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A BOOKLET OF VERSE
BY
W^m NORMAN GUTHRIE



1899



BY WM. NORMAN GUTHRIE.

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A Booklet of Verse

.. by ..

William Norman Guthrie ✓



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Dec. 5. 98.

To

Mrs. Louise Nettelton Anderson

this booklet is inscribed

in token of sincere esteem and

friendship

A BOOKLET OF VERSE.

PRIMEVAL MAN:

Methought that I surveyed the conquered earth,
And felt my breast swelling with pride of kind:—
Man, feeblest, slayer with lightning of the mind,
Lord of all life, and final judge of worth!

Suddenly, the sky, roaring, gives wild birth
To shaggy mammoths who the forests grind,
Huge bears, and wolfpacks fleeter than the hind,
That check my vaunting with a monstrous mirth:—

“ Thinkest our fear of man—a fear of thee,
Poor cowardly liver by thine apish wits?
Our conqueror left with us long ago!

“ Degenerate heir of unearned benefits,
Wouldst thou dare front us with his spear and
bow?
His eye couldst thou endure so long as we? ”

AN INCIDENT AT THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

There, on the floor of thy cage
Thou liest, O Lion,
Stretched out, indifferent!
Vast head, with weight of portentous mane—
A tangle as of autumn forests
Where the horror of jaws
Lurks in ambush;
Compact muscular legs,
Armed with death,
In which the lightning of the fatal leap,
The crack, the crash of the fall,
The rending of flesh yet alive,
Slumber unquietly;
Tail with suppressed lash
Involuntarily vibrant;
Through eyes half-shut
With cunning show of drowsiness
The yellow flash, keen,
Like broken glitter in the moon-glare
Of little pools of steaming blood;

All, all betrays
Subtly a soul of terror!

An outrage to have caged thee!
Yet, in thy bars take comfort.
Proffers of freedom were insult—
Scorn of the harmless, the impotent:
Men dread thee.
But thou—carest not if they quake,
Requiest no flattery of fears,
Sure of thy formidable strength,
Indifferent,
Grand!

Ah, wherefore do we stop
In front of thy cage
Bound by an evil spell?
Why this shudder at times,
Not of dread—this sense
Of oppression, difficult breath,
Unaccountable? Whence this ache
Of self-pity intense as we look
At thee, fierce brute,
Caged fiend of the wilderness,
At thee?

Terrible! magnificent!
That leap, shaking the iron bars
As reeds once by shrunk streams
Where thy tongue of fire
Lapped the cool:
The quick snakes of thy mane
Erect, rigid,
Quivering with wild might,
At the eruption of a roar,—
Like fire volcanic
From bottomless deeps of fury
Inflaming the sky,
Charring the fruitful earth.
What is it
Captive monster,
Late so majestic, composed,
Scornfully indolent?

A cub—set loose
For sport of children—
A cub astonished stares
In front of thy cage,
By neat-trimmed shrubbery—
Free!

Who shall utter, O Lion,
Thy stupor, agony, rage?

One of thy kind, a cub, free ?
What! The wilderness nigh ?
This fetid cage of shame—hallucination ?
Dens full of half-tame skulking beasts,
Howls, whines, snarls of feeding time—
An obsession ?
The day's peering merrymakers,
Cowards who inspect with prudent insolence,—
And the prowl that ends where it began
In the close stench of the walled night—
A hideous obstinate nightmare ?
Ah, 't is the wilderness has roused her to battle—
Has conquered civilization,
At a bound come hither
To rescue her caged King ?
Iron bars only between him and—
Not freedom—
But her ?
The hot day's sleep, the night's fierce hunt,
The fight to the death with rivals
For the lioness, sleek, awaiting the issue
With treacherous fawn, and leers
Of savage pleasure ?
Only these bars between him, and—
Not freedom—
But life ?—life ?

Magnificent captive,
Disdainer of liberty,
Do I not understand thee?
Am not I, too, caged?
Laws, customs, courtesies, proprieties!
I too—remember.

Not liberty, O not liberty now!
Why break through bars?
Prolonged despair has cowed us both,
And the tyranny of use.
What? Wreck our cage?
Where then would our wilderness be?
The torrid sun,
The fever?
Hunger for palpitant flesh,
Thirst for hot blood?
The icy night,
The blinding moon in the clear,
The shadows black of rock and tree?
The prey terrified,
The joy of his agony?
The antagonist's prowl, roar, ramp?
The ache, the bliss of omnipotent fierce life?

Only a minute the spell has lasted—
Best, O Lion, we both were patient,

Spiritless, sleepy—sane!
May be, may be—
(The thought of it starts
A shudder like death's
Clotting the heart's blood)
May be, may be—(who knows?)
Only the semblance is left us
Of fire—as of sunsets
That flare in the heavens,
But singe not a stubble-straw
Of the western hills.
May be—were the wilderness here indeed,
Thou, O Lion, and I—
Even thou, and I
Were wanting.

THE RIDERLESS HORSE:

I.

On the march of the gallant regiment
 Through our street
The people cheer the colors rent,
And from their hearts the shout is sent
 When they greet
The officers who ride
So martially dignified.

But ah, the silence, and oh, the cry:—
A lean and riderless horse is led
Sadly and solemnly by
For the honorable dead.

CHORUS:—

The dead, the dead!
A loud cheer
For all those who can not hear!
A wild long cheer for the dead!

II.

Did they think us a people mean and base,
Without soul?
For gain, indifferent to disgrace?
Each scheming for the foremost place
Of control?
Assured rude words would win,
Not courage and discipline?

Our poor—mere “hands” in the mills, mines,
shops?
Our rich—computing in gold their “worth?”
Cotton and wheat were thy crops,
But not “MEN,” dear native earth?

CHORUS:—

The dead, the dead!
Their blood cries:
“With us died all shameful lies!”
A wild long cheer for the dead!

III.

When they fought, it was never vengeful hate,
That inspired
Their daring; kind, compassionate
In victory; so nobly great
They have fired
The selfish and the cold
With patriot heat high-souled.

Pass on good riderless horse! Lift high,—
For pride in them who have fall'n,—thy
head!
Prance to our jubilant cry
For the honorable dead!

CHORUS:—

The dead, the dead!
The brave men
We never shall see again,—
Three long deep cheers for the dead!

THE TREES IN MARCH.

Brave battlers with the phrenzied winds of fate,
Who stand, though shaken, firm footed on cliff-
ledge,
Stream-border, swamp-marge, turning the fierce
edge
Of vehement currents, lifting the vast weight
Of their mad falls on tortuous branches great
And legioned leaves;—O trees in March, full pledge
That our wills, resolute, can sternly wedge
Blasts of adversity, and storms of hate:

Impart your spirit, that every muscle grow
Gnarled, knotted, self-controlled, wherewith to
thrust
Redoubled onslaughts back with stubborn might;
No rage, rush, rancor, chase of worsted foe—
Ye, who war not because ye choose but must,
Your roots clamped steadfast in their native Right!

THE CONQUEROR.

Strange madness of vain-glory, O Greek commander,
To weep for other worlds to subjugate!
Didst thou not know, though splendid was thy
state,
Though realms unbounded to thy lusts did pander,
Yielding thee costlier delicacies, triumphs grander
Than deified despot ever dreamed; though fate
Should spare thy memory, and vaunt thee "Great,"
Numberless empires knew not Alexander?

Each human soul a realm,—nay, world complete,—
Joyous or sad, but free! Nor ever can
(Save by love's gracious leave) ambitious feet
Tread on its sacred soil; for still the ban
Of some strong God bids conquerors retreat:
A flaming sword invisible to man.

ORCHARD OPTIMISM.

O fragrant fleeciness of orchard snows!
My lavish apple trees, your honeymoon
Is at the full. The brisk air gleams and glows,
At this good hour of sun-happy noon,

Freighted with myriad nectar-laden craft
Of shiny sail, whose ports were your rich bloom,
Their cargoes stolen as the petals laughed
At jests and compliments of buzz and boom.

What all this beauty and glory for, dear trees?
This gorgeous unthrift? Have I understood?
O tell no lover, for his keen eye sees
Even your sound hearts right thro' your ancient
wood:

Ye live, ye love, and in your bliss ye give
Your best to all if they but love and live!

FANCY OR FACT.

Musing, strange faces crowd about and peer
Deep in my eyes; till, if I question them
They fade in dusk, but soon, again, draw near:
Why to their looks do you my soul condemn?

For you retire in some dim fastness far,
Impregnable to fancy's boldest host;
And when I think of all you truly are,
No vision comes—only a shadowy ghost.

O then, my Love, indeed you must forgive
If love refuse your bodily sight to miss,
Sound of your voice, caress of hand, and live
In fullest gladness only when we kiss!

Worship the work of Phidias for divine—
Ye eyes who never saw the God, as mine!

SHALL LOVE BE KING?

Love? I know him with his golden curls,
And his lustrous diadem of light
Circling brows that glow, like some pure girl's,
With a purity all white;

Simple his garb, though knowing God's great choice,
Serious ways that speak of high desires,
Eyes uplifted, fervid tones of voice
Sweeter than his quivering lyre's;

Shall I trust him when some later day
Sceptered, seated on his splendid throne
Crowned a King—to be unchanged for aye,
Just the same my soul hath known?

Will he then be generous and true,
Still have eyes as mild and clear as now,
Hand as gentle, firm, and open to,—
When the crown hath bound his brow ?

Ask not! Place in faith the precious crown—
Place it proudly on his sacred head:
Having worn it could he cast it down ?
Leave his throne through mire to tread ?

AN IDYL.

The sun shone warm, the air was rich
To drink in at the lips; so blent
Its odors fresh, we knew scarce which
Was keenest as we went.

About us dewy azalias rose
In pink and snowy blossom-mounds;
Butterflies cared not which they chose
Dancing their rolic rounds.

And everywhere among the grass
Inquisitive blue sentries stood
On tiptoe, just to watch us pass,
Necks craned as best they could!

For merriment half scared, half pert,
They shook, and winked, and fluttering kept
When over the grass your sweet white skirt
 So breeze-like by them swept.

Down in the valley, circling, whirled
About a farm a pigeon flight;
The sun shone full—a valley empearled
 With gliding gems of white.

We watched those dots—now barely seen,
Now flashing—till, upon the sly,
I looked at you—and, lo! between
 Those lips, a smile's reply.

Then—th' intimate exchange of glance
Telling of love supremely blessed,
And one small hand slid—merest chance!—
 Into my own for rest.

Oh! for those early summer-days
Together in the hills, with hush
Of fragrant noon, or notes of praise
 From mocking-bird or thrush!

Oh! the swift look that means so much
Traversing, bold, the black abyss!
Sweet look, foreteller of sweet touch!
 Shy prophetess of a kiss!

MATERIALISM.

A vision came to me that asked no leave:—
With daybreak, over meadowland dewstrewn;
By streambank, or cool forest-edge, at noon,
With day's fire-passion pulsating; at eve
When glowed the west day's glory to receive,
Thro' the ripe fields, and under the gold moon
No man!—Iron monsters noiseless late and soon
Stalk back and forth, and the sad harvest sheave!

Then to vast cities of men's building fled
My spirit. Lo! through close streets traffic-worn,
O'er squares, whose splendor splashing founts
applaud,
No living men,—but everywhere the Dead!
Not specters even of creatures womanborn,
But automatic tombs that swarm abroad!

LUMINOUS HOURS.

Time hath no substance save what borrowed is
Of the soul's vital being. Moments dart,

Huge suns, leagues inconceivable apart,
Self-hung in the void abyss of centuries,
Framing the real light sphere—immensities
Of nothing merely marble with black art:
And the true seers record on their sky-chart
Only the suns in stellar symmetries.

What madness then to clamor for length of years
Whose lapse were adding naught to naught in
vain?

Ask rather, that every allotted minute burn
With all its possible luster: splendid pain
Or glorious joy. So shalt thou verily earn
Eternities secure from cynic jeers!

A MYTH OF ARTISTIC CREATION.

One huge perpendicular peak stands islanded
In torrid plains to the sky's smoldering verge.
A giant scales it, maddened by the scourge
Of hate for a world stark and gross and dead.
Into the blue he lifts his blazing head
And shades his eyes. Below, all things should
merge
In glare unsufferable:—a snow-soft surge
Of cloud sleeps prone upon the wind instead.

Beautiful 'neath her hairs' flood of rich gloom
Her glory with tumultuous longing heaves,
Which, terrible, his love as lightning cleaves,
Dissolving in a sunlit storm of bliss,
Whereat the waste world bursts in song and bloom. . .
And the Dreamer wakes a dreaming Bride to
kiss.

PROPHET OR POET?

Through the purple portal of that heart of thine
Where sets the sun of self in sumptuous state,
Pass on, with earth's full beauty insatiate,
To where no range of mountainous hopes confine
Thy vision clear; thou, who dost life resign,
Its whole cloud-sky of follies dissipate,
Pierce on—the inmost Splendor contemplate,
Float rapturously on fluctuant deeps divine!

But O, return not thence, thou man of God,
Leave not thy bliss to teach us; naught avails.
We yet will tread the ways our fathers trod.
Above earth's dusk-veiled peaks of purity, dumb,
Stand beckoning! If thy starry summons fails,
Will cries and tears and pleadings make us come?

IN VAIN.

A passer-by, a passer-by,
 Only a passer-by!
And I hoped to have thee always nigh,
To hear thee bid me live or die
For thee, for thee—but what was I?
 Only a passer-by.

An idle dream, an idle dream,
 Only an idle dream!
For we meet to part, and when we seem
Just near enough to kiss, the stream
Will sweep us on, from dream to dream—
 Only an idle dream!

O bitterness of bitterness,
 Bitterest bitterness!
That the heart should spend its tenderness,
And bless a heart that can not bless,
And waste away yet love no less—
 Bitterest bitterness!

HIGHER MATHEMATICS.

Two and two make five, say I!
The truth is as plain as day. For why?
The whole is more than the sum I take
 Of the parts;
Thoughts, feelings, passions, do not make
 Human hearts;
Sums are not wholes
 With flowers and souls!
So two and two make five, say I!

OUR MOTHER OF LIFE.

What other heaven than this should heart desire
In azure nudity, or cloudy flow
Defining godlike dreams invisible else?
What other star than ours, of shiny seas,
Or continents in waves of green springclad,
With chains of diamond ice peaks loosely decked
Gathered to flashing heaps at either pole?
While here we lie, Love, under laughing trees
Can we not feel the sway of happy earth
As on she flies enhaloed of her day,
And followed by her train of soft-starred night?

O foolish perverts from the natural faith,
O blinded generations, centuries
Insane, awake! Ye deemed it wise to sow
In fields of mist, sun-golden at the dawn,
The seeds of hope? Ye wailed when ye beheld
Only at sunset on the verge of night
Wave a far crop of faiths illusively
Which death might harvest, but no living man?
So in your bitterness of heart ye cried:
"Blessed are they that live not, for they reap
With death wide fields of bliss"? Arise!
Arise, ye perverts, if ye have ears to hear.
Wait for no general resurrection. Throng
From self-dug graves of sorrow, and behold
The symbol: Life a crowing Babe in arms
Of tender Mother Death, whose proud fond eyes
Remember and foresee—whose bosom swells
With rich provision for the hungry mouth!
A little sleep, and in the Babe we crow—
A little sleep, and in the Mother smile;
And between sleep and sleep—a lover's kiss!

What other life? What other love? What truth
Truer than these—that Spring hath bloom and song?
And Summer holy heat, and flutter of wings?
And Autumn ripe fruit—heavy, luscious, red—

And flights through sky into the warm unknown ?
And Winter white dreams of whiter Spring ?

Ah, they that love as we are never alone!
Even here, as smile lights smile for intimate joy
That we are denizens of this living earth,
Behold our Holy Mother immaculate
Draweth near softly—smileth on us both.
Thou seest not her face ? The shadow vague
Of the glad trees about us—'t is the drift
Of ample robes over the twinkling grass
For vital bliss ashiver—knowing her.
She walketh viewless through the shining day,
She seeketh them who seek her not—her breath
Is on thy happy hair! Her large deep eyes
Give thine a haze of rapture that they seem,
Fixed upon me, to look, Love, far away
Into the heart of heavenly delights!
Thou seest her now ? That rapturous thrill of fear—
It is thy soul aware of her spread arms
Fain to envelop us with yearning love.
We yearn not, for we have.

O Mother, soon
Soon shall we come to thee, who were of thee,
Who bless thee filially, though now we strive

Against thee, lest thou fold us to thy heart
Ere yet we have done with play. But sweet it is
To know what breast shall pillow us in sleep
When tired at last.

See, see! Life's God is nigh,—
Thy Son of laughter and heroic toils,
Him we acknowledge in thy holy stead,
Not holier, but dearer unto us,
And dear to thee, thy very Son, thy self,
To whom thou gavest us, to be his own!
O thou wilt punish not who hold by him,
Loyally his, not thine; with fervent soul
Worshiping him, crying the jubilant cry
Before his coming, dumb at thy approach—
For thou art he!

Look Love, behold him come!
The locust trees are dancing in vast winds
Of joy, dropping bloomsnows from clusters pure,
On to the frolic grass about us. There,
The lilac bushes catch the breeze, and leap,
Wave with green arms their spires of blossoms pale
Like maddened bacchantes full of sunny wine,
Shaking the cruel thyrsis for the God!
Birds burst together into reckless song

Till the air throbs with obstinate wild notes
Of ecstasy; the blue of heaven pours in
As the trees overhead lift high their boughs
And meet atop applauding frantically.
Close, close! The whole world thrills with the
coming kiss.

Not peace—war, war! Only the victors live
And bloom and sing!

The vanquished,—where are they?
Ah, from the Mother's eyes they beam their love,
On us the victory of their battles lost!
Crest of their wave, the spray, the flare of hues!

O kiss, Love, let us kiss and kiss again,
So shall the God of Life be visible
To eyes of rapturous faith—for he is LOVE.
And Mother Death that instant shall rejoice—
For she is LOVE, as he, her Son, is LOVE.

What Mother must not laugh when crows her Babel!

DAY DREAMS.

A forest there is. Dreams are its trees
Where branches lock with leafage dense,
To screen in gloom trunks gray or dusk,
And a lavish floor of green intense.
And over the roof that shelters these
Quick sunbeams foot a reckless reel,
Stamping in golden glee, to crack
Their floor if possible, and feel
The cool of the green gloom under (See!)
In which swim birds of curious hues
(As in some river fishes dart)
But entrance even the leaves refuse.
A forest of dreams, all dreamed by me,
Familiar, strange, and dear, most dear,
With wonders old I know by heart
And wonders new too fair fear!
Oft do I wander through its shades
Alone, or hand in hand with One
Whose name I never sought to know
Because I fancy she hath none.
Look! how the forest knee-high wades
In hope's fresh sea of shrubbery!

She, laughing ever, as we go—
Her laughter's notes mount merrily
Their sprightly scale, till from each tree
Some bird-voice whirls the laughter higher!
Then throbs the forest: peal on peal
Of thunder musical. How tire
Of such a senseless jubilee?
For every tree-top hides a nest
By two wedded wishes built, to seal
With a new better love their best.
Wild wishes build them nests, I say,
In boughs of my dream-trees, and burst—
Whenever she (my nameless One)
Chances to laugh, in song. Well-versed
In all the tricks a syren may
Practice bewildering whoso hears,
My witch (whom never saw the sun,
Born of the dim cool) slyly peers
With eyes (*their* color can I tell,
That dartle all?) into each thick
Of undergrowth for certain flowers
Which, finding, she stoops her down to pick.
Then falls upon her from the air
A frolic band of sunbeams sly—
Her hair—sent by the merry sun
Forbidden forest-shades to spy!

Why doth she pick them, do you ask?
For me, of course. All which I take
Back with me to the world without,
When for a brief space I forsake
My forest of dreams;—and we, we both,
She and I, we wonder why they bloom—
Those flowers like her own lips' sweet pout—
If to be plucked their hapless doom!
O forest dear! O forest old—
My own, none other's! O dear trees
That are not trees,—dear songster birds
That are not birds,—O sweetest, these
Flowers, not flowers—but joys foretold
Plucked by that One who hath no name,—
Let me be silent, lest my words
Give you perchance a fatal fame;
Lest greedy men, who hear my tale,
With brutal axe fare forth by stealth
And fell my forest trunk by trunk—
Timber to get them vulgar wealth!
Mad call they me? Dear Soul, all hail
Their mocks and sneers at our romance,
For so our treasure is safely sunk
In the river of men's ignorance!

THE REJECTED LOVER TO THE
MOON.

Dear moon, so white, so swift,
That fliest from cloud to cloud
Athwart each starry drift,—
How haughty and virgin-browed!
There clings about thy form
A circle of hallowed light.
It glides, and hides the swarm
Of stars that would share thy flight.

Dear moon, our hearts can ache,
Or quiver with ecstasy.
Is thine too cold to break?
Too lonely in liberty?
No soul thy soul hath known
That lived to enrapture it?
For aye alone—alone—
Athirst for the infinite?

The sky with clouds is strewn,
A sea with its isles asleep.
Thou sailest fast, dear moon,—
Thy love is across the deep!

But one whose life is wrecked
 Would rather believe thee cold,
Unloving, unloved, erect—
 A queen with her crown of gold!

WHENCE? WHITHER?

 Drift!
Who would care to lift
 The cast-off rose
From the stream's traitorous breast?
 No one knows
Whose it was—where it bloomed!
Only doomed—doomed—doomed!
 It is best—
 Drift!

A RIME OF THE WICKED BIRDS IN
JUNE.

My heart is light
With the joy of June,
Light with the hopes of the morning;—
Bright
Was the night,
And gay
The day,—
So, comrades dear, take warning!

Slowly swells the mermaid-song,¹
Languid movement, rich delight,—
Grace and glory glide along,
Rainbow-beauty, softly bright.
Ho! for a toss of the bacchant's locks!
Arm in arm, and the dance-wave rocks:
Soul with soul, we defy earth's sway—
A wing-beat strong
Ere we float along
O'er waves that play
In golden day—

Smile meets smile, while I (and *she*)
Caught in a world of mermaid glee,
Free on the rhythm to far realms flee,
Where the spirit would stay
For aye!

Then, the dance was over, friends,—
A gurgle of laughter breathless—
The sweetest of hours too early ends,
But the joy of the soul is deathless!
We slipped together
Out of the hall,
And no one missed us
In the chatter of all.
Through aisles of elms
To silvery realms
That melted in heavenly vistas.
On, on we roamed
Through the gloom of the trees,
Where the fountain foamed
Like magical seas
In the crystalline glare of the moon;
The flowers about us, fresh and sweet,
(Expressly come
To be witnesses dumb
Of human bliss complete)
Nodded I think,

And dared to wink.
Yet there we rested,
Laughed and jested,
Hoped that "the day would n't dawn too soon,"
Peered at the "queer dear face of the moon,"
Heard the fountain's tinkle and sputter,
Heard the leaves in the full breeze flutter,
Till cool, and scent, and young life's merriment
Beguiled us to venture an odd experiment:
Hand in hand, before we knew,—
Lips found lips, though none had taught us.
Who was there but the moon to view
How Love in his sweet snare caught us ?

A foot-step fell!
We rose in terror.
'T was nobody. Well ?
An evident error.
Ashamed of what ?
'T was Love's own plot.
Yet, mutely went we back.
The sky o'er-clouded, sullen and black ;
And she left me alone
At the door of the hall ;
With a cousin I hated
She flitted away,

Away in the fated
Crazed swirl of the fray.
Yes, left me alone
At the door of the hall!
Not a look to atone
For desertion;
No call that was audible
Beck that was visible!
Motives, no doubt, if you heard her version,
Maidenly motives most laudable—
But Oh, my heart's plight
On that mad June night
Seemed bitterly, bitterly risible!

But my moonlight queen—
Was not
Forgot.
What was it, Oh, what
That had slipped between?
One kiss—the first
From the lips of a girl
That I got by theft not right—
Was that what had curst
Our poem of pearl,
Eclipsing its silver-white light?

At length we met—
Became good friends;
But no word of our night of June
As yet—
Though who could believe
A soul might forget
That fountain's tinkle, that "queer dear moon"?
Believe that love thus ends
Mere "friends"?
That Love can perish so soon?

One day we strolled, a year from then
In the woods together,
Dreamy again,
As still as the warm-cool weather.
The friars
Of the wood's
Imp-brotherhoods,
They stung me like briers
Those gnomes of the woods;
Till I fervently prayed
As we "gaed and gaed"
That her thoughts might be gone too far
To take note of the scoff
Of the gnomes that would doff
Their caps where the mad bells are;

How my blood danced, tingled
As the foolscaps jingled,
Lest their mock-bows all might mar!

—"You will make my proud queen blush

"O gnomes!

"Away, hide, hush

"In your bowery homes!"

In vain, in vain I cried

And sighed.

—"You see?"—"You see?"—from the woods it
came.

—"Who?"—"Who?"—in a quavering tone replied.

—"She's fooling you!"—"She's fooling you!"

My hot heart burst aflame.

—"Too pure!"—"Too demure!"

—"Who? Will she be your . . .

"Your *own own* Sweet?"

My agony grew.

—"She fooling you!"

—"Who?"—"Who?" they repeat:

—"She fooling you!"

—"Too true!"

They whistled,

—"Too true!"

—"We too!"

A pause! . . . I stole
A look at her face,
And saw her soul
With its angel grace.
—“ Oh, will she be yours”—
“Your *own* own Sweet?”
—“ Oh, will she be yours?”
That catch they repeat.
For my soul “ too pure”—
Yet who could endure
Such agony longer
Or stronger?
So I fell at her feet—
Cried:—“Will . . . will you be
My *own* own queen forever?”
—“You see?”—“You see?”—
From the woodland green
How they mocked my cramped endeavor!

Yet the rest
Were best
Hushed tight
For aye;
Since my heart is light
With the joy of June,
Light with the bliss of living!

Bright
Is the night,
And gay
The day—
And my heart
To the gnomes
Of woodland homes
In part
I'll say,
Is forgiving!



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