

THE SHADOWS OF THE TREES



ROBERT · BURNS · WILSON

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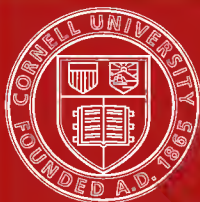
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THE SHADOWS OF
THE TREES



T H E S H A D O W S
O F T H E T R E E S
A N D O T H E R P O E M S
B Y R O B E R T B U R N S

W I L S O N



NEW YORK
R. H. RUSSELL

M D C C C X C V I I I

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THE GATE-WAYS OF THE SEA

*They that set sail upon the ship of song
Are borne to deep seas and return no more.*



*Spread—spread, white wings!—The gate-ways of the sea
No man may close—the sunshine and salt spray
Await our coming—Out! out; and away
From all dull prison shores—the tides are free—
The winds unchained—and no King's vassals we.
The open sea is ours—Farewell delay!—
Unreef thy sails—far, past the placid bay,
The blue waves of the ocean beckon thee.*

*A flame-like scarf, the only flag we fly,
Streams from the peak in honour of the Muse:
And one less loved no mariner could choose.
But if no ship salute us passing by,
No whit we care—black waves and storm defying,
We will go down with our own Thracian banner flying.*



THE SHADOWS OF THE TREES



LINES TO A CHILD

DEAR little face,
With placid brow and clear, up-looking eyes,
And prattling lips that speak no evil thing;
And dimpling smiles, free of fair-seeming lies,
Unschool'd to ape the dreary world's pretence;
Sweet imager of cloudless innocence,
The tenderest flower of Nature's fashioning:—
A dewy rose amidst the wilderness,
Amidst the desert a clear-welling spring,
So is thy undissembling loveliness,
Dear little face.

Dear little hand!
How sweet it is to feel against my own
The touch of that soft palm, which never yet
The taint of soul-destroying gold hath known:
There Nature's seal of trustfulness is pressed,
Even as her loving touch the lily blessed
With stainless purity—even as she set
The golden flame upon the daffodil,
And heaven's clear blue upon the violet,
May her best gifts be for thy clasping still,
Dear little hand.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

Dear little heart
That never harboured any ill intent,
That nothing knows of bitterness or care,
But only young life's nestling wonderment
Amidst thy strange, new joys—thy incomplete
Unfledged emotions and affections sweet.
Veiled, by the unlived years, thy field, but there
The sowing for thy harvest hath begun:
When thou shalt reap and bind, may no despair
Rise from that ground, betwixt thee and the sun,
Dear little heart.

P O E M S

A PHANTASY

THE apple buds in crystal sleet,
The peach tree blooms with snow;
The gray hills and the gray clouds meet,
The meadow brook runs low,

In frost and sad half-silence bound;—
And yet it sings not ill;
Haply some spirit in the ground
Remembereth Summer still.

For in the thicket near she bides,
Chilled by the whistling blast;
But in her frozen breast she hides
Her hopes, till grief be past.

Sing on, ye wimpling waters, clear,
Though snow and ice enfold.
Cease not; though all the world be drear
The song charms, as of old.

These joys, which with the year depart,
Come with the following year;
It is the winter in the heart
That makes an end of cheer.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

The apple buds in crystal sleet,
The peach tree blooms with snow;
The gray hills and the gray clouds meet,
The meadow brook runs low.

Hark how the knowing wind doth stay
To chide yon rusting scythe;
Remembering well, the dappled brae
Which bloomed so fair and blythe.

Remembering well the flashing death
Which laid that beauty low;
The dying daisies, and the breath
Of gladness, turned to woe.

Even now, meseems, a figure tall,
Of not ungentle mien,
Hath moved along the garden wall
And by the gate doth lean.

He takes the scythe down from its place,
And one wan cheek is laid
Close to the arc, while he doth trace
The dulled edge of the blade.

And now awakes a rhythmic tone,
Swift-throbbing, peal on peal,
Stroke following stroke, the whetting stone
Rings on the rusted steel.

P O E M S

In fancy now I see the sweep
Of that remorseless arm;
Once more, in vain, I strive to keep
The flower I loved, from harm.

The apple buds in crystal sleet,
The peach tree blooms with snow;
The gray hills and the gray clouds meet,
The meadow brook runs low.

Oh, darkness of the noon-day sun;—
Oh, Summer, turned to gray!
When evening came his task was done,
And he went on his way.

And I—Oh Brook, sing on, sing clear!
Though ice and snow enfold,—
For, ever in thy voice, I hear
The vanished dream retold.

Gaunt reaper of the earth's wide lands,
Think'st thou 'tis Summer still?
There is no harvest for thy hands,
The fields are white and chill.

The flowers are faded, and the grain
Was gathered long ago;
Put up thy scythe—it would be vain,
Thou canst not garner snow.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

Till Summer comes—sad spectre, wait;
Not all hearts wish thee ill;

Here, hanging by the orchard gate—
Thy scythe shall wait thy will.

The apple buds in crystal sleet,
The peach tree blooms in snow;
The gray hills and the gray clouds meet,
The meadow brook runs low.

P O E M S

A SONG OF NEW SEAS

GIVE us new seas to sail—the cry is, give us new seas to sail!
New seas to sail, be they never so mad, and we ship in the
teeth of the gale:

For the old seas pall on our souls like death, their tides and
their deeps we know,
The slope of the continents under the brine, and the black
ooze beds below.

The currents that drift from pole to pole—what new hope
can they bring—

And the breakers that beat on the thousand shores, what
new song can they sing?

The thousand shores—the dreary stretch, what have they
else to give,

But the same dull death for those that die, and the same dull
life to live!

The thousand shores—the gabbling millions, fronting the
patient sun,

What will they do in their child's-play world, but that they
have always done?

These slaves of time with the farce of their flags, and their
drivelling cant, accurst,

They will know no more when the last man lives, than the
first man knew at first.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

The insolence of the rich, the same complaining of the poor;
The wrongs of the race piled up and up—it has all been done
before—
Till the smoke turns into flame—and the slaves to madmen
turn, and then—
The ashes—and the game renewed—such are the sons of
men.

We build new ships, we set new sails, our hearts are filled
anew
With higher hopes, with better thoughts, we ask new work
to do.
Wherever they roll—in the burning belt—or hemmed in a
frozen mail,
We ask new seas to sail—Great God!—Are there no new
seas to sail?

Is there no place left on this mottled ball—no land in an
unknown sea,
Where the soul might grow to be something more than it
now seems doomed to be?
Shall we never have done with the rotting past, and the
shrivelled claw-like hands
That grapple and strangle the heart of life till it dies in
grave-cloth bands?

P O E M S

The hands that are dead and are never dead— shall we never
be free of these?

They stretch from the grave of life that was, and hale us
where they please;

They build our cities, they frame our creeds, they write our
laws, our songs;

They set their musty seal on all that of right to us belongs.

Shall we never be more than the slaves of death—the death
that is never dead—

The death that feeds on the good red blood which was meant
for us, instead?

Shall we never find strength with a sword of light, to shear
our own life free,

And to make it our own, as God meant we should, as man's
life ought to be?

We build new ships, we set new sails, we resolve our charts
anew,

But, for ever, we sail on the same dull seas, by the will of the
same dead crew;

And they sail us close to the killing wind which blows from
the tombs of eld,

And in spite of the quick hands on the wheel, the same old
course is held.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

We are fond of our symbols. Mark, the torch, which, when
one bearer drops,
The next one grasps—and the next, and the next, so the
borne flame never stops—
But this, like the others all, is false:—the flame and the man,
both, die,
And the next one starts, with his own green torch, and the
taunts of the standers-by.

Is the day of our hope not near—when we will seek for the
truth and find
That the soul's best gifts are lost in the waste of a backward-
looking mind?
Shall we make new paths where none are made, shall we strive
and, at last, prevail,
And at some time build our ships, please God—where there
are new seas to sail?

P O E M S

TO A CROW

BOLD, amiable, ebon outlaw, grave and wise!
For many a good green year hast thou withstood—
By dangerous, planted field, and haunted wood—
All the devices of thine enemies.
Gleaning thy grudgèd bread with watchful eyes,
And self-relying soul. Come ill or good,
Blithe days thou see'st, thou feathered Robin Hood!
Thou mak'st a jest of farm-land boundaries.

Take all thou may'st, and never count it crime
To rob the greatest robber of the earth,
Weak-visioned, dull, self-lauding man, whose worth
Is in his own esteem. Bide thou thy time;
Thou know'st far more of Nature's lore than he,
And her wide lap shall still provide for thee.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

WHEN IN THE NIGHT WE WAKE AND HEAR THE RAIN

WHEN in the night we wake and hear the rain
Like myriad merry footfalls on the grass,
And, on the roof, the friendly, threatening crash
Of sweeping, cloud-spiced messengers, that pass
Far through the clamouring night; or loudly dash
Against the rattling windows; storming, still,
In swift recurrence, each dim-streaming pane,
Insistent that the dreamer wake, within,
And dancing in the darkness on the sill:
How is it, then, with us—amidst the din,
 Recalled from Sleep's dim, vision-swept domain—
 When in the night we wake and hear the rain?

When in the night we wake and hear the rain,
Like mellow music, comforting the earth;
A muffled, half-elusive serenade,
Too softly sung for grief, too grave for mirth;
Such as night-wandering, fairy minstrels made
In fabled happier days; while far in space
The serious thunder rolls a deep refrain,
Jarring the forest, wherein Silence makes,
Amidst the stillness, her lone dwelling-place:
Then in the soul's sad consciousness awakes
 Some nameless chord, touched by that haunting strain,
 When in the night we wake and hear the rain.

P O E M S

When in the night we wake and hear the rain,
And from blown casements see the lightning sweep
The ocean's breadth with instantaneous fire,
Dimpling the lingering curve of waves that creep
In steady tumult—waves that never tire
For vexing, night and day, the glistening rocks,
Firm-fixed in their immovable disdain
Against the sea's alternate rage and play:
Comes there not something on the wind which mocks
The feeble thoughts, the foolish aims that sway
 Our souls with hopes of unenduring gain—
 When in the night we wake and hear the rain?

When in the night we wake and hear the rain
Which on the white bloom of the orchard falls
And on the young, green wheat-blades, nodding now,
And on the half-turned field, where thought recalls
How in the furrow stands the rusting plow,
Then fancy pictures what the day will see—
The ducklings paddling in the puddled lane,
Sheep grazing slowly up the emerald slope,
Clear bird-notes ringing, and the droning bee
Among the lilacs' bloom—enchancing hope—
 How fair the fading dreams we entertain,
 When in the night we wake and hear the rain!

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

When in the night we wake and hear the rain
Which falls on Summer's ashes, when the leaves
Are few and fading, and the fields, forlorn,
No more remember their long-gathered sheaves,
Nor aught of all the gladness they have worn;
When melancholy veils the misty hills
Where sombre Autumn's latest glories wane;
Then goes the soul forth where the sad year lays
On Summer's grave her withered gifts, and fills
Her urn with broken memories of sweet days—
 Dear days which, being vanished, yet remain,
 When in the night we wake and hear the rain.

When in the night we wake not with the rain—
When Silence, like a watchful shade, will keep,
Too well, her vigil by the lonely bed,
In which at last we rest in quiet sleep;
While from the sod the melted snows be shed,
And Spring's green grass, with Summer's ripening sun,
Grows brown and matted like a lion's mane—
How will it be with us? No more to care
Along the journeying wind's wild path to run
When Nature's voice shall call, no more to share
 Love's madness—no regret—no longings vain—
 When in the night we wake not with the rain.

P O E M S

THE SUNRISE OF THE POOR

A DARKENED hut outlined against the sky,
A forward-looking slope—some cedar trees,
Gaunt grasses stirred by the awaking breeze,
And nearer, where the grayer shadows lie,
Within a small paled square, one may descry
The beds wherein the Poor first taste of ease,
Where dewy rose-vines drop their spicy lees
Above the dreamless ashes, silently.

A lonely woman leans there—bent and gray:
Outlined in part, against the shadowed hill,
In part, against the sky, in which the day
Begins to blaze. Oh earth, so sweet—so still!—
The woman sighs, and draws a long, deep breath:
It is the call to labour—not to death.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

THE FEBRUARY LANDSCAPE

MIST fills the air, and in the muffled sky,
The heavy clouds lean eastward as they drift
In one gray, moving wall, without a rift.
The straggling crows call faintly, as they fly
On labouring wings, with feathers blown awry:—
Black phantoms in the vaporous fumes, which shift
With urging winds that vex but never lift
The blurring rack which they drive swiftly by.

The near fields, rich with dark, wet weeds, with brown
And yellow grasses, mingling here and there,
And mosque-like clustering stacks—each lifted crown
Well shaped and pointed—have an alien air,
Like dreamed-of Eastern plains—and like a dream,
Slow-fading in the gathering dusk they seem.

P O E M S

A WINTER LOVE SONG

THE sad fields veiled in falling snow—

They are not sad to me:—

Not chill, to me, the winds that blow,

However chill they be.

The eddying flakes that speed away,

With music they drift down

Through myriad, lacing branches gray,

On dead leaves crisp and brown.

No bloom upon the whit'ning hill,

No leaf upon the tree ;

The music is sad music—still,

It is not sad to me.

For song, with my heart's muffled might

Keeps measure, blow for blow ;

My love's sweet breast is warm and white,

And softer than the snow.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

THE SNOW-FLAKE

FAIR, fragile waif;—whose wandering child art thou?
Climbed thou the sun's beam, from the ocean's breast?
Or from some ice-capped mountain's sparkling crest,
Or from the rill which bathed yon hill's hot brow
When Summer's fever burned—all ashen, now,
With Winter's savage frown? or did'st thou rest
Within some pool which breathing Spring caressed
With silken leaves, that decked the dipping bough?

Mayhap, a tear-like drop of morning's dew
Wert thou—spilled from the hare-bell's trembling cup,
Or nestled on some blade—content to be
The glory of the ray which bare thee up,
Far—far—within the sky's wide sea of blue:—
Now, wandering back across the frozen lea.

P O E M S

THE QUIET WINTER FIELDS

SWEET are the winter fields;
The quiet winter fields of brown and gray,
And green, and tawny yellow, like the manes
Of Asiatic lions; lonely plains
Of pleasing desolation, whence the yields
Of sumptuous summer, have been borne away;
Long, silent lands—haunts of the wandering air
Which breathes out, sighing, from the woodlands bare;
How sad—how sweet, are they!

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

A NIGHT IN FEBRUARY

UNSEEN the rain falls through the darkened air,
The soft, fresh air, new-scented from the hills,
Down whose moist earth the muddy little rills
Make midnight mirth. One can imagine there,
The streaming trees, the weeping branches bare,
The wrecked vines, eloquent of Winter's ills,
The tearful briers, the pool which slowly fills,
Set round with dead weeds, leafless, gaunt and spare.

The black and muffled cedars, where they loom
Slow-tossed, against the drowned and leaden sky.
Anon some stream's loud madness stirs the gloom,
Swept with the fitful gust that scurries by:—
Then all sounds blend in one continuing strain;
The deep, melodious murmuring of the rain.

P O E M S

IN A WINTER VALE

PERHAPS the world is well away
And well forgot;—one cannot know.
But good it seems to walk alone
This quiet winter vale; to hear
This stream's delicious waters clear
Thus blithely singing as they flow;
For now, that limpid monotone
Makes sweeter music for the drear,
Short days, when all the hills are gray,
Than when the young, green-girdled year
In this sad province held her sway,
And made both brook and birds her own.
Changed are these haunts of hers; the sere
And sunlit, silent slopes appear
More faded for the kindling ray,
Which gilds, but cannot cheer decay:
Yet, as of old, floats forth the low,
Soft music of the stream. How dear
That song—how passing sweet to hear.
Perhaps the world is well away
And well forgot;—one cannot know.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

LET NO MAN'S SOUL DESPAIR!

LET no man's soul despair!
The same eternal powers, for good or ill;
The same unslumbering care
Which lived of old, are quick and potent still,
And bend, obedient to the dauntless will
Of souls that do and dare.

P O E M S

THE WINTER NIGHT

Now, bitter cold, the thin and vagrant air
Steals from the frozen shadows of the trees;

Dead are the hills that were so green and fair;
Hushed are the streams, and, joyless as the seas
Far-stretched beneath the cheerless polar sky,
The sad, snow-shrouded fields, in solemn silence lie.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

IF ONE COULD EASE AN ACHING HEART

If one could ease an aching heart
By breathing of the mountain air,
Or woo the wary soul to part
A little from the path of care,
A little from the beaten road
To turn away—an hour of grace
To build the troubled heart's abode
In some forgetful resting-place;
To turn and leave the dust and heat,
The common highway of mankind,
Where all the plodding, weary feet
Tread down the dust of death—to find,
But once, some dewy, cool retreat,
In which the fevered heart and mind
Might put their burthens down, and meet
Some dream long lost, some hope resigned,
Some joy at once complete:—

If one could lose love's vain regret
By gazing on the shining sea,
Or still the trembling chords that fret,
By wandering on the upland lea,
Or find some balm and comfort yet
In hope of better things to be,—
If pale remembrance did not halt
To take each faded garland up,
And if her tears' remorseful salt
Marred not the taste of pleasure's cup,

P O E M S

If fickle Fortune's luring smile
Did not foretell her darkening frown,
And if her touch could not beguile
The temples with a tinsel crown:—

If there were never maddening sneer
On Fame's proud-smiling lips of scorn,
To mock the daring soul with fear,
And leave the broken clay forlorn,—
If sweet religion did not grow
To be a blind and poisoned thing,
That taints with death the limpid flow
Of kindly Nature's crystal spring,—
Then life were not so sad a dream
But that the waking might be pain;
Then hope were not a transient gleam
Like sunlight on the falling rain,
Nor could dear heaven's descending beam
Rest on the earth in vain.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

THE TRAVELLER

So many memories we, in silence, own;
So many hopes, no other soul can guess;
So many thoughts which words will not express;
So many longings that are never shown;
So many faults we hide with grief unknown;
So many wounds the heart may not confess;
What wonder, if at last, in bitterness,
The soul should cry, "I am alone, alone!"

Through this green world our shadowed path-ways lead,
And though each hasting traveller may know
What millions walk which way his footsteps go,
Yet, in the darkness, and at sorest need,
In silence journeys he—as with the dead;
Alone—each soul, its own lone path must tread.

P O E M S

THE PASSING OF MARCH

THE braggart March stood in the season's door
With his broad shoulders blocking up the way,
Shaking the snow-flakes from the cloak he wore,
And from the fringes of his kirtle gray.
Near by him April stood with tearful face,
With violets in her hands, and in her hair
Pale, wild anemones; the fragrant lace
Half-parted from her breast, which seemed like fair,
Dawn-tinted mountain snow, smooth-drifted there.

She on the blusterer's arm laid one white hand,
But he would none of her soft blandishment;
Yet did she plead with tears none might withstand,
For even the fiercest hearts at last relent.
And he, at last, in ruffian tenderness,
With one swift, crushing kiss her lips did greet:
Ah, poor starved heart!—for that one rude caress,
She cast her violets underneath his feet.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

THE DEATH OF WINTER

PIERCED by the sun's bright arrows, Winter lies
With dabbled robes upon the blurred hill-side;
Fast runs the clear, cold blood, in vain he tries
With cooling breath to check the flowing tide.

He faintly hears the footsteps of fair Spring
Advancing through the woodland to the dell;
Anon she stops to hear the waters sing,
And call the flowers, that know her voice full well.

Ah, now she smiles to see the glancing stream;
She stirs the dead leaves with her anxious feet;
She stoops to plant the first awakening beam,
And woos the cold Earth with warm breathings sweet.

"Ah, gentle mistress, doth thy soul rejoice
To find me thus laid low? So fair thou art!
Let me but hear the music of thy voice;
Let me but die upon thy pitying heart.

"Soon endeth life for me. Thou wilt be blessed;
The flowering fields, the budding trees be thine.
Grant me the pillow of thy fragrant breast;
Then come, oblivion, I no more repine."

Thus urged the dying Winter. She, the fair,
Whose heart hath love, and only love, to give,
Did quickly lay her full, warm bosom bare
For his cold cheek, and fondly whispered "Live."

P O E M S

His cold, white lips close to her heart she pressed;
Her sighs were mingled with each breath he drew;
And when the strong life faded, on her breast,
Her own soft tears fell down like heavenly dew.

O ye sweet blossoms of the whispering lea,
Ye fair, frail children of the woodland wide,
Ye are the fruit of that dear love which she
Did give to wounded Winter ere he died.

And some are tinted like her eyes of blue,
Some hold the blush that on her cheek did glow,
Some from her lips have caught their scarlet hue,
But more still keep the whiteness of the snow.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

MARCH, THE TRUMPETER

SHAKE off from your sere, russet robes, O ye hills, the red rust
and the rime of the Winter!

Arouse, from your dusky repose, O ye vales, from the trance
and the stupor of slumber!

Awake, O ye sorrowing fields, and ye streams, break away
from the gates of your prisons!

For March bulging out his bronze cheek, with fierce breath,
sets his lips to the loud-sounding trumpet.

Loud-voiced as the thunder he cries, and the clouds rise and
roll through the heavens before him;

He strides with the rush of the leaves that are whirled on
his path through the echoing forest;

The great trees are swayed and the branches are snapt where
he speeds in the strength of his going;

Outwinding the unwearied blast, and assailing the wilds with
his clarion calling.

The prophet of Spring, the rude herald of hope and the com-
ing of days of rejoicing—

He takes the wet snows on his locks, undismayed, and makes
mirth in the storms of the mountains;

He stems the cold rains, and laughs loud with the mad, tawny
streams in their lion-like leaping;

He shouts from the thundering gorge, and makes cheer in the
chill, murky mists of the valleys.

P O E M S

Strong singer of songs that first rouse the dead heart of the
earth from the Winter's enfolding,
Few days of the sun gild thy boisterous course, and thy feet
find no haven of resting;
But thou art the brave-breasted bearer of promise, for peace
cometh after the battle,
And soon the wide track of thy conquest will bloom with the
vernal reward of thy passion.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

AWAY FROM MY LOVED HILLS

AWAY from my loved hills!—Away from all
That is most dear to my unhappy soul,
I go in sadness; nor can I control
My anxious thoughts, nor check the tears that fall.
Vain is the pale delusion which we call
Philosophy. It never can console
The heart's distress, nor lighter make the dole
For fortune's woundings, be they great or small.

Yet, be it only some new grief to find,
Or to bring back the dear reward of pain,
The trial shall be made. Not all in vain
Shall be the patient battle of the mind;
And, though I know not what the days will bring,
In hope I go forth to my journeying.

P O E M S

THE TREACHEROUS SUN

MID-MARCH—and more—the buds half-blown, and killed!
And Nature crouches shivering, like the meek
And mumbling fool she is. On either cheek
A tear clings, frozen, and her veins, late-thrilled
In one brief moment's pleasure, now are chilled
With icy touches; on her lip the weak
Consenting smile still dumbly stays to speak
The foolish trust with which her heart was filled.

She'll never learn to doubt the treacherous Sun.
Each year she lifts her face for his first kiss;
Each year, with his first glance her heart is won,
All wrong forgiven for one short hour of bliss.
Oh Earth! we, thy true children are by this,
Soon-loving fools are we, and soon undone.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

AN EVENING IN MARCH

Now sweeps the wind down from the waking hills,
Moist with the tears of Winter's closing eye;
Now swells the heart, and we forget the ills
Of all the frozen days that are gone by.
But all was dear to me; the ice-lipped stream
Complaining to the listless grass that hung
In undisturbed monotony; the dream
That held the drooping cedars; men have sung
Their sweetest songs of these gray, quiet days,
For Nature's melancholy strikes the noblest chords she plays.

Oh, strange, sweet time, when life's renewing force
Begins to tingle through all Nature's veins;
The yellow river blusters in his course,
Fierce with the gathered strength of constant rains.
The close-cut willow shakes her tawny mane,
The banks put on a daring touch of green,
The fields begin to dream of growing grain,
Far in the sky returning flocks are seen;
Among the pines they wheel with clamour loud;
The squadrons of the sky stand out in heavy lines of cloud.

The polished, wiry branches of the beech
Hold still some faded last year's leaves; the oak
Stands grimly yet, as though he fain would teach
The elm in patience, while her buds invoke
The dark'ning skies for gentler days to come.
The moss glows on the dogwood's moistened stem;



P O E M S

The maple's lacing branches catch the hum
Of voices in the air that talk with them;
The night comes swift, the heavy drops have ceased,
The crimson blushing clouds seek now the gray veil of the
east.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

SONNETS OF MAD WINDS AND SUNSHINE

MARCH-LIONS, ramping, with snow-brindled manes,
Leap, with the storm, along the airy floors
Whereon the mad winds roll, and with loud roars
Bound, with soft-padded feet across the plains,
Sere from the frost, and beaten by the rains,
Denting the tufted grasses by the shores
Of shuddering, shallow pools, which dot the moors,
Where from, in driven loops, like hurtling chains,
Scared birds, swift-winged, out-fly the speeding gale.
The battling clouds above the woodlands gray,
Flaunting dim banners, pass in hurried flight,
Like some tumultuous dream. A mighty wail
Comes from the writhing trees, and far away,
The billowy landscape meets the coming night.

And when night comes, behold! the winds are still,—
Like floating mountains the great clouds divide
And, in the space, with one star at her side
Swings the bright-mantled moon; the dripping hill
Looms in dark silence, and the little rill—
Pleased with its own soft music—threads the wide,
Faint-glimmering land, where broad cloud-shadows glide,
Changing the features of the fields at will.
They may be bare, the fields, or matted deep
With tawny grasses, brown with weeds, or green
With winter wheat, or lands whereon they fling
The weathering hemp, or maize-camps, fast asleep,—

P O E M S

All now are blent in one fantastic scene,
Made for the moonlight's noiseless revelling.

The moonlight's noiseless revel,—does she know,
Yon Princess of the ever-changing sky,
Floating serene, amidst the clouds on high,
That, where the woven shadows come and go,
Among the lacing twigs, and on the flow
Of chilly streams, that sing the slow night by,
There is uplifted many a tearful eye?
Pale blooms, close-nestling in the dabbled snow,
Sweet woodland spirits, tremulous and frail,
Clad in soft garb,—in timid loveliness
Through dead leaves peeping by the rugged rocks;
Ill can they bear the unfriendly time, the shocks
And buffets of the storms, the ruthless hail,
The whirling snows, and drenchings, numberless.

The whirling snows! With morning comes the sun;
Spangling the earth and air with glinting spears.
From emerald knolls the white veil disappears.
And, merrily, the snow-fed rilllets run
Their sparkling, transient courses. One by one,
The forest streams grow loud with song that cheers
The glistening vales, the preening field-lark hears,
And pipes for joy of days not yet begun.
Uncertain are the skies. Precarious mirth
Rings in the drying thickets; on the peach,
Whose pink buds bloomed amidst the falling snows.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

The robin tries his note; the passing crows
Call down through films up-floating from the earth,
Towards the blue which they will never reach.

Towards the flashing blue,—the crystalline,
Unfathomable sea of dazzling light,
Where rides the sun; soon are they vanquished quite,—
And only winds, low breathing, intervene
'Twixt the miraculous heavens and the scene
Of earth's enchantments. Every moment's flight
Brings the immortal wonder of life's might,—
Within the hour the banks are tinged with green.
As Love comes, came the change,—a quickening flame
Stole through the woodland,—down yon slope of gray,—
Among the russet leaves, and, following, came—
Though all was silent there but yesterday—
Soft-echoing on the air, a warbling clear,—
The blue-bird's voice!—The Spring! The Spring is here!

P O E M S

A LOVE SONG

Love, the last late snows are falling,
 Failing;
 Hear'st thou, Spring is nigh?
Love, the banished birds are sailing,
 Sailing,
 Back along the sky.

Love, O Love, my heart is calling,
 Calling;
 Haply it may be,
 Thou may'st hear and answer me:—
Love, the purple shades are falling,
 Falling,
 On the greening lea.

Love, my heart hath waited, saying,
 Saying;
 Softly, day by day,
Haply I shall meet her straying,
 Straying,
 In the fields of May.

Love, O Love,—and shall I ever,
 Ever,
 In the days unknown,
Rest upon thy heart that never,
 Never,
 Rested on my own?

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

Love, my heart is ever saying,
Saying,
Softly in a dream,
Hist!—She cometh by yon stream.
Death!—'Tis but my fancy playing,
Playing,
With the swift sunbeam.

Haply when the May is turning,
Turning,
Earth from all her woes;
Haply when the blush is burning,
Burning,
On the summer rose;

Then, O Love,—if thou canst hear me,
Hear me
When my spirit cries,
Come before the Summer dies:—
Come, O Love, but once, to cheer me,
Cheer me,
Ere my spirit flies.

Love, my Love,—or dead or waking,
Waking,
Here or on that shore,
Where the unknown seas are breaking,
Breaking,
Now and evermore.

P O E M S

Here or there, alas— God knoweth,
 Knoweth,—
 He alone, not I.
 Love, the days are speeding by;
Fast, Oh fast the river floweth,
 Floweth;
 Love me, ere I die!

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

SONNETS OF THE WINTER HILL

WHOSO may walk upon the brown hill-side
Shall find fresh winds that wander as they will,
With wanton dallying in the tree-tops still;
And golden sunlight, beating like a tide,
From airy oceans:—grass-grown nooks and wide
Gray stretches—scented slopes that fill
The heart with jostling thoughts—the wintry hill
Hath lures the Summer's opulence might hide.
Moist moss, brown-tufted banks, and shadowed mould;
Dry leaves, adrift, and aromatic green
Of dark, tumultuous cedars, gnarled and old;
Clean stems of slim, young trees, and, glimpsed between
The shimmering beech-leaves, clinging, pale and sere,
Still sighing their sylvan fable —“The Summer once was here.”

To these scenes one might fly for comfort, when
The world's vile canker bites too close and threats
The soul with hideous death—when she forgets,
Amidst the savage jugglery of men,
Her sacred fires, which, here, Hope lights again;
Rekindling from a sun that never sets,
The flames of fancy, which, like starry jets,
Shine on the path—far past the dull world's ken.
Fair ministers,—sweet influences all,
Are they that greet us from this fragrant ground;
And from the thick wood's labyrinthine wall,
Come friendly messengers that men have found

P O E M S

For ever faithful,—and still others fly,
To greet us gently, from the undissembling sky.

A softening wind, from southward, stirs the trees,
The herald of low clouds and coming rain;
The dead, crisp oak-leaves sing a rhythmic strain
Of soft, continuous music. Not in these,
Alone—these friendly elements, that please
The mind's wrapt musing—dwells the touch of pain;
But in all nature's changing ways, to gain
Some unknown end, what end no spirit sees.
To be a part of this mysterious world;
To joy and sorrow with all things that are;
To find in each frail plant, which waits, close-furled,
The same intent that lights the far-off star;
To hear strange voices calling, and to heed
What others wot not of—'tis to be sad indeed.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

A GLANCE FROM AFAR

BORN in an hour it comes, —
The sweet delusion of the changeful sky;
No soul knows how, no heart can guess from where.
All January's days are not gone by,
And yet, — there comes this melting of the air,
With wistful tremors through the branches creeping.
So timid is the touch of smiling cheer,
It is as though sweet Spring, who now is keeping
A careful watch upon her children dear,
In far-off Summer lands — where they are peeping
Above the sod, awaked from wintry sleeping —
Had turned to us a glance, moist with a tear,
Full of remembrance of these fields of ours,
Where she — whiles-gone — hath set her fairest flowers
Dead now, — and vanished with the fading year.

The soft and sighing south wind comes to blow
Across the aching fields; far on the hills
It fans the cold banks of the melting snow,
Which turns to music in the downward rills,
And turns to madness in the flood which fills
The river's bed, and like a mighty spirit
Loosed from the bondage of constraining ills
Roars through the vales, that tremble while they hear it.
The moss grows brighter on the cypress tree
And from the maple's branch, the blue-bird sings;

P O E M S

The knowing sparrows twitter, and the lea
Is touched with emerald, while with weary wings
The ebon crow cleaves through the humid sky
And wakes the airy deserts with his cry.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

IT IS IN WINTER THAT WE DREAM OF SPRING

It is in Winter that we dream of Spring;
For all the barren bleakness and the cold,
The longing fancy sees the frozen mould
Decked with sweet blossoming.

Though all the birds be silent,—though
The fettered stream's soft voice be still,
And on the leafless bough the snow
Be rested—marble-like and chill;—
Yet will the fancy build, from these,
The transient, but well-pleasing dream
Of leaf and bloom among the trees,
And sunlight glancing on the stream.

Though, to the eye, the joyless landscape yields
No faintest sign to which the hope might cling:—
Amidst the pallid desert of the fields—
It is in Winter that we dream of Spring.

P O E M S

SNOW IN MARCH

BLUE, full of joy, the sky was, and the sun
Had turned the maple buds to amber tassels;
The robin, at the dawn, had sung; hard by
Upon the elm, the blackbird's welcome cry
Proclaimed dear Spring's sweet coquetries begun:—
When lo! the Wind's loud trumpet, called his vassals
To rear his hasty temples—blurred and gray—
And fan the snow-flakes forth in white dismay.

And so they fled—to blanch the dun hill-side,
To sweep the fields and scud the whistling braes,
To ridge the bleak ground of the moorland wide
And turn to ghosts the rustling shocks of maize.
Thus doth rough-handed March, with blustering gale,
Wrap round the tearful Spring her bridal veil.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

THE VOICE OF SPRING

ONCE more, once more—thank God!

I hear the dull earth waking,
I feel the green grass breaking
The fragrant sod.

II

Let go thy grasp, dull care!

Fly hence, ye shades of sadness!
Life lifts her head and gladness
Mounts on the air.

III

Arouse, ye sleeping vales;
Hark to the thrilling sound!
Spring puts her moist lips to the trumpet now
And blows a long, loud blast of joy which makes
The seeds uneasy in their beds, and wakes
All Nature with a heaving sigh that breaks
Forth from the rapturous bosom of the ground,—
A blast which drowns its echo, and assails
The silent melancholy of the hills, and shakes
The last white flakes from Winter's changing brow.

P O E M S

THE AWAKING

THE silent, great heart of the earth from the dream of deep
death is awaking;

Her budding breast yields to the love of the life-giving
spirit, undying,

Who bends to enfold her fair beauty, from slumber's white
robes warmly breaking;

Her eyelids unclose, and her tresses are stirred by the
breath of her sighing.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

SWEET IS FAIR APRIL

SWEET is fair April in soft garments clad,
With moist, young blossoms on her changeful brow;
Now stealing through some new-green glade, and now
Pursued by winds, for love of her, gone mad,
Or lingering by wide fields wherein the glad,
Half-opening violets—by the driven plow—
Are buried with the sod:—like her art thou,—
Like April, sweet and fair, like her, half sad.

Sometimes she chides the breezes on the hill,
Or, in the sunshine, smiles through budding trees;
Or, weeps, because some darling flower she sees
Slain by the frost,—else by some woodland rill,
Her lute she tunes and sings,—still doth she please,—
She being, as thou, in all things lovely still.



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P O E M S

A WALK WITH A CHILD

COME, little one!—

My feverish spirit is athirst—athirst!—

Come, lead me to that peaceful stream divine,
Whose music-making, crystal waters run

Unshadowed still, for thee:

Whose silver lappings lave the banks that be

Still happy in the sun.

Let thy child's heart be pilot unto mine;

Let me clasp close this fair, soft palm of thine,

Which never yet the greed of gold hath cursed,

And let me look through thy untroubled eyes,

For they are innocently wise,

And filled with light from lost, diviner skies

That shine no more on me.

Lead, where thy feet shall choose,

For well content am I to follow thee:

These little shoes

Like sandals seem—which God hath buckled on—

They cannot err—which way thy steps be drawn,

Must be God's way. There, must the fields be fair!

Lead on—lead anywhere!

It matters not if Summer's cheer be gone,

Even though the grass be crisp, and hills be bare

And Spring not yet returned;—we shall find there

The flowers, unblighted yet, and blithe to see,

And twining close with thine my soul may share

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

The blessed visions which the angels keep
For childish eyes, and hearts untouched of care.
Dear lands, that vanish when we learn to weep
And come no more, save in the dreams of sleep.

Too much the world doth teach;
Too much,—I am weary of it all:—
The wise, side-glancing,—the stupendous folly,
The filed and fitted speech:—
Come, dearest, it hath made me melancholy;
There is a vile distress
In this click-clacking of a gristless mill,
Whose noise proclaimeth its own emptiness;
This cactus-blooming of a barren hill;
Far better may'st thou preach;
These arms of thine, so weak they are, so small,
Yet all there is of wisdom they can reach,
These dimpled hands keep in their easy clasp
What all the chains of earth cannot hold fast,
For happiness slips from the strongest grasp,
And, with swift feet, out-runs the flying blast.

Come, I will cast this cloak of care aside,
And break the world's false armour from my breast:
His kingdom, from thine eyes, God doth not hide;
Come, we together, will go forth to rest,
Somewhere—secure—wrapped in the sacred dream
Which haply, waiteth still,

P O E M S

Close nestled in the hollow of yon hill,
Amidst the drifting leaves. There shall the wild
And inarticulate whisperings, once more,
Speak, with unlying tongues. Once more the stream
Shall sing of beauty which remaineth ever:
No more shall bitter tears for lost endeavour
Be known to us. All things that should have been,
Shall vex us not. Thy steps shall go before
Towards God's kingdom. On the hidden door
Thy hand shall knock, and we shall enter in.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

EVENTIDE ON THE BATTERY

HERE, where the granite holds the Bay at bay,
And sets a bound to that more troubled tide,
Out-surg-ing from the haunts where men abide,
I watch the quiet closing of the day.
The great outstretching level, lone and gray,
Blends with the sky. Across the waters, wide,
The shadowed ships like lonely phantoms glide;
And one white sail gleams in the slanting ray.

The great bronze goddess, stately and alone,
Lifts her unlighted torch. On his far way,
Wrapped in the glory that belongs to him,
The sun goes down. Beyond the islands dim,
The lonely ocean makes eternal moan—
But my sad soul is lonelier than they.

P O E M S

REED CALL FOR APRIL

HITHER away,
Come while you may,
Out where the banks are green,—you hear me,—
Where the brook flows fast between,—keep near me,
Close by the ridge,
Now under the bridge,
And away through the cool ravine,—don't fear me.
Hark, what I say;
A day's not a day;
How long is a day when the hills are gray?
A day is a year when the fields are sere,
And the fox still sleeps in his house of clay.

But mark,—when the showers
Have wakened the flowers,
When the streams run clear and the birds are here,
And the spice-wood is budding,—then mark what I say,—
Come, hither away;
A day's not a day;
A month's but a day, and the days are but hours.

Now through the brake we are led,—you hear me,—
Yonder the red-bud is red,—keep near me,—
Green the field slopes
To the edge of the copse,
Where the snowy wild-plum trees spread,—don't fear me.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

Hark to the reed,
Follow my lead;
Now are the moments worth living indeed;
Now we walk over the sweet dappled clover
And down to the creek we wend;
To cross by the ford where the glinting beams hover,
And yellow young willow trees bend,—
The yellow young willows all dipping and dripping,
All ruffled and swayed by the breath of the breeze,
See how they reach down; but the water keeps slipping
Away to the shade of the sycamore trees.

Softly they sigh
As the waters pass by;
Softly the net of their shadows they cast,—
Day bright or sad night,
Sunlight or moonlight,
They'll tangle the soul of the water at last.

There's nothing that lives but must love,—you hear me,—
On earth or in realms above,—keep near me,—
The clouds and the breeze,
The streams and the trees,
And the birds that build nests in the grove,—don't fear me.

P O E M S

Hark, what I say;
Life's but a day;
Break house and leave books, come away! Come away!
Come, leave the dull fool,
Leave mart, leave the school;
Seek meadow and woodland and love while you may.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

TREASURE

THEY told of many a marvel they had seen,
The tombs and temples famed, the white arrays
Of breathing stone, the burned, and burnished clays;
The brass, the bronzes and the glittering sheen
Of dome and palace wall; of towers that lean,
Poised on the fretful air; the endless maze
Of arms and effigies,—much did they praise
The wonders of the lands where they had been.

But I saw not the colour of those skies,
Nor aught of all they praised; for me, alone,
One gracious vision, lifting to my own
The soft hue of her heaven-resembling eyes.
For others, let the world's vast treasure shine;
In that dear glance, far greater wealth is mine.

P O E M S

LEE

I SING of one who conquered not in fight,
Against whose cause the miracle of Fate,
Set fast in heaven the stars unfortunate:
But when the day was lost, he made the night
That closed about him, subject to the might
Housed in the hearts that Nature hath made great,—
Which arms invincible may not create,
Nor vanishing of cherished visions blight.

Albeit his name was as the trumpet's blast,
Breeding new courage on the bloody plain,
Moving the columns as the storm drives fast
The sweeping billows of the summer rain:
Yet, like sweet silence, when loud thunders cease,
His name now lingers with the dream of peace.

Cheer, O South Wind, those that dwell,
Rapt, in the days departed;
Sweet as the lute of Israfel,
Sing to the broken-hearted;
Sing from the clouds in heaven blown,
Far through the silence crying,
Of souls, long sped to the land unknown,
Up from the battle flying.

Not his upon the final field to feel
The joy that drowns all pain;—to see Fate come

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

Like Pallas, parting the thick clouds, where some
Half-mortal Greek, amidst the clashing steel,
Cried from the earth, on which he scorned to kneel;
Nay, Fate stood on the other hill, wherefrom,
Above the roll of the exultant drum,
Cleaving the skies, rose the victorious peal.

And near him, as a tired reaper stands,
At evening, looking at the gathered grain,
Stood weary Death, his sickle in his hands,
Pleased with his harvest, — brooding on the slain;
Each upturned face by sighing breezes fanned,
Each cold lip murmuring, "In vain! in vain!"

Oh, when the lonely shades of night,
And unseen dews are falling,
When in the amethystine light
The whip-poor-wills are calling,
Then from the noiseless mists that weep,
Over the soft grass trailing,
Bring, O South Wind, soothing sleep
For sorrows unavailing.

Despite misfortune and the wreck complete,
The crash of hopes, the wretched countless cares,
The soul is greater than the fate she shares.
No anguish that can come to her can cheat
The spirit of divineness, nor unseat

P O E M S

The heart's deep purpose, and henceforth he wears
The kingly crown of sorrow and gray hairs,
He that was undefeated in defeat.

Henceforth for ever, in the victor's place,
Amidst the widening circle of the dead,
His gracious figure towers, and on his face,
Seamed by the scars of many an earthly dole,
Flames, white, the star that shines above his head,
Who was the ruler of his own sad soul.

Over the river's rippling bars,
Over the willows lifting,
Over the imaging of the stars,
And the white moon's silver drifting,
Sail, O South Wind, sail and sing;
Sing till the morning's breaking,—
Not of the shadows slumbering,
But of the world's awaking.

So death is rest, if it be nothing more;
Oblivion it may be,—and life's strange guest,
That dwells unsatisfied, within the breast,
For ever troubling, peeping at the door
Of her frail prison, musing on the shore
Of some fair realm in which she might be blest,
Must find, at least, a dreamless hour of rest,
If not some conscious calm, unknown before.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

And if, indeed, the land we do not see
Out-shines our hope, no cause have we for tears:
And with the great ones of that world is he;—
Amidst the drifting of the phantom years,
Sweet is the dream of immortality.

P O E M S

SWEET IS THE PATHWAY ON THE APRIL HILL

SWEET is the pathway on the April hill,
Where all the trees are budding in the sun;
There, from the sod, the first blooms have begun
To peep amidst the new-sprung grass, and, shrill,
The glad birds sing. The waters of the rill,
With limpid voices answer as they run;
Thus, to the summer of thy life, fair one,
Thy pathway leads, thus blest, thus free from ill.

For like the gentle season of thy birth
Thy spirit hath been moulded. Nature's care,
Which lifts anew the beauty of the earth,
Hath made thee part of all that's loveliest there;
Even as the fragrance wraps the blossoming tree,
So Nature's blessing doth encircle thee.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

RAIN IN MAY

Whoso hath never seen the rain,
Gray-lined, swift-slanting through the green
Of early May, hath never seen

The Spring's best picture, and in vain
May careful numbers paint for him,

The sweet enchantment of that time;—
The dappled banks, the moss, the rime,
The spicy scent of woodlands dim.

But whoso keeps within his heart
The green remembrance of such days,
For him the sweetness of past Mays,

In lines of recreating art
May live once more;—the leafy dreams,
The flowers, the shadowed, mellow ground,
The breaking twigs, the showers, the sound
Of breathing winds, and troubled streams.

P O E M S

THE BROOK

BE cheered, O Brook, by thine own lusty song!
Now that green-mantled May's quick-clouded skies
Bless, with brave showers, the new-grown canopies
That arch above thee, for know thou, ere long,
The young year flies this vale; thy voice, now strong,
Will fail in silence, while the rain-crow cries
In vain, and Summer faints and dies
On these same hills which, then, the sun shall wrong.

Sing on, blithe-tempered, cloud-born miracle!
The heart's pain will not cease for all thy mirth!
Part of the passing beauty of the earth,
What shalt thou be, when stillness here shall dwell?
An autumn cloud, perhaps, slow-sailing by;
Part of the passing beauty of the sky.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

THE SONG OF A WOODLAND SPIRIT

IN sacred and solacing shelter and shade; in the solitudes
silent and sylvan;
In songs of the sun in the shimmering leaves and the silvery
sheen of the water;
In dripping of dews and the whisper of wandering winds and
the fragrance of flowers;
In bloom-bended branches, that burthen the balmy and boun-
tiful breasts of the Summer;
In unwithered wilderness ways, where the wrongs and the
wars of the world cannot enter,
There waiteth the spirit of peace and of rest for the sorrowing
soul that returneth.

Like Beauty and Strength, from their slumbers arising re-
freshed, for their love and embracing,
So rise the fair towers that stand by the flame-figured gates
of that slumbering city.
There, far from the fretting, the favouring forest hath fash-
ioned a kingdom enchanting,
With answering arches and aisles that are filled with the
gloom and the glory of ages;
And columns that carry the uncounted years, as a crown of
content and rejoicing,
Uplifting the great swaying world of leaves, to the warm-
breathing wonder of heaven.

P O E M S

O light-loving battlements, walls, leafy-bannered, assailed by
the gleams of the morning!
The bright, level spears of the sun strike and glance through
the emerald shields of the branches;
The trumpet is blown at the door of the tent, but the lips of
the trumpeter smileth;
And they that awake from their slumber and dreaming come
forth, with a song, from the portals.
O beautiful battle, that blesses and kindles to life by the
friendly assaulting!
O happy green streets of the city besieged by the sun, and
the strength of his loving!

Therein, the young year riseth up from her couch, which is
spiced from the pines and the cedar;
Fresh-robed, as an orchard in bloom, she appears, with the
fragrance of dawn in her tresses;
Advancing with comely and confident steps, for she loveth
the lord of the Summer.
Her eyes have a light like the light from a fountain wherein
the sky's image lies broken;
Her voice hath the sound of the music of waters that lave the
starred banks of the meadow;
And lightly she sighs, like the breeze that caresses the soft,
silken leaves of the willows.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

There, love maketh gracious the labouring patience of Nature's renewing, for ever;
The bursting of fettering frosts and the waking from rigid and riveted slumbers;
The storms, and the rioting rush of the rains through the hills that re-echo with laughter;
The flashing of rays in the wide, dripping courts, the miraculous birth of the flowers,—
That race which springs up from the fresh woodland loam with the glory of God in their faces,
Divine and unchanged in their dateless descent while the kingdoms of earth come and vanish.

O nameless, unspeakable triumph and glory of strength that is loving and gentle;
Secure, indestructible beauty and righteousness robed in the purple unfading;
Bright-crowned, with the gems of the dew and enthroned in a circle of life-giving splendour!
O blessed and shadowless land of repose, which the dream of the Summer enfoldeth;
The light shall not fade from the green-bladed slope, and the charm of the trees is immortal,
Unsullied, undimmed, as the light of the stars in the fields of the silence eternal.

P O E M S

In sacred and solacing shelter and shade; in the solitudes silent and sylvan;

In songs of the sun in the shimmering leaves and the silvery sheen of the water;

In bloom-bended branches that burthen the balmy and bountiful breasts of the Summer;

In dripping of dews and the whisper of wandering winds, and the fragrance of flowers;

In unwithered ways, in the wilds where the woes and the wrongs of the world are forgotten;—

There waiteth the spirit of peace and of rest for the sorrowing soul that returneth.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

ELKHORN RIVER

SONG—MAKING Elkhorn! Ever-flowing stream!
Lovely for ever, whether Winter holds,
Or Spring awakes thee, or if Summer's gleam,
With leaf and bloom and shadows warm infolds;
Or if upon thy sparkling waters float
The myriad, mimic fleets, launched from the trees,
The gold and russet tribute from each breeze
Of Autumn, charmed by thy melodious note.
Always thy music, loud or soft, is dear;
Always with rapture thy sweet voice I hear.

Dear stream, when morning gilds thy lapping wave,
How sweet it is to haunt the friendly scenes

Where leaning elms their sweeping branches lave
In waters cool, which their deep shadow screens!

There with some loved companion to retreat
Awhile from wounding cares, and from the pain
Of killing disappointments, and the vain

Pretense of shallow, empty hearts—how sweet
To soothe the soul with quietness, and, there,
Wring from the earth new strength against despair!

Here in the glimmer of thy dappled brim

How often do I see the angler stand,
As silent as the trees which shelter him,
Winding and casting with unwearied hand.

The gentle melancholy of his face,
Changed by the light upon thy changing breast,

P O E M S

He seems a part of Nature's secret rest,
Like some belated scion of that race
In ancient fable famed,—and all the scene
Swims in soft light of mythic hue serene.

Farewell! farewell! farewell!
Gone is the summer tide; the summer days
Are gathered in the sheaf; the summer's blaze
Is now a smouldering glow. Slow murmurs call
Across the changing vale; an answering knell
Creeps from the slumbering hills, where drowsy echoes dwell.

There is a touch of scarlet on the field,
Which speaks of dear days passed beyond recall,
Like a bright ribbon on a conquered shield;
And on the dark, deep-bosomed, forest wall
Of August green one branch is shimmering,
A banner flaunting from an alien hall;
But thy delight knows no diminishing.

Whatever may befall,
If fields be gray and leaves be withering,
Amidst the autumn's flame thou dost prolong
The deathless flow of thy unworded song.

The vision moves on with the curving sweep
Of thy commingling cadence, where thy shores
Are paved with glistening pebbles, and thy deep,
Dark-flashing blue breaks, rippling, silver-bright,
Across the slanting bars that gleam with light
Among the giant, white-armed sycamores,—

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

The grave historians of thy life, that die
And leave thee youthful still. Their bronzed leaves
Slip with crisp rustlings through the branches dry,
And drift away in silence.

Dost thou fade
In light and beauty, O immortal stream!
I see thy dazzling radiance where it cleaves
The golden splendour of the hills, and turns
To meet the westering sun, and cannot tell
Thy wave, transfigured, from the glinting beam
Which makes its brightness thine.

The distance burns
A crimson glory, where the heavens have made
A matchless gateway for thy entering.

What happy fate is thine!
Therefrom the clouds shall bear thee back to cheer
Thy native vales; thy brooding hills shall know
The sweet distraction of thy murmuring
For ever and for ever. There thy flow,
With song triumphant, evermore shall bring
To tree and vine
The whispering enchantment of the spring,
And the departing year
Shall linger long, and autumn-time shall seem
Like days in May, and brooding Winter here
His sorrows shall forget. O stream divine,
Thou art a dream! a dream!

P O E M S

JUNE DAYS

THE whilom hills of gray, whose tender shades
Were dashed with meagre tints of early Spring,
Lift now their rustling domes and colonnades,
And from the airy battlements they fling
Their banners to the winds, and in the glades
Spread rich pavilions for the Summer's king.

The sometime fields that sad and sodden lay,
Soaked in the first cold rains, or flecked with snow,
With helpless grasses trodden in the clay
By shivering herds that wandered to and fro,
Wave now with grain, and happy birds all day
Pipe, hidden on the slopes with flowers ablow.

The yellow streams that fled from Winter's hold
When first the young year saw the vernal moon,
And lipped the yielding banks whose moistened mould
Slipped, mingling with the flood, now sleep at noon,
Calm as the imaged hills which they infold,
All glimmering in the long, long skies of June.

The brindled meadow hides the winding path
With interlacing clover, white and red;
The blackbirds, startled from their dewy bath,
Fly chattering, joyful with imagined dread;
The while the whetting scythe foretells the swath
And rings the knell of flowers that are not dead.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

Now waves of sunlight cross the fields of wheat;
The shining crow toward the woodland flies;
Far in the fields the larks their notes repeat,
And from the fence the whistling partridge cries;
Now to the cooling shades the cows retreat,
To drowse and dream with mild, half-opening eyes.

No other days are like the days of June;
They stand upon the summit of the year,
Filled up with sweet remembrance of the tune
That wooed the fresh spring fields; they have a tear
For violets dead; they will engird full soon
The sweet, full breasts of Summer drawing near.

Each matchless Morning marches from the east
In tints inimitable and divine;
Each perfect Noon sustains the endless feast
In which the wedded charms of life combine;
Sweet Evening waits till golden Day, released,
Shall lead her, blushing, down the world's decline.

And when the day is done a crimson band
Lies glowing on the hushed and darkened west;
Dark groups of trees like listening spirits stand;
The robin's song lifts from his trembling breast;
The shadows steal from out the twilight land;
And all is peace and quietness and rest.

P O E M S

MY LADY SLEEPS

AH, happy-hearted bird,
Full-throated minstrel, shaking all the air
With golden ripples of thy passion's pleading;
I tell thee true, my lady is not heeding;
 She lies asleep, within her window there;
 Good sooth—thou art not heard.
 Thou living memory of her kindly care,
 The small white hand, which once had gifts to share,
Will never hold forth morsels for thy feeding
 In sad hereafter days;
Nor pluck the roses by her lattice creeping.

 So slow the curtain sways,
Not strange, it seemeth now, she should be sleeping;
 So soft the sweet air strays,
 So fair she lies.
And in her room the Silences are keeping
 A watch upon her eyes,
And with forgetful balm their light lids steeping
 Lest she should wake and rise.
The roses she last gathered, now are weeping
 Upon my lady's breast;
Close to the foam-like laces of her gown,
 Their silent lips are pressed,
And drops of dew, like fragrant tears, slip down
Between the moveless snowy billows there
Which heave no more, for rapture, nor despair.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

Nor storm nor sunshine, rain, nor falling dew,
Nor stirring leaves, nor voice of friend or foe,
Nor surge of all the worlds, shall enter through
The stillness guarding now that slumberer fair,
Whose heart knows now no guest,
Nor any ray nor shadow, weal, nor woe.

Cease, cease thy song, sweet bird, far hence, fly thou;
Where Nature keeps
Her June-day revel, in fair fields, new drest;
Thy mate awaits thee there:
There Summer spreads her dappled robes anew;
There bends, with snowy crest,
The pliant elder, where the sweet winds blow;
There hangs thy nest
Amidst the leafage, on some swaying bough;
There haply thou, love-blest,
May'st soon forget. Farewell! She marks not now;
Thou canst not break the calm which wraps her brow:
My lady sleeps.
At rest! at rest! at rest!!!

P O E M S

WHILE LOVE DELAYS

O HAPPY days!
Amidst the gracious glammers of the Spring,
Amidst the maze,
Along the brook whose glancing waters sing
Through woodland ways,
There, still—so seems it—ye are lingering:
The same bright rays
Glint on the bristling slope, and seem to bring
A shimmering blaze
Out from the woven branches, and to fling
Down through the grays
Some part of yon wide sky's blue crystallizing;
And on the sprays
That from the cliffs, soft winds are winnowing,
The dream still stays:
Clear from the vale, the same glad voices ring,
And from the maze
Of budding hills come voices answering:
While Love delays,
It must be here that ye are harbouring,
O happy days!

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY

THIS, then, is she! Those steadfast eyes of hers,
Brimmed with ineffable, deep tenderness,
Have never looked on sorrow. No despair
Hath touched this brow, from which the silken hair
Parts in twin waves, soft as the slow caress
Of sunlight on a cloud's light loveliness.

A rosy dawn, that face,—those lips of hers,
With ruddier curves, so delicately pressed,
Like an unuttered phrase of love, are they,
Which charms the silence by its sweet delay:
And this distracting dimple's constant guest
Seems some fair thought, kept in divine unrest.

A fairy circle is that chin of hers,
And full of witch-craft, too,—and that round neck,
On which is poised, so lightly, her fine head!
What havoc swift with these gifts must she spread!
And he among the swains, swayed by her beck,
Must be held wise, who saves his heart from wreck.

Too wise, perhaps! And that white breast of hers,
Smooth-billowed, wrapped in sacred mystery;—
What care, what sorrow, might not one forget
Lulled in that dream, where never fanged regret
Could strike his spirit,—well recompensed were he,
Though banished from all else his life might be.

P O E M S

Those arms were made for love. Those hands of hers,
Whose nimble hesitancy gives strange grace
To all they do, how fine it is, to see,
In their pale pink and dimpled symmetry,
Her soul confessed, and in their lines to trace
The like-proportioned beauty of her face.

Who is he, that with his love shall win hers?
What fashion is he of? and will she find
What we name happiness? May never shade
Creep over her fair life till it be made
A blurred remembrance. Fate were far more kind,
To strew her heart's dust on the idle wind.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

THE SUMMER DAY

FAR-FLASHING in the bright gulf of the sky,
The unavailing clouds float, and the air
Burns, quivering in the steady, flame-fierce glare
Down-beating from the Sun's throne, on the dry
Thirst-fevered fields, and on the roads that lie
Choked with hot dust; while only here and there,
High in the glistening sycamores, or where
The willows are, a languid breath goes by.

But no touch stirs the river's quiet deeps;
Therefrom the wooded hill looms, green and dense,
Therein its huge inverted image sleeps.
The locust's whizzing music, shrill and tense,
Sounds from the dusty elm, whose shadow creeps
Across that wide and glassy indolence.

P O E M S

JULY

Now doth sweet Summer dream her sweetest dream;
With full fringed lids half closed against the sun,
And thirsting lips, she nods beside the stream
Within whose silent bed no waters run.

Full wearily she stretcheth now her limbs;
Anon her breast is stirred with languid sighs;
Lulled by the murmur of slow forest hymns,
She draws the shadows with her drowsing eyes.

And, all above, her busy hands have made
A woven covert of green boughs that keep
The semblance of a painted arch, whose shade
Falls on the ground like an enchanted sleep.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

SONNETS TO THE SUN. SUNRISE

FLAME-HEARTED lover of the Earth,—great Sun!
Rise from thy purple couch; stretch forth thine arms
Through morning's parted curtains; let the charms
Of waiting love—which it were death to shun—
Persuade thy clasp. Now hath the Earth begun
To loose her robes of mist; with mock alarms
She yields her beauty, which love's longing warms,
Forestalling the embrace thy kiss hath won.

Arise, great god of light and life, arise!
Enfold the fond Earth in the deathless glowing
Of thy fierce love; bend from the shimmering skies
Which burn before thee in thine onward going.
No cheer have we and not of thy bestowing;
Thou art the joy of all hope-lifted eyes.

P O E M S

SUNSET

WITHIN thy burning palace in the west
Thou art awhile withdrawn. Yet doth thy face
Look from the closing portal for a space
Back to the Earth, which thy dear love hath blessed;
While she, with tears and soft sighs half-repressed,
Beholds thee sinking in thy resting-place,
As with up-gathered folds of dewy lace
She hugs remembrance to her yearning breast.

Thy glory darkens, and the careful Night
Hangs out the moon's pale lamp while yet the flush
On Evening's face—with thy departing light—
Turns from rose-pink to crimson, till the blush
Dies with the coming stars, and slumber's hush
Wraps thy warm bride, who waits thy waking might.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

THE RAIN THAT COMES OVER THE HILL

THE rain that comes over the hill, the rain,
 The mystical, heavenly rain!
Cool and sweet as the stretch of the temperate skies,
The skies that are gray as are my love's eyes,
 Oh, the rain!
With the smell of young wheat from the upland plain,
 The rain that comes over the hill!

The rain that comes over the hill, the rain,
 The mighty and measureless rain!
That drenches the green shaking woodland and sweeps
Like an avalanche over the dim tossing steeps,
 Oh, the rain!
That falls with a roar on the vale's grassy floor,
 The rain that comes over the hill!

The rain that comes over the hill, the rain,
 The gleeful and glittering rain!
Which plays hide and seek with the sun and the shade,
In showers of jewels that sparkle and fade,
 Oh, the rain!
That veils the green meadow, and laughs in the glade,
 The rain that comes over the hill!



P O E M S

The rain that comes over the hill, the rain,
 The gracious and plentiful rain!
New life of parched lands that are blighted and cursed,
When forests are faint and the fields are athirst,
 Oh, the rain!
That will bring back the soul of the Summer again,
 The rain that comes over the hill!

The rain that comes over the hill, the rain,
 The dewy, miraculous rain!
With the comforting clouds that drift close to the breast
Of the transfigured earth, by the soft mist caressed,
 Oh, the rain!
That disturbs not or breaks the enchantment it makes,
 The rain that comes over the hill!

The rain that comes over the hill, the rain,
 The tearful and tremulous rain!
That sobs by the wide-open windows at dawn,
Where the grieving night wept on the noiseless lawn,
 Oh, the rain!
Which falls like the shadows of hopes that are gone,
 The rain that comes over the hill!

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

THE OLD GARDEN

UPON a southward slope, that stretched away
Towards the sea—long since a loving hand,
Moved by a heart more loving still, had planned,
And safe-enclosed against the salt, sea spray,
A noble garden. There—shall not we say?—
A loving pair walked in the sunshine bland,
Breathing the perfumes of their fruit trees, fanned
By breezes soft, for many a happy day.

But now the dream is past. The fragile wall
Of palings, slim and high, swings in the wind,
Neglected, bleached with age, a silvery gray,
With wrinkled lichens dappled thick; while all
Within is sad, bewildering disarray,
Like the fine wreck of a rich-gifted mind.

Young sumach trees and balm-of-Gilead spring
Along the lonely paths; the untrimmed vine
Slips from the broken trellis, to entwine
Its tendrils with the weeds, or vainly cling
To some sad rosebush from whose withering,
Blight-wasted leaves, is lifted a divine
Uncared-for flower,—still true to her design,
Amidst the ruin and abandoning.

The terraced beds are hidden by the tall
Witch-grasses and close interlacing briars,
Whose leaves already burn with autumn fires,

P O E M S

And strewn with pale and spotted fruits that fall
From trees whose gnarled and knotted branches bear
The fixed contour of writhings and despair.

Dry, pungent odours, by the warmth set free,
Rise from the formal borders of dark box;
And tiger lilies, in close crowding flocks,
Stand nodding in the sun dejectedly.
Tall belvederes, uplifting hopelessly
A shattered protest to the storm's rude shocks,
Look, still, across the tumult of vast rocks
Toward the unmeasured welter of the sea.

Filled with tall, spindling weeds, now sere and dry,
The ruined greenhouse seems a sepulchre,
Where hopes, long dead, lie buried; where the fair,
Faint ghosts of vanished blossoms mournfully
Haunt, still, the sun-lit darkness of decay,
As memories bide when joy hath passed away.

Among the mildewed grapes the idling bees
Make fretful murmurs, and the cricket plays
His shrilling pipe, hid in the glistening maze
Of dead-ripe grass,—so changeless fate decrees!
Art perishes, and Nature's savageries,
With peaceful waves and soft, slow-breaking sprays
Of changing green, and starry blooms, erase
Her scorn of our down-fallen vanities.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

Heart-breaking beauty, painful loveliness,
Luxuriant poverty, wreath-crowned despair,
Abandoned symmetry, oblivious care,
 Fantastic sadness, revelling distress,
Sweet desolating of the silent years,
Too fair for mirth, too sorrowful for tears.

P O E M S

THE SUMMER RAIN

SWEET, blessed summer rain—ah me!
The drifting cloud-land spills
God's mercy on the dotted lea,
And on the tented hills;

Yet is there more than shrouded sky,
And more than falling rain,
Or swift-borne souls of flowers that fly
Breeze-lifted from the plain.

Strange joy comes with the freshening gust,
The whitening of the leaves,
The smell of sprinkled summer dust,
The dripping of the eaves.

The soul stirs with the melting clod,
The drenched field's silent mirth;
Who does not feel his heart help God
To bless the thirsting earth?

Oh, rain! oh, blessed summer rain
Not on the fields, alone,
Nor woodlands, fall, nor flowery plain,
But on the heart of stone!

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

IN MEMORIAM

'Tis morning, and the gateway of the sun
Swings open; and across the summer land
Comes the resplendent Day. On every hand
The bright, fleet-footed beams, in gladness, run
Along the late-reaped fields, and one by one,
The vales, the dewy slopes, the trees that stand
Upon the hills, by languid breezes fanned,
Take on the glory of new life begun.
But she that should behold it,—she is still.
Wrapped in the rayless shadow, mute she lies.
She heeds no more the songs upon the hill;
She wakes not to the wonder in the skies.
She, that was fair as is the summer's day;
Even with the summer she hath passed away.

The flower falls with the grain, and in the sheaf
The opening rose is gathered; she that stood
Like some young tree amidst the summer wood,
Clad in fresh bloom, hath found a day as brief;
No more she knoweth, now, of joy or grief;
Alike to her, the evil and the good.
So sleeps she, in immortal maidenhood,—
That she, indeed, is dead, is past belief.
Come, O ye loving winds of heaven, and bring
Across the spaces, perilous and wide,

P O E M S

Some tidings from the spirits that abide
Beyond our love and our remembering!
In tearful hope we bide, ere yet shall fall
The voiceless shadow which awaits us all.

'Tis evening; and the great sun disappears
Beyond the Benson Hills. Alone she sleeps,
While twilight gathers on the tangled steep.
Her bed is heaped with roses, wet with tears,
And over her a sheltering tree up-rears.
Far in the vale the river slowly creeps,
And soft winds whisper from the heavenly deeps,
"With Him one day is as a thousand years."
The silence deepens on the sacred hill;
As in a dream, the noiseless branches sway;
The world, and all it holds of good and ill,
Grows less and less, and strangely fades away;
While from the pale stars comes the whispering still,
"A thousand years, with Him, is as one day."

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

THE SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAIN STREAM

BEAUTY is born of beauty,—all best things
Are joined together in their loveliness.

Love, still, is love's begetter,—eagle's wings
Are fashioned only in the wilderness.

Far from the frenzied and distracted tide
Of this world's life—deep in a mountain vale,
Where shadowed rocks arose on every side,
Half hid by velvet mosses and the pale
Wild blossoms of the wood—a crystal stream
Welled from the earth; and, like a snowy cloud,
A swaying mist, fantastic as a dream,
Hid the soft flow of its first journeying.

The water sang,—and words can never tell
How sweet the music was. The laurels hung
Far down the rocks to listen; silence fell
Upon the birds that heard it, and the young,
Sleek squirrel, hearking there, well-pleased, grew still
And dropped the nut he held; the dappled fawn
Drew near, entranced; the trees leaned from the hill
Enchanted, while the stream sang on and on.

One could not say what made the song so sweet;
It was not gladness, for it rose and fell

Like soft winds sighing in the rustling wheat,
Sad as the failing murmurs of a bell.

P O E M S

Sometimes a wavering cadence in the strain
Was like the faint complaining of a dove;
The mournful melody of happy pain,
Like one soul longing for another's love.

It was as though the singing waters dreamed
Of something fairer than the lovely scene
Around it,—lovelier than the sky that gleamed
Beyond the arching of the branches green.
Year after year the music did not fail
To woo the unimpassioned rocks, and fill
The echoes of the sweet, quiescent vale
With praise of some loved spirit, hidden still.

At last she came. Warm-limbed, with blushing grace,
A figure—nymph-like—from the rock's cold breast
Slipped timidly, and in its deep embrace
The fountain held her, murmuring and blest.
At sunrise, borne upon the fragrant air
She floated with the undulated tide,
Each motion following, while her shining hair
Streamed through the mists, with rainbow colours dyed.

So sped the years, in love and quietness,
In undistracted beauty and repose;
But with man's coming, came, at last, distress;
As it comes always—why—Alas!—who knows!

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

They filled the peaceful vale with clamours rude,
With vapours vile they dimmed the cheerful sky;
The haunts where friendly Nature nursed her brood,
Soon held no trace of happier days gone by.

The birds fled from their dwellings; forests fell,
Till all the hills were bare beneath the sun;
Soon all the flowers were dead, and from the dell
No music came,—the stream had ceased to run.

They burrowed, in their thirst for gain, and turned
To hideous wastes the beauty they despised,
For, with much knowledge, men have never learned
What gifts they are should be most highly prized.

At last the vengeance came. One sultry day
A cloud-wrapped spirit, on the mountain's height
Stood weeping till the sun went down, and gray
Dull vapours rolled before the feet of Night;
Then—through the dusk, clad in pale mist—stole down
Along the changèd vale, unseen, and strayed
Among the blurred lights of the murky town,
Longing and listening, sorrowing and afraid.

Discordant sounds—loud drunken revelries,
Vile jests and mouthings blasphemous—she hears.
Pierced with unutterable pain she flies,
Her heart on fire, shame tingling in her ears.

P O E M S

Where once the fountain flowed, she stopped and stood,
Immortal anger burning in her look,
Recalling the sweet shelter of the wood,
And the lost music of the vanished brook.

“In vain the beauty of the earth,” —she cried—
“In vain my grieving silence. Now shall wake,
Here, from the grave of happiness, a tide
Whose thundering voice shall make the mountain shake.
Insulters and despoilers are they all,—
Not friends, but foes in Nature’s realm, are they:”
Which having said, her tears ceased not to fall,
And, weeping still, at dawn she slipped away.

When sunset came again, the mountain’s crest
Was circled with a cloud, so black that Night
Seemed centering there all her deep gloom, unblest
By the forgetful stars. A shuddering fright
Seized on the aimless air, a blinding flash
Blanched all the scene an instant: then there fell,
In hissing streams, amidst the thunder’s crash,
A watery avalanche that filled the dell.

The flood roared through the darkness, spreading wide,—
Swift, fierce, relentless as the hungering grave,
And like a white flame, swaying from side to side,
The spirit rode, towering, on the topmost wave.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

When morning came, a slope of rocks and sand
Deep-buried every trace of house and street;
This time, not man's, but God's destroying hand
Had changed the scene. The vengeance was complete.

P O E M S

THE SONG SOUL

Rise from the dust,—O soul, not long, not long,
Droop thou thy baffled wings upon the ground!
Celestial Spirit, I have done thee wrong!
Knew I not well the world hath spears to wound,
Darts, that have pierced thee through? Alas, the sound
Of thy sweet voice comes faintly to my ear,—
But rouse thee, yet once more; there shall be found
Some days to be thine own, from all the year:
Come banishment or death, thy world of song
Shall yet be mine; thou shalt not perish here!

Lift up thy vision;—yonder, where the west
Breaks through the sparse-leaf'd trees, the fadeless charm
Breathes softly still. Be cheered—thou shalt be blessed.
Trust thou the strength of this forgetful arm,
And lean, lean close upon this traitor breast.
Hear'st thou the guilty thundering of my heart,
Racked with fierce pain, that I have brought thee harm?
Lean close, and ever closer, till that warm
Remorseful-throbbing pulse at last find rest.

Thy song! think on thy song, think not on me;
Heed not my tears; they are not tears of grief,
But all too painful joy, once more to be
Thus happy in thy love. Life is but brief,—
Stay with me dear song soul, forsake me not;

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

Despair will slay me if I have not thee!

For thee, all sordid care shall be forgot.
Come, I will lead thee where the autumn leaf
Sings in the wind that sweeps the upland lea.

Or, if thy wish be for the quiet vale,
To thrid the weedy margins of the stream,
Where nodding stars of gold and purple gleam
In lovely loneliness,—and where the pale
Waifs, journeying from the breathing hill, shall seem
Down-dropping from the blue, so far they sail;
As though the sun half claimed a shivered beam
Whose flakes, whirled in the eddies of the gale,
Fell, shimmering through the Earth's haze-shrouded dream.

Or, if the wide fields please thee best,—where May
Keeps still some foot-prints green, albeit the dun
And crimson-dotted wildernesses sway
Their tawny manes in the slant-shining sun,
Where summer-faded slopes, fire-fringed and gray,
Are laced with scarlet-flaming vines that run
Among the grasses sere. Or, if thou'lt say,
“Lead where the tragic revelry's begun,

Where Tyrian-tinted woodlands cast away
Their wine-stained, costly glories, one by one,
Where wild fantastic madness and decay
Blend into strange, sad silence, like the play

P O E M S

Of noiseless phantoms in a world undone;—”
Speak thou thy wish,—shall I not gladly shun
This fashion-flattered world, so thou may'st stay
To be my solace? Wilt thou say me nay?

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

THE PRINCESS INA: AN UNFINISHED PICTURE

THE dying twilight wrapped the palace walls,
And veiled the clustered and deep-bosomed trees
In rich and dreamful half-obscurity;

The glistening, tessellated terrace floor
Was dotted here and there with yellow leaves;

For summer waned, and harvest time was past,
And drowsy murmurs from the woodland's edge
Died out in soundless breathings of repose:

Hard by the deep base of the granite wall
Slept the dark waters of the shadowed lake,
Gemmed with reflections of the pallid stars.

The Princess sat upon the marble seat,—

The Princess Ina, young and beautiful,
Her snowy garments soft as down, and clasped
By sparkling treasures from the ocean's caves,
Gleamed from the purple cushions where she leaned,
Like some moon-radiant cloud that floats at rest,
Against the starry darkness of the sky.

One hand, uplifted, touched her throat, and one,
Starred with fair jewels, lightly overhung
The sculptured marble, like a pale blush rose,
Down-bent and weighted with the shining dew.
Only a lover's eyes, in that faint light,
Might see the golden gleaming of her hair;
Only a lover's eyes would guess the hue

P O E M S

Of those grave-looking eyes,—soft as the gray
And liquid shadows of an evening cloud,
Full of sweet dreams and tinted like the air
That fills a distant summer vale at dawn.

The russet sandals on her dainty feet
Were cunningly embroidered with fine threads
Of gold and silver, delicately wrought,
Like sun-lit frost upon an autumn leaf.
So sat the Princess, half reclined, to hear
The story of Ronaldin and his love:
The Princess Ina,—fair beyond all words.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

SONNETS OF SIMILITUDE

LIFE is a rich-robed angel, winged with light,
Whose will is still to leave us. No estate—
Gold-crowned, or starred with jewels—may bid her wait,
Nor fix a charmed delay upon her flight.
Life is a rainbow circle, through whose bright
And changing hues—blown by the breath of fate—
The myriad motes pass, quickly; soon or late,
The magic round, itself, will vanish quite.

Life is a voice, low-toned and sweet, that calls
Amidst the immortal solitudes, and they
That start, as from a dream, scarce can they say
I come—I come! when lo! the silence falls.
Life is a gift which no soul may refuse;
A priceless gift—a pearl—which whoso wears must lose.

Life is a darkness. They that walk therein
Set foot, each instant, on an unknown ground.
Life is a song, for which was never found
The fitting music; few are they that win
Even one true note, amidst the jangling din
Of nameless chords in which that strain is drowned.
Life is a wordless riddle, and so profound
That wisest guessers end where they begin.

P O E M S

' Life is a tree, whose countless leaves, diverse,
Flaunt in the sun of hope through one brief day;
Whose blooms seem half-divine, despite the curse
Beneath whose touch they fail and fade away.
Life is a woven mantle, soft and fair,
Which we put on with tears and put off in despair.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

LOVE'S GIRDLE

THE girdle of the earth goes round,
The frigid poles are still,
The zone with beauty doth abound,
The poles keep only ill;
In one the sweets of life are found,
The others can but kill.

Love belts the moving universe
With his hope-jewelled zone,
While hate and envy send a curse
From moveless eyes of stone;
Love bids dear joy her notes rehearse,
Hate brings but grief alone.

I would that love about my heart
His girdle fair would bind,
Then in the brightest world of art
A dwelling I should find;
Then would my life become a part
Of God's eternal mind.

P O E M S

THE PASSING GLEAM

O SUN-LIGHT on the winter hill!
Still art thou there? One moment more—
A flash—a gleam—a crackling blaze
Transfigures tree and slope, and stays
An instant on the summit's floor;
Thereon a field of gathered maize
Flames out in that white glory. Still—
Swift, swift around the russet curve
Of yon shorn ground, with dip and swerve
Thy bright wave speeds. Yon quiet row
Of dead brown stacks now catch the glow
Of blinding, heavenly lustre—so!—
Thou'rt gone!—the clustering cattle raise
Their heavy eyes, surprised, and gaze
Which way thou'rt fled; they too must know
That touch of gladness, from the chill
Which follows fast. I see thee yet!
Far off, a fading beam that strays
Amidst dull shadows;—to and fro
On distant treetops thou art tossed;—
Some vale hath hid thee, thou art lost;—
And with me stays a strange regret,
O sunlight on the winter hill!

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

AN INSCRIPTION, A SONNET, AND A QUATRAIN

DESIRE not, thou, too greatly, for like fire,
Destroying what it enfolds, so is desire.

SUCCESS!—that was his thought, his hope, his aim,
Afield, or housed; noon, midnight, dusk or dawn,
That dazzling image his heart dwelt upon.
For, if he slept, imagination's flame
Burnt like a steady torch, along the same
Determined path, which way his soul had gone;
And if he waked, the dream, still unwithdrawn,
Remained unchanged, his conscious force to claim.

At last 'twas his! An airy figure brought,
Light-balanced, on soft finger-tips, a sphere
Of fine wrought gold; but his trained hands forgot
Their skill for one brief instant in the fear
To lose the gift,—too eagerly they caught
The glittering ball, which crumbled into naught.

So strength may gain what it may fail to hold.
This world's gifts vary only in degree;
They are but air, sphered in the thinnest gold;
The bubbles must be handled carefully.

P O E M S

ENCHANTMENT: AN IDYL

WHOEVER cannot fly from care,
Departed is life's joy from him;
Care leads her captives to the dim,
Gloom-shadowed regions of despair.
However changed the world may be,—
And it is changed, for good or ill,—
The soul remains the same, and we
Are seeking some enchantment still.

Romance—with us—will never die;
Illusion is the spirit's bread;
While beauty lures the longing eye,
The soul that dreams not, still, is dead.
Perhaps where Mammon's incense blurs
The glittering courts, where all men press,
Enchantment makes the happiness
Of her deluded worshippers.

The gleam of drifting clouds at noon,
Amidst the sky's blue brilliancy;
The landscape's weird solemnity,
At dusk, beneath the summer moon;
The sun's unwavering blaze that falls
On forest walls of glistening green;
The voice of some lone bird that calls
At midnight from his haunt unseen;

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

The gathered gold of harvest lands;
The sound of some slow-turning mill;
The farm-house, dark-outlined, that stands
Against the sunset, on some hill;
In these a strange enchantment dwells,
Which makes, in some sad sense, a part
Of Life itself; dreams, that the heart
Keeps treasured in its secret cells.

There is enchantment in the thought
Of lands which we shall never see;
Life's undetermined mystery,
And strength which strives, and wearies not.
There is enchantment in regret:—
Regret,—the one bewildering strain
Which no soul ever can forget,
While memory breathes across life's plain.

Wherefore it is, the soul must find
Her happiest dreams in realms untried;
Yet will all triumphs of the mind
Still leave the heart unsatisfied:
The troubled heart, whose pulse must bring
To thought her music and repose,
And guard life's wayward tide, which flows
And ebbs with passion's whispering.

P O E M S

A FAIR DÉBUTANTE

FAIREST, as in a dream I thee behold,
A white-robed vision, radiant and entrancing,
Upon the threshold of the world advancing;
Fair,—like some goddess of the days of old,
Before whose level gazing is unrolled
The splendid train, the music and the dancing,
The revel and the gloom, the amorous glancing,
The wayward throng,—the mingling clay and gold.

Thousands will press to gain one smile from thee,
And for thy favour, friend with friend will vie;
Which way thy look may turn, there shalt thou see
Love's kindling light in each admiring eye.
That thou art happy, well content am I,
Nor should I ask that thou remember me.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

THE SHADOWS OF THE TREES

THE shadows of the trees!
They come and pass away, they change and fade,
By wood and meadow-stream, by hill and glade;
The shadows of the trees!
They change and fade, but the impression stays;
How filled with fragrant fancies is the phrase,
The shadows of the trees!

Where bends the blooming clover, half asleep
Amidst soft grasses, misty with cool dew;
Where, undisturbed, the slender love-vines creep,
And mumbling bees their early toil renew;

There do they spread—the shadows—creeping slow
Across the blended modelling of the ground;
Whereon, light, aimless footsteps wandering go,—
The footsteps of the wind that make no sound.

Where, mingling with faint rustlings of the leaves
Come fitful notes, soft-blown, as though, indeed,
A dryad, crouched beneath the glistening eaves,
Made her love's thought speak through some slender reed.

Here do they spread—the shadows—where the Night
Weaves her pale mists, which scarce yet have forsook
The deeper forest ways that hide from sight
The mirthful windings of the blinking brook.

P O E M S

Here do they spread—the shadows—where the wheat
Sweeps, like a green sea, from the forest wall,

Away—away—in long smooth waves that meet
The skies' white wonder, dazzling over all.

O blessed silences, that hold and keep,
In vast and calm embrace, the lost repose
Of troubled multitudes! How still, how deep
The rest ye know, which man's life never knows!

The shadows of the trees,
That come and pass away, that change and fade,
Yet are the same for ever; they have made

Themselves a place in every life; they are
In-woven with all thought, and have their part
In every dream which charms the longing heart;

The shadows of the trees!

They always will be with us—near or far—
They pass away, but the impression stays;
How filled with sweet remembering is the phrase,

The shadows of the trees!

The shadows of the trees!
Divine enchantment hides within that phrase,
About the words the loving fancy plays;

The shadows of the trees!

Therewith what visions come! there, the soul sees,
Not man's world, but the good green earth, and hears

Strange sylvan melody—dreamlike—that strays
Content among the shadows of the trees.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

The good green earth, where cloud-girt nature rears,
In massive mould, her gracious imagery;

Where dome fantastic over dome appears,
Wind-ruffled, and tricked out in silver sheen,
Above some measureless abyss of green;

Wide-swaying arches, and preposterous towers
That lean out on the unimpressioned air,

Far over-looking the majestic sweep
Of sculptured leafage, variant as the sea.

What branching columns, what pavilions fair,
What endless, dim arcades, what airy bowers!
What shimmering walls and labyrinthine deeps
Of interweaving branches, pictured there!

What glittering slopes, and head-long plunging steeps
Of surging green on green! Yet these be not
Illusions merely, fancifully wrought;
Abiding gifts of Nature's best, are these,
Still waiting, in some soul-restoring spot
With the inviting shadows of the trees.

With the inviting shadows of the trees,
Inviting still, O soul, be not deceived!

Grave Nature's unrevokable decrees
Are still the same, believed—or not believed.

The undefined and gentle whisperings
That follow, with our footsteps, day by day,

Amidst the alien mockery, which brings
The soul no peace, at last may turn away.

P O E M S

From idle strings the music will depart;
The instrument, untouched, forgets the strain;
And being departed once, our subtlest art
Will seek the vanished melody in vain.

The dream may fade, sweet influences fail,
The quiet glories of the sky advance
And pass in silence, hidden by the veil
Which shuts the soul from her inheritance.

About the summer hills the slumbering dusk
Of deeper shadows, will be softly drawn;
The trailing robe of darkness, and the musk
Of deep-grown vales that wait the breathing dawn.

Pale, glimmering starlight, and the dim array
Of shrouding mists;—the sculptured, empty urn,
Placed, with its emptier phrase, above the clay
To which the spirit never will return.

But evermore the shadows of the trees—
The symbolized image of our fleeting days—
Will fall by field and wood, by hill and glade;
The shadows of the trees,
That come and pass away, that change and fade.
The shadows of the trees!
They pass away; but the impression stays,
A sacred inspiration, and a part
Of beauty's solace in the troubled heart.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

The shadows of the trees,—
How filled with sweet remembering is the phrase!
The shadows of the trees!
They will be with us always; they will never
Grow old, nor vanish from the earth's green ways;
The shadows of the trees!
They change and fade, yet are the same for ever.

P O E M S

A SONG TO THE GLORY OF THE SUN

DISPELLER of gloom, and the clouds, and the shadows of death,
and the darkness!

Flame-clad, heaven-conquering, bright and imperious soul of
desire!

Advance, in thy strength, on the blue and ethereal field of
thy glory—

Advance, and transfigure the deeps of the unbounded sky by
thy shining,

Eclipsing the lamps of the night and the wings of the dawn
in thy coming,

And waking the amorous breast of the earth by thy loving
caresses.

Chill clouds, at thy touch, glow and burn in magnificent
splendour before thee;

Bright-paved with pure gold is thy path on the measureless
floor of the ocean,

Where shadowy islands emerge from the white, misty veil
of their slumbers,

Renewed and rejoicing that night hath been vanquished by
thy fair appearing,

Which gives to the winds the sweet incense of blooms and
the balm of the mountains,

And spices from thick-wooded steeps, and the herbage of
vales cool and dewy.

Hail! framer of rainbows, sustainer of worlds, and begetter of
beauty!

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

Light, warmth and delight, life and joy of the earth and the
hope of her children,
Unwavering torch that for ever illumines the spaces eternal,
Out-wearing the years, and pursuing time's flight by thy
flames unremitting,
Slow-lighting the ages the way to the plains where Oblivion
reigneth,
Unchanged by the seasons thou changest, undimmed by the
days that are vanished.

O Sun! wherewithal shall the measures of perishing song, un-
availing,
Make praises befitting thy might and the meed of thy gra-
cious deserving?
Thine, thine are the songs of the hills, and the songs of the
seas and the rivers,
The birds, and the light-leaping rills, and the clarion winds in
their revel,
The roar and loud crash of the clouds that alarm the storm-
echoing heavens;
And thine are the songs of the silence, bloom-voices, that die
with thy setting.

As turns the heart, wishing for love, to the image of that
which it loveth,
To thee the earth turns, in her longing, from night and the
chill of the winter;
And like the mute pleading of eyes when the soul is dis-
tressed and despairing,



P O E M S

So is the sad silence of forest and vale which await thy returning.

But sorrow shall fly at thy touch, and her foot-prints shall bloom at thy bidding,
And cheer shall invade the dumb grief of the fields, and the wilderness lonely.

The green shall invade the 'sere plains, and the forest shall stir, and the orchard

Shall burst into million-starred bloom, rosy-white, and the gray of the meadows

Be dappled with clover, the hedge-rows be spangled with gems, and the wheat-fields

Wave wide in the wind, and the swallow shall skim the clear brook, and the wood-lark

Shall tune his wild note, and the roses shall deck the warm wall, and the maiden,

Light-hearted, shall walk with her lover,—because thou art shining in heaven.

Full-summer:—the earth, leaf-embowered, thy flame's living flood hath encircled.

Broad fields, that were stripped, are now rich with the thick-woven gold of the harvest,

On high the green glory of hills, in tumultuous repose is uplifted,

Enclosing the deep-teeming valleys in drowsy and prospering silence.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

There, nestled in clustering, fruit-burdened trees, are the homes of contentment.

White ships, ever resting, at peace with the waves of that green, friendly ocean.

With morning thy first level beams, stealing softly through moist, fragrant branches,

Make entrance by dewy and cool-curtained casements, invading the stillness

With glories celestial, in gentleness breaking the trance of the sleepers.

The strong man, aroused from his rest by the bright and miraculous summons,

Leaps forth from his couch, and in joy goeth forth to the fields and his labours,

Well cheered with new hopes and sweet thoughts of chaste love and delicious embracing.

Thy rays touch the dream of the matron, and slowly, with smiles, she awakens,

Out-stretching her limbs, strong and white, glad with health and unspeakable beauty:

Half-rising, she lingers to loosen the soft-gleaming waves of her tresses,

While over her bosom thy light throws a mantle, well-matching its fairness.

Soon clad in fresh robes she comes forth like some creature divine and immortal,

P O E M S

So full of proud life is her step as she walks in the glow of
thy blessing.

Through vine-leaves and lattice, thy flames find their way to
the maid in her bower,
And dazzle with wavering gold the dim whiteness of sleep's
fair seclusion;
Dispersing the veil of vague shadows in which she lies, softly
enfolded;
Investing her fancies, and stirring the tide of her heart's
sacred fountain;
But, waking, she chides not thy boldness, nor shrinks from
thy eager advances,
For thou art the cherishing lover of life, ever young and un-
dying.

O radiant heart of our heaven, firm-fixed in brave constancy
ever!
Unshamed in thy love, and not wearied by infinite labours
unending!
Translating the clod into fair-mantled, breeze-haunted leaf-
age and blossom,
Arraying the passionate earth in prolific and arrogant splen-
dours,
Out-lustreing wide-visioned Fancy's illuminant dreams, and
in triumph,
Unlocking with easy and confident touches the gates of en-
chantment.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

Cease not, O gloom-banishing Sun, to arise on the earth's
waiting patience!

New-fashioning ever her fast-fading pictures, in happy suc-
cession;

Re-imagining always the changing delights of the field and the
forest.

Be steadfast for ever, O comfort and cheer of our perilous
journey!

Thou vision of darkening eyes and sad spirits that long for
the morning,

Fail not to arise, in thy matchless estate, undiminished for
ever.

P O E M S

WITH NO INTERPRETER

HERE may'st thou read a soon-forgotten song—
The soul's song of the soul. The soul!—that name
Is title for a volume; there, all shame,
All sorrows, all pain, and all grief and wrong,
Hope, love, despair, are written. No eye long
Can read therein undimmed. The soul!—a flame
That lights Oblivion's path,—a bird that came
To life's cage, flying from a foe more strong.

Of thought's proud splendours the artificer;
Yet, in her frail, clay house content to stay:
An angel, harried, like a beast at bay,
Self-musing, patient, and alone, always:—
Twin sister unto silence, and, like her,
A shade,—a dream, with no interpreter.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

A WILD VIOLET IN NOVEMBER

ALAS, dear flower! child of the morning sun,
Of April showers and spring-time's kindly breath,
Against what odds hath thy sweet life begun!
All nature bodes thee ill. Thou may'st not shun
The hard mischances of this changing world,
Nor 'scape the sad presaging of this sky.
To-day thy gentle beauty is unfurled,
To-morrow in the lap of sleep to lie.
All cheerfully the wonder of thine eye
Looks upward, smiling in the face of death.

Is nature then forgetful and unkind?
Unknowing of her time, to send thee forth
Uncared for, unprotected from the wind,
Whose threat'ning voice stirs from the pallid north?
Or hath the sun, made fierce with Autumn's wine,
Too fondly wooed, too soon, the drowsing earth,
So that she stirs uneasy in her rest,
And dreams she must put forth some tender sign
Of love's sweet troubling in her yearning breast,
And so, unwitting, gives thy beauty birth?

Hast thou no fear? Ah, poor, unconscious waif!
No dew-drop hast thou but compassion's tear.
Would that an angel now might bear thee safe
To some sure hiding-place! Dost thou not hear
The anger of the coming storm, that fills
The sky with gloom and shakes the earth with dread,

P O E M S

Voiced in the deep mouths of the bellowing hills,
Wherefrom bright Autumn in despair hath fled
And left the gray trees naked to their ills,
Each holding mournfully some farewell shred,
Torn from the rich robe of the passing year?
No help of mine, alas! can bring thee cheer.
Here will I heap the leaves about thy bed,
That they may make thee, when the storm draws near,
A friendly shelter for thy drooping head.
Soon will thy life be done, and mine more drear,
That I shall seek for thee, and find thee dead.

Now from the far horizon sweeps the blast,
Distress and desolation in the sound,
Swift through the moaning forest, driving past
The frantic leaves along the rustling ground.
Now on the drear fields night is closing fast,
The shadows and the darkness fill the air;
Dun Melancholy leaves her haunts at last,
And wails along the hillsides in despair.

Far from the fading valley bursts the boom
Of distant echoes, and the darkness reels,
Where sightless chariots, thundering through the gloom,
Bear down the tree-tops with their crackling wheels.
Sheer down the shattered silence of the sky
The fierce, white steeds of Winter plunging go;
Swift on the level of the storm they fly,
And from their gleaming manes, as they rush by,

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

They shake the hoar-frost out, like moon-lit snow.
Now is the summer as it had not been;
The autumn but a fancy and a jest;
All is but night, and phantoms come again.
The rounded moon sinks in the tangled crest
Of yon dark hill. Are all but shadows then?
And what should I do other than the rest,—
A dreamer of the whisp'ring fields at best?

Farewell, sweet flower! We yet perhaps shall meet
At sometime, somewhere, God, He knows; not I.
But if this life be not a useless cheat,—
A farce for fiends to laugh at, and a lie,—
Then sure I know that in some land unknown,
To which we journey, we shall meet again.
And if there be not this—if life be grown,
Heart, soul and mind, a fleeting dream and vain,
Born of the earth and nurtured by the sun,
A nothing and a shadow, but to be
Whiles that a few short years of time shall run,
And vanish then forever—still, I say,
Farewell! Farewell! It is but clay to clay,
Thou goest now, and I shall follow thee.

P O E M S

TO A SERPENT

Poor, hideous beast! The long, late autumn night
Hath numb'd thee with chill dews; this nipping air
Makes thee thus slow, unsure. Ill would'st thou fare
Should thy foe find thee now; yet fiercely bright,
Thy fixed and jewel-like, glittering eyes, like light;
Thy lithe tongue threatens, as who should say, beware
These rigid, flattening coils. Poor worm! my care
Is but to aid thee in thy hapless plight.

Nay, never fear,—thy winter lair I know.
Thy life God gave thee and no right have I,
Nor wish, to harm thee. Now, once more, to try
These steep, cold rocks beyond which thou must go;
Art thou so quickly gone? O, strange, strange earth;
Fear, always fear! death dogs thy children, all, from birth.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

THE ANGEL OF SLEEP

DEAR angel Sleep,
Where lies thy world which yet hath not been seen
By waking eyes, though they be charged with light
Filched from the undying sun, and pierce the night
With eagle gaze, the veil doth intervene
Which hides thy mystic land! Thy noiseless wings
Afar up-bear thee on thy distant flight
While watch we keep.
Still doth thy hand withhold, thy lips forbid,
The strange half-parting into bliss which brings
Some touch of solace craved by every breast,
Till softly to the cheek the fringed lid
By weariness or sorrow hath been pressed
And all—save life within the heart—at rest.

Then from the airy corridors which wed
The shadowed halls where Death and Silence dwell,
With velvet foot-falls on the lonely floors,
Through closely-bolted and unfriendly doors,
Thou—friend of friendless souls—with hastening tread
Dost come to kneel, by cot and costly bed;
With juice of herbs from many a dream-land dell
Caught up and pressed betwixt thy soothing palms
To cool the eyes that weeping hath made red,
And plants, plucked from the fragrant earth, which shed
Their priceless drops for thee, and poppy balms
That breathe elysian airs, whose touch restores

P O E M S

Lost, happier visions of sweet days, long dead,
To hungering hearts that feed on sorrow's bread.

Across the deep
Ungessed abysses of ethereal space,
Bridged by wide arches of the glimmering stars,
Through darkling distances, on wind-reaped moors,
Beside dim rivers on whose soundless shores
The countless journeying years have left no trace
To tell Time had been there, thy friendly hand
Leads forth our spirits to that shrouded land
Beyond the vague, impenetrable bars
Which hedge this conscious life—a world that beams
With other light than this—in which the soul
'Scapes for a little from the harsh control
Of tyrant circumstance, and oft, it seems,
We almost have cast off our chains, and stand,
Freed from the reach of care and earthly dole,
So far we wander in thy land of dreams.

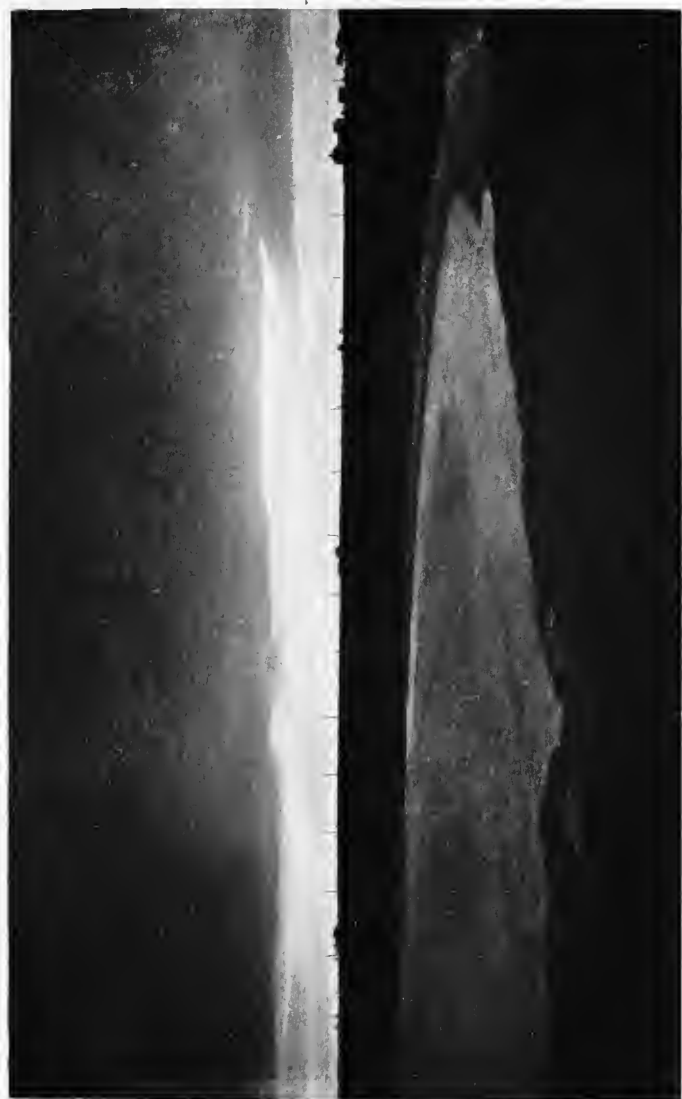
But while life bides, the binding tie must hold.
We must return to earth. Tears that were shed,
Before thine arms closed lovingly around us,
Scarce have grown cold,
When, to the scene in which thy coming found us,
We wake; once more recalled, once more, as when
We laid life down, we take it up again
And trudge beneath our burthens as of old,
Thou and thy fair, fantastic world being fled.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

Yet, evermore in happiness or sorrow,
In health or sickness, trusting thy strong wing
To bear us to the threshold of the morrow;
From Night's still unaccomplished hours we borrow
The comfort of new hopes which dawn may bring.

Thus safe across the dreary gulfs that sunder
The realm of Day, we pass, by thy kind care;
And if some cloud, lit by the lightning's glare,
And rent in pieces by the crashing thunder,
Wakes the deep-slumbering Earth to trembling wonder
And frights thee hence, how anxiously we stare
Out through the gloom, aghast, not knowing where
Thy startled flight hath left us; for a space,
Held by the lingering spell we have been under,
We see a world in which we have no place;
As though both Life and Death by some strange blunder
Had fallen away and left us lonely there.

The soul thus dallying on Life's farthest edge,
Not having stepped across Death's wavering line,
Leaving its house with Life, as if in pledge
Of sure return, slips down the shimmering ledge
Whose yielding sands with unknown jewels shine,
And out upon the sea, which like a wedge
Divides two worlds and, far out-flowing, laves
Oblivion's shadowed coast with soundless waves.



P O E M S

There with thee drifting, in thy shallow boat,
 Beneath thy up-stretched wings, which fan the air
With fragrant, downy plumes, once more we float;
 Forgetful of this life that is so fair,
But where each blooming path by Death is haunted,
And where the burning hopes so often vaunted
 Soon smoulder in the ashes of despair;
 And if they live again, some other-where,
No heart, however fearless and undaunted,
 Can surely know;—no mortal hand may dare
 Point out the road by which we shall come there.
 But when upon thy tranquil breast reclining,
 No more we care if life hath used us ill;
Or if for rain the summer fields be pining,
Or if fierce winter scourge the naked hill;
 Nor if dark clouds have quenched the moon's fair shining,
Nor if the heart which loved us, loves us still.

 And when at last life will no longer stay,
But turns aside all heedless of our calling,
And we can go no farther on the way,
 Because the great abyss, deep and appalling,
 Gapes widely in the darkness for its prey,—
 Then, whether night be come, or, slowly falling,
The twilight shadows of the evening gray,
Or some last dawn, our swimming sight forestalling,
 Or if the time be some fair summer day—
 It hinders not thy coming nor thy care:

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

Kind, first, last friend, thou wilt not leave us there.
Nay, lovelier seeming then, dear angel Sleep,
From thine abode, — where Death and Silence keep
Watch on thy going, — down the cloud-built stair,
On thy last journey thou dost softly creep:
Thy cup of balm clasped in thy hand, to steep
Our anxious spirits — as of old — in rest,
Once more, upon the pillows of thy breast.

But from his gloomy hall the black-robed king
Steps hastily and halts thee in thy flight.
And while his presence overawes thy sight,
The poisoned jewel drops within thy cup;
And when we drink, our fainting spirits yearn
For thy soft bosom, where we fain would cling,
To rest for ever from our wandering:
Once more thy strong arms lift us gently up,
Once more the world fades out, and soon the light
Of worlds unknown and fabled suns that burn
Far off, beyond the farthest star of night,
Breaks on the plumes of thy space-cleaving wing.
So we go hence and never more return.

P O E M S

THE WINGED VICTORY OF SAMOTHRACE

ENCHANTING wonder! Heralding, that we
Keep not the favour of the gods, as they
With whom thou dwelt before thou fell'st a prey
To fools and savage time. O can it be
That, in thy little isle, men came to see,
Perhaps with careless eyes, from day to day,
The being whose hands shaped thus thy deathless clay;
Whose soul gave thee this immortality?

O splendid wreck! Divinest gift that, yet,
The centuries have bequeathed, if time may dare
Despoil thee thus, and hide, we know not where,
Thy maker's name and ashes, what regret
Must mingle with our soul's delight in thee,
When we, with faltering speech, shall name thee, *Victory*.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

THE PIPER AT DARGAI. A SONG OF THE GORDONS

"THE hill must be taken," the order read,
 "*Cock o' the North,*" when the pipes are played,
"Then the Gordons will take it" the Colonel said,
 "*Cock o' the North,*" when the charge is made,
And the hill,—it was blossoming smoke and flame,
 The lead hornets, nipping the dust as they came,
 Were whistling a challenge,—'t was death or fame,
 "*Cock o' the North,*" not a man delayed.

In a moment the Piper sat propt by a stone,
 "*Cock o' the North,*" was the air he played.
The Afridis had shattered each ankle bone,
 "*Cock o' the North,*" was the air he played.
He was left, for the Gordons were off, with a deep
 Cry of rage up the slope, to the hill, with a sweep;
 But the shrill piping followed them up the dim steep,
 "*Cock o' the North,*" was the air he played.

They went on, they went up, they went over the hill;
 "*Cock o' the North,*" was the air he played.
The battle cheers ended, the guns were still;
 "*Cock o' the North,*" was the air he played.
Hark! For the love of Christ's name! do ye hear?
Hark ye! Each man puts his hand to his ear,—
 'T was the pipes, faint and far, but the notes coming clear,
 "*Cock o' the North,*" was the air he played.

P O E M S

REMEMBER THE MAINE! BATTLE SONG

WHEN the vengeance wakes, when the battle breaks,
And the ships sweep out to sea;
When the foe is neared, when the decks are cleared,
And the Colours floating free;
When the squadrons meet, when it's fleet to fleet,
And front to front with Spain;
From ship to ship, from lip to lip
Pass on the quick refrain,
Remember—
Remember the Maine!

When the flag shall sign, advance in line,
Train ship on an even keel;
When the guns shall flash, and the shot shall crash,
And bound on the ringing steel;
When the rattling blasts, from the armoured masts,
Are hurling their deadliest rain,
Let their voices loud, through the blinding cloud,
Cry, ever, the fierce refrain,
Remember—
Remember the Maine!

God's sky and sea, in that storm, shall be
Fate's chaos of smoke and flame;
And across that hell, every shot shall tell,
Not a gun can miss its aim;
Not a blow will fail, on the crumbling mail,
And the waves that engulf the slain,

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

Shall sweep the decks of the blackened wrecks
With the thundering, dread refrain,
Remember—
Remember the Maine!

P O E M S

AN AUTUMN PICTURE

A TRANQUIL sky, where day is perishing
In cloudless and unsaddening silence deep;
Like the slow coming of a peaceful sleep,
The shadows fall, and each ray's vanishing
Adds something to the soft enveloping,
Which veils, but doth not hide, the valley's sweep,
And climbs with steady pace the glowing steep,
Whose fading marks the light's diminishing.

The mellow music of a drowsy stream
Tolls out a slumberous note across the gray
And autumn-changed mead. Not far away
Some cattle stand, like figures in a dream,
And from a lowly cabin's chimney wide,
The smoke's thin column lifts and drifts aside.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

A BACHELOR'S CHRISTMAS. A SONG

WHEN Christmas comes, a year from now,
With Spring returned, and lost again,—
Perhaps I shall be happy then:—

When Christmas comes, a year from now,—
Perhaps beneath the shadowed gold
Of her soft hair, I shall behold

No more the frown upon her brow:—
Perhaps her heart will be less cold

When Christmas comes, a year from now.

When Christmas comes, a year from now,
With Summer come, and gone again,—
Perhaps she will be mine, by then;

And yet, her soul may not incline
To quit, for love of me, the shrine

Where I in faithful worship bow—

This fair, illusive bride of mine—

When Christmas comes, a year from now.

When Christmas comes, a year from now,
When Autumn flames and fades again
To ashes,—she may love me then,—

When Christmas comes, a year from now:
And if she love me not, I'll share
My hopes with none; alone I'll dare

Whatever fate the gods allow:—

Perhaps I shall not greatly care,

When Christmas comes, a year from now.

P O E M S

WHERE SUMMER BIDES. A WINTER DAY-DREAM

“WHAT cheer—what cheer?”

It was the hardy red-bird's ringing cry,

Sweet, and so clear;

“What cheer—what cheer?”

Again that questioning sounded in my ear,

“What cheer—what cheer?”

My heart could not reply;

For to my mind the chilly world was drear,

And all about me fell

The light-winged snowflakes, and that bird and I

Were all that lived within the wintry dell,

Where I had wandered, why, I cannot tell.

The once green banks were sere;

The well-remembered brook was frozen dry;

And all the summer's leaves were crisp and dead.

Musing, I leaned my head

Against a lichened beech that grew hard by,

And in my heart a tear

Rose with a sigh,

While still the red-bird called,

“What cheer, what cheer?”

“What cheer, what cheer?”

A vision seemed to spread before my eyes;

A sudden spring-time waked the sleeping year.

The sun shone clear;

The balmy air came softly from the skies.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

The spice-wood, bending near,
Began to bud—to bloom. The silent stream
Awaked, low murmuring, from its winter dream.
Along the banks green grass began to grow;

The violets sprang
Among the dead leaves, and the falling snow
Was turned to clusters of anemones.

A rapturous glow
Warmed all the ground, and loud the glad birds sang.
A vernal fragrance stole among the trees,

While to and fro,
From flower to flower, swift flew the journeying bees.

Amidst the mossy rocks
The saxifrage peeped forth, and near, below,
The purple phlox
Stirred with the breeze; and high up, on the brink,
Gleamed, like a scarlet star, the mountain pink.

“What cheer— what cheer?”

There was not need to ask, nor for reply;
Its echo now made answer to the cry.

With bud enfolding spear
The young May-apple pierced the sod, and spread
Her silken canopy. The dog-wood's bough
Grew heavy with white blossoms; and bravely now
May wove her wonders; and all overhead,

A million tints of green
Burst from the interlacing twigs. Soft fringe
Hung on the sugar-trees. A rosy tinge

P O E M S

Crept on the rugged oaks; and many a cup
Of newest, golden sheen
The giant tulip-tree's high hands held up;
And, all between,
Were labyrinthine lacings of the vine,
With buds translucent in the sun. The scene
Was all too fair;
The snowy hawthorn and the eglantine
Tricked out the blithe enchantments clustered there
With joys too keen;
For beauty brings some strange, unnamed despair
In-mingling with fierce rapture, all divine,
Which gods alone may bear.

“What cheer—what cheer?”
A thousand voices now made mock at care;
So dear, so dear,
Those oft-repeated notes! They filled the air
With overflowing mirth,
Those lavish songsters—generous as the earth:
So rich, so bountiful, they need not spare.
The lark called from the flowering slope. The thrush
Held all the dell entranced. From bush to bush
The warbling bluebird flew. The oriole,
Like some enchanted soul,
Amidst the emerald leafage went and came,
A voiceful fire, a song clad in bright flame.
And on the hill
The chat, the nuthatch, and the jay are still.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

The robin, too, refrains,
While from some towering branch
The mock-bird pours his rippling avalanche
Of intermingling strains,
And floods the fields of sunshine with his clear,
Inimitable song;
And yet the red-bird was not silent long,
But cried, "What cheer—what cheer?"

"What cheer—what cheer?"

Like some past grief recalled, that cry I hear.
With splendid strides, swift Summer makes advance,
And spreads her blazing glories far and near.
Magnificent, luxuriant arrogance

That knows no peer!

Unmatched, unrivalled Summer! whose mere mirth
And laughter makes quick conquest of the earth.
Joy's dream fulfilled. Rose of the rounded year,
Triumphant Summer, Life's bud blooms in thee!

The later days may wane,
And blight may fall upon the autumn grain;
The timid Spring may see

Her hopes made vain

By lingering frosts, or by the chilling rain;
But thou art perfect; sorrow finds not thee!

The blooming iris nodded on the brae;
The languid air was heavy with the scent
Of teeming fields; the sleepy birds grew still;

P O E M S

The white clouds went,
Slow-drifting, past the tree-tops on the hill;
The slumbering sunlight lay
Along the woodland's breast; and in a dream,
The listening branches bent
Above the stream,
Which sang, low-voiced, in drowsy, sweet content.
The dappled shadows crept
With noiseless feet that marked the passing day,
When, so it fell,
The vision wavered, and a chill wind swept
The changing picture of the summer dell,
And in a moment all had passed away.
The snow-flakes wandered through the branches gray;
Ice hushed the stream once more; the banks were sere;
The faded, drifting leaves were dead and dry;
The winter weeds were grouped in clusters drear;
But, shrill and clear,
The red-bird whistled from the copse near by,
"What cheer—what cheer?"
"What cheer—what cheer?"
A pleasing fancy nestles in my heart,
When, now, I hear,
Among the cheerless trees, that questioning cry,
From earth the Summer never doth depart:
Within the silence of the dell she bides,
Unseen, amidst the lacing twigs she hides,
And waits the waking of the sleeping year.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

So with that fancy do I please my mind,
To think—albeit snow lieth on the hill,
 And though the wind
Be cold, though joyless are the fields, and chill
 The wintry woodland ways—
Yet somewhere, unseen, haply hiding near,
 Sweet Summer stays.
 O loved one dear,
Not comfortless would seem these feeble rays,
Not thus would fade these dreams of happy days,
 Could I but find thee here;
 Not silent then were I!
How easily my heart could make reply,
 When I should hear
From yon gray slope, as now, that ringing cry,
 “What cheer—what cheer?”

P O E M S

BETTER LIFE'S LONELIEST PATH TO TREAD

BETTER life's loneliest path to tread,
With never a stay for the weary feet;
Better gray hills and sky of lead,
And the buffeting winds, and the blinding sleet,
Than the soul embittered, and friendship dead,
And the heart made hard by the world's deceit.

Better the wilderness, fierce and lone,
And the storm's wild dirge in the moaning trees;
Better the hut and the rude hearth-stone,
With the homeliest fare and the heart at ease,
Than a palace from whose door love hath flown,
And joy from the dweller's revelries.

Better to battle alone with fate,
And to fall unknown,—if so it must be;
Better the world's neglect and hate,
With the wings of thought, unclipped and free,
Than a liveried soul in the best estate
And the crown of a weakling's victory.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

DUST AND ASHES. A COMMONPLACE MONOLOGUE

WHEN we have gathered all the hard-wrung store,
The careful harvest of man's restless mind,

Have winnowed well, and sifted to the core
The ponderous heap, how little do we find!
A meagre gift of grain that one might bind

Within a kerchief compass; little more
Than roving, aimless fancies had divined

In fateful intuitions, long before.

The fruit of life, a scanty feast, indeed,

On which the hungering heart, unsatisfied, must feed.

When we have toiled with feverish heart and brain;
With bleeding hands have delved, from sun to sun,

From fresh-blown youth to wrinkled age, to gain
Gold's glittering burthen—miscalled wealth—have won,
Perhaps, with our own souls wrecked and undone

The prize so coveted, what can it bring,
When it is ours at last? When life has run

Past all joy's gates, and hope is withering,
The worthless heap, which mocks us with its gleam,
Will not buy back for us one hour of life's lost dream.

Or if, with eyes uplifted from the earth,
Urged by the soul's aspiring flame, we dare

Some perilous, lonely path, foregoing mirth
And love's sweet, proffered balm, content to bear
The nameless woundings that await us there;

In secret, grieving, hiding the heart's pain

P O E M S

In that long, losing battle with despair,
Wherein the victor is o'erthrown and slain;
And should we win the changeful world's acclaim,
What breath-blown emptiness is emptier than fame?

These be life's boasted triumphs; men have lost,
For these, in vain, all else life held in store;
And with what unavailing tears the cost
Has, at the last, been counted, when the door
Was shut on happiness, whose hand no more
Upon the unuplifted latch will rest—
What words shall tell? Left on the barren floor
Of life's accomplishment to stand, unblest,
Amidst mad memories, and naught else beside,
In triumph vanquished, lonely and unsatisfied.

There be but two things which the soul may find
On this sad earth, and, finding, should hold fast,—
The soul of beauty, which dwells in the mind
And hence in all things, for all things are cast
In our soul's proper measure; and the last
And best is love; love truly can repay
The heart's full sacrifice, for, love, being past,
Leaves something with us that no fate can slay;
And if love linger till the end be here,
What cause have we for sorrow then, what cause for fear?

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

WOULD WE RETURN?

Would we return

If once the gates which close upon the past
Were opened wide for us, and if the dear
Remembered pathway stretched before us, clear,
To lead us back to youth's lost land at last;
Whereon life's April shadows, lightly cast,
Recalled the old sweet days of childish fear
With all their faded hopes, and brought anear
The far-off streams in which our skies were glassed;
Did these lost dreams which wake the soul's sad yearning
But live once more and wait for our returning,

Would we return?

Would we return

If love's enchantment held the heart no more,
And we had come to count the wild, sweet pain,
The fond distress, the lavish tears, but vain;
Had cooled the heart's hot wounds amidst the roar
Of mountain gales, or, on some alien shore
Worn out the soul's long anguish, and had slain
The dragon of despair; if then the train
Of vanished years came back, and, as of yore,
The same voice called, and, with soft eyes beguiling,
Our lost love beckoned, through time's gray veil smiling,
Would we return?

P O E M S

Would we return

Once we had crossed to death's unlovely land
And trod the bloomless ways among the dead,
Lone and unhappy; after years had fled

With twilight wings along that glimmering strand,
If then an angel came with outstretched hand
To lead us back, and we recalled in dread
How soon the tears that once for us are shed

May flow for others, how, like words in sand,
Our memory fades away, how oft our waking
Might vex the living with the dead heart's breaking,

Would we return—

Would we return?

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

I SHALL FIND REST

“A LITTLE further on—

There will be time—I shall find rest anon:”
Thus do we say, when eager youth invites
Young Hope to try her wings in wanton flights,
And nimble Fancy builds the soul a nest
On some far crag. But soon youth’s flame is gone,
Burned lightly out, while we repeat the jest,
With smiling confidence,—“I shall find rest
A little further on.”

“A little further on

I shall find rest,” half-fiercely, we avow,
When noon beats on the dusty fields, and Care
Threats to unjoint our armour, and the glare
Throbs with the pulse of battle, while life’s best
Flies with the fitting stars; the frenzied brow
Pains for the laurel, more than for the breast
Where love, soft-nestling, waits. “Not now! not now!”
With feverish breath we cry,—“I shall find rest
A little further on.”

“A little further on

I shall find rest,” half-sad, at last, we say,
When sorrow’s settling cloud blurs out the gleam
Of Glory’s torch, and to a vanished dream
Love’s palace hath been turned; then, all depressed,
Despairing, sick at heart, we may not stay

P O E M S

Our weary feet; so lonely then doth seem
This shadow-haunted world, we, so unblest,
Weep not, to see the grave, which waits its guest;
And, feeling round our feet the cool sweet clay,
We speak the fading world farewell, and say,
“Not on this side, alas! I shall find rest
A little further on.”

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

EVENING AT ASHLAND

LONG, level lines of liquid, yellow light
Out-ebbed from the horizon-touching sun
With glory bathe all things they rest upon.
Beyond the hedge foreshadowings of the night
Pervade the solemn woodland, where the bright,
Gold and flame-fretted columns have begun
To lose their lustre, darkening one by one,
While all the dewy distance fades from sight.

Across the lawn the turkey and her brood,
A straggling group, wend to some restful spot,
Where no unfriendly footsteps may intrude;
The grassy courts already have forgot
The tennis player's laughter, and the air
Holds but night's love, night's joy and night's despair.

P O E M S

THE DEAD PLAYER

SURE and exact,—the master's quiet touch
Thus perfect, was his art;
Ambitious, generous, sad, and loving much,
Was his pain-haunted heart.

To him, the blissful burthen of her love
Did stern-browed Fortune give;
In hell, in heaven, beneath life and above,
Such souls as his must live.

Who wears Fame's Tyrian garb, as well must wear
The heavy robe of Grief;
Who bears aloft the palm, must also bear
Hid woundings past belief.

Both he did wear, and bear, as well as most
Of Earth's soon-counted few
That stand distinguished from the unknown host
By having work to do.

Souls seek their doom. A costly-freighted bark
That sails a perilous sea,
Rounds every bar, and goes down, in the dark
At port,—e'en such was he.

A classic shade,—he walks the unknown lands
Death-silent and death-dim;
But like a noble Phidian marble, stands
The memory of him.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

WHEN EVENING COMETH ON

WHEN evening cometh on,
Slower and statelier in the mellowing sky
The fane-like, purple-shadowed clouds arise;
Cooler and balmier doth the soft wind sigh;
Lovelier, lonelier to our wandering eyes
The softening landscape seems. The swallows fly
Swift through the radiant vault; the field-lark cries
His thrilling, sweet farewell; and twilight bands
Of misty silence cross the far-off lands,
When evening cometh on.

When evening cometh on,
Deeper and dreamier grows the slumbering dell;
Darker and drearier spreads the bristling wold;
Bluer and heavier roll the hills that swell
In moveless waves against the shimmering gold.
Out from their haunts the insect hordes, that dwell
Unseen by day, come thronging forth to hold
Their fleeting hour of revel, and by the pool
Soft pipings rise up from the grasses cool,
When evening cometh on.

When evening cometh on,
Along their well-known paths with heavier tread
The sad-eyed, loitering kine unurged return;
The peaceful sheep, by unseen shepherds led,
Wend bleating to the hills, so well they learn
Where Nature's hand their wholesome couch hath spread;

P O E M S

And through the purpling mist the moon doth yearn;
Pale, gentle radiance, dear recurring dream,
Soft with the falling dew falls thy faint beam,
When evening cometh on.

When evening cometh on,
Loosed from the day's long toil, the clanking teams,
With halting steps, pass on their jostling ways,
Their gearings glinted by the waning beams;
Close by their heels the heedful collie strays;
All slowly fading in a land of dreams,
Transfigured spectres of the shrouding haze.
Thus from life's field the heart's fond hope doth fade,
Thus doth the weary spirit seek the shade,
When evening cometh on.

When evening cometh on,
Across the dotted fields of gathered grain
The soul of Summer breathes a deep repose;
Mysterious murmurings mingle on the plain,
And from the blurred and blended brake there flows
The undulating echo of some strain
Once heard in paradise, perchance,— who knows?
But now the whispering memory sadly strays
Along the dim rows of the rustling maize,
When evening cometh on.

When evening cometh on,
Anon there spreads upon the lingering air
The musk of weedy slopes and grasses dank,

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

And odours from far fields, unseen but fair,
With scent of flowers from many a shadowy bank.
O lost Elysium, art thou hiding there?
Flows yet that crystal stream whereof I drank?
Ah, wild-eyed Memory, fly from night's despair;
Thy strong wings droop with heavier weight of care
When evening cometh on.

When evening cometh on,
No sounding phrase can set the heart at rest.
The settling gloom that creeps by wood and stream,
The bars that lie along the smouldering west,
The tall and lonely, silent trees that seem
To mock the groaning earth, and turn to jest
This wavering flame, this agonizing dream,
All, all bring sorrow as the clouds bring rain,
And evermore life's struggle seemeth vain,
When evening cometh on.

When evening cometh on,
Anear doth Life stand by the great unknown,
In darkness reaching out her sentient hands;
Philosophies and creeds, alike, are thrown
Beneath her feet, and questioning she stands,
Close on the brink, unfeared and alone,
And lists the dull wave breaking on the sands;
Albeit her thoughtful eyes are filled with tears,
So lonely and so sad the sounds she hears,
When evening cometh on.

P O E M S

When evening cometh on,
Vain seems the world, and vainer wise men's thought.
All colours vanish when the sun goeth down.
Fame's purple mantle some proud soul hath caught
No better seems than doth the earth-stained gown
Worn by Content. All names shall be forgot.
Death plucks the stars to deck his sable crown.
The fair enchantment of the golden day
Far through the vale of shadows melts away,
When evening cometh on.

When evening cometh on,
Love, only love, can stay the sinking soul,
And smooth thought's racking fever from the brow;
The wounded heart love only can console.
Whatever brings a balm for sorrow now,
So must it be while this vexed earth shall roll;
Take then the portion which the gods allow.
Dear heart, may I at last on thy warm breast
Sink to forgetfulness and silent rest
When evening cometh on.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

A PRAYER

God of my sinking soul!
Across the waters stretch Thy helping hand;
Betwixt me and the far-off shining land,
The wide seas roll.

P O E M S

BALLAD OF THE FADED FIELD

BROAD bars of sunset-slanted gold
Are laid along the field, and here
The silence sings, as if some old
Refrain, that once rang long and clear,
Came softly, stealing to the ear
Without the aid of sound. The rill
Is voiceless, and the grass is sere,
But beauty's soul abideth still.

Trance-like the mellow air doth hold
The sorrow of the passing year;
The heart of Nature groweth cold,
The time of falling snow is near;
On phantom feet, which none may hear,
Creeps—with the shadow of the hill—
The semblance of departed cheer,
But beauty's soul abideth still.

The dead, gray-clustered weeds enfold
The well-known summer path, and drear
The dusking hills, like billows rolled
Against the distant sky, appear.
From lonely haunts, where Night and Fear
Keep ghostly tryst, when mists are chill,
The dark pine lifts a jagged spear,
But beauty's soul abideth still.

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

ENVO:

DEAR love, the days that once were dear
May come no more; life may fulfil

Her fleeting dreams with many a tear,
But beauty's soul abideth still.

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