



The Eternal Masculine

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ELIZABETH PAYNE



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THE ETERNAL MASCULINE



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ELIZABETH PAYNE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOR



RICHARD G. BADGER

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THE "ETERNAL MASCULINE"

Introduction

In Eden, long ago, mid vistas green
Of tangled forest by the shining sea,
A man first made a woman give her love
And then in fear of censure all denied.
So, in the fresh dawn of Earth's rising day
This tale began which here is told by one
Of many thousand more, held up to scorn
Because their love was stronger to endure
Than that which first evoked its lasting flame.

Prelude

They say "Begin again, forget the past"
As well say "Your right arm has never grown."
It may be useless, but it still is there.
We see a stream, once clear and beautiful,
Blocked in its course become a stagnant pond
That breeds all sorts of dirt and poison-flies.
Is it good fortune to escape from strife,
To find the outlet closed for vital force
And the soul's life to putrefaction turned?
Work is so easy when for those we love,
With strength of spirit pain cannot exist,
But pity that same spirit crucified.
They say "the shores are strange, the way is
rough."
But strong and clear I might have journeyed on
To the deep sea at sunset of my life.

I

Those days we cooked our supper in the wood
While smoke curled up between the pointed firs
We talked of everything in Heaven and Earth;
Both liked the cello more than violin,
Had friends in common, laughed at the same
jokes;

Read Kipling, William James and Munsterberg,
Felt kindred wonder for the outdoor world,
The blue sea and the starry, velvet night.
You railed at marriage, said love was but flesh,
That you could never tie yourself for life,
Then in the dark you took me in your arms
And kissed me while I was too weak to scream.
Our friendship at an end, you sobbed and said
That trees and sky were all that I could love.

II

At first I'd not go off with you again;
But you were gentler and at last I knew
You were the only thing for which I'd live.
A painful death I'd brave, but not the lack
Of that companionship grown now too dear —
And so we had our picnics for three years.
You kissed me nearly every time we met,
Among the pines or on the rocky shore,
And called me once a flower you had picked;
But found you had no vase to put me in.
I only wished to feel that you were near,
Your very ugliness I did so love.

III

Then suddenly you'd neither write nor speak;
I could not work or even sleep or eat;
Still you did not explain for four long months,
I asked then if you liked the others more —
You said you did — had only kissed for fun.
They told me that to save yourself from blame,
You often swore that I ran after you.
In angry pride I answer'd you had kissed —
Even embraced me in the city streets
When we came home from plays or picture shows.
You then spread the report I was insane;
You looked me in the eyes and denied all —
So I knew you were bad and only cared
For the excitement of a pretty face.

IV

All winter long I thought I hated you,
Believed the gossip of your evil past;
Then heard that you'd been married in the spring
To someone taller and of greater charm.
So there she is with all I'd die to have,
The certainty of seeing you each day,
The peace of knowing she belonged to you,
That you would come to her to mend your clothes,
That she would have a son with curly head
To make you glad that you had married her.
Oh, how I'd like to kneel and scrub your floor!
There's nothing left now in the world to do;
I only pray for death to end the woe,
The waste of power and the love thrown down.
Why give us hearts to feel, without the lure?
A Spanish torture, when the feast is spread
Before gagged mouths that hunger for a meal.

So all the dead, unsatisfied, long years,
Stretch out before me for my body's strong,
Made for hard work, to do a woman's part.
I walk by sunlit sea and want to laugh,
To take you by the hand into the woods —
So full of magic when the twilight falls.
To see the golden sky between the pines,
While you go off to gather firewood;
Then in the velvet dark the crescent moon.
But all of that you wish now to forget,
Instead of feeling that I honored you —
As you so often said — by being friends.
Has she climbed with you from the mountain-top
Into a purple misty gulf below
After an autumn sun had disappeared?

Through all that strange, uncertain, puzzled time,
I wonder if you knew how I craved peace,
To put my head upon your arm and sleep;
Instead of which I had to fight you off,
Then see you flirting with the other girls
So that I never really understood,
Because you often seemed to care so much.
But I was only flesh — not soul — to you.
Perhaps now that you love, you may be good;
Or do you still care more for empty praise
Than truth and courage, which you now ignore.
Oh, Judas! so you kiss, and so you lie!

OCTOBER

Leaves dropping gold on the grass underneath,
Gray branches outlined against the blue sky,
Masses of flaming trees, purple the heath,
Splendor of autumn when sweet flowers die.

Gorgeous the sunset and brilliant the moon,
Spirit of rapture, last effort of love,
Warmth and its fullness, no immature June,
Joy of completion, the harvest to prove.

Colors so wonderful, air that is wine,
Blue and mauve blending the most vivid tone.
Soon ends this month of the year so divine,
Vanishing joy that too quickly has flown.

Watch for the Northern lights over the pine.
Nature and mystery walk hand in hand.
Is there a meaning and is there a sign?
Only the night-wind responds through the land.

“ THE PRICE OF ENCHANTMENT ”

Far into the wood when daylight fails
And the moon is hanging her silver veils
With magic touch and illusive gleam,
I walk in a still enchanted dream.
To feel your presence, the floating mist
That cools the hand you so lately kissed,
All of the mystery never solved
Where life and forest are both involved;
This wonderful moment pays for death
Though love and anguish with every breath
Fight for the soul in the after days
And if flesh escape then spirit flays.
For pain of body or pain of mind
Is the wake that rapture shall leave behind.



ON THE SHORE

Each day I built a statue in the sand,
The waves came up and washed it quite away;
Yet all my vital soul and craftsman hand
Were used to mould a thing for children's play.
Dismayed at such a futile waste of power
I turned from art; when love came slowly down.
With famished heart I welcomed every hour
Its human warmth, the joy that seemed a crown.
But in the cold of winter all was dead,
The tender day was turned to stormy night,
An icy chill crept through me, tears unshed
Were frozen by the anguish of my plight.
When art is fruitless and when love is done,
What is the use of moonlight or of sun?

A WOMAN'S PART

O cruel love, exacting sacrifice!
Although the price of blood be never paid;
Where is the wand that turns again to ice
The burning soul that at your feet is laid?

They say that when a child dies at its birth
The sorrow of the mother is the same
As though she'd cherished him in joy and mirth
And he had grown to manhood and to fame.

Then why should one who loves enough to give
Her life, her soul and her intelligence
Be forced to die although so ripe to live
Because a man withholds the recompense?

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Great mountains rise here shadowed by the mist,
A falling river dark below the pines,
Lonely and solemn, gray, impersonal,
We stand belittled by their giant lines.
What matter if we fail in love or fame?
One life counts nothing in the universe;
The harmony we strive for is the same
Although the tortured soul shall writhe and
 curse.

Look then at nature, feel a part of her,
Not something that is fighting for its life;
Peace for a bleeding thing that felt the spur,
Vast hills receive us where there is no strife.

CONTRASTS

What do you love the most with all your soul?
Fir trees at night against a northern sky,
A man of clay, a coward, quick to lie
Who slanders women to attain his goal.

For what in life would you lie down and die?
To give to all the thrill of the north wood,
To hear a voice that chimed with any mood,
To touch a hand by years of service scarred.

What do you hope for when you meet with death?
To know that work was worth the toil it cost,
To feel the best of me had not been lost —
That human love poured fruitless on the ground.

IN THE MAINE WOODS

Look between the fretted branches of the firs
Where the sky is such a deep and heavy blue;
Brown and purple underneath the vista blurs
Dark the avenues that lead away to you.

In the warmth and tenderness of early spring,
Or when winter covers all the earth with snow?
Straight and somber trees their gloomy shadows
 fling
As they did the years you kissed me long ago.

Was it strange that my affection should remain
After you had ceased to care the least for me?
If a woman all her vital love retain
'Tis the same as keeping green a balsam tree.

INTERVALE

From the city streets of dingy brown
The mountains are calling far away.
Let us leave the prison walls of town,
And reach the country at close of day.

In a sunlit valley with spires white,
And shallow river that runs along,
The blue hills rise in a glowing light
And we enter a pass as the sun goes down.

Clear air, clear water, clear speech, clear
thought —
Oh, dear New England, you have it all!
And delicate beauty that rests unsought
'Mid the clouds that hang on your summits tall.

A SONG

All my love of the hills must die
Since it's a part of you;
The purple land and the turquoise sky
Turn black to my somber view.

I lay on the coffin that holds our past,
My talent and heart and brain;
Wreaths of laurel that felt the blast,
And withered beneath such pain.

When there's a certain stillness and light
I feel I must surely see
The place that was gold to my loving sight,
Those woods full of magic for me.

Into the sunset and over the bridge,
I take my own lonely way;
And the silver rays of the early moon,
Are cold with despair to-day.

WHERE MANY HAVE LIVED

The old house stands there low and white,
Shadows of leaves in the soft green light;
Roses that climb on the garden wall,
Phlox and verbena and lilies tall.

Within the parlor of creamy gray,
The painted rushbottom chairs display;
Tea is served from the luster set,
With bowl of pansies and mignonette.

Here is a delicate ivory fan,
A tarnished necklace from Hindustan;
All the embroidery grandmother made —
And gowns of wonderful dim brocade.

Over the lawn with its flickering green,
And spicy box in the summer sheen;
Through the arbor and down the walk,
Wander the ghosts who cannot talk.

Some of them young and some of them old,
Gentle and gay and brave and bold;
When shall I join you, spirits rare —
A trampled flower to those who care.

Perhaps through moonlight's silver veil
When blossoms glimmer and colors fail;
You'll call me out from the paneled room,
And steal away in the fragrant gloom.

OCTOBER

Masses of trees that are amber,
Hillsides of purple and red,
Clouds that pile up as we clamber
Over the stream's rocky bed.

Smell the wild grape in the hollow,
Fire-smoke from the dead leaves,
Spices of autumn which follow
A languorous season of sheaves.

Moon rising up like a lantern
Yellow as pumpkins below;
Come let us dance like the satyr
Before we are covered with snow.



THE HEIRLOOM

Web-like flounces of Flemish lace
Left for her daughter's wedding gown;
Old and yellow, we love to trace
Patterns of roses up and down.

She folded it all with ivory hands —
In the leather chest it was laid away;
And a faint aroma of foreign lands
Hovered about it for many a day.

Does she know it was useless all those years —
That it never clung to a dainty bride;
But sorrow, anguish and bitter tears
Veiled her darling and stayed beside.

When her eyes grew dim in the last great sleep
They watched together the whole night-through
The girl and her lover, with feelings deep —
Does the mother know that he proved untrue?

SOUTHERN MEMORIES

Hear the darkies singing on the river
Where the cane brakes rise along the shore.
Branching oaks with silver moss a-quiver
Overhang the garden's glowing core.

Blooming there are masses of azalea,
Rhododendron with its shiny leaves,
Garlands of the climbing Lady Banksia,
White festoons of starry cherokees.

Paths are flecked with sun in golden patches,
Stagnant pools are mirrors of the sky,
Dopey frogs, the coiling serpent catches.
Slowly through the haze, the buzzards fly.

Where the old house stood is one tall pillar,
Joy and gaiety have left the place;
Dames in stiff brocade who fed the peacocks
Gave their grandsons to defend the race.

And the daughters with their tired fingers
Working in the North away from home
Hear in dreams the mellow sound that lingers —
Smell the roses and the river loam.

MOONLIGHT AND FOG

Oh, silver moon amid the vapory sky
You look on many strange and varied things;
One who in pain and agony doth cry
And one who loud in fullest rapture sings.

The mighty waves keep rhythm on the shore
And in the pallid light the lovers dream;
Far in dim ages fate stands by the door,
When shall we enter by that mystic gleam?

RIVER FRONT — APRIL

Beyond the narrow, glist'ning street
Where showers leave bright pools behind,
The golden skies, the waters meet
And clouds are by the sunset lined.

Tall masts of ships rise close beside
The gables of an old brick store,
While farther out against the tide
A giant liner swings from shore.

Fruit stands that catch the mellow light
And oranges piled up waist high,
Make gay the curb with colors bright
That match the yellow of the sky.

On stoops which once were white and clean,
Now swarthy mothers nurse their young,
And joke and quarrel in between,
With rapid speech of foreign tongue.

The City gains in varied life
Although it lose the finer caste.
Steam brings a richness and a strife
That did not come with soaring mast.

Grotesque, incongruous and strong
The sudden contacts kindle flame,
And out of all this motley throng
Create a type that's never tame.

INSTINCTIVE EXPRESSION

The soul is a bird in a cage
That longs for the freedom of air
To soar and to sing as it dare
Of sorrow, of joy, and of rage.
The voice of all creatures who care
For blue misty spaces of air;
The depths that no mortal can gauge
Where science and learning, though sage,
No part of the wonder may share.
Here instinct shall reign all supreme
With love and the power to dream,
The glory of life and of earth,
The warmth of the sun's golden beam,
The light of the moon's icy gleam,
The waters that measure the girth
Of the land with their storms and their mirth;
And man with himself to redeem.





VISION

A quiet light, a windless, sunny day,
The country purple-brown with tree trunks gray;
Time to perceive, when everything seems clear,
Events that are long past, or those more near.

So that we see as though hung in a frame
Our life's sad whole, so incomplete. The blame
Where does it lie, who knows wherein we fail?
We love too much or seek the Holy Grail

And miss the prize, perhaps, of those who care
For concrete things the most, who do not dare
To break the chain of custom, or to chance
A hurt to pride or an unfriendly glance.

Who never find the clay beneath the gold
Of gentle Buddhas smiling as of old,
But we who question and who lose our youth
Would not exchange your peace for our stern
truth,

Or rapture of great love in the free air
For parlor courtship in the city glare —
Though one brought sorrow and the other life
With praise from fat prosperity, so rife

To seal with admiration commonplace
Experience. But when we see the face
Of buried crime look upward from the sod
As we walk overhead, our feet unshod

With sloth, expediency, or fellowship,
How can we blind our eyes and let time slip
With pious dope, Nirvana as a goal?
No, rather truth, although we lose our soul.

REPRESSION AND COWARDICE

What is there wrong but the waste of life?
The throttled voice that would sing its song,
The timid thoughts with such insight rife,
The fruitless hope that can last so long.

The nun who prays to the walled out skies.

Conscience or cowardice, who can tell?
Be frank, own up, that you fear'd to act.
Negative virtues may lead to Hell.
Often a liar is graced with tact.

The monk who prays while his spirit dies.

Has a great man lived without a foe?
What is a leader in time of peace?
The nerve that it takes to strike a blow-
Is better far than a sheep's thick fleece.

The priest is teaching a mass of lies.

*The trav'ler flees from the war at home,
The dilettante lives best in Rome.*

THE WOMAN'S CAUSE

Through many years injustice held them down,
Why marvel if vindictive they rebel?
When might made right, they could not storm
the town.

Now moral force counts more than shot or shell.
Throughout the world we see them march to-day!
Man's plaything for so long by his device
Brought up to think their highest aim display
To win approval and his love entice.

Religion even tried to keep them bound
— When giving them the credit of a soul —
By phrases of an old familiar sound
Once hurled at Science and at progress whole.

They braved the danger they were taught to fear,
That knowledge would unfit them for their work,
By laying burdens which they could not bear,
Unless a woman's task they'd wish to shirk.

Triumphant by their strength of will alone
They win against brute force that feels its end
Achieve the right to guard what is their own,
To use their brains, and thus their souls defend.

TANTALIZATION

If life were not so perfect, at its best
We would not wish to leave it and to rest,
But its enticing wonders of romance
Are torture when the soul has lost its chance
To live the fullest and achieve the most;
Surrounded by such loveliness no ghost
But would return to see again the place
Of Autumn magic or of Spring's sweet grace.
The wonder of the city with its crowd,
Its concentrated life that thinks aloud,
The brilliant women and the busy men
Denting the world's hard disk with acumen.

The more we feel the glory of the scene
The harder seems our lot no fruit to glean.
To be away from those who speak our tongue
And always on our own devices flung.
On winter evenings, reading all alone;
In Summer, when we hear the ocean moan
At sunset, or when moonlight calls us out
To feel its magic spreading all about;

I sit on some far rock, with folded hands
That never can be warm in mortal lands
Since they were kissed so near these shifting sands.

THE CITY'S STRESS

Oh fragile human life that comes and goes,
That fights against a weight of stone and steel,
That struggles forward 'spite of all its woes,
Most grateful if benumbed it cease to feel.

The streets are seething with their busy tide,
Tall buildings throng with workers day and
 night,

While crowded trains below the pavement glide,
Their passengers shut out from air and light.

Men lack the time in which to stop and taste
The flavor of existence here on earth,
They cannot linger in their frantic haste
Which kills the soul and crushes out its mirth.

Were they in grassy meadows cool and dim
With wreaths of fog that from the ocean blows,
Where sea gulls float above the fir trees slim,
Would they find boredom or a deep repose?

TO THOSE WHO "LIVE FOR THE NEXT
WORLD"

I turn to the Northern country —
As you to the peace of God —
Where hills in their dream-like beauty
Await us with heights untrod.

The colors are shifting and changing
As mists take their morning flight,
And purple and rose and turquoise
Emerge from the dusk of night.

To rhythm of falling water
And smell of the pointed fir,
We mount through a wooded valley
The distance an opal blur.

Who wishes for Life Eternal
When living is always pain?
Up here there is joy supernal
What more could one's soul attain?

SPRING MEMORIES

Shut out the world and there is ringing gladness,
Golden, lost days have come to me once more.
Feel the clear air that brings with it June madness,
Smell the apple blossoms that fall beside the door.

Soon heavy lilacs breathe sophistication
After first kisses of the fruit tree blooms;
Fly to the wild rose for your consolation,
Even valley-lilies remind of City glooms.

White clumps of sweetness gleaming on the hill-
sides
Over which the pine trees are dark against the
sky,
Swift the river flows in broken silver meshes
Making low music that I'll hear until I die.

After long years of feeling life was wasted
Came shining months when everything seemed
right.
Then joy of love and sympathy were tasted
In all the warm and mellow summer light.

When at dusk the moon rose soft upon the ocean
Which fell in ripples just below our feet,
There on the rocks we cooked a frugal supper,
You kissed my heart and I felt that life was sweet.

I only wanted then to make you happy,
To ease the life which seemed to rack your nerves.
If you had come to me for rest and quiet
Then my existence would have what it deserves.

Now I am doomed to spend in incompleteness
Days whose perfumed beauty cry to be enjoyed.
Oh that my senses were dead to light and sweet-
ness
That I might lie at peace with life destroyed.



AS ONE MAY GROW ACCUSTOMED

As one may grow accustomed to a plain
Where barren lands stretch out from side to side;
So hopeless days monotony provide
Whose only pleasure is a lack of pain.

The mountain heights where sun and beating
rain —

The joy and tears of Earth — our time divide
Lie far behind, like distant clouds which glide
In golden majesty, then fade again.

How can we raise a harvest from the ground
Which dull and sodden shows no sign of growth?
Where bones of dead men everywhere are found
Who preached contentment and ignoble sloth.
Far better live in anguish all the time
Than lose the vision of those peaks sublime.

IN SUCH A QUAIN T SMALL HOUSE

In such a quaint small house close by the sea
Which now intones its restful "All is well,"
You learn the best that nature has to tell
Of quiet happiness and harmony.
No wonder that you do not think of me
That you forget the words you wrote and said;
Your lies show that you often wish me dead—
You would not stop at any calumny.

Thus one dies starving, while another fed
On every sweet beneficent true thing,—
Which love and peace and kindly patience bring,
Will grow like these same buds and blossoms shed
By fragrant May: although a heart has bled
Which once beat high with rapture of the Spring.

ART AND LIFE

Can Art, your life of steadfast love excel,
Its happiness one with the growing earth?
For me the vacant years bring only dearth,
The bitter memory of days whose spell
If cast by man or magic who can tell
Since they are past. I now, with lack of mirth,
With all incentive gone for doing well,
Create dead things which mock a living birth.

How can the greatest sculptor vie with her
Who brings a human being into life?
The finest statue cannot breathe or stir;
The weakest son of any poor man's wife
May change the world, or yet some day confer
Undreamed of blessing and the end of strife.

THE FRIENDLY NIGHT

Through miles of dim and misty star-lit spaces
Where forests stretch away to mountain height
Where water of the sea in silver traces
Long lines that curve toward the harbor light;
The atmosphere seems full of gentle faces
And consciousness breathes through the throbbing
 night:

Mysterious, vibrating, open places
Where soul may answer soul unvexed by sight.

No loneliness when multitudes are waking
Of friends so close to share our every thought,
While music of the wind and sea are making
Low voices that with memory are fraught.
They know our inner selves without mistaking
And understand our yearning need untaught,
Love is with them no careful undertaking
But harmony that thrills, with peace long-sought.

AN EVIL PRIEST

So when you called me "dear" and kissed my
feet

And said I was a minx, both cold and sweet;
How hard it was for me to hide the love
Which made you greater than a god above.

Do you remember when for kindness past
I named you Buddha? You, who later cast
Such jeers and lies at me, whom once you
loved —

As those old letters in my desk have proved.

Oh wistful memories of out-of-doors

When hill and wood and the clear river shores
Enhanced the joy of my poor spirit's dream,
Like great orchestral music on love's theme.

No one can take the thought of that away
Although my Buddha was a thing of clay
To be trod under foot and spurned of men.

But as a sacrament is holy when

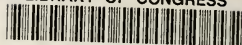
The Priest is foul, so my love being pure
Was quite as beautiful, if not so sure

As though the senses had stamped both as one
To live together long as life should run.

NOV 28 1913

Here in my golden chalice are the years
With all their happiness and all their tears,
The twilight glimmer on the mountain height,
The mystery that comes with summer night,
And all the soul may know of true delight.

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