

UC-NRLF



B 3 342 973

---

---

WINIFRED WELLES

---

*The*  
HESITANT  
HEART

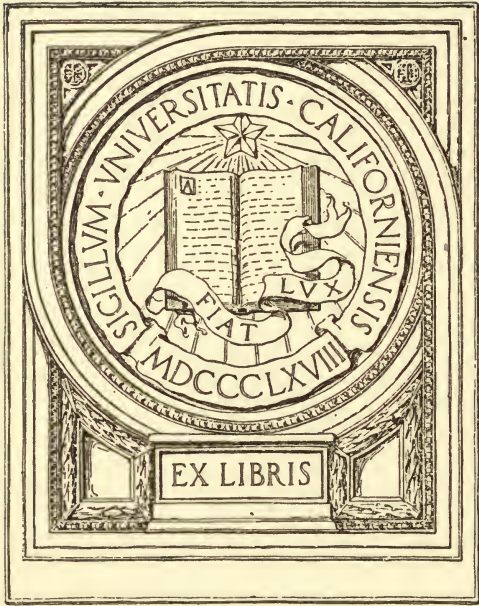
---

---

NEW YORK: B. W. HUEBSCH

---

---



959  
W449  
h









*The*  
HESITANT  
HEART





---

WINIFRED WELLES

---

*The*  
HESITANT  
HEART



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA

*New York* B. W. HUEBSCH *Mcmxix*

COPYRIGHT, 1919, BY B. W. HUEBSCH  
PRINTED IN U. S. A.

NO. 211  
1919

SOME of these poems were first printed in the North American Review, The Century, The Liberator, The Smart Set, The Madrigal, The Poetry Journal and Contemporary Verse, to which due acknowledgment is made.



## *Contents*

- The Hesitant Heart 9  
From a Chinese Vase 10  
School 11  
The Unfaithful April 12  
Five O'clock 13  
Loud Youth 14  
Snowfall 15  
Humiliation 16  
Idyll 17  
Cobweb 18  
To Narcissus 19  
One Voice 20  
Driftwood 21  
Windows 22  
In Love 23  
Variation 24  
Hail and Farewell 25  
Plaint 26  
The Violin 27  
Keepsake 28  
A Child's Song to Her Mother 29  
Threnody 30

Two Songs of Bitterness	31
To a Mocking-Bird	33
Gesture	34
Language	35
A Tree at Dawn	36
A Tree at Dusk	37
Love Song from New England	38
Trespasser	39
Moonflower	40
Surf	41
The Misers	42
Lifetime	43
Communion	44
Talisman	45
Sympathy	46
Nocturne	47
The Child	48
My Heart Can't Break	49
Portrait of a Lady at the Piano	50
I've Lived so Long	51
Realities	53
Setting for a Fairy Story	54
Climb	56

## *The Hesitant Heart*

No, I shall never climb above the hill,  
But, wistful, pause halfway and take my fill  
Of wondering —  
Behind me lies the valley, hot and still,  
A roof-scarred thing.

If, like a lagging cloud with slow, white feet,  
I should surmount the hill, would I then greet  
The spray-wreathed sea?  
And would the eager winds blow keen and sweet  
Up, up to me?

Halfway, my craven heart shall ever bide,  
Content in hoping that the other side  
Shines on a silver shore,  
Yet fearful lest the high hills only hide  
More vale — and nothing more.

*From a Chinese Vase*

Roaming the lonely garden, he and I  
Pursue each other to the fountain's brim,  
And there grow quiet — woman and butterfly —  
The frail clouds beckon me, the flowers tempt him.

My thoughts are rose-like, beautiful and bright,  
Folded precise as petals are, and wings  
Uplift my dreaming suddenly in flight,  
And fill my soul with jagged colorings.

The waters tangle like a woman's hair  
Above the dim reflection of a face —  
He thinks those are his own lips laughing there,  
His own breasts curving under silk and lace.

How shall we know our real selves, he and I,  
Which is the woman, which the butterfly?



## *School*

His seat was by a window. So he dreamed.  
How could he study while the sunlight gleamed  
In small, sweet shapes, like wild things tame enough  
To dart to him and touch his hands for love?  
While there were profiles carved in every cloud  
To mark as grim or ludicrous or proud,  
And agile shadowings to writhe and crawl  
Like ghostly spiders up and down the wall,  
He could not help but turn their way to look.  
His eyes, that would not follow down his book  
The muddy trudgings of deliberate words,  
Reflected blue and silver flights of birds.  
You would not think there was so much to trace  
Of wonderment on just a window space.  
But once, when a frail scrap of paper moon  
Enchanted him from ten o'clock till noon,  
They moved him to the middle of the room.  
He learned his lesson then for very gloom,  
Until, came glowing to a nearby chair,  
A little girl with sunset in her hair.  
His soul recolored. The forlorn dreams came  
To warm themselves once more at this new flame.  
He pushed aside the dusty Greek. He had  
A different way to read the Iliad.  
While through cold ashes others groped to learn,  
He lit the towers of Troy and saw them burn.

## *The Unfaithful April*

I saw a robin last year,  
I heard him fill his throat  
High in the trembling elm tree  
With note on gallant note.

So splendidly his red breast  
Went flashing in the dew,  
I thought beneath his glad wings  
His heart had broken through.

I hear the robin this year,  
His voice is sweet and strong,  
But I can not give him welcome  
Nor listen to his song.

How can he bear the new leaves  
Around his last year's nest?  
How can he sing with old wounds  
Still red upon his breast?

## *Five o'Clock*

Let us go far away from buttered toast,  
And tea, and marmalade, and all of it.  
The feathered jostling of their hats, the wit  
Unhumorous — I can not bear this host  
Of warm, sweet women! Everything offends.  
The murmurous movement of each gleaming bead,  
Sly laughter on soft lips that do not feed  
So much on tea as on their absent friends.

I knew you understood because your eyes  
Were beckoning across the crowd to me,  
Oh Child, who have so strangely learned to be  
Unconsciously, mysteriously wise!  
We went away, unnoticed, from the room  
Into the drip of slow, autumnal rain,  
And laughed, and drew deep breath, and laughed again,  
We were so glad to leave that candled gloom.

Through the wet dusk the leaves came fluttering —  
I felt one falling softly on my head  
As I leaned down to kiss you and you said  
Adorably, "You're such a dear old thing!"

## *Loud Youth*

There is a great, sweet golden bell in me —  
It has a chime of flame, a flame so bright  
I seem to walk forever in its light,  
As gods do in their immortality.  
Such a tremendous joy would come to be,  
That chains would turn to wreaths of blowing white,  
And crutches drop for wings to flare in flight,  
If I could ring the bell that is in me.

Oh if I could! The stars would shake — and suns  
And moons collapse, and the hollow ways of death  
Fill with enough of echo to revive  
Such restlessness among the saintly ones,  
That the oldest of them all would catch his breath  
Remembering what it was to be alive!

## *Snowfall*

Enchantment on the river  
And magic on the lake,  
The world has turned to crystal,  
Don't speak or it will break!

The road seems new, the valley  
An unfamiliar place,  
Where trees are trimmed with spangles  
And stones with silver lace.

A pink and white, furred rabbit  
With a star-tuft for a tail,  
Hops up the hill by moonlight  
And leaves a fairy trail.

I think we mar the meadow  
So white, and smooth as suede,  
We ought to shine in satin  
Or glitter in brocade.

## *Humiliation*

How nakedly an animal  
Lies down on earth to die,  
Unmindful of the shining air,  
And unashamed of sky.

But men and women under roofs  
Draw shades and hush the floor,  
And furtively they lay their dead  
Behind a darkened door.

## *Idyll*

Not the wise, quiet pine nor the amorous, blonde oak  
Nor the tall, pale, lady elm tree,  
But you, who came invisible in a magic cloak,  
You, who were the wind, chose me.

I, the white little birch, who had stood alone, serene,  
Content to listen and to stare —  
And I never saw your hands that tore my veils of green,  
Nor your lips that laughed in my hair.

You held me and kissed me, I knew your strength and grace  
And dreams rose like sap in the spring.  
I trembled as with buds, but I never saw your face,  
I only heard you whispering.

So yawning and careless you went on to field and sea,  
So here I am lonely and still —  
Oh wind, wind, better to have broken me  
Than leave me with roots in the hill.

## *Cobweb*

It joins a dark pine to another tree;  
And shining through its bones a ray of sun  
Unearthed it like some graceful skeleton,  
Or an unfinished frame of faery  
As frail as words. Not even thought could be  
More carefully, more delicately spun —  
As fine a thread as that invisible one  
Of speech and silence between you and me.

The spider lurks there blotched and poisonous.  
He is the monstrous god who can at will  
Belch beauty from a stomachful of spit;  
And dreaming of that silver binding us,  
Which Love unwinds and weaves, my heart grows still  
And cries that Love is lovely — isn't it?



## *To Narcissus*

I have no beauty that is all my own,  
No special loveliness carved out of me,  
No glowing images wrought perfectly,  
Splendour of flesh or delicacy of bone.  
I am a pool, wherein you shall be shown  
How wonderful and starlike you can be,  
I am a mirror so that you may see  
Yourself most intimately and alone.  
When you lean to me and a dear, swift grace  
Sways in my body, and my lips and eyes  
Grow suddenly and exquisitely calm —  
Oh tremble and look deep into my face  
And see your own there, marvel and grow wise,  
Touch me and cry, "How beautiful I am!"

## *One Voice*

You were the princess of the fairy tale  
Who spoke in emeralds instead of words,  
Whose laughter left an exquisite, bright trail  
Of sounds as winged and visible as birds.

I never knew until yours went from me,  
That any voice could love my name so much,  
That just to speak it made it seem to be  
A fragrance and a color and a touch.

My days are gestures of bewilderment,  
My nights are attitudes of listening,  
For fear you may have whispered as you went,  
And I shall lose the starlike echoing.

## *Driftwood*

Life gave me these —

The beauty that can only branch in trees  
Who are content, knowing the roots' securities —  
The strength to stand up straight and bear the wings  
Of a brave ship on her adventurings —  
The bitterness of being broken, being tossed  
And driven on the waters and the winds, and lost  
In desolation, mist and stinging foam,  
And being beaten back at last to home.

Now love has kindled me —

Strange that my beauty of a dear, green tree  
Should vanish into smoke and memory.  
Strange that the strength, magnificently mine,  
Should fall before the flame without a sign.  
But oh most strange that bitterness should be  
Drawn up in color after color out of me.

## *Windows*

Today I have been washing windows  
Where storms have left their stain,  
And marks were made in loneliness  
By someone's fingers — mine, I guess —  
On the outside smear of rain,  
On the inside blur of pain.

I had forgotten that clean windows  
Can make such difference.  
That through a glass as clear as air,  
Landscapes seem painted on each square,  
That colors shapely and intense  
Can bring relief and recompense.

I've looked so long through darkened windows  
Where my own reflection peers,  
I had forgotten there might be  
Things outside myself to see —  
I wonder if your eyesight clears  
For better vision after tears.

## *In Love*

No firefly more forlorn, more gravely strays  
Among the glories of the morning tree  
Than I, who glide almost invisibly  
Where apple boughs are white as brides' bouquets.  
Beneath the arches of the orchard ways,  
Only one tulip, that I start to see,  
As though my own heart had dropped out of me,  
Seems to have guessed that I, too, am ablaze.

My blood is full of gleamings like seafoam,  
My body brims with something of the moon  
And shakes, as if with wings that would unfold.  
So, after dark, I bar the doors of home,  
Lest those, who think that I am grey at noon,  
Should stare at night to see that I am gold.

## *Variation*

Undesirous of a lover

Daphne hid where cool ferns were —  
And the kind god of the river  
With the flesh and blood of her  
Made a green tree lovelier.

What presence could fill a forest,  
Or footfall so fearful be,  
That a god must rise in pity  
To change a quiet tree  
Into me?

## *Hail and Farewell*

With tears and a faithful heart and brave mirth,  
Once on a time you watched to welcome me.  
Waiting and weariness and agony  
Until the last were what you thought me worth.  
But wearier than the months that wait for birth  
Are those that wait for death — How shall I be  
Still while you are so still? How shall I see  
Unbrokenhearted your slow steps from earth?

So the white watchers gather near to hark  
The soul's approach, the heralding of the horn,  
And so they strain and listen for the tread  
Of the free soul retreating down the dark —  
Mothers who wait for children to be born,  
Children who wait for mothers to be dead.

## *Plaint*

I too would run like Nicolette  
Down aisles of rose and mignonette,  
And stain my knees with midnight dew  
Passing the ghostly gardens through,  
If I should know that loverly  
Young Aucassin awaited me!

And I could leave without regret  
My warm white bed like Nicolette,  
And flee from roof and candle-light  
Into the deepest hour of night,  
If by the ivy-shadowed wall,  
I knew that Aucassin would call.

But I'll not tremble in the wet,  
Nor bruise my feet like Nicolette,  
Only to dream of his embrace,  
Only to think I see his face,  
Feel nothing sweeter on my mouth  
Than heedless wind lips from the south,  
Only to stand unloved, alone,  
And listen to the fountain moan  
From stone to unresponsive stone.



## *The Violin*

Musician, give a voice to me!

Oh quicken wood and string,  
Unburden me of ecstasy,  
For I have songs to sing!

Of faces forward through dark rains,  
Of torn but valiant feet,  
Of blood that runs in shrinking veins,  
Of broken hearts that beat.

Of crooked boughs that have kept true  
The promise to fulfill,  
Of thwarted roots that yet pursue  
Their purpose in the hill.

Oh all you safe and smooth of heart  
Listen to song from me,  
Whose wooden throat was once a part  
Of the north side of a tree!

## *Keepsake*

You said they were brook trout —  
Those fairy blades of sun and moonlight  
You so gravely lifted out  
One by one from your basket on the grass.  
And I held up two handfuls  
Of pink and green and white  
For everyone to see,  
And called the colors by a name,  
Wood-anemone.

But of all those little dreams in cups  
Left brimming over on the moss,  
And of that big, breathless one  
We leaned across  
The fallen willow to give back again  
To deep and shoal —  
We never said a word,  
We never told a soul!

## *A Child's Song to Her Mother*

The lovely years went lightly by  
As April flowers go,  
And often you would laugh or cry  
To see how I could grow.

The lonely years drift by in rain,  
As leaves in autumn do.  
I long, when we shall meet again,  
To be as tall as you.

## *Threnody*

I never have known anyone so proud,  
So fierce for faith, so strong for nobleness.  
I never heard you whine nor cry distress,  
Nor saw you kneel nor knew your bright head bowed.  
Dreams, Love and Laughter were a swift, white crowd  
Of wings flashed upward from your loveliness,  
You carried Truth, wore Honor as a dress  
And wound yourself in Beauty like a cloud.

Surely this is not you who lies so low,  
Smitten as others, yielding as they must  
With abject hands and smooth, submissive head,  
All fire and glory crumpled by one blow,  
Bewildered and beaten and brought to dust,  
This is not you, oh pitiful and dead!

## *Two Songs of Bitterness*

### I

Dear to me is Ruth, a bowl of crystal  
She brims her heart with laughter and I look  
And see her clear as the dew on a cobweb,  
Or green water over white sand in a brook.

Mary is dearer, color and story  
Are wound in her and like soft cloths unfold,  
And when she moves her footsteps are of silver,  
And where she will her touch can turn to gold.

Oh sweet as wine is laughter with the loving,  
And speech with the living good as bread,  
But only with a ghost can I feast in silence,  
With Eunice, who is dearest, being dead.

The princess that I could not be,  
The fairy that was not for me,  
The game begun and never ended,  
The castle dreamed, the play pretended,  
The note unsung, the word unspoken,  
Whatever I have lost and broken,  
My doll, my heart, my promises,  
All these things Eunice is —  
When I lie down with her to rest,  
I'll find my dearest and my best  
Safe in her dust beneath the sod,  
Kept fair and clear and written plain,  
And then I shall believe again  
In elves and knights and love and God.

## *To a Mocking-Bird*

I was asleep, dreaming that I could see  
The north hills bowed and burdened with the snow,  
And the grey-bearded river old and slow,  
And the sick silences on vine and tree —  
When in upon my loneliness and me  
Light rushed, and sweetness tumbled down as though  
Windows had opened for white hands to throw  
Roses and roses from a balcony.

Oh Bird, imperious for happiness,  
For moments gold as arrows in the air,  
I am the only dark in all daybreak!  
Let loose your avalanche of loveliness  
Over my heart, until I am aware  
How long I sleep — and sing me wide awake!

## *Gesture*

My arms were always quiet,  
Close, and never freed.  
I was furled like a banner,  
Enfolded like a seed.

I thought, when Love shall strike me,  
Each arm will start and spring,  
Unloosen like a petal,  
And open like a wing.

Oh Love — my arms are lifted,  
But not to sway and toss;  
They strain out wide and wounded,  
Like arms upon a cross.



## *Language*

I made new speech for you, a secret tongue,  
Dearest and best of all in book or scroll —  
To hear it spoken was to hear it sung,  
I copied all of it upon my soul.  
There were those leafy letters, wreathed like vines,  
Such trellises of words as Sappho spoke —  
Heavy as silver flagons of old wines  
Some Latin phrases carved by stately folk.  
I could not find a sound for leavetakings  
Slower, more sorrowful than Spanish is,  
And the French names with flower-dusty wings  
Flew in and out among the sentences.  
So with my heart a voice made musical,  
I went to you and did not speak at all.

## *A Tree at Dawn*

I know that day will come for I have seen  
Under the sky three silver threads unravelling,

The blackness whispers of green —

A sound becomes a glimmering  
And waters waken.

White from her sleep the Lily prays —

A fragrance sways  
Where the grass is shaken.

And as the last hour listens, lingering,  
Deep in my heart the Voice begins to sing.

## *A Tree at Dusk*

With secrets in their eyes the blue-winged Hours  
Rustle through the meadow  
Dropping shadow.

Yawning among red flowers,  
The Moon Child with her golden hoop  
And a pink star drifting after,  
Leans to me where I droop.

I hear her delicate, soft laughter,  
And through my hair her tiny fingers creep. . . .

I shall sleep.

## *Love Song from New England*

In every solemn tree the wind  
Has rung a little lonesome bell,  
As sweet and clear, as cool and kind  
As my voice bidding you farewell.

This is an hour that gods have loved  
To snatch with bare, bright hands and hold.  
Mine, with a gesture, grey and gloved,  
Dismiss it from me in the cold.

Closely as some dark-shuttered house  
I keep my light. How should you know,  
That as you turn beneath brown boughs,  
My heart is breaking in the snow?

## *Trespasser*

I am among the careless dead  
Who do not rise to see  
Why I should hurry through their flowers  
Beneath their willow tree,  
Nor lift their hands from off their breasts  
To beckon me.

But though I run so lightly through  
The myrtle's rambling mass,  
And though my feet step silently  
Above the blowing grass,  
And though they do not stir or speak —  
They know I pass.

## *Moonflower*

I can not be a banner swift and gay,  
A yellow glory or a scarlet flight,  
Superbly opening upward into light —  
While some are waving scarves I only pray.  
I am the one who hides her heart by day,  
Who does not dare to rise and blossom white  
Until the lovely moment before night,  
The interval of lavender and grey.  
So love me delicately as the rain  
Fingers the leaves. Hold me as if asleep —  
Nor waken me with some too terrible  
Dear call or kiss, lest, stricken with the pain  
Of your close-beating heart, my heart should leap  
And break, finding the world too beautiful!

## *Surf*

Here are gardens growing, ruining in the deep,  
Where the frail foam pauses, then topples and unturns  
Forever and forever, wonderful white ferns,  
Where feathers fly in colors and lights like lizards creep,

Where the twining, white ivy shrivels and is rolled  
Glamorous and blowing into fragment and flake  
Beneath enormous orchids that only bloom to break,  
To crumble into smoke and turn to opal mould.

And some waves like children — each one alight, alone —  
Hurry up the pathway and point and hesitate,  
Their torn blue ruffles tossing around them as they wait,  
As they turn and tiptoe seaward over shell and stone.

So it is that wonderings flow in and out of me —  
Like little bells and tassels of foam along a beach  
They dream and sigh and whisper, whimper and reach  
For peace withdrawn as softly as sand from the sea.

## *The Misers*

We were so fearful lest we give too much  
And thereby wrench the sweetness from the song,  
Trembled to look too deep or kiss too long,  
And stood aloof when we yearned most to touch.

Oh had we been content, less passionate  
For Love's eternity we had not lost  
The least of Love's eternal hours, whose cost  
We never dreamed until it was too late.

So was life stripped of even memories  
To meet that time when we had no desire,  
That day we looked and turned away shamed eyes,  
Seeing but ashes where had once been fire.

No splendid shadows of a well-lost heaven,  
But tearful ghosts of kisses never given.



## *Lifetime*

I am the river, I have been immense  
With hope, great as the inner heart of spring —  
The reeds have huddled to my whimpering  
Amid the noon-time's staleness and suspense.  
Between the ruins of magnificence,  
Stained and autumnal, mournfully I sing,  
And then among my white beards muttering  
Grow old, and sleep into indifference.  
I have no returning, onward is best,  
Close to the dark, sweet earth in every place,  
But with the sky's mark hidden in my breast,  
And a star's shadow falling on my face.  
Where shining spaces wait to fill with me,  
Death is the beautiful and bitter sea.

## *Communion*

With delicate, white hands the priest has laid  
His usual blessing on the wine and bread,  
And to each broken figure, each bent head,  
The symbol brought, the silver cup conveyed.  
The candles peer, uneasy and afraid,  
Like small, grey faces from the mournful dead,  
And up and down the aisles the organ's dread  
And doubt and grief and gravity have strayed.

Softly the stained glass windows split apart,  
Their ineffectual angels pine and pass —  
I am upright and proud. Whom I seek now  
Sudden and sure as dawn breaks in my heart —  
And I tread stars as intimately as grass,  
Touch light as though it were a golden bough.

## *Talisman*

He was a little boy and gentle,  
With the dim look in his eyes  
Of one accustomed to a temple  
And speech there with the wise.

He went the adventurous way of beauty  
And passed unharmed without distress,  
And learned a secret for unlocking  
The spells of ugliness.

He knew, like someone in a legend,  
The magic in the lowliest things,  
That stones are golden coaches really,  
And frogs are fairy kings.

So when Death came, he saw her coming  
With a tall star in her hand,  
And turned from life as from enchantment  
At the waving of her wand.

## *Sympathy*

While all of you are bringing milk and bread  
And stroking me and saying I must rest,  
Remembrance beats like black wings in my head,  
And wolfish grief is clawing in my breast.

I know that you are kind, that you mean well,  
And thanking you so quietly I seem  
So comforted that you could never tell  
I'm wondering why it is I do not scream.

Oh crucify me! Nail my hands and feet!  
Strike in and turn the torture of a knife  
Heart-deep to loose my blood and take my breath —  
Pain would be good and suffering seem sweet.  
But keep your love for those who still love life,  
And do not feed me who am starved to death.

## *Nocturne*

I have grown pale and paler  
Since one went away,  
Who passed from me as softly  
As daylight leaves the day.

My hair has lost its gleaming,  
The light has left my face,  
I am a grey-eyed wanderer  
In any lonely place.

And on my heart is moonlight  
Like white rain on the sea,  
And I am of the evening  
As the evening is of me.

A gentle moan, remembrance,  
A folded wing is love,  
Since my dream stepped into shadow  
On the soft feet of a dove.

Now when thoughts of him arise  
And open in my soul,  
They are frailer than white roses  
In a silver bowl.

## *The Child*

The linden bough above the garden wall,  
The pleasant meadow and the pretty brook,  
What miles of dream they spread, what torrents shook,  
What majesty they wore when I was small!  
Since I am grown they are not so at all.  
Absurd and dear as fairies in a book,  
They fade and dwindle and will never look  
Mighty again to me for I am tall.

I shall grow taller, sometime I shall be  
Shoulder to shoulder with the full-grown cloud,  
And, looking down on life and death and birth,  
As I do now on grasses or a tree,  
Remembering myself shall laugh aloud  
And think, "Oh little Grief! Oh foolish Earth!"

## *My Heart Can't Break*

My heart can't break but closes like a flower  
That waits in windless places for the day,  
Until the arrowy dawn finds some swift way  
To pierce its paleness with a gleaming hour.

And when at last I look without offense  
Through windows and in mirrors that were yours,  
The stranger shadow in them reassures  
My heart that it has learned indifference.

So hour and hour and hour and dark and light  
Go rustling softly by as women do,  
Trailing complacence in a silken dress.

Until, crying with loneliness some night,  
I wake from that old dream of losing you  
To find my hands closed tight on emptiness.

## *Portrait of a Lady at the Piano*

She spoke assent, decisively and clear,  
Flashed to her seat, flame-eyed and shining-lipped,  
As though she were a crystal that had slipped  
Down from the brilliance of the chandelier.  
Her hands glittered — We thought that we could hear  
Icewater on white marble as it dripped,  
Or yards of pale, blue satin deftly ripped  
To shreds, or falling fragments of a spear.

Is there not anywhere deep down in her  
One long, soft note to penetrate this blur  
Of splintered music? Do bright, broken things  
Litter her soul, or has she somewhere stored  
In secret purple, like warm evenings,  
The steady darkness of some perfect chord?



## *I've Lived So Long*

I've lived so long companionless  
In this old house bowed down with years,  
I've learned to welcome loneliness,  
Converse with dreams and sit with fears.

Often and often in the night  
When I have laid some dull book down,  
One comes between me and the light  
With terrible, unrustling gown.

Wistful as moonlight in the room  
Her face sways, luminous with fire  
Of eyes unsmothered by the tomb,  
Of lips remembering still desire.

And there beside the lute she stands  
With mournful little motionings,  
And stretches out her pulseless hands  
And only thrusts them through the strings.

No way to bring her longing near  
Who has no heart to beat and break,  
Nor any way that she can hear  
The sound her lost touch can not make.

Oh who will sit here wondering  
Some other night and watch me steal  
Close to an unforgotten thing  
With hands that reach but do not feel?

## *Realities*

When I stand listening in my heart at night,  
I hear them leaping through the loneliness  
Ringing their colored bells, and less and less  
I grieve as they come flashing into sight.  
The lover Dreams run first, boy-like and bright,  
Then lusty Ghosts and ruddy Fairies press  
And crowd to kiss my hair or touch my dress,  
Substantial as the stars, as real as light.

My heart grows dark with the returning day,  
And flames no more, but flickers and grows faint.  
Faces fade by me in a ghostly stream,  
Voices of people are a faroff plaint.  
I move uncertainly, and grope my way  
Among them, like a shadow or a dream.

## *Setting for a Fairy Story*

This is a lonesome place,  
The water is as peaceful as a face,  
That moods have smoothed and dreams made exquisite.  
And where your paddle gleams and slips,  
It seems as if one sighed and closed his lips.  
And softly and as sly  
As ghostly cats, the long white mists prowl by.  
Oh I can tell  
We are not wanted here! There is some spell  
Those dwarfs of trees, who squat around the lake,  
Are squinting through the dusk to see us break.  
So desolate a place . . . so full of wonder. . . .  
Now near, and far, and over us and under,  
A million million frogs entreat.  
Their thin, entangled threads of voices meet  
And mingle with the tree-toads', jarring sweet  
And whirring strong as tiny motors might.  
And leader of them all far down the night,  
One huge, wet-bellied, moss-mouthed crier  
Ttwangs like a taut bronze wire.  
The way grows narrower, the voices less.  
Only the water-lilies in distress  
Hold up their horrified white hands, and cling  
Close to each other shuddering.  
And I am troubled by their breath,  
That smells of mystery, or sleep, or death.

And was it death or sleep or mystery,  
That slew the knighthood in so brave a tree,  
And left him torn to bowels, stripped to bone,  
Abject and mutilated and alone?  
His body, broken but still marvellous,  
Darkens and bars the way for us.  
And so we leave our boat and move  
Timidly through a fearsome grove,  
Where witches' shadows huddle as we go —  
It ends — as sudden as a blow.  
And here are blessed, blue-lit spaces!  
The fireflies everywhere,  
Like tips of wands are waving in the air.  
And we can see our faces  
Dimly, like faces in a well.  
So quieted beneath that star,  
We have forgotten that there was a spell,  
And kiss, and laugh to find how real we are!  
And then, as if she heard our laughter,  
And longed to tiptoe after,  
Amazingly alone and still,  
And very fairy-queenlike on the hill,  
The moon uprises, darling as of old.  
So we go home, resplendent in her gold,  
Safe in her glory,  
And happy as the ending of a story.

*Mount Misery Brook*

## *Climb*

My shoes fall on the house-top that is so far beneath me,  
I have hung my hat forever on the sharp church spire,  
Now what shall seem the hill but a moment of surmounting,  
The height but a place to dream of something higher!

Wings? Oh not for me, I need no other pinions  
Than the beating of my heart within my breast;  
Wings are for the dreamer with a bird-like longing,  
Whose dreams come home at eventide to nest.

The timid folk beseech me, the wise ones warn me,  
They say that I shall never grow to stand so high;  
But I climb among the hills of cloud and follow vanished  
lightning,  
I shall stand knee-deep in thunder with my head against  
the sky.

Tiptoe, at last, upon a pinnacle of sunset,  
I shall greet the death-like evening with laughter from  
afar,  
Nor tremble in the darkness nor shun the windy midnight,  
For by the evening I shall be a star.









THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE  
STAMPED BELOW

AN INITIAL FINE OF 25 CENTS  
WILL BE ASSESSED FOR FAILURE TO RETURN  
THIS BOOK ON THE DATE DUE. THE PENALTY  
WILL INCREASE TO 50 CENTS ON THE FOURTH  
DAY AND TO \$1.00 ON THE SEVENTH DAY  
OVERDUE.

MAY 6 1941

MAY 14 1940

MAY 14 1941

~~JAN 22 1983~~

JUN 22 1983

REC. CIR. JAN 08 '83

458927

*Wells*

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

