

The RYERSON
POETRY
CHAP-BOOKS



The Sweet o' the Year
AND OTHER POEMS

by

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

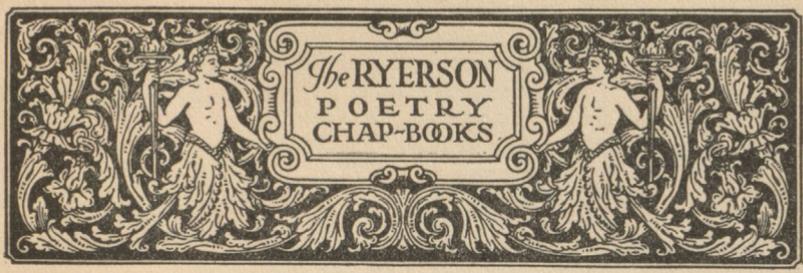
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THE SWEET O' THE YEAR

THE UPLAND hills are green again;
 The river runs serene again;
 All down the miles
 Of orchard aisles
 The pink-lip blooms are seen again;
 To garden close
 And dooryard plot
 Come back the rose
 And bergamot.

One

The ardent blue leans near again;
The far-flown swallow is here again;
 To his thorn-bush
 Returns the thrush,
And the painted-wings appear again.
 In young surprise
 The meadows run
 All starry eyes
 To meet the sun.

Warm runs young blood in the veins again,
And warm loves flood in the rains again.
 Earth, all aflush
 With the fecund rush,
To her Heart's Desire attains again;
 While stars outbeat
 The exultant word—
 "Death's in defeat,
 And Love is Lord."



THE UNKOWN CITY

THERE lies a city inaccessible,
Where the dead dreamers dwell.

Abrupt and blue, with many a high ravine
And soaring bridge half seen,
With many an iris cloud that comes and goes
Over the ancient snows,
The imminent hills environ it, and hold
Its portals from of old,
That grief invade not, weariness, nor war,
Nor anguish evermore.

White-walled and jettied on the peacock tide,
With domes and towers enskied,
Its battlements and balconies one sheen
Of ever-living green,
It hears the happy dreamers turning home
Slow-oared across the foam.

Cool are its streets with waters musical
And fountains' shadowy fall.
With orange and anemone and rose,
And every flower that blows
Of magic scent or unimagined dye,
Its gardens shine and sigh.
Its chambers, memoried with old romance
And faëry circumstance,—
From any window love may lean some time
For love that dares to climb.

This is that city babe and seer divined
With pure, believing mind.
This is the home of unachieved emprise.
Here, here the visioned eyes
Of them that dream past any power to do,
Wake to the dream come true.
Here the high failure, not the level fame,
Attests the spirit's aim.
Here is fulfilled each hope that soared and sought
Beyond the bournes of thought.
The obdurate marble yields; the canvas glows;
Perfect the column grows;
The chorded cadence art could ne'er attain
Crowns the imperfect strain;
And the great song that seemed to die unsung
Triumphs upon the tongue.



O EARTH, SUFFICING ALL OUR NEEDS

O EARTH, sufficing all our needs, O you
With room for body and for spirit too,
How patient while your children vex their souls
Devising alien heavens beyond your blue!

Dear dwelling of the immortal and unseen,
How obstinate in my blindness have I been,
Not comprehending what your tender calls,
Veiled promises and re-assurance, mean.

Not far and cold the way that they have gone
Who through your sundering darkness have withdrawn;
Almost within our hand-reach they remain
Who pass beyond the sequence of the dawn.

Not far and strange the Heaven, but very near,
Your children's hearts unknowingly hold dear.
At times we almost catch the door swung wide.
An unforgotten voice almost we hear.

I am the heir of Heaven—and you are just.
You, you alone I know—and you I trust.
I have sought God beyond His farthest star—
But here I find Him, in your quickening dust.



HILL TOP SONGS

I.

HERE on the hill
At last the soul sees clear.
Desire being still
The High Unseen appear.
The thin grass bends
One way, and hushed attends
Unknown and gracious ends.
Where the sheep's pasturing feet
Have cleft the sods
The mystic light lies sweet;
The very clods,
In purpling hues elate,
Thrill to their fate;
The high rock-hollows wait,
Expecting gods.

II.

When the lights come out in the cottages
Along the shores at eve,
And across the darkening water
The last pale shadows leave;

And up from the rock-ridged pasture slopes
The sheep-bell tinklings steal,
And the folds are shut, and the shepherds
Turn to their quiet meal;

And even here, on the unfenced height,
No journeying wind goes by,
But the earth-sweet smells, and the home-sweet sounds,
Mount, like prayer, to the sky;

Then from the door of my opened heart
Old blindness and pride are driven,
Till I know how high is the humble,
The dear earth how close to heaven.



WAYFARER OF EARTH

UP, HEART of mine,
Thou wayfarer of earth!
Of seed divine,
Be mindful of thy birth.
Though the flesh faint
Through long-endured constraint
Of nights and days,
Lift up thy praise
To life, that set thee in such strenuous ways,
And left thee not
To drowse and rot
In some thick-perfumed and luxurious plot.

Strong, strong is earth
With vigour for thy feet,
To make thy wayfaring
Tireless and fleet.
And good is earth,—
But earth not all thy good,
O thou with seed of suns
And star-fire in thy blood!

And though thou feel
The slow clog of the hours
Leaden upon thy heel,
Put forth thy powers.
Thine the deep sky,
The unpreempted blue,
The haste of storm,
The hush of dew.

Thine, thine the free
Exalt of star and tree,
The reinless run
Of wind and sun,
The vagrance of the sea.



UNDER THE PILLARS OF THE SKY

UNDER the pillars of the sky
I played at life, I knew not why.

The grave recurrence of the day
Was matter of my trivial play.

The solemn stars, the sacred night,
I took for toys of my delight,

Till now, with startled eyes, I see
The portents of Eternity.



THE HOUR OF MOST DESIRE

IT IS not in the day
That I desire you most,
Turning to seek your smile
For solace or for joy.

Nor is it in the dark,
When I toss restlessly,
Groping to find your face,
Half waking, half in dream.

It is not while I work—
When, to endear success,
Or rob defeat of pain,
I weary for your hands.

Nor while from work I rest,
And rest is all unrest
For lack of your dear voice,
Your laughter, and your lips.

But every hour it is
That I desire you most—
Need you in all my life
And every breath I breathe.



THE STREAM

I KNOW a stream
Than which no lovelier flows.
Its banks a-gleam
With yarrow and wild rose,
Singing it goes
And shining through my dream.

Its waters glide
Beneath the basking noon,
A magic tide
That keeps perpetual June.

There the light sleeps
Unstirred by any storm;
The wild mouse creeps
Through tall weeds hushed and warm;
And the shy snipe,
Alighting unafraid,
With sudden pipe
Awakes the dreaming shade.

So long ago!
Still, still my memory hears
Its silver flow
Across the sundering years—
Its roses glow,
Ah, through what longing tears!

THE SUMMONS

DEEPS of the wind-torn west,
Flaming and desolate,
Upsprings my soul from his rest
With your banners at the gate.

'Neath this o'ermastering sky
How could the heart lie still,
Or the sluggish will
Content in the old chains lie,
When over the lonely hill
Your torn wild scarlets cry?

Up, Soul, and out
Into the deeps alone,
To the long peal and the shout
Of those trumpets blown and blown!

THE
RYERSON POETRY
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Lorne Pierce—Editor

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OTHERS IN PREPARATION

