

THE MUSIC OF EARTH



Bliss Carman

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The Music of Earth

THE MUSIC OF EARTH

BY BLISS CARMAN

With Foreword and Notes

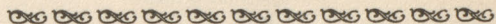
by

LORNE PIERCE



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FOREWORD



THE *Music of Earth* offers a selection of the choicest poems by Bliss Carman in the five *Pipes of Pan* volumes and *Sappho: One Hundred Lyrics*. To these are added several verses, his earliest and last, which now appear for the first time in a collection of his poetry.

Carman's first known poem was written in 1875, and the first to be published, "Ma Belle Canadienne", appeared in *The Week*, Toronto. His cousin, Charles G. D. Roberts, was the editor, and Goldwin Smith owner and publisher. Ten years later, 1893, his first book appeared, *Low Tide on Grand Pré*, the culmination of tentative writings appearing in periodicals and broadsheets.

Repeatedly urged to collect his verses, Carman definitely undertook the task. In Washington, at the home of Richard Hovey, he typed eight pages of titles and suggestions in February, 1893. From 161 poems he selected several groups. [i] *Nomina Mimae* he chose as the first book title, and listed forty poems, among them—"Marian Drury", "Marjorie Darrow", "Berris Yare", "Golden Rowan", "Louie Rae", "Nell Guy", "Marnie Mayilton", "Nancibel", "Lal of Kilrudden", and "Hilary Varen". Several of these had been privately printed. [ii] *In the Ardise Hills* contained twelve poems, none published. [iii] *The Battle of Sombre Field* had ten poems, "Hack and Hew", "Overlord", etc., as well as "Signal", "Tidings", and "The Trail of the Bugles" which had appeared in broadsheet form. [iv] *The Marring of Malyn: A Book of Sea Ballads* grouped the title poem, "The Yule Guest", "The Master of the Isles", "The Shadow Boatswain" and three others. [v] *Doomstead* had three poems only, including "The Man Child". [vi] *Olaf Hjörward: and Seven Wind Songs* joined but four, the title poem, "In the Heart of the Hills", "An Afterword" and "The Grave Tree". [vii] *The Country of Har* he planned on May 20, 1893: "A Pagan's Prayer", "The Faithless Lover", "The Faithful Love", "The White Gull" and "Overlord". [viii] *Daughters of Lilith* contained the ten listed above under *Nomina Mimae*. [ix] *Behind the Arras* listed nineteen poems, the majority of which appeared in book form under that title, in 1895. [x] *Songs from an Old Play* included "The Dustman" and "The Kingmaker" struck from the last list, also "Earth's Lyric", "Daisies", "In the Wings", "The Players" and ten others. [xi] *The Yule Guest: A Book of Sea Ballads*, had fourteen of the better known songs, "The Grave Digger", "The Master of the Scud", etc. [xii] *The Yule Guest* with but eight poems.

Out of these experiments grew: *Low Tide on Grand Pré* (1893, and tentatively entitled in MS, *Northland Lyrics*); *Songs from Vagabondia* (with Hovey), 1894; *Behind the Arras*, 1895; *Ballads of Lost Haven*, 1897; and *Ballads and Lyrics*, 1902. The *Pipes of Pan*, 1902-1905, and *Sappho*, 1905, marked the end of the great productive period of Bliss Carman's lyrical work.

L. P.

In Exile

I.

THE winter's dull unfathomed gray,
So near and wide against my door,
Rests in the lull of hollow day.
There flies not here across my floor
One home-bird shadow, through the door
There breaks no call, there leads no way.
Once more in exile ere I die,
O spirit-mother Acadie,
Stretch hands and take me back to thee,
When April comes and night goes by,
When snows melt down in Acadie
To swift blue runnels filled with sky.

There bring me home, though years be long,
When some still hour, unheard, at dawn
The sparrows come, and joy has gone
Across the morning, far along
My river-reaches in the dawn,
To pierce the golden spring with song!

II.

I do remember how the sun
In that North land when May was there,
Would drench the noon with (gladness), where
The great calm river-floods did run
Strewn by the golden willows there
With subtile germs of spring begun.

And I remember how we came
All day along the stream with calls
Of shy new-comers, till sunfall's
Untroubled quiet heard my name,
Under the low glad swallow-calls,
Divide the gradual dusk with flame

I weary homeward far o'er sea,
For there a little I would dream
Beside my quiet willow stream,
Once more at evening, it may be,
To hear his voice across my dream
Unbar the golden spring for me!

To One, Being in Sorrow

J. H. B.

DO you remember that one day
Of perfect blue
When years of pain had gone, and you,
Down the old way
The river-elms made cool at morn,
Went glad and free?
How ripe the world! How fair to see
The bending corn!

And with you through that summer air
He loved so well,
Went one whose eyes outsmiled to tell
How glad you were.
Now the dark years are heavy grown,
No less I deem,
He would be near with words of dream,
Loving his own.

Merely as if he took your hand
And said "Dear heart,
Let us two go awhile apart
Where Nature planned
The wide, sweet forest for a home,
Whereto at last
Her children, morning overpast,
Might turn and come."

The unweary stars are over it,
And all eve long
The thrushes give their souls in song
To fathom it.
Under the frail wood-flowers where dew
And calm abide,
The everlasting arms are wide
With love for you.

Overlord

πνεῦμα Κυρίου ἐπ' ἐμέ

LORD of the grass and hill,
Lord of the rain,
White Overlord of will,
Master of pain,

I who am dust and air
Blown through the halls of death,
Like a pale ghost of prayer,—
I am thy breath.

Lord of the blade and leaf,
Lord of the bloom,
Sheer Overlord of grief,
Master of doom,

Lonely as wind or snow,
Through the vague world and dim,
Vagrant and glad I go;
I am thy whim.

Lord of the storm and lull,
Lord of the sea,
I am thy broken gull,
Blown far alee.

Lord of the harvest dew,
Lord of the dawn,
Star of the paling blue
Darkling and gone,

Lost on the mountain height
Where the first winds are stirred,
Out of the wells of night
I am thy word.

Lord of the haunted hush,
Where raptures throng,
I am thy hermit thrush,
Ending no song.

Lord of the frost and cold,
Lord of the North,
When the red sun grows old
And day goes forth,

I shall put off this girth,—
Go glad and free,
Earth to my mother earth,
Spirit to thee.

A Shepherd in Lesbos

ALL night long my cabin roof resounded
With the mighty murmur of the rain;
All night long I heard the silver cohorts
Tramping down the valley to the plain;

All night long the ringing rain-drops volleyed
On the hollow drum-heads of the leaves
In a wild tattoo, while gusty hill-winds
Fifed The Young Pan's March about the eaves.

So all night within the mountain forest
Passed the shadowy forces at review;
And they bore me back to time's beginning
When the wonder of the world was new.

Then from out the gloom there came a vision
Of the beauty of the earth of old,—
The unclouded face and gracious figure,
Filleted with laurel and green-stoled,

Such as Daphne wore the day she wandered
Through the silent beech wood of the god,
When a sunray through the roof of shadows
Wheeled and stole behind her where she trod,—

When the loveliness of earth transfigured
By one touch of rapture grew divine,
Ere it fled before the unveiled presence
To indwell forever its green shrine.

Like a mist I saw the hair's gold glory,
The grave eyes, the childish scarlet lip,
And the rose-pink fervour that afforded
Soul the sheath to fill from tip to tip.

On her mouth she laid a warning finger,
And her slow calm enigmatic smile
Told me, ere she spoke, one-half the message;
Then I heard (my heart stood still the while),

"Mortal, wouldst thou know the maddening transport
No mere earth-born lover may attain,
Till some woodland deity hath loved him,
And her beauty mounted to his brain?

"Thenceforth he becomes, with her for mistress,
Master of the moods and minds of men,
Moulding as he will their deeds and daring,
All their follies open to his ken;

"Yet he is a wanderer forever,
Without respite seeking the unknown,
Wouldst thou leave the world for one who offers
But the beauty bounded by her zone?"

When I woke in golden morning dyeing
The dark valley and the purple hill,
Flushing at the doorway of the forest,
Flowered my mountain laurel, cool and still.

How I chose? Have ye not heard in Lesbos
Of a mad young shepherd by the shore,
Whose wild piping bids the traveller tarry
Some immortal sorrow to deplore?

On a morning by the river marges
Many a passer-by hath heard that strain,
Sweet and sad and strange and full of longing
As a bird-note through the purple rain.

In a maze the haunted music holds them
With a meaning past all guess or care;
With its magic note the lonely cadence
Swells and sinks and dies upon the air;

And they say, "It is the stricken shepherd
Whom the nymph's enchantment set astray,
And the spell of his bewildering vision
Holds him fast a lover from that day.

"His dark theme no mortal may interpret;
But forever when the wood-pipes blow,
Some remembered and mysterious echo
Calls us unresisting and we go."

A Young Pan's Prayer

O PIPES of Pan,
Make me a man,
As only your piercing music can!
When I set my lip
To your reedy lip,
And you feel the urging man-breath slip.

Through fibre and flake,
Bidding you wake
To the strange new being for beauty's sake,
I pray there be
Returned to me
The strength of the hills and the strength of the sea.

O river reed,
In whom the need
Of the journeying river once was freed,
As of old your will
Was the water's will,
To quiver and call, or sleep and be still.

So now anew
I breathe in you
The ardour no alchemy can subdue,
And add the dream,—
The immortal gleam
That never yet fell on meadow or stream.

I breathe and blow
On your dumb mouth so,
Till your lurking soul is alive and aglow.
Ah, breathe in me
The strength of the sea,
The calm of the hills and the strength of the sea!

Love, joy and fear,
From my faint heart here,
Shall melt in your cadence wild and clear.
With freedom and hope
I range and grope,
Till I find new stops in your earthly scope.

The pleading strain
Of pathos and pain,
The diminished chord and the lost refrain;
The piercing sigh,
The joyous cry,
The sense of what shall be by and by;

The grief untold
Out of man's heart old,
Which endures that another may still be bold;
The wise will
That forgoes self-will
And aspires to truth beyond trammel or ill;

Ambition unsure,
And the splendid lure
Of whim in his harlequin vestiture;
And the reach of sound
Into thought's profound;
All these I add to your power earth-bound;

But most, the awe
That perceives where law
Is revealed at last without fault or flaw,—
The touch of mind
That would search and find
The measure of beauty, the purpose of kind.

So with the fire
Of man's desire
Your notes shall outreach the mountain choir.
Brook, breeze and bird
Shall hear the Word,
And know 'tis their master they have heard.

And the lowly reed,
Whose only need
Was to sigh with the wind in the river weed,
Shall be heard as far
As from star to star,
Where Algol answers to Algebar.

For the soul must trace
Her wondrous race
By a seventh sense on the charts of space,
Till she come at last,
Through the vague and vast,
To her own heart's haven fixed and fast.

O pipes of Pan,
Whose music ran
Through the world ere ever my age began,
When I set my lip
To your woodland lip,
I pray some draft of your virtue slip

From each mellow throat,
As note by note,
A learner, I try for the secret rote,—
The rhythm and theme
That shall blend man's dream
Of perfection with nature's imperfect scheme!

Blow low, blow high,
Your haunting cry
For me, a wayfarer passing by;
Blow soft or keen,
I shall listen and lean
To catch what your whispered messages mean.

I shall hear, and heed
The voice of the reed,
And be glad of my kinsfolk's word, indeed.
I shall hearken and hear
Your untroubled cheer
From the earth's deep heart, serene and clear.

Blow cold and shrill,
As the wind from the hill,
I yet shall follow to learn your will;
Blow soft and warm,
As an April storm,
I shall listen and feel my soul take form.

Blow glad and strong,
As the grosbeak's song,
And I mount with you over hurt and wrong;
Blow little and thin,
As the cricket's din;
But my door is wide and I bid them in.

Blow, blow till there be
Inbreathed in me
Tinge of the loam and tang of the sea,—
A vagrom man,
Favoured of Pan,
Made out of ardour and sinew and tan.

With the seeing eye
For meadow and sky,
The want only beauty can satisfy,
And the wandering will,
The questing will,
The inquisitive, glad, unanxious will.

That must up and away
On the brave essay
Of the fair and far through the long sweet day,—
Of the fine and true,
The wondrous and new,
All the warm, radiant, bright world through.

Blow me the tune
Of the ripe red moon,
I shall sleep like a child by the roadside soon;
And the tune of the sun;
When our piping is done,
Lo, others shall finish what we have begun.

For the spell we cast
Shall prevail at last,—
When fault is forgotten and failure past,—
Prevail and restore
To earth once more
The lost enchantment, the wonder-lore.

And I must attain
To the road again,
With the wandering dust and the wandering rain,—
A sojourner too
My way pursue,
Who am spirit and substance, even as you.

Then give me the slow,
Large will to grow,
As your fellows down by the brookside grow.
Ah, blow, and breed
In my manhood's need
The long, sweet patience of flower and seed!

O pipes of Pan,
Make me a man,
As only your earthly music can;
And create in me
From your melody
The strength of the hills and the strength of the sea!

Lord of My Heart's Elation

LORD of my heart's elation,
Spirit of things unseen,
Be thou my aspiration
Consuming and serene!

Bear up, bear out, bear onward
This mortal soul alone,
To selfhood or oblivion,
Incredibly thine own,—

As the foamheads are loosened
And blown along the sea,
Or sink and merge forever
In that which bids them be.

I, too, must climb in wonder,
Uplift at thy command,—
Be one with my frail fellows
Beneath the wind's strong hand,

A fleet and shadowy column
Of dust or mountain rain,
To walk the earth a moment
And be dissolved again.

Be thou my exaltation
Or fortitude of mien,
Lord of the world's elation,
Thou breath of things unseen!

Spring Magic

THIS morning soft and brooding
In the warm April rain,
The doors of sense are opened
To set me free again.

I pass into the colour
And fragrance of the flowers,
And melt with every bird-cry
To haunt the mist-blue showers.

I thrill with crimson quince-buds
To raptures without name;
And in the yellow tulips
Burn with a pure, still flame.

I blend with the soft shadows
Of the young maple leaves,
And mingle in the rain-drops
That shine along the eaves.

I lapse among the grasses
That green the river's brink;
And with the shy wood creatures
Go down at need to drink.

I fade in silver music,
Whose fine unnumbered notes
The frogs and rainy fifers
Blow from their reedy throats.

No glory is too splendid
To house this soul of mine,
No tenement too lowly
To serve it for a shrine.

How is it we inherit
This marvel of new birth,
Sharing the ancient wonder
And miracle of earth?

What wisdom, what enchantment,
What magic of Green Fire,
Could make the dust and water
Obedient to desire?

Keep thou, by some large instinct,
Unwasted, fair and whole,
The innocence of nature,
The ardour of the soul;

And through the house of being
Thou art at liberty
To pass, enjoy, and linger,
Inviolat and free.

The Dancers of the Field

THE wind went combing through the grass,
The tall white daisies rocked and bowed;
Such ecstasy that never was
Possessed the shining multitude.

They turned their faces to the sun,
And danced the radiant morn away;
Of all his brave eye looked upon,
His daughters of delight were they.

And when the round and yellow moon,
Like a pale petal of the dusk
Blown loose, above the sea-rim shone,
They gave me no more need to ask

How immortality is named;
For I remembered like a dream
How ages since my spirit flamed
To wear their guise and dance with them.

The Green Dancers

WHEN the Green Dance of summer
Goes up the mountain clove,
There is another dancer
Who follows it for love.

To the sound of falling water,
Processional and slow
The children of the forest
With waving branches go;

And to the wilding music
Of winds that loiter by,
By trail, ravine and stream-bed,
Troop up against the sky.

The bending yellow birches,
The beeches cool and tall,
Slim ash and flowering locust,
My gipsy knows them all.

And light of foot she follows,
And light of heart gives heed,
Where in the blue-green chasm
The wraiths of mist are freed.

For when the young winged maples
Hang out their rosy pods,
She knows it is a message
From the primeval gods.

When tanager and cherry
Show scarlet in the sun,
She slips her careworn habit
To put their gladness on.

And where the chestnuts flower
Along the mountain-side,
She, too, assumes the vesture
And beauty of their pride.

She hears the freshening music
That ushers in their day,
When from the hemlock shadows
The silver thrushes play.

When the blue moth at noonday
Lies breathing with his wings,
She knows what piercing woodnote
Across the silence rings.

And when the winds of twilight
Flute up the ides of June,
Where Kaaterskill goes plainward
Under a virgin moon,

My wild, mysterious spirit
For joy cannot be still,
But with the woodland dancers
Must worship as they will.

From rocky ledge to summit
Where lead the dark-tressed firs,
Under the open starshine
Their festival is hers.

She sees the moonlit laurel
Spread through the misty gloom
(The soul of the wild forest
Veiled in a mesh of bloom).

Then to the lulling murmur
Of leaves, she, too, will rest,
Curtained by northern streamers
Upon some dark hill-crest.

And still, in glad procession
And solemn, bright array,
A dance of gold-green shadows
About her sleep will play;

Her signal from the frontier,
There is no bar nor toll
Nor dearth of joy forever
To stay the gypsy soul.

At the Yellow of the Leaf

THE falling leaf is at the door;
The autumn wind is on the hill;
Footsteps I have heard before
Loiter at my cabin sill.

Full of crimson and of gold
Is the morning in the leaves;
And a stillness pure and cold
Hangs about the frosty eaves.

The mysterious autumn haze
Steals across the blue ravine,
Like an Indian ghost that strays
Through his olden lost demesne.

Now the goldenrod invades
Every clearing in the hills;
The dry glow of August fades,
And the lonely cricket shrills.

Yes, by every trace and sign
The good roving days are here.
Mountain peak, and river line
Float the scarlet of the year.

Lovelier than ever now
Is the world I love so well.
Running water, waving bough,
And the bright wind's magic spell

Rouse the taint of migrant blood
With the fever of the road,—
Impulse older than the flood
Lurking in its last abode.

Did I once pursue your way,
Little brothers of the air,
Following the vernal ray?
Did I learn my roving there?

Was it on your long spring rides,
Little brothers of the sea,
In the dim and peopled tides,
That I learned this vagrancy?

Now the yellow of the leaf
Bids away by hill and plain,
I shall say good-bye to grief,
Wayfellow with joy again.

The glamour of the open door
Is on me, and I would be gone,—
Speak with truth or speak no more,
House with beauty or with none.

Great and splendid, near and far,
Lies the province of desire;
Love the only silver star
Its discoverers require.

I shall lack nor tent nor food,
Nor companion in the way,
For the kindly solitude
Will provide for me to-day.

Few enough have been my needs;
Fewer now they are to be;
Where the faintest follow leads,
There is heart's content for me.

Leave the bread upon the board,
Leave the book beside the chair;
With the murmur of the ford,
Light of spirit I shall fare.

Leave the latch-string in the door,
And the pile of logs to burn;
Others may be here before
I have leisure to return.

Pictor Ignotus

HE is a silent second self
Who travels with me in the road;
I share his lean-to in the hills,
He shares my modest town abode.

Under the roof-tree of the world
We keep the gipsy calendar,
As the revolving seasons rise
Above the tree-tops, star by star.

We watch the arctic days burn down
Upon the hearthstone of the sun,
And on the frozen river floors
The whispering snows awake and run.

Then in the still, portentous cold
Of a blue twilight, deep and large,
We see the northern bonfires lit
Along the world's abysmal marge.

He watches, with a love untired,
The white sea-combers race to shore
Below the mossers' purple huts,
When April goes from door to door.

He haunts the mountain trails that wind
To sudden outlooks from grey crags,
When marches up the blue ravine
September with her crimson flags.

The wonder of an ancient awe
Takes hold upon him when he sees,
In the cold autumn dusk arise
Orion and the Pleiades;

Or when along the southern rim
Of the mysterious summer night
He marks, above the sleeping world,
Antares with his scarlet light.

The creamy shadow-fretted streets
Of some small Caribbean town,
Where through the soft wash of the trades
The brassy tropic moon looks down;

The palm-trees whispering to the blue
That surfs along the coral key;
The brilliant shining droves that fleet
Through the bright gardens of the sea.

The crimson-boled Floridian pines
Glaring in sunset, where they stand
Lifting their sparse, monotonous lines
Out of the pink and purple sand;

The racing Fundy tides that brim
The level dikes; the orchards there;
And the slow cattle moving through
That marvellous Acadian air;

The city of the flowery squares,
With the Potomac by her door;
The monument that takes the light
Of evening by the river shore;

The city of the Gothic arch,
That overlooks a wide green plain
From her grey churches, and beholds
The silver ribbon of the Seine;

The Indian in his birch canoe,
The flower-seller in Cheapside;
Wherever in the wide round world
The Likeness and the Word abide;

He scans and loves the human book,
With that reserved and tranquil eye
That watched among the autumn hills
The golden leisured pomp go by.

What wonder, since with lavish hand
Kind earth has given him her all
Of love and beauty, he should be
A smiling, thriftless prodigal!

Ephemeron

AH, brother, it is bitter cold in here
This time of year!
December is a sorry month indeed
For your frail August breed.

I find you numb this morning on the pane,
Searching in vain
A little warmth to thaw those airy vans,
Arrested in their plans.

I breathe on you; and lo, with lurking might
Those members slight
Revive and stir; the little human breath
Dissolves their frosty death.

You trim those quick antennae as of old,
Forget the cold,
And spread those stiffened sails once more to dare
The elemental air.

Does that thin deep, unmarinered and blue,
Come back to you,
Dreaming of ports whose bearing you have lost,
Where cruised no pirate frost?

Ah, shipmate, there'll be two of us some night,
In ghostly plight,
In cheerless latitudes beyond renown,
When the long frost shuts down.

What if that day, in unexpected guise,
Strong, kind, and wise,
Above me should the great Befriender bow,
As I above you now,—

Reset the ruined time-lock of the heart,
And bid it start,
And every frost-bound joint and valve restore
To supple play once more!

The Heretic

ONE day as I sat and suffered
A long discourse upon sin,
At the door of my heart I listened,
And heard this speech within.

One whisper of the Holy Ghost
Outweighs for me a thousand tomes;
And I must heed that private word,
Not Plato's, Swedenborg's, nor Rome's.

The voice of beauty and of power
Which came to the beloved John,
In age upon his lonely isle,
That voice I will obey, or none.

Let not tradition fill my ears
With prate of evil and of good,
Nor superstition cloak my sight
Of beauty with a bigot's hood.

Give me the freedom of the earth,
The leisure of the light and air,
That this enduring soul some part
Of their serenity may share!

The word that lifts the purple shaft
Of crocus and of hyacinth
Is more to me than platitudes
Rethundering from groin and plinth.

And at the first clear, careless strain
Poured from a woodbird's silver throat,
I have forgotten all the lore
The preacher bade me get by rote.

Beyond the shadow of the porch
I hear the wind among the trees,
The river babbling in the clove,
And that great sound that is the sea's.

Let me have brook and flower and bird
For counsellors, that I may learn
The very accent of their tongue,
And its least syllable discern.

For I, my brother, so would live
That I may keep the elder law
Of beauty and of certitude,
Of daring love and blameless awe.

Be others worthy to receive
The naked messages of God;
I am content to find their trace
Among the people of the sod.

The gold-voiced dwellers of the wood
Flute up the morning as I pass;
And in the dusk I lay me down
With star-eyed children of the grass.

I hearken for the winds of spring,
And haunt the marge of swamp and stream,
Till in the April night I hear
The revelation of the dream.

I listen when the orioles
Come up the earth with early June,
And the old apple-orchards spread
Their odorous glories to the moon.

So I would keep my natural days,
By sunlit sea, by moonlit hill,
With the dark beauty of the earth
Enchanted and enraptured still.

After School

WHEN all my lessons have been learned,
And the last year at school is done,
I shall put up my books and games;
"Good-bye, my fellows, every one!"

The dusty road will not seem long,
Nor twilight lonely, nor forlorn
The everlasting whippoorwills
That lead me back where I was born.

And there beside the open door,
In a large country dim and cool,
Her waiting smile shall hear at last,
"Mother, I am come home from school."

Songs of the Sea Children

VI

Love, by that loosened hair,
Well now I know
Where the lost Lilith went
So long ago.

Love, by those starry eyes
I understand
How the sea maidens lure
Mortals from land.

Love, by that welling laugh
Joy claims its own
Sea-born and wind-wayward
Child of the sun.

VIII

Under the greening willow
Wanders a golden cry;
Oriole April up in the world
With morning day goes by.

Out of the virgin quiet
Like an awakening sigh,
With the wild, wild heart forever
A journeyer am I.

We are the wind's own brothers,
Sorrow and joy and I;
But thou art the hope of morrows
That shall be by and by.

XV

O purple-black are the wet quince boughs,
Where the buds begin to burn!
And fair enough is Spring's new house,
Made fresh for Love's return.

She has taken him in and locked the door,
And thrown away the key.
When Free-foot finds his Rove-no-more,
What use is liberty?

XXII

Eyes like the blue-green
Shine of the sea,
Where the swift shadows run,
Where soul is free.

Shimmer of sunlight,
Shadow of gloom,
Wayward as ecstasy,
Solemn as doom.

Triumph, transplendour,
Joy through and through,
Till the soul wonders what
Sense next may do.

Hair like the blown grass
Brown on the hill,
Where the wide wandering
Wind has his will.

Spirit, the nomad,
Whither to wend,
Knows not and fears not,
To the world's end.

Seadusk or Dawnbright
Name the earth's child,
Like the wind, like the sea,
Virginal wild.

XXVIII

In the cool of dawn I rose;
Life lay there from hill to hill
In the core of a blue pearl,
As it seemed, so deep and still.

Not a word the mountains said
Of the day that was to be,
As I crossed them, till you came
At the sunrise back with me.

Then we heard the whitethroat sing,
And the world was left behind.
A new paradise arose
Out of his untarnished mind.

The brown road lay through the wood,
And the forest floor was spread
For our footing with the fern,
And the cornel berries red.

There the woodland rivers sang;
Not a sorrow touched their glee,
Dancing up the yellow sun,
From the purple mountain sea.

Towns and turbulence and fame
Where as fabled things that lay
Through the gateway of the notch,
Long ago and far away.

There we loitered and went on,
Where the roadside berries grew;
Earth with all its joy once more
Was made over for us two.

And at last a meaning filled
The round morning fair and good,
Waited for a thousand years,
There was no more solitude.

XLIII

Berrybrown, Berrybrown, give me your hands!
Here in the bracken shade will we not well
Wring the warm summer world dry of its honey?
God made a heaven before He made hell.

Berrybrown, Berrybrown, give me your eyes;
Let their shy quivering rapture and deep
Melt as they merge in mine melting above them!
God made surrender before He made sleep.

Berrybrown, Berrybrown, give me your mouth,
Till all is done 'twixt a breath and a breath!
Naught shall undo the one joy-deed for ever,
God made desire before He made death.

LV

You old men with frosty beards,
I am wiser than you all;
I have seen a fairer page
Than Belshazzar's wall.

You young men with scornful lips,
I am stronger than you all;
I have sown the Cadmian field
Where no shadows fall.

For a woman yesterday
Loved me, body, soul, and all.
Saints will lift their crowns to me
At the Judgment Call.

LXXIX

Her hair was crocus yellow,
 Her eyes were crocus blue,
 Her body was the only gate
 Of paradise I knew.

Her hands were velvet raptures,
 Her mouth a velvet bliss;
 Not Lilith in the garden had
 So wonderful a kiss.

To know her was to banish
 Reason for once and all.
 Her voice was like a silver door
 Set in a scarlet wall.

For when she said, "I love you,"
 It was as when the tide
 Yearns for the naked moonlight,
 An unreluctant bride.

And when she said, "Ah, leave me,"
 It was as when the sea
 Sighs at the ebb, or a spent wind
 Dies in the aspen tree.

XCV

Up and up, they all come up
 Out of the noon together,
 The flowering sails on the slope of the sea
 In the white spring weather.

In and in, they all draw in—
 A streaming flock together—
 From the lone and monstrous waste of sea
 By a single tether.

Home, come home, they all make home
 In a racing fleet together—
 The little white wishes I sent to you
 In the golden weather.

CVI

Over the sea is a scarlet cloud,
And over the cloud the sun.
And over my heart is a shining hope,
And over that, Yvonne.

CXV

I do not long for fame,
Nor triumph, nor trumpets of praise;
I only wish my name
To endure in the coming days.

When men say, musing at times,
With smiling speech and slow,
"He was a maker of rhymes
Yvonne loved long ago!"

The Keepers of Silence

MY hillside garden half-way up
The mountains from the purple sea,
Beholds the pomp of days go by
In summer's gorgeous pageantry.

I watch the shadows of the clouds
Stream over Grand Pré in the sun,
And the white fog seethe up and spill
Over the rim of Blomidon.

For past the mountains to the North,
Like a great caldron of the tides,
Is Fundy, boiling round their base,
And ever fuming up their sides.

Yet here within my valley world
No breath of all that tumult stirs;
The little orchards sleep in peace;
Forever dream the dark blue firs.

And while far up the gorges sweep
The silver legions of the showers,
I have communion with the grass
And conversation with the flowers.

More wonderful than human speech
Their dialect of silence is,
The simple Dorian of the fields.
So full of homely subtleties.

When the dark pansies nod to say
Good morning to the marigolds,
Their velvet taciturnity
Reveals as much as it withholds.

I always half expect to hear
Some hint of what they mean to do;
But never is their fine reserve
Betrayed beyond a smile or two.

Yet very well at times I seem
To understand their reticence,
And so, long since, I came to love
My little brothers by the fence.

Perhaps some August afternoon,
When earth is only half-aware,
They will unlock their heart for once,—
How sad if I should not be there!

The Deep Hollow Road

COOL in the summer mountain's heart,
It lies in dim mysterious shade,
Left of the highway turning in
With grassy rut and easy grade.

The marshes and the sea behind,
The solemn fir-blue hills before;
Here is the inn for Heavy-heart
And this is weary Free-foot's door.

O fellows, I have known it long;
For joy of life turn in with me;
We bivouac with peace to-night,
And good-bye to the brawling sea.

You hear? That's Master Thrush. He knows
The voluntaries fit for June,
And when to falter on the flute
In the satiety of noon.

A mile or two we follow in
This rosy streak through forest gloom,
Then for the ample orchard slopes
And all the earth one snowy bloom!

At the Great Release

WHEN the black horses from the house of Dis
Stop at my door and the dread charioteer
Knocks at my portal, summoning me to go
On the far solitary unknown way
Where all the race of men fare and are lost,
Fleeting and numerous as the autumnal leaves
Before the wind in Lesbos of the Isles;

Though a chill draught of fear may quell my soul
And dim my spirit like a flickering lamp
In the great gusty hall of some old king,
Only one mordant unassuaged regret,
One passionate eternal human grief,
Would wring my heart with bitterness and tears
And set the mask of sorrow on my face.

Not youth, nor early fame, nor pleasant days,
Nor flutes, nor roses, nor the taste of wine,
Nor sweet companions of the idle hour
Who brought me tender joys, nor the glad sound
Of children's voices playing in the dusk;
All these I could forget and bid good-bye
And pass to my oblivion nor repine.

Not the green woods that I so dearly love,
Nor summer hills in their serenity,
Nor the great sea mystic and musical,
Nor drone of insects, nor the call of birds,
Nor soft spring flowers, nor the wintry stars;
To all the lovely earth that was my home
Smiling and valiant I could say farewell.

But not, oh, not to one strong little hand,
To one droll mouth brimming with witty words,
Nor ever to the unevasive eyes
Where dwell the light and sweetness of the world
With all the sapphire sparkle of the sea!
Ah, Destiny, against whose knees we kneel!
With prayer at evening, spare me this one woe!

Morning and Evening

WHEN the morning wind comes up the mountain,
Stirring all the beech-groves of the valley,
And, before the paling stars have vanished,
The first tawny thrush disturbs the twilight
With his reed-pipe, eerie calm and golden—
The earth-music marvellous and olden—

Then good fortune enters at my doorway,
And my heart receives the guest called Gladness;
For I know it is that day of summer
When I shall behold your face ere nightfall,
And this earth, as never yet in story,
Ledge to hill-crest dyed in purple glory.

When the evening breath draws down the valley,
And the clove is full of dark blue shadows
Moving on the mountain-wall, just silvered
By the large moon lifted o'er the earth-rim,
At the moment of transported being,
When soul gathers what the eyes are seeing,

Sense is parted like a melted rain-mist,
And our mortal spirits run together,
Saying, "O incomparable comrade!"
Saying, "O my lover, how good love is!"
Then the twilight falls; the hill-wind hushes;
Note by note once more the cool-voiced thrushes.

The Players

WE are the players of a play
As old as earth,
Between the wings of night and day,
With tears and mirth.

There is no record of the land
From whence it came,
No legend of the playwright's hand,
No bruited fame

Of those who for the piece were cast
On that first night,
When God drew up His curtain vast
And there was light.

Before our eyes as we come on,
From age to age,
Flare up the footlights of the dawn
On this round stage.

In front, unknown, beyond the glare
Vague shadows loom;
And sounds like muttering winds are there
Foreboding doom.

Yet wistfully we keep the boards;
And as we mend
The blundering forgotten words,
Hope to the end

To hear the storm-beat of applause
Fill our desire
When the dark Prompter gives us pause,
And we retire.

In a Far Country

IN a land that is little traversed,
Beyond the news of the town,
There lies a delectable Kingdom
Where the crimson sun goes down,

The province of fruitlands and flowers
And colour and sea-sounds and love.
If you were queen of that country,
And I were the king thereof,

We should tread upon scarlet poppies,
And be glad the long day through,
Where the bluest skies in the world
Rest upon hills of blue.

We should wander the slopes of the mountains
With the wind and the nomad bee,
And watch the white sails on the sea-rim
Come up from the curving sea.

We should watch from the sides of the valleys
The caravans of the rain,
In trappings of purple and silver,
Go by on the far-off plain.

And they all should be freighted with treasure,
The vision that gladdens the eye,
The beauty that betters the spirit
To sustain it by and by.

We should hear the larks' fine field-notes
Breaking in bubbly swells,
As if from their rocking steeples
The lilies were ringing their bells;

We should hear invisible fingers
Play on the strings of the pines
The broken measure whose motive
Only a lover divines;

The music of Earth, the enchantress,
The cadence that dwells in the heart
Against the time of oblivion,
To bid it remember and start.

And nothing should make us unhappy,
And no one should make us afraid,
For we should be royal lovers
In the land where this plot is laid.

And with night on the almond orchards
We should lie where warm winds creep,
Under the starry tent-cloth
Hearing the footfall of Sleep.

The Least of Love

ONLY let one fair, frail woman
Mourn for me when I am dead,—
World, withhold your best of praises!
There are better things instead.

Shall the little fame concern me,
Or the triumph of the years,
When I keep the mighty silence,
Through the falling of her tears?

I shall heed not, though 'twere April
And my field-larks all returned,
When her lips upon these eyelids
One last popped kiss have burned.

Painted hills shall not allure me,
Mirrored in the painted stream;
Having loved them, I shall leave them,
Busy with the vaster dream.

Only let one dear, dark woman
Mourn for me when I am dead,
I shall be content with beauty
And the dust above my head.

Yet when I shall make the journey
From these earthly dear abodes,
I have four things to remember
At the Crossing of the Roads.

How her hand was like a tea-rose;
And her low voice like the South;
Her soft eyes were tarns of sable;
A red poppy was her mouth.

Only let one sweet, frail woman
Mourn for me when I am dead,—
Gently for her gentlest lover,—
More than all will have been said.

Be my requiem the rain-wind;
And my immortality
But the lifetime of one heartache
By the unremembering sea!

Sappho Lyrics

I

Cyprus, Paphos, or Panormus
May detain thee with their splendour
Of oblations on thine altars,
O imperial Aphrodite.

Yet do thou regard, with pity
For a nameless child of passion,
This small unfrequented valley
By the sea, O sea-born mother.

XXIII

I loved thee, Atthis, in the long ago,
When the great oleanders were in flower
In the broad herded meadows full of sun.
And we would often at the fall of dusk
Wander together by the silver stream,
When the soft grass-heads were all wet with dew
And purple-misted in the fading light.

And joy I knew and sorrow at thy voice,
And the superb magnificence of love,—
The loneliness that saddens solitude,
And the sweet speech that makes it durable,—
The bitter longing and the keen desire,
The sweet companionship through quiet days
In the slow ample beauty of the world,
And the unutterable glad release
Within the temple of the holy night.
O Atthis, how I loved thee long ago
In that fair perished summer by the sea!

XXV

It was summer when I found you
In the meadow long ago,
And the golden vetch was growing
By the shore.

Did we falter when love took us
With a gust of great desire?
Does the barley bid the wind wait
In his course?

XXVIII

With your head thrown backward
In my arm's safe hollow,
And your face all rosy
With the mounting fervour;

While the grave eyes greaten
With the wise new wonder,
Swimming in a love-mist
Like the haze of Autumn;

From that throat, the throbbing
Nightingale's for pleading,
Wayward, soft, and welling
Inarticulate love-notes,

Come the words that bubble
Up through broken laughter,
Sweeter than spring-water,
"Gods, I am so happy!"

XXXIV

“Who was Atthis?” men shall ask,
When the world is old, and time
Has accomplished without haste
The strange destiny of men.

Haply in that far-off age
One shall find these silver songs,
With their human freight, and guess
What a lover Sappho was.

LIV

How soon will all my lovely days be over,
And I no more be found beneath the sun,—
Neither beside the many-murmuring sea,
Nor where the plain-winds whisper to the reeds,
Nor in the tall beech-woods among the hills
Where roam the bright-lipped Oreads, nor along
The pasture-sides where berry-pickers stray
And harmless shepherds pipe their sheep to fold!

For I am eager, and the flame of life
Burns quickly in the fragile lamp of clay.
Passion and love and longing and hot tears
Consume this mortal Sappho, and too soon
A great wind from the dark will blow upon me,
And I be no more found in the fair world,
For all the search of the revolving moon
And patient shine of everlasting stars.

LX

When I have departed,
Say but this behind me,
“Love was all her wisdom,
All her care.

“Well she kept love’s secret,—
Dared and never faltered,—
Laughed and never doubted
Love would win.

“Let the world’s rough triumph
Trample by above her,
She is safe forever
From all harm.

“In a land that knows not
Bitterness nor sorrow,
She has found out all
Of truth at last.”

LXVI

What the west wind whispers
At the end of summer,
When the barley harvest
Ripens to the sickle,
Who can tell?

What means the fine music
Of the dry cicada,
Through the long noon hours
Of the autumn stillness,
Who can say?

LXXXII

Over the roofs the honey-coloured moon,
With purple shadows on the silver grass,

And the warm south-wind on the curving sea,
While we two, lovers past all turmoil now,

Watch from the window the white sails come in,
Bearing what unknown ventures safe to port!

So falls the hour of twilight and of love
With wizardry to loose the hearts of men,

And there is nothing more in this great world
Than thou and I, and the blue dome of dusk.

Forever and Forever

FROM the sea-light of Yarmouth to the headlands of Bras
d'Or,
From the swinging tides of Fundy to the wild Southern Shore,
The Gaspereau Valley, the dikes of Grand Pré,
Farms and mines and fishing fleets, river, lake and bay,
Lunenburg and Halifax and lovely Margaree,
Is all the Land of Acadie, the Sweetheart of the Sea.

Sweet beyond forgetting with mayflowers in Spring,
At rest in hazy August when the busy crickets sing,
Rich when Autumn splendor dyes many a wooded vale
Where romance still lingers beside the Glory Trail,—
In Louisburg, Shelburne, and Shubenacadie,—
Bides the Darling of the Snowflakes, the Sweetheart of the
Sea.

In days of wood and sail, from her teeming yards and slips
Down across the world and back went her trading ships.
Still from all her harbors the tramps and liners ply,
Trailing from every sea-lane their smoke upon the sky,
And still her sons and lovers, in whatever port they be,
Are heart-fast forever with the Sweetheart of the Sea.

On a day in early June when a young lad was I,
I was caught in a charm like a wild bird's cry,
With the sorcery of Summer on the marshes by the tide,
And apple blossoms snowing down by every roadside.
'Twas the glory of the world laid a spell on me,
And I gave my heart away to the Sweetheart of the Sea.

Then I heard a voice saying, "You shall walk alone,
You shall have nothing that you can call your own,
But a handful of apples. That will be enough,
For you shall have everything. You shall have love.
From the tyranny of riches you shall go foot-free,
Given all to beauty and the Sweetheart of the Sea."

And so it came about the years were blown away,
Light as flying leaves or the fog upon the bay,
While I must seek my fortune over many lands,
A follower of dreams with nothing in his hands.
But always in his mind the cry from the sea
And the look of Heaven's glory on the face of Acadie.

Till I said upon a day, "I must go where I was born,
To the Abanaki Country against the gates of morn,
The marshes will be red now beside the blue streams,
And the orchards all golden in the land of my dreams.
I shall hear again, like an Angelus for me,
The soft sound of ox-bells in valleys by the sea.

"Along the quiet roads the yoked heads will go
Swaying through the morning, rhythmical and slow.
I shall reach trail's end among the apple trees
In the lee of Blomidon sheltered and at peace,—
Where time hardly passes and true things be
Treasured unforgotten in the heart of Acadie."

So it was I learned, with my head upon her breast
To crooning little soft words that love knows best,
That soul of enchantment had never let me go
From her dear heart's keeping with her windflowers under
snow
What were fame or fortune any more to me,
Hand-fast forever with the Sweetheart of the Sea!

May in the Selkirks

UP the Illecillewaet and down the Yellow Beaver,
Over skyward passes, where snow-peaks touch the blue;
Shining silver rivers dropping down from heaven,
With the spring-call of the wilderness waking life anew.
Far, gleaming glaciers, like the gates of glory,
And the hosts in new green marching up the slopes,
Organ-voiced torrents singing through the gorges,
Songs for the high trail and visions for our hopes.
Hints of light supernal on the rocky ledges,
Echoes of wild music from the valley floors,
And the tall evergreens watching at the threshold—
Keeping the silence of the Lord of out-of-doors.
Balm out of paradise blown across the canyons,
From the balsam-poplar buds and bronze leaves uncurled,
Soul in her wonder lifts the new magnificat,
Alight with the rapture of the morning of the world.

MUSIC OF EARTH

NOTES

- IN EXILE: Written Feb. 20, 1888, during Carman's Harvard days.
- TO ONE, BEING IN SORROW: Written Feb. 9, 1887, at Fredericton, N.B.
- FROM THE BOOK OF MYTHS: Published Nov., 1902 (Boston), and dedicated to Charles G. D. Roberts.
- OVERLORD: Appeared in broadsheet with four other poems, New York, 1892; written Aug. 7, 1892.
- A SHEPHERD IN LESBOS: *Ainslee's Magazine*, June, 1903; written in Ghost House, Twilight Park.
- FROM THE GREEN BOOK OF THE BARDS: Published May, 1903 (Boston), and dedicated to Edward Nathan Gibbs.
- LORD OF MY HEART'S ELATION: First published as "A Pagan's Prayer", in *The Outlook*, N.Y., Sept. 22, 1894; written at the Hovey home in Washington, Aug. 26, 1894.
- THE DANCERS OF THE FIELD: Written at the Meteyard's, Scituate, Mass.
- THE GREEN DANCERS: *Scribner's*, Aug., 1900; written in the Adirondacks, July 7, 1899.
- AT THE YELLOW OF THE LEAF: *Harper's*, Nov., 1900; written Aug. 26, 1899.
- PICTOR IGNOTUS: *Cosmopolitan*, Jan., 1901; written at New Canaan, Conn., Aug. 26, 1899.
- EPHEMERON: *Boston Transcript*, Feb. 13, 1897; written Nov. 21, 1896.
- THE HERETIC: *Century*, Aug., 1902; written at "Sunshine House", New Canaan, Conn., March 16, 1901.
- AFTER SCHOOL: *Harper's Bazaar*, Aug. 4, 1894; written in New York, March 10, 1894.
- SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN: Published, Boston, October, 1903. Carman began this series in the Adirondacks, July, 1893.
- VI: *Independent*, Oct. 11, 1894; written at "Kingscroft", Windsor, N.S., Sept. 19, 1893. Number 38 in original MS.
- VIII: *Independent*, Oct. 25, 1894; written in Boston, April 20, 1894. Number 56 in original MS.
- XV: *Independent*, Nov. 1, 1894.
- XXII: *Independent*, Dec. 20, 1894; written at "Kingscroft", Sept. 23, 1893. Number 6 in original MS.
- XXVIII: *Independent*, Jan. 3, 1895; written at the Hovey home in Washington, Jan. 10, 1894. Number 45 in original MS.
- XLIII: *Town Topics*, April 18, 1895; written in the Adirondacks, July 16, 1893. Number 2 in original MS. Peter McArthur edited *Town Topics*.
- LV: *Town Topics*, June 11, 1896; written May 27, 1895.
- LXXIX: *Town Topics*, June 27, 1896, as "A Lyric"; written Jan. 1, 1899.
- CVI: *Frank Leslie's*, Oct., 1902, as "Yvonne".
- CXV: *Smart Set*, Sept., 1902, as "Icelandic Lyric, VIII".
- SONGS FROM A NORTHERN GARDEN: Published, Boston, August, 1904.
- THE KEEPERS OF SILENCE: Published as "A Hillside Garden"; written at Boston, Aug. 26, 1896. (Verse 1, line 2, "mountain" altered to "hillside"; verse 4, line 3, "litttle" to "quiet".)

- THE DEEP-HOLLOW ROAD: First appeared in *Ninety-Six*, a calendar, Toronto, Dec., 1896; written at Wolfville, N.S., Feb. 18, 1895.
- FROM THE BOOK OF VALENTINES: Published, Boston, 1905.
- AT THE GREAT RELEASE: *Collier's*, May 28, 1904, as "Phaon to Sappho"; written Jan. 21, 1904, for Mary Perry King.
- MORNING AND EVENING: *Outlook*, New York, March 7, 1903.
- THE PLAYERS: *Fair Topics*, May 7, 1892; written for The Actors' Fair, Madison Square Garden. (Line 35, read "smug" for "snug").
- IN A FAR COUNTRY: *The Pilgrim*, June, 1903; written March 19, 1902. (The title of *The Music of Earth* is taken from verse 9.)
- THE LEAST OF LOVE: *Town Topics*, Nov. 26, 1896.
- SAPPHO: ONE HUNDRED LYRICS: "These hundred lyrics, adaptations, renderings and imitations of the fragments of Sappho were begun in June, 1902, and finished in December of the same year." (A note by Carman.) They were begun at the suggestion of Mitchell Kennerley, who gave Carman a copy of H. T. Wharton's *Sappho* (1895). He began "A Second Book of Sappho" in New York, June, 1903, and continued at Ghost House, Twilight Park, during July, August and September, and at Scituate, Mass., in September and October of the same year. Ten of these poems were published, between 1903 and 1910, in *Everybody's*, *Smart Set*, *The Reader*, *The Booklover* and *The Forum*. Kennerley was editor of the latter. Direct references to Wharton's *Sappho* indicate those fragments which Carman "translated", while the others have no actual original in Sappho, and are merely suggested by the poem or written immediately after his first adaptation.
- I: *The Reader*, New York, Nov., 1902. Written at Ghost House, June, 1902. Wharton's No. 6.
- XXIII: Written July 17, at Ghost House. Last word, line 15, originally "repose". Wharton's No. 33.
- XXV: Written July 5, at Ghost House, sent next day to Mitchell Kennerley. Wharton's No. 30.
- XXVIII: Written, Sept. 29, at 22 West 9th Street, New York. Suggested by Wharton's No. 137. Twenty-six lyrics were suggested by this fragment.
- XXXIV: Written July 20, at Ghost House. Suggested by Wharton's No. 48.
- LIV: Written Dec. 13, at 22 West 9th Street. Last two lines transposed. One of fourteen lyrics suggested by Wharton's No. 11.
- LX: Written Oct. 13, at 129 South 15th Street, New York. Suggested by Wharton's No. 137. Lines 6 and 7 and the last two were re-written.
- LXVI: One of fifteen lyrics suggested by Wharton's No. 44. Last word, line 1, "sings" altered to "whispers".
- LXXXII: Written Oct. 14, at 129 South 15th Street, New York. Suggested by Wharton's No. 137.
- FOREVER AND FOREVER: One of Carman's last poems. Published in *The Legion Book*, September, 1929, on the invitation of the Prince of Wales. Cassell & Co., Ltd., London, England.
- MAY IN THE SELKIRKS: The last poem written by Carman. Composed when returning home from the Pacific coast, and sent to friends in Halifax. Published in the Canadian press the day after his death at New Canaan, June 8, 1929.

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