far away.  
Then the earth laughs with pleasure,  
And tosses from her treasure  
Store of blue crocuses and snow-drops white,  
Glad trilliums that make the woodland  
    bright,  
Rich arbutus and shadowy violets;  
Till, caught in webs of bloom,  
Light-footed Spring her stormy woe forgets,  
Forgets the cold, the gloom,  
Blesses with errant grace  
Each dim forgotten place,  
Casts on the oak its rosy velvet dress  
Of drooping leaves, muffles the maples bare  
In lilac veils, covers with tenderness  
The harsh brown world; and then, when all is  
    won,  
Trails languorous dreams, dreams exquisite  
    and rare,

THE DANCE OF THE SEASONS

And shrinking from the bold, too fervid sun,  
She giveth over  
Her royal lover  
Like one afraid of love, who will not stay  
Love's perfect day.  
She giveth over—  
Inconstant rover—  
Her glad green garlanded world, and like  
the dew  
Sleeps in the blue.  
She tosseth down  
Her flowery crown  
Into the lap of Summer—  
Glad newcomer!—  
Smiling adorns her with treasure of growing  
things  
And softly sings,  
The while she fades in light—  
A wraith, a mist  
Of amethyst;  
A spirit, a dream that goeth,  
But whither—who knoweth?

THE DANCE OF THE SEASONS

II—SUMMER

*Andante*

Hush! hush!  
Wake not the drowsy Summer—she would  
dream,  
Heavy with growing things.  
Dance lightly where her beauty lies a-gleam  
'Neath languidly folded wings.  
Over the delicate grasses  
A breath, a spirit passes,  
A song, and the odor of bloom—  
Give way! make room!  
The Summer hath met her lover  
By day, by night;  
He hath brought from the stars—bright  
rover!—  
Heaven's fire, heaven's light!  
He hath filled her with life that sleepeth,  
That waits for birth,  
As a jewel its secret keepeth  
In the rock-bound earth.

THE DANCE OF THE SEASONS

Softly, slowly  
Dance and sway,  
While Summer dreameth  
The moons away.  
Full weary she seemeth  
Of love's deep bliss,  
But holy, holy  
Love's memories.

The idle day is rich with budding  
things  
Whereon the bold sun glares.  
Dance lightly, lest thou tread on folded  
wings,  
Of flight still unawares.  
Ah, delicate thy foot-fall be, while ever  
The seed grows in the corn,  
The bird in the egg, the deed in the endeavor,  
The day in the morn.  
Deep in the pool the spawning fishes play;  
High in the air the bees buzz out their way.  
Everywhere  
The children of Summer come crowding in  
lustrous array—  
The myriad children of Summer, beloved of  
the sun;



THE DANCE OF THE SEASONS

Through the long hot noons they are glad of  
the world they have won.

Bright and fair

They throng in the meadows and shake out  
the dew from their hair;

They sing in the tree-tops, they dip in the  
slow-flowing stream;

They nod from the hills, in the valleys their  
swift feet gleam;

They kneel in the moon-light, the bright stars  
hear their prayer.

Everywhere

The high sun blesses them,

The moon confesses them,

Old Time with patient smile

Harks to their hope awhile.

They are born, they awake, their arise—yea,  
they dance in their bloom;

For their revels of love and of wonder the  
earth makes room.

Yea, she harketh their song for a season, she  
kisseth their feet;

She giveth her all for their hour—be its joy  
complete.

THE DANCE OF THE SEASONS

The fecund Summer then  
Veileth her eyes again—  
Dreameth, at rest.  
Young mother of life who feedeth  
The world at her breast;  
Rich bride of the year, who needeth  
But love and light  
To give, and give more, and give all  
In her great love's might.  
Tread softly, give heed to her call—  
Oh be still! be fleet!  
Hush—hush the sweet sound of thy singing;  
Pause—pause, ye feet!  
Sink down! she bids thee rest  
Close on her breast.  
Down! down! thy rapture flinging  
Where all her dreams are winging.  
Ah, cease thy quest!  
Peace!—be blest!  
Be blest!

THE DANCE OF THE SEASONS

III—AUTUMN

*Scherzo*

Come with me—

All that live!

Dance with me—

Love—and give!

Give me your love, ye souls of the corn and  
the vine!

Dance with me! laugh with me! crowd me!  
be mine—be mine!

Up from the earth in your splendor of scarlet  
and gold—

Haste, oh make haste ere the warm rich year  
grow old!

Ye throngs that gaily rise

Multitudinous

As the red, red leaves that flutter

All tremulous

When the wind rides down from the skies;

Ye spirits that shout and mutter

In laughter, in pain,

When the year of her sowing and reaping

THE DANCE OF THE SEASONS

Would waste again,  
Come, spend of your treasure, full heaping,  
Be lavish, be bold!  
Cast your hope on the winds, from your feet  
shake the dark damp mold;  
Come dancing, come shouting, come leaping,  
Ere the earth grow cold!

Come, ye wings of the air; come, ye  
feet that trample the grasses!  
Come, ye tree-top spirits that kindle the  
leaves to flame!  
Come, sprites of the sea that shout when the  
gray storm passes!  
Come, wraiths of the desert whom sorrow nor  
death may tame!  
Come eat of the rich ripe fruit, come drink of  
the vine!  
Come dance till your revels are drunken with  
joy, with wine.  
For the labor is over and done,  
The spoil of the battle is won!  
Ah trample it, scatter it,  
Cast it afar!  
The tempests will batter it—  
On with the war!

THE DANCE OF THE SEASONS

Let your bright robes float, let them whirl  
with the rush of your feet—  
The gauzes of crimson and gold!  
Give your will to the winds—they are chas-  
ing, they haste, they are fleet;  
They are eager and ruthless and bold.  
On! on! till ye circle the earth with the rush  
of your dancing,  
With the shout and the song;  
Till your choral of crowds, like a river in  
flood-time advancing,  
Bears all things along!  
Dance! dance! for the end comes soon—  
Do ye feel the chill?  
White winds of the Winter croon  
From their cave in the hill.  
Yea, death and the end come soon—  
Spread your gaudy robes!  
Haste! haste! for the leaves are falling.  
Shout! shout! for the storms are calling.  
Give all, ere the year grow old,  
Ere the world grow cold.

THE DANCE OF THE SEASONS

IV—WINTER

*Finale*

Fly! fly!

Gather your white robes close—  
Scuttle away!  
Look! in the sky  
The bleak winds mutter morose  
To the swift dark day.  
They gather and threaten and scold,  
They shiver and shriek in their rage.  
They are ashen and icy and old—  
Ah, bitter the passion of age!  
Flee from them! haste—haste  
Through the vengeful weather!  
Lest your red blood chill  
And your hearts stop still,  
Crowd close together  
And flee o'er the drear dead waste!

Down! down!

Out of a sky all brown  
The dark storm stoops to shrivel the world  
away.

THE DANCE OF THE SEASONS

With ribald winds he strips her,  
With stinging sleet he whips her,  
With envious frost he withers her green to  
    gray.

Because she was gay and glad,  
Beloved of many lovers, fruitful mother  
Of many children crowding and killing each  
    other;

Because she was wasteful mad,  
Scattering and trampling her riches for  
    death to smother,

Now shall she starve and freeze  
And pray on her stiffened knees.

Now shall she helpless lie

And the powers of the air will mock her;

The spirits she dared defy

Will rend her and blind her and shock her.

With white, white snow they will bury her  
    passion deep

Till it's dumb, till it's cold.

They will whistle and roar in their triumph,  
    and orgies keep

Till her heart grows old.

They will put out her love-lit sun like the  
    torch at a feast,

THE DANCE OF THE SEASONS

And with haughty carousals make wanton  
his court in the east.

They will brush down the stars like white  
feathers far blown on dark waves,  
And the night will be black as they dance on  
the ghost-thronged graves.

Haste! haste!

Your garments are torn, they are sheeted  
with ice,

In your wind-loosed hair

The sharp sleet rattles.

Ye are hurled, chased

To the Winter's lair—

Ye have paid the price,

Ye have bled in her battles.

Now shelter your woe

And be still, be still!

Let the night-winds go

To their cave in the hill!

Let the dark clouds flee

Through the gates of the west,

Till the earth rides free

Who was sore oppressed.



THE DANCE OF THE SEASONS

For weary of orgies that ravage  
Is Winter now.  
From the heel of a tyrant savage  
She lifts her brow.  
Lo, the wrath of the storm is over,  
And under a moon-white cover  
Lies the world asleep.  
So still, so pale—  
Dance bravely, lest thou quail  
And pause to weep.  
Over the flower-soft snow  
Still as the lost wind go  
To open the gates of day.  
Where watcheth yon lone pale star  
Crimson and golden are  
The curtains that shake and sway.  
Ah lift them! look, through the rift  
Comes the sun adrift!  
He kindles the snow to fire,  
He bids the dead earth aspire.  
Ah dance! from the year's white grave  
New blooms will blow.  
Dance lightly, wistfully—save  
The life below!  
Softly! the world is still—

THE DANCE OF THE SEASONS

Hush thine errant will!  
No longer the dream pursue!  
Rest—rest, till the dream come true!  
Wait! hope! be still!





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