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RAIN IN MAY

RAIN
IN
MAY

AND
OTHER
VERSES BY
FORNTASSIN GIFT



BOSTON
THE FOUR SEAS COMPANY
1918

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THE FOUR SEAS COMPANY

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THIS
BOOK IS
INSCRIBED
TO LILLIAN EYRE

904154



RAIN IN MAY

FOR LILIAN

As your wild heart keeps
 Laughter of Spring ;
As your wild heart leaps,
 Thus would I sing.

Thus would I fling
 My soul into life,
Feel the keen sting
 And glory of strife . . .

Exultant in pain,
 Forgetful of sorrow,
Eager to gain
 Surprise to-morrow.

Everywhere Beauty
 Sings through the rain
Joy is a duty—
 Regret is vain.

Divinely sane
 With the laughter of Spring—
Through wind and rain
 Thus I will sing!

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VERSES
WRITTEN
IN THE
OLDER
IDIOM

TO A MORNING-GLORY

White morning-glory, fragile flower,
Touched by the dew of dawn and lined
With mellow purple from the sun,
Thy goblet only let me pledge
To my fair lady of the tower.

Here is the tangling fretted vine
Within the garden she designed,
So carelessly yet deftly done:
This tiny cup above the hedge
I'll drink—the dew shall be for wine.

AFTER BLAKE

Child of fortune and of fame,
Genius of the seven lakes,
Stars transcendent gleam red flame,
When thy sleeping spirit wakes!

Guardian of unmeasured store,
Fountainhead of glorious art,
Mistress of tradition's lore,
Who invades thy inner heart?

Child unborn, yet living, dead,
Essence pure of all mankind,
Unknown god and goddess wed,
In the gist of human mind!

THE STAR

I sat in a crowded car
And sought to free a song,
Surrounded by noisy people
And bored by the journey long.

But thought became fixed as a star
That rode in stately advance,
And I looked on the town and the steeple
In a strange unwonted trance.

The trance showed a vision afar
Of a fragile purple flower,
Perfect of petal and sepal,
Born one idyllic hour.

I stooped to pluck the vision,
Changing to opaline mist,
And a smile was in the flower
Superb in dream and tryst.

* * *

Mockery and derision
Came the laughter in the car:
But I turned to the night in that hour,
And saw my ascendent star.

TO ADIR NAMIR

I.

Your face is like a rare intaglio

Upon a moonstone cut, and set within

A diadem of rich pearl-broidered stuff:

Something that rajah or sultan would wear
And vaunt possession, but might never know
Its real value. Men would travel through

The mountains and the seven seas to win

By trade or stealth such treasure: but enough-

When pilgrims see your beauty they must swear
The gem Earth wears upon her brow is you!

II.

Dear one of silent speech, could I translate

Your regal beauty into living verse,

Presenting that perfection to the sense

By interlinking strands of melody,

No other labor would I consummate.

To you all tribute of success belongs:

All those who share our children will disburse

Pure admiration as a recompense,

And precious coins of praise, in company,

Only to you, the mother of my songs!

“NO MAGIC MUSIC COULD I MAKE”

No magic music could I make
To curl in eddies upward far,
And gild the hours where you are
Beside the hill-girt sapphire lake:

Although in Slumber's gliding car
Dreams bring me music for your sake,
And I may worship when I wake
The wonder of your splendid star.

DIRGE IN OLDEN STYLE

I wandered through a wood at eve
And sat me down within a dell.
More deep than was the ancient well,
Were the wild eyes of Isabel.

Why should the wretched lover grieve
To hear a weary funeral knell?
More deep than was the ancient well,
Were the wild eyes of Isabel.

Would that God might her soul receive—
One day of fear her wits did leave.
More deep than was the ancient well,
Were the wild eyes of Isabel.

For simple country folk believe
That on her mind weird evil fell.

Thus do I wander near to hell,
Because no learned men can tell
The way to break the wizard spell
That holds the *mind* of Isabel.

THE SEA

O the sea, the sea, and its hungry waves,
The ghostly wind as it moans and raves,
The will of the stars and their cryptic chart,
Ah, these belong to the sailor's heart!

O the ever changing opal sea,
With its lure of unspoken mystery,
And ships that rove on its trackless waste,
They are land and mansions to sailor taste!

O the gorgeous dark of the sunken sea,
And its deep unfolded destiny!
A bright coral strand will the sailor tread
When he goes to his grave on the ocean bed.

AUTUMN FANTASIE

When I look out upon the Western hills
Clad in their glory of Autumnal hues,
And see the luscious fruit and ripening grain,
And all the visioned opulence of things:
A deep emotion my whole heart enthrills.

O mellow time of harvesting and cheer,
What vivid passion surges to infuse
Our voices in one happy christening strain?
The Sun and Earth have formed new offerings,
Born in this flaming splendor of the year.

LOVE'S ARROW

A laughing boy and winsome girl
Who tryst in the summer moon-glow,
Forget the careless little blind god
And the random shots of his bow.

Ah, who will sing the pain of love?
A mischievous, maddening thing:
And though barbed the point of the arrow,
Many hearts crave its sting!

"I WORSHIPED FROM AFAR"

I worshiped from afar,
Her hand and mine met never:
She seemed exalted as a star,
Untouched forever.

Among the night's pale gems
A robber passed unnoticed.
Thus flowers die with broken stems—
In splendor, death-kissed.

TO THE CAYUGA

I know a lake among the hills
 Unsung, unknown to fame,
But something in my being thrills
 At the mention of its name.

There are tall groves of red pine trees
 And vineyards near the shore,
And orchards too, in companies,
 Upon the valley floor.

There is the little valley town,
 ('Twill be the same forever!)
There's memory like an unseen crown,
 That Time will rob me never.

There is the university
 That draws men from afar.
It stands in proud serenity
 As patient as a star.

Like castles are the many halls
 Clustered about the crest,
And gorges where the waterfalls
 Play magic songs unguessed.

To walk in silence on the slope
And watch the red sun rise,
Inspires the soul with lustrous hope,
And freshens wonder-wise.

And this to me in other days
Was really an enchanted realm,
When wandering through the shadow ways
All garlanded with elm.

And oh, the charm this lake land gives
In Autumn splendor dressed!
A deathless fountain spirit lives
In the blue hills of the West.

May never liberty forsake
This happy hallowed air—
Beloved country of the lake,
May you be ever fair!

ON A SKETCH

It suggests by a vague indefinable play

Her face, in unbridled unravished delight,
Like a fawn in a beautiful wilderness caught,
Still wild and lithe, and caring for naught:

Let us loosen the fetters and watch the swift wight
Spring bounding away—leap to freedom—away!

TO WILLIAM WATSON

[*Written in my copy of his "New Poems"*]

Titan, whose message brief, but strong,
Rings out in mighty epigram,
And like a braided iron thong
Whips shame upon pretentious sham:

Thou faithful scribe of vital word,
Though braving exile-prophet's ban,
Still wield the master's keen edged sword—
Not Melodist—but Superman!

TO SOLITUDE

Stern daughter of enfolding night,
You haunt the forest and the margeless sea ;
In never conquered realm of airy height,
Near sunset mountain vistas rare,
Among caverns without entrance and sound-free,
With future things unknown and unaware,
Your brooding spirit is there.

When woven darkness shrouds the land,
You spread your curving wings of raven gloss
And bid the champing winds obey your hand ;
Then wander through wide earth and heaven.
You send as courier the albatross,
Sometimes the dawn and opening flowers seven,
Or death, with bitter leaven.

No gate opposes your slow knock,
The villa and the hut are your abodes :
Your face, the cloud-frown or the smiling rock,
Has myriad moods, emotions wild.
You know the traveler on gloomy roads,
The stricken mother with her still-born child,
And pariah reviled.

Ranging the bleakest plains of time,
The bearer of a strange invisible torch,
And banished messenger from court sublime,
You beckon to profounder sense,
Dimly from star's aerial pendant porch,
Leading the soul along a pathway hence
To happier eminence.

“WEARY OF TURNING PAGE ON LETTERED
PAGE”

Weary of turning page on lettered page,
I turn light low and glide into the dark.
How cool the sombre night! Its dewy tears
Are shed upon earth's coverlet of green:
Past is the stormy grief and troubled rage.

Peace of the night, descend and make me thine!
Whirl me aloft into heaven's high arc,
From disappointed hope and heavy fears,
To peak subliminal and realm unseen:
There let me rest in dreamless sleep divine.

“ 'TIS WINTER, AND MY CHEERLESS ROOM
IS COLD”

'Tis Winter, and my cheerless room is cold.
The sharp wind whistles mockingly outside,
The ceiling with its plastered cracks looks down
Upon bare walls and carpet gray,
And gloom stares through the curtains torn and old.

I light the last chips on the hearth. I must.
It's cold. The little swords of flame, untied,
Leap from their scabbards—prongs around a crown!
Their blaze soon done, the garnet embers play,
Then die. So fade my hopes to ashy dust.

WILL

Why not then argue thus,
And let this cut doubt like a knife;
Are we what life makes us?
Not so—we are what we make life!

AMBITION

Ambition is that force in man
That bids all dormant powers rise,
And teaches that he ever can
Obey the law of sacrifice.

PARDON

When blind injustice is an ember
From your heart you cannot lift,
Think not vengeance, but remember
Pardon is a perfect gift.

SLEEP

Gladly I go to sleep,
And should death fall before night ends,
Smile—do not weep,
Friends.

LOVE

Love is a festered thorn within the breast:
The surgeon Time probes, slow and insolent,
Once having found it, then he gives no rest.
With forceps he names Disillusionment,
He drags it forth with many a ribald jest.
And though the wound by skilful hands be dressed,
The pain abides, beneath the sewn-up rent.

OTHER
VERSES

TO ELIZE

Elize, your boy-chum remembers
How like a bird you would preen,
In the olden golden Septembers,
Before you were even fourteen.

Never were apples so mellow,
Never were sunsets so red,
When I wove of scarlet and yellow
Garlands about your head.

The leaves whirled in wild elation
To see if the wind could tire,
And we shared strange jubilation
As we sat by the smoking bonfire.

And through those glorious summers,
Together early and oft
We used to play like mummers,
Up in the old barn loft.

1 Out of all I recall one hour,
4 And sure enough, the clouds did turn gray!
3 They said there might be a shower—
2 When sun-amber flooded the day:

Purple grapes in clusters
I stole behind the house:
Plums with dim blue lustres,
You hid them in your blouse.

Then to escape the thunder,
Upstairs in the loft we lay;
And when we had eaten our plunder—
Fell asleep in the hay.

Dappled tiger-lilies
Were symbols you told me of—
When we, two serious sillies,
Vowed undying love.

TO A BUTTERFLY

Butterfly, Butterfly,
Flitting, fluttering,
Born in a silken shell somewhere,
With the wild flowers
Daintily puttering,
Wondrous things are the wings you wear!

Butterfly, Butterfly,
Flitting, fluttering,
How have you come to our garden rare?
What strange enchantment
Is your love uttering
Now to the rose that glows so fair?

Butterfly, Butterfly,
Floating, soaring,
Lost in the luminous blue up there—
Of the wild flowers
Adored and adoring,
Creature of gold in a mold of air!

THE MUSIC STUDENT

My hands are tired: I have practised much.
Within the loitering twilight do I sit,
To ponder on the problems overcome,
And greater labors yet to undergo,
Before an audience thrills to greet my touch.

Beneath, the growling trains of traffic roll,
And Winter's gloomy weather seems unfit.
But joy is mine, though finger tips are numb;
The instrument has taught me how to know
Its secrets, and the pathway to my goal.

THE HAUNTING MOOD

On cliffs above the harbor
And the naked surge of sea,
You stand beside the cottage—
And I hear you whisper to me.

I am bored with books and papers,
With play or drudgery;
For I would reach out to capture
And bring you here close to me.

Though states block the way between us
And wide be the barrier sea,
Over all the city's discord—
I hear you whisper to me.

“BENEATH THE PENTAGONAL LAMP”

Beneath the pentagonal lamp
Suspended in blue air,
I sit and wonder for hours
How you fare.

Beside the mahogany table,
When midnight has slipped away,
Alone I sit and ponder
The gift of day.

For life at best is a riddle,
At worst a grim charade:
And no one knows the answer
When the game is played.

While hours whirl in elusion,
Smoke thins to nothingness—
I can only wish you may gather
Sheaves of success.

Days one by one say farewell,
And idols crumble to dust.
The disused sword of ideals
Is broken with rust.

To you falls the heritage joyful,
Contented, happy—blind.
To me are years of wandering—
The great undefined.

And though life is but a riddle,
Or a grim charade—
Here's to the fight to finish,
If only with half a blade!

CHANGE

The withered leaves, that lingered late,
Are fallen now from stripped bare trees;
And fallen with them lie prostrate
My childhood hopes and fantasies.

Good-bye, sweet imagery—great dreams—
How sad, yet foolish it all seems.
In future I can never dare
To build more palaces of air.

But onward, ever on, goes life—
Its warfield now is manhood's land—
I must forget—and understand
That all existence is but strife.

SKETCH

One happy moment, single and superb,
Waylaid me by the dark apartment door.
It was so unexpected,—just before
We had been chattering beside the curb.

Mayhap because I felt naught could disturb
The calm—our party had been all a bore—
One happy moment, single and superb,
Waylaid me by the dark apartment door.

STATEMENT

I've started on a journey
Whose ending is somewhere:
It's many years to travel
Before arriving there.
I just hold back the questions,
And leave the doubts unsaid:
I trust somehow in a future,
And plod on straight ahead.

JINGLES
FOR
JUNE

AT THE WINDOW

3 And I wonder what you are dreaming
/ Your lips are like red apples,
2 Dark waves your tumbling hair,
4 As I see you sitting there:
Your eyes are absently gleaming,
And seem to be unaware;
Your freckles are little brown dapples,
But they add a touch debonair!

I would kiss those lips like red apples
That pout such a pretty dare,
And lose my hands in the gleaming
Of your rippling ebony hair:
I would sing your eyes to dreaming
And hold you beside me there;
Your freckles are funny brown dapples,
But I love you, so why should I care?

INVITATION

My summer house among the trees
Is cool and quiet every day,
And from the ocean miles away
In drifts a breeze.

There in the sleepy grass at ease
The idle flowers nod and sway,
And over them at plunder play
The yellow bees.

I know my summer house will please,
And if you care to call some day,
You'll find the path—it's tucked away
Among the trees.

With violets
And triolets
We wove the morning into play—
And histories
Of mysteries
Wafted the afternoon away.

* * *

And oh, to swim
With joy abrim
Out from the fresh lake's pebbled rim—
While sun allows
To lie and drowse,
Or watch the yachts with swaying bows.

* * *

For little cones
And lucky stones
We hunted on the beach all day—
And quips of chance
Or circumstance
Blew the sunlit hours away!

Could I but speak within
The clinging voice of violin,
While you danced splendidly,
Ecstatically—

Or could my song compose
The vibrant odor of the rose,
In garden where you were
A worshiper—

Could I in moonlight gleam
Through latticed windows of a dream,
And kiss your tangled tresses
With light caresses—

Then happiness were mine,
A music from the spheres divine,
And love would be
A melody!

Those clouds are fantastic cobwebs
Swaying in corners up high,
And the moon is just an old lantern
Hung on the top of the sky.

The gossiping trees are asleep now,
But through that misty gray glade,
Do you know the crickets make music
For the elves to masquerade?

Hidden on the veranda,
We grudge the moon its light,
The while in slow zarabanda
Shadows dance through the night.

And the clouds are gossamer hammocks, too,
Hanging in corners up high,
And we swing through gardens of slumber—who?
Why—You, the Moon, and I.

Between the reeds and the rushes
The bullfrog strums his banjo,
While the fresh stream gurgles and gushes,
And falls in the pool below.

Up yonder the faithful pines cover
Our nested brown bungalow ;
Overhead the purple clouds hover,
And the sun on the hill swings low.

Has the afternoon gone, my lover,
Have the hours vanished so soon?
She slumbers—and I sing above her
Songs that are born in June.

And now idyllic hushes
Waken with sunset glow,
And with them she wakens and blushes
At being discovered so.

The spring still gurgles and gushes
And falls in the pool below,
While between the reeds and the rushes
The bullfrog strums his banjo.

Perhaps I will bring you roses,
Perhaps a handful of pearls,
 To that elm-shaded spot
 Of fancy begot,
Where dragon-fly dozes
And cool water whirls—

Where green canoes point their noses
And the lapping wavelet unfurls,
 In that willow-wood plot
 The yellow sands dot,
And your dear head reposes
Enclustered with curls—

I may only bring you roses;
Perhaps the pearls would destroy
 That small elfin grot
 The good gods allot,
Where silence encloses
Our haven of joy.

SILVER BROOK

Our little brook
 Behind the barn
Runs through the field
 Like a thread of yarn.
And half concealed
 In tiny nook
Our little brook
 Becomes a tarn.

She tells me things,
 With laughter low,
About the birds
 And how trees grow.
But in her words
 And whisperings
She tells me things
 That I would know.

My lady fair
Climbed mountain high,
In velvet dressed,
'Neath the sapphire sky.
And my request
Met with a stare,
My lady fair
Gave no reply.

My brook will tell
At afterglow,
When sunset kiss
Gilds all below.
The joy I miss
Will hurt—although
My brook will tell
All I would know.

LARGO

When June just seems to blend with July,
And the flowers drowse in the noonday heat,
And the lazy locust ambles by,
We know a cool and cozy seat—
Up in the cherry tree, you and I.

While handfuls of crimson are hanging nigh,
You are a princess and I a prince,
Our state is all spread before the eye,
In an orchard of apple, peach and quince—
Up in a cherry tree, you and I.

Latticed with leaves is our house on high,
The boughs are stairs for us to climb,
Right underneath the broad blue sky.
Oh, who could have a happier time—
Than two in a cherry tree, you and I?

Tears, like a sudden shower,
Cross my lady's face—
Grief rushes in to devour
Care-free laughter and grace.

Muttering of sombre thunder
Ushers in the rain—
But the rainbow emerges in wonder,
Greeting sunlight again.

Tears, like a sudden shower,
Go from my lady's face—
Leaving, a perfect dower,
Tranquility—in their place.

In ecstasy of sadness
I waited for a word—
The blank day grew, and then I knew
It never would be heard.

Oh, that we might undo
The cord of memory!
Because in gladness or in madness
Fate cuts ruthlessly.

SONNETS

PRELUDE

To pour out life in song! Ah, radiant thought!
This is a lamp before my stumbling feet:
Let all my verse as offering be brought
Art's sovereign Heiress-Mother to re-greet.

Then let my rhyme inweave a tapestry,
With love in glowing color finely drawn,
Picturing in bold lines Earth's pageantry,
The call of Justice and the worth of Brawn.

So does the eternal drama move in pomp,
Where men act parts by Impulse, so-called Fate;
Where rollicking Fun must have its clownish romp,
And Sorrow, Joy and Sorrow alternate.

Then pour out all of life in song, my soul,
While circling stars fly toward their ultimate goal.

High on the rocky sheer outjutting ledge,
While speeding day spreads wide blue wings in flight
Pensive I sit upon the dizzy edge,
And strive to read my destiny aright.

The days of fond illusion now have passed,
Already luscious Summer drifts away,
Soon I will face the Winter's icy blast,
And banished, fight in a world grown old and gray

Strong manhood sets a seal upon lost youth,
Ambition flares a torch before the eyes,
Bidding to join the search for absolute truth,
Or lead new steps of some large enterprise.

So I will labor onward in the van,
And try, whatever threats, to be a man.

TO RICHARD WAGNER

You are the master of stage panoply,
Who, delving in the Northern mythic lore,
Brought forth from fragments of old legendry
Synthetic dramas none had dared before.

The people of the Niebelungen Lied
Live once again in cave and mountain hall,
And in the web of treachery and greed
The ancient gods crash downward to their fall.

Bewitching mind with mingled hope and doubt,
In mixed emotions, brilliant light or gloam,
Your music pours its living message out,
With heartbeats for a mighty metronome.

Proud maker of great tapestries of sound,
With agelong admiration you are crowned!

[NOTE.—*Wagner once said that while composing his heart beat time to the music.*]

ON A PICTURE OF MY MOTHER

Was this my mother's face? Well, I am glad.
Was she so beautiful? I don't recall
Her features; she died when I was a lad.
I recollect the sick-bed—her silk shawl.

She used to tell this story as I kneeled—
A lovely lady lost her little child;
Some gypsies stole him, playing in a field,
And so he wandered, outcast, rude and wild.

This made me sad. I used to turn and wince,
But smiled, in fond hope she would soon be well.
The tale was true—for I have wandered since
A vagrant, with achievement yet to tell.

But now, beholding her untroubled eyes,
I really know she lives in Paradise.

THE ARTIST

TO OLAF BRAUNER

If paint and brushes, dead things in themselves,
Shall show the secrets of our inner hearts,
Only the man who deep in nature delves
May reach the summit of this Art of Arts.

Only the man with eyes of heart and mind,
Who stands long hours in the day and waits
Inspired moments that ride with the wind,
May find himself the chosen of the Fates.

Such oft knows Sacrifice a visitor,
A slough of suffering threats to bar his goal,
And many years of toil must pass before
The painted canvas can reflect the Soul.

Yet if the mortal does the height attain,
His Immortality rewards all pain.

THE ARTIST'S CREED

If song be in our hearts, why need we care
That some may pass and hear with unconcern?
Or if we shout, and with elation burn,
Why should we heed the idler's stupid stare?

If we express our visions as we dare,
And men in ignorance fail to discern
Our painted parables; or even spurn
As ugly, works that we consider fair—

We will not listen to detracting cries,
And do not understand cold apathy:
Art is the symbol of our lives' intent.

Then let us sing, and shout, and represent—
For some will read with eyes of sympathy,
We are convinced that Beauty never dies.

ROMANCE

Romance, I have forgotten you, return!
And fill my hollow life with splendor young;
Shake off this heavy blindness that has hung
About my searching eyes, intent to earn
Mere concrete gold. Ah, now let me discern
Sunlight in bloom beneath the trees upsprung,
And through the ecstasy of tears, my tongue
Shall free the songs that in my being burn.

Not yet forgotten, but a dormant flame
Among the hidden fires of memory—
Arise! Burn warmly, brightly, joyously;
The earth is fair, the flowers are all aglow,
And on the lake the mirrored mountains grow—
Romance, I could not see—before you came!

THINE—MINE

I.

For drab convention let us make amends,
Vowing that time is but an idle whim,
And drink together of this cup abrim
That Spring with wayward Fancy blends.

What lavish treasures Earth-mother spends—
The sunset cloud above the ocean rim,
The fresh arbutus and the lark's glad hymn:
Dear heart, what feast of beauty she extends!

Let us enjoy all, for a little while,
Before us the elixir of our youth,
Let us the magic cup together drink—
(We never taste it twice, by any guile.)
Dear heart, we shall unite in very truth,
And let the world to deep oblivion sink!

II.

Thine—mine shall be this one immortal hour,
That Fate in some forgetful moment gave,
Now we shall drink forbidden joy we crave,
And be divinely satisfied with power.

Though afterdays may frown and dull years glower,
No storm shall break what now we shall engrave
Upon this hour, the fairest architrave
In Memory's imperishable tower.

The dawn divides the indigo of sky,
And soon I shall be vanished utterly—
See—yonder heaven's cup of brazen fire!
But in one welded kiss has our desire
Been wholly sated—and within the tower,
Mine—thine has flown this one immortal hour.

THE HOUSE OF HAPPINESS

I sought to find the House of Happiness,
From childhood, as when first I heard the sound
Of laughter: then methought that it was found—
'Twas but the entrance to a wilderness.

Years later when I learned I could transgress,
And live with lust, I visioned it was drowned
In seas of sorrow. But still journey-bound,
I could not stay, and took the trail by guess.

I traveled through the fair Illusion Hills,
Across the arid plains of Drudgery,
Up to the city of Old Age and Ills.
And there I met a pilgrim with a wand,
Who at the door of Death directed me:
"The House of Happiness lies just beyond . . ."

TO MUSIC

Inspired Music! Language of the soul—
Oh, could the listening ear thy liquid tones
Receive, as dew within a silver bowl,
And hold all precious like encrusted stones.

Then would life be one vocal trance,
A wandering through the tints of mind's mirage,
A habitation in aerial manse,
Possession of a priceless heritage.

In truth thou art a spirit, rhythmic Tongue,
Who governest all mortals by caprice,
Enchanting like some censured perfume swung
With whorls of smoke before Love's altarpiece:

Now playing to our hopes, our eager fears—
Now like a statue melting into tears.

THE POWER OF SONG

Song forges the immortal from the man,
The hammer life, the anvil iron earth:
Then never ceasing rhythm of cosmic plan,
From glowing crude beat out a sword of worth.

A flaming sword to cut the mountain road
Through all hard obstacles of circumstance,
Uproot the tyrant habits that corrode,
And place a soul beyond the clutch of chance.

One purpose, single, centric and unmixed,
Driven on by the all-conquering "I can!"
Will yoke the thunderbolt from sky unfixed,
Or with frail wings gray ocean's fury span.

O Song, infuse me with this living breath,
And I will follow you to body's death!

ROSE REVERIE

I wandered through a garden when a child,
And stole a rose, to drink its fragrance sweet.
With mossy mortared steps, a friendly seat,
And dreams, long sunlit hours were beguiled.

In boyhood's unruled kingdom, running wild,
I climbed the gorge and waded with bare feet
The terrace mazes of its plashing street—
A pagan, with school never reconciled.

Grown older now, I sometimes flee the whirl
And smothering strife of earthly greed and men,
To view that garden and the darling girl
Whose fresh-blown spirit is a rose to me.
Unsated, but renewed in hope again,
With uplifted head I face reality.

CHILD OF THE SOUTHERN HILLS

Child of the Southern Hills, your occult gift
Descends upon me, and removes the chain
Of circumstance and worry from my brain,
To soothe the heart and heal the widened rift.

And as the weeping clouds ride on adrift,
While night drinks up the crystal cleansing rain,
I think the tears of heaven dissolve my pain,
To bring sweet sadness and my soul uplift.

Child of the Southern Hills, forever be
The Presence that descends, as rain in May,
Awhile to cleanse and purge the earth full free
From toil-stain and insidious decay:
Come, as the pattering rain, at night to me,
While I go on my solitary way.

BEFORE THE HEARTH

Upon the sapphire throne of memory
You reign, my princess of illusions rare;
The starlight forms a crown about your hair,
And loveliness robes you entirely.

You wave a sceptre lightly, airily,
And sudden moments on the spiral stair
Of dream return—the dalliance we did share—
To hint fulfilment of what once could be.

And in your clear blue eyes there seems to wake
The happiness of some untold desire—
You come so near—your parted lips will break
This poignant silence of the silver lyre—

But dream collapses in an ashy flake,
And leaves me gazing at the ember fire.

APRIL SUNRISE

The morning floods the valley 'tween the hills
Where opalescent mist floats hazily:
The distant vale with dancing sunshine fills,
The ridge awaking, stretches lazily.

Great clouds like an armada sail along
In outspread squadrons on a turquoise sea:
The birds at nesting sing their welcome song
And fly elate about each budding tree.

The grass is green, and Spring is here at last!
Greeted again, like exiled rightful king,
This re-creating spirit will outcast
Each tattered garment and each useless thing.

Then let us cast all sordid things away,
And waken to the glorious new day!

POSTLUDE

When I reflect on all that I have writ
In moods of sorrow, hope, in pain or joy,
It seems I have suppressed all that is fit,
And left inscribed much that I should destroy.

So many thoughts, forgotten or thrust in,
Make useless by omission or excess
The finest woven harmonies I spin:
And there are runes that I cannot express . . .

But consolation quivers in the thought
Some will glean deeper meaning in my rhyme,
Some will attain the snow crests I have sought,
Reach Immortality that laughs at Time!

Should I not be content with what I gain?
Work done in faith was never given in vain.

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