

Porter

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Bruce Porter

to
Mr & Mrs Bruce Porter
with kind remembrances
from
Hauier Long

December 2, 1920.

"Our person shall be more acceptable
by being all complete". Paradise XIV 45.

POEMS

POEMS

BY
HANIEL LONG



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TO
WITTER BYNNER

***T**HANKS are due to "Poetry: A Magazine of Verse"; "The Poetry Journal"; "Contemporary Verse" and "Harpers' Magazine" for permission to reprint some of these poems.*

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THROUGH THE WINDOW NEAR HIS BED

THROUGH the window near his bed
On his tousled head,
All her magic on the sprite
Poured the Lady of the night.

Down a ladder came the lad
With the moonlight mad;
Down a ladder from his room
To the garden's moonlit gloom.

White with light was every limb —
Moonlight maddened him —
As he nakedly came down,
Having taken off his gown.

Trod he underneath the trees
With a sprightly ease,
While the moonlight on his face
Lingered with a wingèd grace.

Thus he came to know the smart
In the trembling heart,
When that cruel bee, the moon,
Stings one in her midnight noon.

.

Down a ladder came the lad
With the moonlight mad;
Down a ladder from his bed,
Sleeping with the moon instead.

THE POET

I TAKE what never can be taken,
Touch what cannot be;
I wake what never could awaken,
But for me.

I go where only winds are going,
Kiss what fades away;
I know a thing too strange for knowing,
I, the clay.

BARAKEESH

YOU tell me that the green god says
That Barakeesh is fair;
I answer that the strangest stars
Are shining everywhere,
That unaccustomed suns arise,
And life is gay and sweet
As the tinkle of the camel bells
Along your phantom street.

O Friend of God, if I decline
To taste the gift you give
'Tis that I need no hash-a-eesh
To coax me still to live.
Plain every day is vice enough,
With moons to quench my thirst;
And I let the roses poppy me
When worst has come to worst.

ASCUTNEY

WHAT is the mountain dreaming of
Misty yonder — has he kept
Green through the day the thought of her,
Who last night softly crept
Up from the valley to his breast,
And there lay down and slept?

PRESUMPTION

O WHO are you, the goddess cried,
To clamber to my heaven?
Merely a youth who's come to be
Your lord and lover, answered he,
And stay with you till daylight

And by what right, the goddess cried,
Dare you presume to speak so?
A thousand bitter nights, he said,
Admit me to your snow-white bed,
And darknesses support me.

I could have built the Pyramids
With half the wasted thinking
I've spent on you and your mad ways.
'Twas you that lost me in this maze
Which now you'll lead me out of.

THE FAUN

I BRING you the scent of the earth on my body,
The smell of the leaves in my hair;
I come with the wind and the water upon me,
And never a care!

THE BEETLE

I SAW a beetle on my knee
As I lay basking by a tree,
And this is what he said to me:

Since you ask me of the Lotus,
May this oak-tree not misquote us;
I the Scarab am, of old
Gold and green, and green and gold.
Let the chariots speed away,
Clamor lasts for but a day,
While the peace the Scarab gives
Murder and its god outlives.
Egypt wore me on her breast,
Pharaoh bore me as a crest.
Brief was Pharaoh's scarlet way,
I am green and gold to-day.

Most delectably to me
By the green and golden tree,
Spoke the beetle on my knee.

THE CLOCK

THE Clock is in a garden wide,
And there it keeps the hours,
And even finds a way to hide
Its face among the flowers.

The clock is in a hive of bees,
The clock is in a fountain —
It's here, it's there, it's in the trees
Yonder up a mountain.

At times it's all that I can hear —
No surer clock could be —
For it is always somewhere near,
And strikes eternity.

SHOES

I CANNOT put the old shoes on,
They're too far gone to wear—
And yet I cannot quite assume
My newly purchased pair.

The difficulty is extreme.
Since shoes are such a trial,
I guess that I'd go happier
Barefoot for awhile.

THE HERD-BOY

THE night I brought the cows home
Blue mist was in the air,
And in my heart was heaven,
And on my lips a prayer.

I raised my arms above me,
I stretched them wide apart,
And all the world was pressing
In beauty on my heart.

The lane led by a river
Along an ancient wood,
And ancient thoughts came softly,
As with the leaves they should.

I hung the cows with garlands,
And proud they walked before;
While mother-naked after
A laurel branch I bore.

THREE QUAKERS

I MET three Quakers on a hill,
And thee'd and thou'd with them until
I thought I was a Quaker, too,
And Quakers all the birds that flew

And Quakers all the trees that stood
Like little angels being good,
Whilst Quaker thoughts paced through my brain
Like Quaker maidens down a lane.

Alas, a solemn goat came by,
And butted me, and closed his eye;
And not a Quaker I could quote
Would make him be a Quaker goat.

TO ONE WHO REBUKED HIM FOR
WRITING A THOUSAND POEMS

BUT is it such a shameful thing
To see so many flowers in Spring?

ORDEAL BY FIRE

AND so she was condemned to pass the night
Above, beneath, beside, within a flame;
And everywhere she looked the sky was bright,
And everywhere she turned the burning came.

Tongues licked her body, and a blaze
Piled up as though her April skin were pitch;
And yet she rose unharmed, and went her ways,
And the grey monks intoned, She was no witch,
She was no witch!

MADNESS

THE night came softly to the sea;
And they, the seven stars, to me.

The sea, the seven stars, and I
Gave an involuntary cry

That echoed in the hills and went
The ways of old bewilderment.

And I alone the reason knew,
And I had told it then to you;

But stars are strange, the sea is deep
And you were lovely, in your sleep.

A SEA MAIDEN

FACE-DOWN was I upon a sea,
And not a planet swung in space
Could mark a form that under me
Rose to my embrace.

What face I kissed, no moons disclose;
My eager lips drank in the deep,
And vast, mysterious limbs were those
Which rippled me to sleep.

THE MIDNIGHT SWIM

ALCHEMY snared me with a spell.
Where heaven began, I could not tell,
Where water ended I could not see;
Both were above and under me.
For I was floating late and far
Where there was neither shore nor star.
The depthless valleys far below,
The ether's endless vertigo,
I fled from both. With senses dim
Like one in a primeval sleep,
I silently began to swim
Reptilian across the deep.

Suddenly loomed from the vast haze
A hill to meet my searching gaze,
And finding I could safely stand
I climbed, a man, to the dry land.
Then the warm air pressed round me
And in leafy fragrance drowned me.
I felt my rigid thews relent
In the more kindly element,
And I distinguished, solid, sweet,
The planet earth beneath my feet,
Calm that I at last might be
Vertical like bush and tree,
Not horizontal, on a sea.

WITH COMPLIMENTS

WE went along a forest road,
Went naked in the night;
Our bodies in the moonlight showed
Curious and bright.

I don't think you'd enjoy it;
Although you have the wit,
I doubt if you'd employ it
Or like the lark a bit.

Yet there was nothing novel
That night in what we did —
We saw the old moon travel;
Like him, we went unhid.

Just after dawn we met a dame
Who some day shall be dead,
And when we bright triumphant came
She covered up her head.

THE DEATH OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

THREE POEMS

I

THE DRYAD WELCOMES HIM

CITIES which knew you shall know you no more:
Come, to new intimacies;
Dream as the wisest of men dreamed before —
Stay and be safe on this magical shore;
Stay, and be lovely with trees.

Elephants dance here, stately and slow,
On the fourteenth night of the moon;
Children and emperors ride to and fro
With princesses swarthy and whiter than snow,
And boys like the sun at its noon.

Stay, and be young with the blossoms of May;
Stay, and be violet-crowned;
For youth's a libation the world throws away,
But here you may offer it day after day
To the gods of the sky and the ground.

II

HE SAYS GOOD-BYE TO THE WORLD

The sound of subterranean violins
Below the woodwind orchestra of leaves
Has entered me;
And lo, my song begins,
And Alexander dances as he weaves.

I sing the panic of young birth
And the ravishment of earth;
The bright dismay
Of flowers naked in the day;
The monstrous license and illusion
Of profusion,
The seed that struggles to creation
Through the surging night,
And the raids of emanation
To the light.

O frenzy to escape the Many
And be One;
To be blind to the debauchery of shade
And leap to the gold of the sun!
For everything I see is a release
From chaos to the peace
Of an identity.

O proud rejection of what cannot be
That gives the oak its majesty!
O great integrity of heart
That keeps each sapling faithful to his part
Was Alexander thus, or did he violate
With crimson the white dignity of fate?

Who knows?
Silent is the rose,
And Alexander dances here alone
With flesh unstable and dissolving bone.

I too, I, Alexander,
Have felt the fingers of the sea,
And trees have held me quietly.
Leopards have marked the inside of my thigh
With the play-bite; and from the farthest sky
Eagles have come impassioned to my breast
And longing for my life confessed.

I sing the panic of young breath,
And the struggle back to death.
'Tis strange,
We so desire to be apart —
And then we change,
We desire to have done,
To be gathered heart to heart.
After the day of million-fold identity
Follows the night when all identities are one.

And I,
Who face the sky
The proudest scion of my race,
No more would Alexander be,
But lie in the intricate embrace
Of flower after flower,
Tree upon tree.

III

THEY TELL OF HIS DEATH AFTERWARDS

TO a land where goats are browsing
And the crimson thistles are,
Alexander came carousing,
Came carousing in a car.

Suddenly he ceased from laughter;
By his side the charioteer
In the silence that came after
Sank upon his knees with fear.

Alexander, king of kings,
Thought he heard the beat of wings;
Truths his tutor never taught him.
Came about him and besought him.

Alexander, king of kings,
Cast away his helm and greaves;
He could see within the leaves
Dancing shapes and lovely things.

There was fever in his breast,
And he acquiesced —
Left his car to rot and rust,
Went away from death and dust,

Went away from lust and lying,
Went to meadows and to streams
Where there's never need of dying —
Went to be a prince of dreams:

Left the wrongness and the rightness
Of the things we dare —
Took his beauty, took his brightness,
Took his golden hair.

TO THE VISCOUNT OF BÉZIERS

1209 A.D.

SIMON de Montfort seemed to win,
Simon de Montfort lost.
You played the game through thick and thin,
And paid the uttermost cost
That a lad should pay
Who dared to say
Thought is free, and life is gay,
And birds are sweet in early May.

The winds have taken your foeman now;
Your name is snow and gold.
Even in death you showed us how
Dreamers could have and hold.
And we try to say
Your words to-day,
Thought is free, and life is gay,
And birds are sweet in early May.

SONG OF YOUNG BURBAGE

THE goat that rubbed my knees last night
And left his ancient smell
Maddened my heart that I was what
A hornéd goat could tell.

For if his favour singled me
Out of the passing crowd,
It's plain I'm not too well disguised,
Nor yet too worldly proud.

Most difficult it is to-day
Beneath a coat and vest;
I feared my old identity
Might fade with all the rest.

But I'll go back to hill and sky
And hold a colloquy;
I need those ancient presences
Whose tumult still is — *me*.

TREES

SINCE I became a caliph I have known
No councillors so prudent as the trees.
When I walk forth I never go alone,
And they are with me when I take my ease.

We spend the night in revelry and song;
By day we wag our beards and sit sedate.
If rash intruder question us too long,
We yawn, and plead the heaviness of state.

A CALIPH SMITTEN WITH SURMISE

A Caliph smitten with surmise
Forbade a certain star to rise.

Strange influence is in this star,
He thought; it must remove afar.

And yet at midnight just the same
The star which was forbidden came.

He dared not wander out at night
While the red star was waning white;

For when he did, his waking dreams
Were mingled with amazing themes,

And he heard whisper from the skies
A star enamoured of his eyes

Upon a terrace in his park
He lay half-strangled in the dark,

And secrets which it wished to tell
Came from the earth whereon he fell.

He sent for his astrologer
About the portent sinister.

Deliverance from this star he sought
And from the fevers which it brought.

The wise man said, O happy child,
With this strange star be reconciled;

Under the Prophet's Star who dwell
May madness know and yet be well.

THE WATER-SPRITE

I SEE her as I walk the shore,
Luminous, opaque.
She yearns for young men's limbs to wind,
For young men's hearts to break;
And she has weeds to wreath their brows
Under the clear lake.

Some midnight when the moon is full
And I can hear her moan,
I shall walk slowly down to her,
Under the lake, alone,
Bearing a cluster of land-flowers
And an agate stone.

ON THE ROADWAY TO MATANZAS

ON the roadway to Matanzas
I was busy building stanzas.

Some were good and some were bad,
But they one and all were mad.

For I knew the gods walked lately
Here where royal palms were stately,

And their haunting gave me qualms
In caesuras of those palms.

THE CUBAN IN THE STATES

THE North is beautiful, and I
Would like it — but for me
How bud the lips of woman by
The soft Habana sea!

And how can one who long has known
The fragrance of this rose,
Keep from his frozen lips a moan
Against the northern snows?

I shiver at the closing white —
But on the sunburnt south
I lie in an eternal night
Of sighing mouth on mouth.

I GATHER TREASURES OF THE DARK

I GATHER treasures of the dark
By walls of fireflies,
And at the wood-edge listen stark
To midnight minstrelsies,
And there a youth I always meet
Who passes me on wingéd feet.

He flies too fast for me to see
If he be lass or lad —
If lad he be, he beckons me
To fly too, and be mad;
And if a lass, across the night
She draws me to her far and bright.

There's frenzy in the leaping limb
When the wide world's asleep,
When all the mountain tops are dim
And all the valley's deep —
But what it means, or why I go,
Only the black magicians know.

O HAVE YOU LISTENED TO A HORN

O HAVE you listened to a horn
Sounding behind the night,
And have you leapt from bed at morn
To a fountain bright?

And have you tried the flowers of June,
And drunk the draught of brooks,
And have you eaten of the moon
In the forest nooks?

And have you known the old romance
Of following a star
Which makes the very dead to dance
After things afar?

THE MOON-BELOVED

THE poet lies by his silver sea
And loved of many moons is he.

The years go by, and Time assures
Continuance of his quaint amours;

For worlds may break and new ones be
As the poet lies by his ancient sea,

And many a star fall out of the sky
And many a wise man learn to die.

Whilst he, the moon's bright golden boy,
Rests well contented with moon-joy.

Loved of the moon and in her thrall,
The boy has naught, and so has all.

MOON SONG

KISS me with flowers and flagons,
Kiss me with clouds and your lips!
Kiss me the kiss of the dragons
In the foam of phantom ships;

Give me a lotus as token,
A poem, a flute, and a chime;
Kiss me with bells that are broken
In a dream that has conquered Time.

CAIN

THE afternoon was beautiful,
White clouds were on the hill,
Until I saw some little boys
Entering a mill.

And then, I saw but waiting shrouds
Where the white clouds had been;
I rubbed a blood stain off my hands,
Only to rub it in.

A BOOK ON ECONOMICS

BETWEEN long rows of figures lurk
Pictures of little girls at work;

And how poor women fade away
Page after page the margins say.

And in a note once in a while
I see death freeze a baby's smile.

THERE WAS A CITY WHERE SERPENTS
WRITHED

THERE was a city where serpents writhed
In tiles along old yellow ledges;
The swastikas curved ceaselessly
To and fro on the palace edges;
Rosettes of unknown copper flowers
Plaited the stone where the totem lowers;
And devil-masks and human faces
Were carven in the interspaces.

White temples there were wont to rise
Pyramidal beneath the skies.
The vanished priests and the kings ascended
With hieratic pomp and choir
To celebrate the cult of Fire.
They mounted a thousand steps and one;
They mounted, and knelt before the sun.

And in that city, beside the palace,
Underground rivers formed a pool.
There at the call of primal malice
Men threw maidens to a ghoul.
Milk-white maidens, weeping, bound,
They threw to rivers underground;
And the lecherous rivers bore them away
To lands beyond the reach of day.

Where is that city? In a green tide
The jungle beats the terrace wide,

Its streets beneath the tropic sun
Whiten and age; its life is done.

.

Priests still ascend, and maidens fall —
O is there any hope at all?

THE DISCOVERER

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

Runs through the grass,—
He hushes, he halts,
At sight of a lass;
And the moment unlooked for
Has come to pass.

He marks her as seemly,
Approves her as right;
She stands in the brook
Like the falling of light,
More golden than gold,
Whiter than white.

GIFTS

I MUST have many a golden moon
With mermaids and the sea,
And many a summer afternoon
With peacocks calling me,

And mottled pythons, too, to sleep
Along an onyx stair,
And gaze at me with vision deep,
Sluggish, unaware.

And that I may pursue the guile
Of the remote and strange,
Perhaps I'll need a crocodile,
A panther, for a change.

Caesar and Mephistopheles
Must sit with me at board,
My clown against the Devil's knees
Jesting with Caesar's sword.

But bring, when you have done with these,
Still further gifts to me —
A girl to love, a group of trees,
An infant on my knee.

YOU WERE DIVULGED FROM
FOREST SHADES

YOU were divulged from forest shade,
Who bore you but the vine?
It was the fountains that betrayed,
The stars that made you mine.

You, who enamoured of the moon
Linger to comfort me,
Whose eyes are brighter than the moon,
More agile than the sea.

Approaching softly with the dawn,
You sing your heart in words
Which make too poor the mating song
Of all the other birds.

A GIRL

ONE of life's pioneers
To whom God gave deep eyes
To see, and deep deep ears
To hear, and little veins
To penetrate, in the dark,
The spell-bound earth, and the heavens,
For news of all far beauty,
For tidings remote and lovely,
And creeping shadow-fears:
She dances through ancient forests
Winding her limbs in leaves
Her locks with the green nightshade:
She follows the spotted moth
Where the red flower appears
Under the beard of the live-oak;
She poises slender and topaz
At night by moonlight meres,
Marking the crystal barge
Of Paris, and piping the dirge
Of his beauty on the black bier;
She harkens to the low wind
Which weeps in the wood-edges,
Till the lancers of dawn ride up
With outflung crimson spears.

And then she comes *distrain*
Into the open day,
And wonders how to tell us
Her tidings far away.

CONFIDENCES

S AID the sun to the boy:
What I spake to thee to-day,
Go and whisper to a maiden
For thy joy.

A maple bent to him:
Between thee and thy lass,
All that passed between us
Bring to pass.

That I told to thee to-night,
Said the moon,
Speak thou softly
To her soon.

When he met his love,
The sun was in his face,
The moonlight and the leaves,
In his embrace.

AND THEN I SAW A MAID

THERE is a madness out of wonder born,
And out of madness comes a parching thirst;
So I who wandered stricken and forlorn
Was like a dreamer with his dream accursed.
And still I dreamt, and thought my heart would
burst
With the great wonder of this world to share.
And then I saw a maid, that she was fair.

And wonder now is budding like the rose,
And wonder now is waxing like the sea,
And what may come no necromancer knows,
For what has never been, at last shall be.
Eternal lips have leaned to whisper me
The song which makes a deathless world the way
Of decking lovers for their golden day.

THE MASKER

I FELL in love with you
 (Guessing that you were truth),
For you were masked and strange,
 And you were Youth.

And then when I was sure
 That love and youth were true,
I took the mask away
 And you were You.

But gazing on you still
 As hungry lovers do,
I saw that you were more
 Than Youth, or You;

You had a third Shape, too,
 Hidden for my surprise —
I looked, and saw it masked
 Within your eyes.

THE DAY THAT LOVE CAME DOWN
TO ME

WHEN Love bethought her to come down to me,
Now must I dress me well, said she;
Since he has only mortal wit,
I must give up my native tongue;
Since he has only mortal ears,
I must give up the songs I've sung
And take an earthly melody.
Since he has only mortal eyes
I must depart the stretchéd skies
And wear a mortal veil.
Leaving my home above me,
I'll be a girl that he may love me.
Lips I'll have that he may kiss,
Limbs that he may see.
For this let all my wonders pale
And dwindle to mortality.
Thus did my Love bethink her,
When she came down to me.

And yet my love could not disguise
Upon that day her deathless eyes.

THE LIBRARY

PETALS of flowers filling my vases,
Sealed in crystal state,
Millions of beautiful broken faces
In my volumes wait.

Here are the blossoms of vanishing lovers
Who once desired the sun:
Here are their beds and their tapestried covers,
Theirs, whose loves are done.

Some kissed on laurel, and some on the roses,
Some on the columbine;
And I gather them here ere love-time closes
Always to be mine.

SONG

POPPIES paramour the girls;
Lilies put the boys to bed;
Death is nothing else than this
After everything is said.

They are safe and shall not fade,
After everything is done,
Past the solace of the shade
Or the rescue of the sun.

THE CONSPIRACY

MY mother gave me to the moons,
And gave in turn the moons to me,
One midnight when she sang her tunes
To a baby on her knee.

I saw a kingdom in the sky;
And as I watched it move and shine,
I stretched my arms out with a cry,
Knowing the moon was mine.

Though I have seen the right turn wrong,
And common things grow strange,
O I have watched the moons too long
To be afraid of change.

THE CAUSE OF THIS I KNOW NOT

THE cause of this I know not,
Whither they went nor why,
But I still remember the laughter
And the bright eyes flashing by,
The day the girls were kissing
The boys who had to die.

I search in vain for the reason —
What does a poet know? —
Only that youth is lovely,
Only that youth must go;
And hearts are made to be broken
And love is always woe.

APRIL, 1917

THOUGH life returns with April's breath
And olden dreams are in her hair,
I feel the undertones of death
And there is blood upon the air.

DEAD MEN AND THE MOON

FORTUNATE they that take advice
Of dead men and the moon,
For dead men's bones are loaded dice,
The moon a bright doubloon;
And gamblers poor can stake a price
To make a Croesus swoon.

If in the fury of the play
The moon should disappear,
Our dead men clink behind the day
Until at dusk we peer
To see them heave her through the grey
And roll her glory near.

Florin of Dreams! O many a night
The dusty dice we shake;
The while the horror sinks in flight
And brighter grows the stake,—
The future that shall be, despite
What shadows undertake.

DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES

THEY say that *dead men tell no tales!*

Except of barges with red sails
And sailors mad for nightingales;

Except of jongleurs stretched at ease
Beside old highways through the trees;

Except of dying moons that break
The hearts of lads who lie awake;

Except of fortresses in shade
And heroes crumbled and betrayed.

But *dead men tell no tales*, they say!

Except old tales that burn away
The stifling tapestries of day;

Old tales of life, of love and hate,
Of time and space, and will and fate.

HIS DEATHS

HE bore the brunt of it so long
And carried it off with wine and song,
The neighbours paused and raised an eye
At hearing he had learned to die.

'Twas on a Friday that he died,
But Easter day his neighbours spied
His usual figure on the streets,
And one and all were white as sheets.

I died, said he, on Good Friday,
But someone rolled the stone away,
And I come back to you alive
To die tonight at half past five.

Monday at Babylon I fall,
And Tuesday on the Chinese wall,
Wednesday I die on the Thracian plain,
And Thursday evening at Compiègne.

Saturday, Sunday, Monday too,
I die and come to life anew;
Neighbours like Thomas look and touch
Amazed that I can live so much.

SONG OF THE SAND DUNE

COME, will you worship the moon with me?
There are six of us now by the side of the sea;
But seven's the number there ought to be
When the City of Death is in motion.

Here by the side of the sea is a space
Where forms that are silent may gaze on her face;
May move to the music, may gather the grace
Of the City that comes from the ocean.

THE CENTURION TO THE DREAMER

I ALSO had authority
And soldiers did my will,
So have compassion, Thou, on me
And remedy my ill.

The sun descends in smoke and flame,
Disastrous is the field,
And now I call upon Thy Name
That we, the dead, be healed.

My day is done; and to the full
Yearn I for life in Thee,
To Whom each dream is possible,
While this alone to me.

STAR-DUST

WHERE past Time the roads go far
Littered with dust of sun and star,
With sundered string and arrow sped
The angels of the Lord lie dead.

There lads of the impassioned races
Reflect the night skies in their faces;
Boys' eyes, boys' thoughts and bodies bright
Are changing to eternal light.

AGAINST THE RISING MOON

THE lake, the lad who stood alone
That midnight by the shore,
The full low-hanging orange moon —
The memory of a boy I loved
Who went away to war.

FOR RICHARD

A TRUE believer in the strange,
Building a Bagdad everywhere,
He so delighted in the change
Which comes of breathing different air,
That we whom he has left behind
Past any sight, past any sound,
Must wish that death for once were kind,
And he could tell what he has found.

The lad who lightly went to meet
The adventure of the far away,
Can he return by any street,
Has he no single word to say,—
And what of us, that we can fail
To listen so intent and well
Now when he has the strangest tale
Ever a mortal boy can tell?

FOR OLIVER

BRIGHT summers fade, and all bright faces too.

It seems but yesterday beside the lake

You stretched your brown length in the sun to
bake,

Or drove against the waves in your canoe.

That summer Shakespeare lived again in you.

You cried with him at Harfleur, Henry's speech,
"Once more, dear friends, once more into the
breach!"

Each day you went as Shakespeare's heroes do.

So when the bright world darkened with a war

You, the adventurer of dreams, aroused

As one who recognized his hour, and sped

Into the danger's very heart and core.

And now, farewell! They tell me you are housed

Among the deathless, whom they call the dead.

FOR ALAN

THE shapes of waking moments wearied him,
Heroic beauty stirred him as he slept;
And so he lived his youth, and so he crept
Back to old shadows beautiful and dim.
But at the call to arms his eyes were grim;
Dreams must be saved! So he, the dream adept,
Seeing young Death afar where Horror swept,
Leapt with a lover's trembling in each limb.
He sought her out he knew to be his maiden
And cried to her he flamed for as his bride.
The thundering guns were viols for his suit,
And iron shards his couch. The day was laden
With scent of deadly blossoms, and he died—
And now, wrapt with his maiden, he is mute.

THE DEATH WATCH

THE young moon early slipped away
And left the stars to watch with me
A shape that trailed his summer cloak
By the quiet sea.

And there beside the summer sea
Under a vastness star-beguiled,
Young Death heard all I had to say,
Everything, and smiled.

Though this was only yester-eve,
He seemed Someone I used to know,
Someone more close to me than life
In the long ago.

ON THE ROAD TO GANNETT HILL

ON the road to Gannett Hill
South of Robin's lumber mill,
Whispers come from waiting trees
Sudden murmurs on the breeze.

For the passing of the hours
Loses one in miles of flowers,
And each winding of the lane
Leads one back to trees again.

There the forest edges call
The most careful feet that fall,
And the ears forever hark
Invitations in the dark.

Invitations to return
To the breast of flower and fern,
Just as though the sweet and wild
Leaned to its forgetful child.

AFTER

IF I had had to face my grief
For those I love who now are dead,
Remembering a Stoic belief
Or what some ancient Cynic said,

From day to day I could not go
As one who goes from dark to light,
Nor could I know what now I know
Of Shapes that keep away from sight.

It was our lingerings to say
All sorts of things we could not tell,
Which made them sure they still might stay
Forever safe from a farewell.

THE BROW OF DUST

THIS dust was lilies long ago,
And precious living things;
It knew the shapes of loveliness,
It rose on beating wings.

Daughters of heaven, sons of earth,
Mix in it far and near,—
What wonder poets find the earth
A magic thing and dear,

And braid their words from very earth,
And fear not moth nor rust,
And place new garlands one by one
Upon the brow of dust.



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