

*The* RYERSON  
P O E T R Y  
C H A P - B O O K S



The Wanderer

A Narrative Poem  
(Sequel to "Twenty and After")  
And Other Poems

*By*

NATHANIEL A. BENSON



OF THIS FIRST EDITION OF THE  
WANDERER AND OTHER POEMS,  
BY NATHANIEL BENSON, M.A.,  
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To my friend,  
Thure Hedman,  
with the sincere and affectionate  
regard of  
Nathaniel A. Benson

Toronto

Aug 28. 1930

*The Wanderer and Other Poems* is Mr. Benson's third published volume of poetry. The long poem, "The Wanderer," which begins this volume is a sequel to his "Twenty and After," which won the Jardine Memorial Award at the University of Toronto in 1926, when he was but twenty-two, and was published by the Ryerson Press in March, 1927. "The Wanderer," a romantic, autobiographical narrative, slightly over a thousand lines in length is a sincere attempt on the poet's part to delineate the experiences of his youth. His early dreams, loves, fears and emotions are clearly revealed and presented. He tells of his wanderings in the United States and the Dominion, of Canada's Northland, of Winnipeg, the prairie provinces, Banff and the Rockies. He describes vividly as an eye-witness Canada's Diamond Jubilee of Confederation at Ottawa in July 1927, when Lindbergh's squadron visited the Capital, and the impressive ceremonies at the celebration of the Centenary of his alma mater, the University of Toronto, in October 1927.

Another interesting feature of the poem is his graphic reference to various Canadian poets who have been his intimate friends, Charles G. D. Roberts, Bliss Carman, Wilson Macdonald and E. J. Pratt.



To my friend,  
Prof. Thore Hedman,  
from Nathaniel A. Benson

ODE FOR DOMINION DAY

28/8/30.

NATHANIEL A. BENSON

I

When Cartier first saw Hochelaga's height  
And on Mount Royal reared the fleur-de-lys,  
When dawn swept down the age-long savage night,  
Was Canada conceived in majesty.  
    God, keep within us yet that dauntless flame  
        Of old courageous days,  
    When hearts were stout and hands were truly strong;  
    Of those who from the valorous centuries came  
        Still let us stride the ways,  
    And tribulation never shall be long!  
O Canada, unveil for us the splendid past,  
That thy first glorious hours may sanctify these last.

II

That we might wear this present nationhood,  
Daulac drew sword, and sought Death to the end;  
For us Brock gave an English hero's blood,  
And dark Tecumseh did our fields defend.  
    Far on the veldt, and on the crimsoned Somme  
        New generations proved  
    The Empire free as their Canadian home.  
    Now over many a field the stars are calm  
        Where heroes sleep beloved,  
    And there Remembrance shall for ever come.  
These are our heritage, and these our rightful pride;  
God grant that we may live as nobly as they died.

III

The hero's deed, the lonely poet's theme  
Enshrine a nation's greatness—these we have,  
A strange magnificence of deed and dream  
That mocks the years and burns above the grave;  
    England and France flow kindred in one vein,  
    The dreaming Celt and Scot,



The Norseman all his sea-born valor brings,  
The magic melancholy of the Ukraine,—  
All these are subtly wrought  
In one vast anthem our Dominion sings:  
From ancient kingdoms' hopes a People shall arise  
To write their steadfast faiths across the Western skies.

## IV

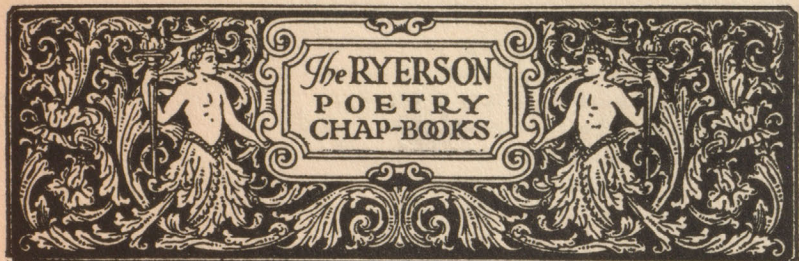
We are a people marching down the ages,  
O'er golden seas, beyond the mountains' crest;  
Our legacy of warriors, bards and sages  
Shall guide us still on truth's and beauty's quest.  
God, let our dreams be deep, our deeds be fair,  
And let our spirits be  
Imbued with all that was, that future time  
Shall see a new Dominion which will dare,  
For right and liberty,  
Attain new peaks and victories more sublime.  
My country, Canada, land of auspicious birth,  
Arise, and let thy youth inspire the lands of Earth!



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# The Wanderer

*By Nathaniel A. Benson*

\* \* \*

## INVOCATION

I

**N**OT FOR the weak, submissive souls  
Life's lightning leaps, doom's thunder rolls,  
For dully, slowly comes the breath  
Of men whose love would dare not death,  
Who would not raise in ecstasy  
A desperate cup eternally  
And drink to life, that mistress stern  
Whose wonders fade, whose sorrows burn.

II

Count me the hearts that throbbed and dared,  
Looked on the world and never cared  
For exile and for loneliness  
To win one hour with loveliness,  
To grasp one diamond of delight  
Out of the thunder and the night—  
For these alone have fought and won  
Immortal triumph never done.

*One*



### III

I, too, would join that deathless band  
And kiss in homage each scarred hand  
That waved a battered standard high  
And dared the fury of the sky,  
Who backed a proud eternal word  
With broken, yet unconquered sword,  
Who crossed the land and spanned the sea  
For dreams and loves that could not be!

### I

#### MY DEDICATION

**B**EFORE a lonely hearth whose ashes were  
Each a past glory greyed in flames of time,  
I sat, and on my knee I held awhile  
My life's loved coffer, locked for many years;  
And yet I knew beneath the carven lid  
There lay experience that few had known.  
At seventeen three friends had I, and these  
Were dreamers, grasping at the precious hour  
Of fortune, fame, and even costlier things.  
Four comrades, picturesque nomads we were.  
Artist, musician, scientist the third  
And I, who worshipped Shelley, Byron, Keats,  
Masters of ecstasy in poetry,  
Dreamed early of that immortality  
So poorly dowered by men, but passing all  
In its incomparable wealth of soul.

Time passed and, in four bitter, toilsome years,  
I learnt at Failure's stool the crushing price  
Man pays for crying: "My soul *shall* be free!"  
Adversity, no understanding given,  
The paltriness of my own heart and brain,  
Dry pedagogues who lacked all sympathy  
And cried that literature was long since dead  
When its sad spark lay suppliant at their feet  
Waiting its morrow of maturity.

I loved a little and my humour kept  
My feet on earth, my head above the clouds.  
My friend, the artist, found his destined mate  
And married, so forsaking art for love.



Now often do I doubt my dreams' pale glow  
When I stand looking in his infant's eyes,  
See them like little jewels that dance and gleam—  
A son—a treasure I may never know . . .  
Envy of comfort, anguish for content,  
These are the swords that bar the poet's way—  
Yet he has all the passion of all earth,  
Trembles for beauty and doth worship love  
With an unquenched, though often-answered fire.

These are the poet's family, only these:  
The stars, whose infinite light and mystery  
Shine as the vestal ideal in his soul  
Or as the eyes of loved ones yet unknown;  
The rivers and the trees whose music wakes  
The unsung anthems in a poet's heart;  
The clouds, the single realm where he beholds  
The castellated mansions of his dreams,  
Kingdoms that never were and cannot be,  
The seen fulfillment of his visioning—  
And there's the wind—by night he wakes and hears  
His unborn children crying in the wind.

## II

### SPRINGTIDE

My second friend, of scientific mind,  
Had soon to leave our land, but left to me  
A legacy of joy, a cousin sweet  
Who grew to love me even as he did.  
She watched with me the pale and flickering light  
Of my poor genius, dim at twenty years;  
She loved and gave me all that women may;  
Tender, sweet, understanding, confidence,  
And faith triumphant in my poetry,  
Faith then unmerited. For she believed  
Me destined to high fame and noble things;  
She gave me books of all the gods I owned:  
Shelley and Byron, Keats and Rupert Brooke,  
Beloved Burns. In later days I turned  
My riper mind to Browning and to him  
Who drew a world of light from during dark,  
And last, I did approach that mighty mind,  
The mightiest work of man's mortality,



Voice of the world, all-knowing, feeling all,  
Friend to the ostler, brother to the king,  
Who read the tragedy in princes' hearts.  
Our minds drank deep and from these fountain-heads  
Consumed a wisdom never elsewhere gained.  
For two rich years, twenty and twenty-one,  
She gave my life a glory that comes once,  
Fades then forever, or is dulled in marriage.  
We might have married, had it so been willed,  
Lost rapture's spring in resignation's fall.  
Happy was I, and happiness I gave,  
Sweet as the precious flower of one day.  
And now her lasting comfort has been found  
With my third friend whose music thus may be  
Filled with the glory of inspiration.  
Fate has ordained and I am well content . . .

### III

#### THE POETS

Even then my judgment was not wholly formed;  
My mind was undisciplined and my thoughts  
Vague, evanescent, and most indistinct.  
I postured in the way of petty men  
Who think to take on stature, being strange,  
Yet in my heart I doubted still my power,  
Knew my own littleness and tried to learn  
The arduous way unto the snowy peak.  
'Twas there I met a songstress true and sweet,  
Who gave me friendship's key unto the portal  
Where dwelt a mind pre-eminent in our land.

That night in June I met, one year ago,  
Roberts, the patriarch of our native tongue,  
Whose garnered knowledge of a lifetime's depth  
Makes him more kindly, younger, and humane,  
Wise as the years, although he seems to own  
The matchless secret of eternal youth.  
This singer of an olden Doric lay,  
To whom revealed are all of nature's ways,  
Her mysteries, the record of her rocks,  
In days before mankind had come to birth;  
Well he knew Browning, Arnold and Swinburne,  
The vast, dim giants of old glorious years;



Knew ill-starred Wilde, and gay Le Gallienne.  
He awoke Lampman, sponsored long ago,  
That deep, fresh mind and gentle-hearted man  
Who read "Orion" and did dedicate  
Himself unto the high immortal cause.  
Patriot, comrade and historian,  
Scholar in ancient and concealed love,  
Poet and lover of all humankind,  
He termed me poet and has granted me  
Friendship and understanding sympathy.  
I leave untold the gratitude I feel,  
Save that the gallant "vagrant of old time,"  
The genius who pursues his wailing ghost  
O'er peak and mire, over dark fen and hill,  
Is greatened over all by life's strange quest.

As one who marvelled, seeing Shelley plain,  
I too have seen a spirit wandering,  
Carman, the pagan faun and minstrel, come  
Singing from Arcady and Sapphic isles  
The sweetest music of our western world.  
Kindly and gentle, yet remote from men  
As carefree satyrs of the Grecian time,  
He was a haunter of that mystic place  
Where fade the real and dreamt-of into one,  
The borderland of twilight where his race  
Danced long ago beneath a phantom sun,  
While wanton winds their love were whispering  
And dark, unhurrying stars were hanging low,  
While nightingales in oaks were lingering  
To teach him music of true lyric flow.

I have the friendship of MacDonald, he,  
The eager genius of the magic line  
Who hears the very sadness of the sea  
And kneels at Melancholy's sombre shrine,  
Ununderstood by all who have not known  
Ceaseless frustration in all things but dreams,  
Whose heart is as an empty shadowed throne  
Kept lonelier by memory's tired streams;  
The foe of man's injustice, whose ideal  
Burns, a white fire for human brotherhood,  
Who waits the inevitable Time to feel  
That mortal hearts are purged of all save good.



I have known Pratt, and touched the manly hand  
Of that Titanic singer of far time,  
Whose force and fantasy the ages spanned  
To live in brilliant and terrific line.  
His eyes are merry and clear; his humour wakes  
In broad satire, devoid of mockery,  
Until he sings, when old Atlantic breaks,  
The sorrow of the Everlasting Sea.

#### IV

#### YOUTH

Three magic things alone make poetry,  
The heart of him who writes, its primal soil,  
Wherefrom there flower unvisioned violets;  
The many marvellous suns of greater men,  
Whose enduring speech brings summer to the soul;  
The third, the intensest element of all,  
The ever-falling irised rains of love  
Come from the faery deeps of maidens' eyes—  
Rains like the tears of saints in Paradise,  
Unclouded showers of light and silver fire  
Born in twin heavens, azure worlds, or pools  
Of sepian shadow. For a woman's eye  
Is the sole crystal where a poet sees  
The pale procession of his lonely dreams,  
Wrapped in unwonted splendor, passing by;  
Here all his ultimate fancies are no more  
Mere wild imaginings, for they arise  
So dressed to make their parent-spirit dumb,  
Trailing long veils of samite from their wings  
Across his troubled sight, until he drops  
His eyelids on all weary daily scenes  
And cries: "The world's no more the drab, dull world!  
Earth rolls resplendent—I am loved and love!"

Not once, but many times, have I been touched  
By this same miracle of glorious strength  
Flaming along my blood, and bearing me  
To summits of the spirit where I saw  
A world that wakes, a fresh and wondrous world,  
The radiant sphere imagination knows.

After my desolation, two years past,  
I fled my native city to escape  
The memories that haunted every street,  
And queried why I henceforth walked alone.



Far in a thundering mart of wealth and power,  
Cleveland, I came to know that mighty race  
Still indivisible with us and quick  
To offer hands of friendship, to crush out  
The lingering pangs of melancholy's pain.  
Upon a warm and sandy golden beach  
I read by morning, heard the southern wind  
Play joyously across the sheltering trees;  
I was the playfellow of sun and rain,  
Felt the warm earth, a bosom vast and strong  
Surging beneath me, or I ran to plunge  
In Erie's kindly arms of heaving blue.  
By night I watched the lightning flashing free  
Out from Ontario, or I did stray  
Down roaring streets agleam with yellow day,  
While all about me marched reverberant  
The giant feet of vast America.  
The pauper, beggar and the derelict,  
A brotherhood I never thought to know,  
Drew me to them in deeper sympathy.  
I gazed on mighty temples that were built  
To Mammon and his brazen sons of gold;  
I guessed that I, at twenty-two, beheld  
Triumph that will outlast the stones of Thebes,  
For these were Parthenons of wealth's grim power:

### SKYSCRAPER

I sit not as the Pyramid  
For centuries upon the sands;  
I rose but yesterday amid  
A million hurried hammering hands.

The stars I challenge in the night,  
The sun I meet in molten day;  
A man-built mountain bearing might,  
A monument to mortal clay.

A yellow-flaming word I burn  
In heaven all the midnight hours  
Above a multitude that turn  
To marvel at their puny powers.



They reared me, and I hold them still  
Between my iron ribs to toil;  
I wield my long-relentless will  
And all their strongest efforts foil.

I am the might that is not man,  
Though all my might man gave to me.  
Far dawns and sunsets I shall scan  
When my creators cease to be.

The hill am I that ants have built,  
If they be crushed, I shall not crumble;  
Though all man's gold be turned to gilt,  
My generations rise and rumble.

The whispers that I hear within  
Proclaim the truth that man is able  
To speak his thousand tongues of sin,  
To build his God a braver Babel.

Now God is wealth, a giant gold,  
A Mound made higher year by year,  
A Calf of daily increase told  
By hundreds' faith and millions' fear.

I am the Temple, sounding not  
A trumpet calling men to strife;  
They come unbidden, hasting hot  
To earn the bitter bread of life.

With even strong electric eyes  
Reminding men of toil to come,  
I nightly gaze across deep skies  
And hear the morrow's rolling drum.

By day all quietude forsaking,  
By night on sleepless watch I tower,  
My sound and silence ever making  
Immortal Voice of mortal power!

. . . . .

Months afterward I came back joyously,  
Back to my home, and to that well-loved place  
Of learning, whose full nature steadily  
Flowed strong within me, till at last I felt  
That I was one with all the singing leaves,



The deep autumnal beauty and the stones,  
The spires, the ancient halls, and windows filled  
With a rich, dim and mediæval light.  
Not all the pomp of pedantry grown dull  
Round its own echo could affray my heart;  
I planned strong things and did them every one—  
I vowed that I should wake and contribute  
Whatever talent lay within my soul  
To commemorate the treasured, youthful hours  
Passed in that semi-legendary ground.

Lost in my efforts I awoke one day  
To find that love had tried a long-locked door;  
I met, by chance, a fragile, lovely girl  
Born to be the destroyer of her peace.  
Not Baudelaire or Dowson ever strove  
With subtler mind to slay his own content  
Than she whose childish ardor was misspent  
Creating monsters for her own dismay.  
She was companion unto revelry  
And ceased to sorrow more for happiness  
Until her faith in life and love were fled.  
I, once betrayed by loved one, and by friend,  
She, mocking what was once a joyous world,  
Were cast like mariners on a desolate isle  
And there our tired hands built up a bower  
Of faith and glory that surpassed our hopes.  
We walked a dismal shore in winter's cold  
While the gaunt moon poured icy silver down  
Into a sapphire bracelet that she wore,  
Cold as her heart before, yet burning now  
With all the passion of our new-found love.  
Three winter months of precious happiness  
Were ours, before the inevitable came.  
I could not stay the course of Destiny  
And she returned unto that darksome bourne  
Of careless sorrow.

Then, as often since,  
Fate with her enigmatic hands returned,  
In her strange, generous way, a recompense,  
One of the loveliest spirits ever born  
Out of the soundless deeps of mystery.  
Gilda was fair above mere loveliness,  
For through her eyes of azured crystal shone  
The luminous glory of a lovely soul;



Even as, at the hour of moonrise, falls  
The quiet silver rain on a violet prism  
In some unpeopled fane of sanctity.  
So shone unconsciously the light serene  
Born in the inner shrine of Gilda's heart.  
Great orchids dreaming in slim candle light,  
Fantastic shapes of never-never lands,  
Even a lonely poet's unvoiced dreams  
Came down and found a haven on her breast.  
Oh, there are islands where the feet of man  
Have left untrodden all the sunlit sands,  
And only voices from sweet unseen streams  
Sing, while the waves from leagues of lucent sea  
Answer in measured cadence; there are isles  
That never heard the thunder of the world.  
Gilda was even so, for life's vast wind  
Had blown over her, as a hurricane  
Might spare the tranquil mirror of a pool,  
And passing, draw a gentle zephyr's veil  
Across that lovely blue in tenderness.  
Beauty of spirit, form and attitude  
Were hers; beauty she gave to sombre life,  
And in return life tendered that same gift.  
Most natural was this, for as a lake  
Slumbers in morning underneath the sky,  
Its glass returns to God the stainless light  
Of His dominions and His bounteousness.  
Each moment passed with Gilda seemed to be  
Clothed in an iridescent amber glow.  
Her home, a tiny castle on a hill,  
A very place of dear enchantment hid  
From eyes that never cared to understand;  
'Twas there I went through winter's dazzling snow  
When myriad diamonds glistened at my feet,  
Paving the lovely way to Lyonesse.  
My very breath, fast-rising in the frost,  
Seemed to enfold me in a pearly mist  
Of Oberon's unearthly fashioning.  
Down the dim path to Gilda's castle-gate  
I walked, and watched the window's orange light,  
Bright, ever brighter, until all the house  
Seemed like a fairy's cave in Oramar  
Where, on wide wings of wonder, gently glide  
Pale glimmering legions and mysterious hosts.



Still I remember how her hair would gleam  
Golden as all the pastures of the sun,  
And to my half-closed eyes it often shone  
Like phantom seas that roll across the mind  
Wave upon amber wave, without a sound.  
She was a childish Lilith with the power  
To see the eerie marvels of that World  
Whose folk in song and dance and beauty move  
Not far removed from us, invisible  
To all save Gilda, who lived wondering,  
A strange, rapt exile from a mystic sphere.  
Well I remember passing slowly by  
Her little castle. She was far away,  
And yet there lingered on a fragrance there  
To which I sang, in the silence of my heart:

Leave me not, leave me not,  
Rest with your lover;  
Grieve me not, grieve me not,  
Summer is over.  
Silent your castle stands,  
Still in the night,  
Still as a maiden's hands  
Pale in moonlight.

Leave me not, leave me not,  
Deep is my sadness;  
Give me one lovely thought  
Born of your gladness.  
Clouded the summer-moon,  
Over dark trees;  
Autumn comes swift and soon  
Sorrowing these.

Leave me not, leave me not,  
Lonely is life;  
I give my love unsought,  
Flower of life.  
Night-winds on shadow-feet  
Bear you this blossom,  
Lay it but lightly sweet,  
Light on your bosom.

. . . . .



To plead with circumstance is all in vain,  
And now has Gilda gone forever from me,  
Forevermore, and henceforth has become  
The loveliest month of youth's enchanted year.

Once and again the restless tide  
Of time draws outward unto sea,  
That sea, Forever, where abide  
All beauties well beloved of me.

Once and again the sombre deep  
Rolls out and onward, bearing far  
A silver shallop that doth keep  
A silent tryst with one dark star,

And in that silver shallop sleeps  
A little golden dream's delight,  
Gliding across the soundless deeps,  
And riding seaward far to-night—

Grief moves, a spectre, through my blood,  
For I may touch no more, nor sing  
Your slim gold beauty whose white bud  
Will never know another spring.

#### "TORONTO'S" CENTENARY

ONE year ago my spiritual home,  
My well-loved home for seven fruitful years,  
Attained with pride its centenary's peak.  
From Canada and all the lands of earth  
Came scholars of acclaim and far renown;  
Came all the great who, once within these walls,  
Walked humbly hopeful of a larger day,  
And with them came (I never pause to doubt)  
The invisible ranks of all our martial sons,  
Youthful and smiling, cleansed of wounds and pain,  
When we put by all save nobility  
To celebrate our great historic Day.  
Much from my mind will pass ere I forget  
The splendour and the beauty of that hour;  
The slow, insistent, measured, mournful march  
Built on the even rolling thrill of drums  
Was grandly played, while through the tower-arch  
There filed in meet and solemn majesty  
The pageant of a mediaeval day.



Men of high learning, of accomplishment,  
Honoured in all the earth, grave men who would  
Make nations one in love of intellect  
And banish Ignorance and Prejudice,  
The dumb sire and deaf dam of monstrous War.  
These princes of the highest mortal realm,  
The kingdom of the unconquerable mind,  
Passed with a reverend mien and tread august,  
With dark robes trailing and with splendid hoods  
Of scarlet, purple, gold and royal blue.  
Thousands assembled—deepest silence fell,  
As that proud dirge, "O Valiant Hearts," was heard.  
Low over all the crowd I seemed to see  
A khaki legion bend with banners furled,  
A young lost legion perished long ago,  
Whose unreluctant yielding of their youth  
Knows no reward, no recompense for death  
Unless we listen as they whisper back

"We have not died in vain,  
Nor poured our precious blood  
Back into earth again  
In royal crimson flood,  
We have not died in vain  
For death is victory  
If we have taught again  
Truth and Humanity."

. . . . .  
Now once again did enigmatic Fate  
And old bewildering Destiny give to me  
A richer comfort than the joy I lost.  
Always I dreamed to meet a poetess,  
To have the instinctive blessed sympathy  
That only genius owns and shares with all.  
She was a poetess of perfect song,  
Voicing the saddest thought in measure sweet.  
I worshipped and respected her; we loved,  
And yet, together lonely as the stars,  
She, a remote and silent solitary  
Whose fires were ever chaste and cold and white;  
I, whose intensity has made my life  
A rugged country where the loveliest vales  
And peaks of unbowed granite alternate.



Despite our difference, deep stimulus  
Was given us by the strange contending tides  
Of nature, and our poetry reborn.

June came—how gentle, maiden-fair is June,  
Stealing upon the quiet countryside  
Where flower, tree and meadow smile once more  
In fresh and virgin emerald. What delight,  
To wander silent roads in country-night,  
When each dark grove becomes a glade of love  
Draped with deep veils of shadowed mystery!  
The moon of this most lovely month to me  
Seems a white vestal pouring silver wine,  
Youth's own libation over all the earth.  
She is the enchantress whispering magic words  
To lovers' listening ears, and it is she  
Who leads them gently on in secret paths  
Of raptured tenderness. Her ardent fire,  
Blent with the ruby flame of un-kissed lips,  
Ripens the wine of dreaming in our hearts.  
I never knew the brazen lips of Fame,  
The cloying golden kiss when Fortune bends—  
I never knew them, and I care no jot  
If never in this life I know their touch,  
Since there is given me most bounteously  
God's greatest gift, the sovereign joy of Love.  
Not once, but many times, such happiness  
Was granted me that I did wonder long,  
Knowing such glory passed my meriting.  
Not once, but many times, yet of the best,  
O dark, dear lovely head the night that I  
First held your quiet beauty in my arms;

The moon's pale silver seemed that night  
A stream from Paradise,  
A kindred river of strange light  
Homing toward your deep eyes.

Soft as the midnight wind your face  
And shadow-dark your hair;  
Your hands were fairies winged with grace,  
White in the darkness there,

Downward I bent—as with no sound  
That silver river slips—  
And in the perfect silence found  
The moonlight on your lips.



## V

## MY COUNTRY

O Canada, my country, lead me on,  
 As all this glowing summer thou hast done!  
 Always I was a vagabond at heart  
 And ever was a wanderer in soul,  
 Although I never left my native street.  
 Strangely I loved the place where I was born,  
 A sleepy, quiet, maple-shaded cottage.  
 Long years ago great poplar-sentinels,  
 With leaves like ocean, sang to me, a child,  
 And long ago there was a dear old garden  
 With lilacs, hollyhocks and tiger-lilies,  
 Roses and morning-glories, daisies bright  
 With ivy wandering gently over all.  
 There would my well-loved grandmother and I  
 Hide in the leaves from every mortal eye,  
 And she would tell me stories of the flowers.  
 I was eleven when she journeyed far  
 To where in gardens it is always spring,  
 And where some day she'll tell me sweeter tales,  
 Tell on, and on, until I quite forget  
 Life ever taught me all there was to know.

Even the old street has vanished quite away,  
 And a new structure, symbolic of our time  
 Brick houses, roaring cars, and cold square lights  
 Replace its peace. But I was never one,  
 (Much as I love to dwell upon the past)  
 To discountenance the future, nor who failed  
 To catch the music of the present time.  
 I see the colour and the gay movement  
 Circling about me; comic unwashed Jews,  
 Guttural and stinking, marvellously fecund,  
 Quarrel in their shops, while loud Italians  
 Jabber and shout, drink deep and play guitars  
 And those of the Double Isles who have laid by  
 Their courage, hope and all their pride of race,  
 Content to labour as unworthier men.

Here was I born, and lived, and seldom moved  
 Until I journeyed east to Ottawa  
 To walk alone on storied Parliament Hill.  
 How lovely that July, the Capital—  
 Flags streaming and grey towers against the blue,



Fair uniforms that dazzled one; poor courtiers  
Skipping silk-breeched around the taxicabs  
And wooden fellows in their tall silk hats  
With minds like rat-traps, catching golden rats,  
And given many "columns" when they died.  
I strayed round Lovers' Walk in Ottawa,  
Felt the clear heat, and marvelled at the skies  
Seeming to withhold the slightest trace of storm  
Until Confederation Day had passed.  
Beyond the river stretched the ancient meadows  
Of old Quebec, and far to the north-east  
The purple dim Laurentians grandly lay.  
I saw the Conqueror of Ocean come  
With twelve winged knights to honour and to draw  
More closely two great nations in one love.  
A darker Aviator came with them,  
Breathed on their wings, and one was hurled to death.  
With minute-guns, low-trailing arms, and all  
The sable pomp of woe, his cortege passed.  
And well might kings envy his obsequies  
Whose funeral hymn the loud propellers roared.  
'Twas then I heard the statesmen bawl their words,  
And ape good Bossuet a score of times.  
One cannot hear with an untroubled calm  
A score of crows attempt to caw the fame,  
The beauty of a phoenix lost on them.

One year passed by, and Destiny ordained  
That I should see the beauties of my land,  
Rich wonders which have left me small desire  
To view the marvels of more distant climes.  
Deep in remembrance, as a treasure-chest,  
I stir these jewels that my eyes have seen:  
Red sunrise in the Northland, like a flame  
Leaping across majestic hills of pine,  
Flowing like molten gold athwart the blue  
Of each unstirred and ever-slumbering lake;  
Great forests whose immeasurable hearts  
Are silent altars whither no man goes.  
Grim is the North, inimical to man  
And loth to yield her fortresses sublime.  
The red rocks rise in cold austerity,  
Gnarled and malign, like spectres of a race  
Born in fierce travail when the greenish glow  
Of chill Aurora spanned the ancient dark  
In the first week of an informate world;



These rocks like craggy castles breast the air  
And keep the banners of silence yet unbowed.  
Down from their crests cruel shapes jut savagely,  
Like dragons snarling from a rugged lair.  
Mile upon mile the blasted woodlands reach,  
Raped by great fires for many a ruined league.  
Westward the forests in full beauty wake,  
And mighty rivers hurl their springtide strength  
In turbulence toward the inland sea,  
The Empress of all lakes, Superior,  
A frigid basilisk whose great cold eyes  
Look pitilessly on the fisherfolk  
Whose little huts are huddled on the shore.  
Far off, half-hidden in a bluish haze,  
Great capes cleave out above the whelming waste  
Like the gigantic flanks left unsubmerged  
When some Triassic monster roared and drowned.  
This is a coast inhospitable, stern,  
A waste of unforgiving waters, yet  
Not even the Mediterranean fairer seems  
Than the long bays and archipelagoes,  
Infrequent beauties, rare and dominant.

I journeyed on and reached the Double Ports  
Where the vast elevators line the coast,  
Seeming like mighty ghosts, or as the homes  
Of supermen in a mechanic age.  
I crossed to Manitoba in the dawn,  
Where countless lakes were stirring in the sun  
And casting off an icy cloak of mist;  
Then Winnipeg, the young metropolis,  
A fortress of the eastern money-kings,  
Rich in romantic colour, vivid, clear,  
Each street a drama in its eager self:  
Ranchers sun-tanned, in chaps and broad sombrero,  
Rovers from eastern Europe gaily scarved,  
Tall Scandinavian fellows golden-haired,  
Manly, and stalwart; blond Ukrainian maids  
Like John Keats' women in their loveliness.  
The smiling Irishman, the Indian  
Whose weary spirit slumbers in his eyes  
Surrendering to Time, and white man's law.  
The garish glamor of the swarthy men,  
And voluptuous beauty of the women come  
From southern lands, the old Canadians



Easily known, who held this western land  
Against the crafty Riel and his strong cause;  
A line of noble buildings set on Portage  
Sloping in grandeur toward the setting sun;  
A great stained "mogul" panting forth its steam,  
Drawing with its steel strength the grain-heaped cars—  
All this, a symphony reverberant,  
A strong-limbed nation on its upward march,  
Young and exultant, striding History's road.

And then at evening, out Kildonan way,  
Where the Red River winds most peacefully  
Down past the quiet gardens; there the trees  
Await the silent, silver summer-moon,  
Who drops her diamonds on the river's breast,  
And pours her benison of purest light  
Upon the darkness of the shaded shores.  
Never my eyes beheld a lovelier sward,  
Nor ever saw so well that After-day  
When light and darkness, melting into one,  
Dispel one's gloom, the other's gaudiness  
And leave the world a dream of silvered blue.  
Lovely that river-garden was, and yet  
I think its magic might have saddened me  
With dull remembrance of young ardor lost,  
Had not the moon's pale glory touched that night  
A paler and more glorious golden head,  
Had not the stars found other mystic fires  
In soft blue eyes that tenderly met mine.

Onward I journeyed over that great land,  
A golden sea of coming fruitfulness  
So vast the mind may scarcely understand  
A lonely land, a land that's limitless  
From north to south, from fading east to west  
That scarcely undulates its mighty plain.  
The prairie cities hum with energy,  
Unspoiled and rich with promise yet to come;  
These cities pass, and great cloud-legions form  
Huge in the east as some pursuing host;  
Darkness comes down, and red the western moon  
Mounts slowly, and sublimely, till it seems  
Like some great golden world that rolls with ours.  
The little towns of wide Saskatchewan  
Cling to the rails; the elevators pass  
Like giants in the night; the sudden dawn  
Glow palely from the north toward the south.



Alberta wakes, and sloping hills appear  
With little farms; kerchiefed old women stand,  
Wave to our progress; merry children, men  
Bronzed with long suns and strengthened by stern toil  
Greet our swift passing with a friendly hand.  
Tall riders of the range swoop galloping  
On distant winding roads.

I have not seen  
A city now remembered with more joy  
Than Calgary, the fair embodiment  
Of all the youthful power of the West;  
Its beauty unconfined, its air as clear  
As that above the ocean, and its people  
The very symbols of deep kindness.  
How happy I was there, where morning heavens  
Shone with a rich immensity of light!  
All these loved lands, I found, were wondrous steps  
Leading me onward to the mountains' realm,  
The Rockies (there is magic in that word!).  
I waited; as a child on Christmas Eve,  
I hoped that they might equal my long dreams—  
And slowly, like a host invincible,  
They rose in age-old, splendid dignity,  
Fronting the stars, and warring with the winds!  
Those grand relentless Titans of the past,  
God's battlements, immeasurably grand!

## VI

### LYONNESSE

There in Banff's castle, in baronial halls  
Mocking the name of man-made luxury,  
There, by the thunder of Bow River's Falls,  
I touched the ultimate in ecstasy.  
All else that comes, whatever future time,  
All that is yet to be, and all that thrills,  
Must needs fall short of joy that was sublime,  
My happiness by those eternal hills!  
One never walked in Eden all alone  
And found a truly-unmarred Paradise;  
I wandered blindly toward joy's shining throne  
Until I saw it in a loved one's eyes.  
She gave me love: the tenderness and peace  
Known only in the touch of loving hands—



From all past sorrow granted full release  
And gave a heart that, giving, understands.  
I ask no more, for then my soul put by  
All of its passionate quest and wild disdain  
Of life as it must be. I knew again  
That Joy lives on forever, though men die.  
The old grim plaint that we are transient things  
Born in sore anguish, driven down the years,  
Was quite dispelled. I guessed the truth that tears  
Are jewels worn by gods who once knew wings.  
Love in her fulness does her mystic wonders  
Unseen, past explanation, all-ungessed,  
Until we hear, beyond Death's dinning thunders,  
Her Voice that whispers: Life is Love, then Rest.  
Devoid of shame I own I often loved,  
Seldom in vain, but never passing this,  
Never with all the spirit's deeps so moved,  
Never before, a god creating bliss.

Within this poem I nothing spared, but said  
Ever the truth as poets used to do;  
I left no hallowed memory with the dead,  
For in brief life those riches are too few.  
The Man of Stratford said that not to love  
Was "treason 'gainst the kingly state of youth—  
For where is any author in the world  
Teaches such beauty as a woman's eye?"  
In the sweet middle way that wisdom shows,  
Far from base licence, chill austerity,  
And all the forces that condemn the soul,  
We find a Joy that vanquishes all woe,  
A crown of life, a Recompense 'gainst death.

The precious hours of life that I had known  
Taught me to judge the value of this last,  
For all were but dear lessons, here full learned;  
These, these were all, even the wondrous first,  
Sweet buds of April, opening one by one,  
Closed in the briefest while, forerunners of  
The flame-filled heart of one great summer-rose.  
I worshipped long in a devotion deep,  
Rose up, and parted wide the curtains, saw  
The blue-green Bow still winding far away,  
Cascade and Rundle standing giants' guard.  
I heard anew the everlasting roar  
Of those wild Falls, and far above them smiling  
The slumbrous stars persuading dreamful sleep.



I yearned to rest, but something seemed to say:  
"The mountains look upon man's transient loves,  
And sorrow comes within their granite hearts."  
Moveless, impassive, omnipresent gods,  
They stood beyond the window whispering:  
"Think of the countless aeons that we have watched,  
From formless infancy, the giant steps  
Of glacial years. Think, we shall yet be here  
A hundred centuries when you are dust.  
Man is an atom, an unheeded mote;  
Woman, the wisp of light that makes him seen.  
The stars, the rivers, and the hills endure;  
Man passes like a breath in wintry air."  
I hid my face in beauty, and my spirit  
Fled outward once again, and cried to them:  
"Eternal sentinels, the mind of man  
Shall pass from star to star when valleys trench  
The space where your proud summits are upreared.  
Shakespeare dies not; Plato and Socrates  
Knew wisdom when grim glaciers lined your brows.  
Shelley sings on, and Keats forever sings.  
The thunders that enfold your massive peaks  
Were empty noise had Milton never lived,  
Beethoven toiled to tell of suffering."  
Their deep hostility did trouble me,  
And then truth came as comes the lightning-flash:  
These were complete, but man must still evolve,  
Must weep and toil, fall and rise up again,  
Face life and death until the Race becomes  
Worthy of Him who shaped the universe.  
Man is God's pilgrim toward eternity,  
His burdens weakness, hatred, ignorance,  
His goal a vast and shining mystery.  
He is a wayfarer who doth forget  
His destination and the path fixed thither  
Until God's amulet within his hand,  
Recalls his quest and purpose unto mind.

## VII

### RETURN

Long afterward I journeyed west again,  
In passionate hopefulness to hear once more  
That song of happiness translating earth.



Vain was my quest, as one who walks afar  
On autumn days and hopes to find the spring.  
The most sublime of hours in mortal life  
Approach unseen, and drop their sombre veils—  
Suddenly to stand in dazzling loveliness,  
To make all earth a realm of radiance,  
And then forever pass.

My glory fled,  
My trouble lingered on. How dare I face  
Those awesome giants there awaiting me?  
Hostile before, and whirling mighty slings  
They hurled grim stones in love's enchanted bower.  
And now—? I shrank and thought to see them rise,  
Mocking my sorrow and my desolate heart;  
For She, being far, I would be easy prey  
To Beings that scorned my insignificance . . .

Again I saw their far magnificence  
Like some incredible unmoving sea,  
Or heights of dimly-dreamt immortal realms  
Whither man might strive, and ultimately hope  
To be as wise as God, never to know  
Of littleness in word, or thought or deed,  
Forever from endless sorrow to be free,  
To be beyond the claws of circumstance,  
The scope of fear, the paltry thrill of pride,  
Beyond the treacheries of tide and time;  
Finally, to rest as these eternal Shapes,  
These vast perpetuations of God's thought,  
Heeding nor caring aught how mortals fare.  
These things alone are perfect, for they stand  
Great of themselves, greatly against the years,  
Unchanged by changing seasons, unforgiving,  
They tower like gods, grey fingers on their lips,  
Imposing on the meanest of mankind  
The silence of their immortality.

## VIII

### FAREWELL

O all you lonely over all the world,  
For whose unlustred eye the crimson sun  
Drops sallow unto rest! You lonely hearts,  
Living again the sweet, the kindlier past,  
When each young day an unbroaded flagon was,



And every night a crystal brimming red  
With all the untouched wine of wonderment;  
You who climb dully with a leaden heel  
The spirit's hillock and look westward far  
To fabled Isles of fair Hesperides;  
You whose poor arms are empty evermore  
Save when they cradle a beloved ghost,  
Be comforted in this: Thus to have loved  
And to have gladly given all, but once,  
Is life's rare privilege. To have watched the flames  
Consume the holiest, freely-proffered gift  
Spread on the altar raised to Loveliness,  
Is pure devotion, asking no reward,  
Save the full realization of itself.  
Then, head erect, unbowed if sorrowful,  
To front the morning and to meet the night,  
Clear-eyed and unreluctant, half-content  
To mourn the unreturning evermore.  
If 'tis the lover's lot to joy and weep,  
It is his triumph to carve noble thought  
In sorrow's granite. This remember most:  
Dull daily usage frets the keenest edge  
And even love must alter day to day,  
Forward or back, progress through constant change.  
Thrice blest the one who, as a youthful knight,  
Falls early in the conflict, ardent still,  
"What might have been" his last and strongest thought.  
Wisdom has proven ever in the close  
That the frustrated and the thwarted are  
Ever most fortunate, being unsatisfied . . . .  
And when the heaven of great love gratified  
Becomes a long and aching lonely hell  
A poet will transfigure that in song.

To be a poet is to stand apart,  
Midway 'twixt God and Man, and, standing, know  
One has the love of neither; 'tis to be  
Heedless of either's thanks, yet ever eager  
To sing the beauties manifest in each,  
That men may grow a little more like gods,  
That God may bend a handsbreadth nearer Man.

*Finis*

*Twenty-three*



# Shorter Poems

## YEAR'S END

THE year is dead, for Death slays even time,  
And was it not a proud and foolish thing  
To cry "We love forever?"—'Twas sublime,  
For there's no heart that may forever sing;  
One sweet, tremendous, transient hour of love  
Is worth a thousand unawakened years;  
One perfect memory shall eternal prove,  
However deep the price we pay in tears.  
Life is an envious miser, and he guards  
The wonder-stone of love with jealous pride,  
And only the courageous pass his wards  
To wear the jewel for which great kings have died;  
Thus, having known the best that life affords,  
We have done more than make the seas divide.



## FOREVER

FOREVER! Well, I know it must be so.  
A long farewell, and then beyond my sight  
You pass, a song that fades far down the night;  
Once we were happy—that was long ago.  
I loved you from your first kiss to the last.  
You left me, yet I loved you more each hour,  
And hold you still, a blind man with a flower  
Who never shall forget that spring long past.  
God is so strange—if there is any god—  
To burn two little stars in one great flame,  
Then quench them in the ocean of the years . . .  
And yet I know above my burial sod  
The very grass shall glow to feel your name,  
And on my face the rain shall be your tears.



## TO ONE WHO HAS MARRIED

ALTHOUGH to-night I may mean less to you  
Than some poor vagrant wind about the house,  
At times you'll hear me gnaw my passage through  
The years' dim wall, a most unwelcome mouse.  
Rest, comfort, peace, and marriage—build them firm,



Yet in the wainscot of your woman's mind  
Nightly I'll creep forever, throughout life's term  
And whisper afterwards on Death's pale wind.

Your nothing, love, is my eternity,  
Your long-dead yesterday my live to-morrow,  
My one kept gift that immortality  
For one who ringed me with immortal sorrow.

Yet live, my love, for none are like you ever,  
Perhaps because perhaps you're lost forever.



### SPRING SONG

WHEN Winter's chill is overpast  
And crocuses come out at last,  
Blow on the hills demurely bright,  
Smile jocund to the stars by night—  
The songs of Spring wake in delight.

When the shy snowdrops first appear  
To beckon in the modest year,  
And when bright tulips gaily show  
Their pagan vanguard after snow,  
All heaven envies earth below.

April, intangible and sweet,  
Comes dancing by on silver feet;  
How fair the melody she plays  
On singing streams those dream-like days  
When young winds stir the browns and greys.

The countryside, so fairer grown,  
Puts off her winter bridal-gown  
As over wood and field the green  
Steals silent, lovely and unseen,  
Until all earth's one magic sheen.

With May and June the daffodils  
Dance golden on the gleaming hills,  
While daisy, lily, violet,  
Fresh lilac and fair mignonette  
Banish the lonely heart's regret.



## TO GILDA RETURNING

SINCE I have touched my lips again to yours  
And breathed again the fragrance that you are,  
I feel as one who fills his ivory ewers  
In crystal depths that mirror one white star.

Since I have known your sweetness once again  
And, in the midnight's rich enchanted shade,  
Felt fall your golden loveliness like rain  
Soft-streaming on green leaves in Grecian glade,

I live in beauty that can never die,  
And you have dried an everlasting tear,  
Have stilled awhile that strange eternal cry  
And woven your spell on sorrows far and near.

You give me back a jewel, a wonder-stone,  
Hush all my fears, and kindle bright for me  
The precious fire I cannot keep alone,  
Whose flame is song, whose light solemnity.

I drink the goblet that my dreams have filled,  
You pour its wine upon my eager lips,  
The strings of all my panting soul are thrilled—  
I clasp the moment ere its wonder slips.

Your beauty is a fountain of delight  
That rises fairylike, a graceful flower,  
A golden rose that blossoms in the night,  
A bud whose lifetime is one magic hour,

A petal floating happily on the waves,  
A star above life's long and level sea,  
A spirit over all lost lovers' graves,  
A lovely elfin soul divine and free.

You give fresh life to my imaginings,  
All beauties of the world are in your kiss—  
More treasure than the wealth of eastern kings,  
Who knew no yielding beauty sweet as this.

And when you leave me, I have left all joy  
Until you re-awaken in my heart  
The simple sorrow of a lonely boy  
Who sees the princess of his dreams depart.



## TWILIGHT NOON

**L**AST night I dreamed of you, and still my heart  
Throbs all this waking day with that same power  
God gave us for one far ecstatic hour,  
When, loving, we of loveliness were part.

I sit alone before the fire, I start,  
Tremble, and see in memory's still bower  
You whispering, as of old, more soft and lower,  
The words of love's immeasurable art.

Here on this island, fair as Paradise,  
Something from earth's best beauty's fled and gone,  
And there's half-twilight in the richest skies,  
And shadows lie upon the sunniest lawn—  
I miss the perfect glory in your eyes  
That drew all heaven into Western dawn.



## FAREWELL

**I** KNOW one warm red jewel of joyous May:  
The rose in youth, in beauty, in first flower,  
Vieing her blush with sunrise one brief hour,  
Dew-pearled with dawn's pale tears at break of day,  
Grace in each petal, love that breathes away  
A fragrance filling garden, tree and bower  
Ere, drooped in storm and passion that deflower,  
Slow-falling leaf and bloom find death's dark way.

So, love, in all thy virgin shining charms  
That richest praise from earth and heaven warms  
Fate summons thee, in dust to don repose.  
Then take as obsequies my sighs, my tears,  
This vase of dew, this bud the May-month wears  
That on Death's couch thou still shalt sleep, a rose.



## NO POET SAID:

**B**REAK with me now—forget that I'm alive,  
Or that you placed your peace within my keeping.  
Break with me now—that less you must forgive,  
For after sharpest pain there's deepest sleeping,  
Dear, let me go—and going quietly,  
I'll prove myself the only kindly lover  
In sacrificing all my ecstasy  
Before its virgin wonder all was over.



Dear, I must go alone, and travel far,  
Rival the winds in bitter pilgrimage,  
Perhaps to reach some white tremendous star,  
Perhaps to live an hour, perhaps an age.  
You cannot come . . . but . . . in the far years . . . keep  
Those songs I left to lull your fears asleep.

✧ ✧ ✧

## ONLY SILENCE ANSWERS

### I

**D**O YOU remember once, a strange night in December,  
Warm for the time of year, we walked your garden round,  
Light wind was blowing the fine snow, do you remember—?  
The great bare poplars whispered to the wind . . . That  
sound  
Drifts back across my peace, speaks in my loneliness;  
I still can see the light of all those myriad stars,  
And deeper light was in your eyes . . . your loveliness  
Stirred me as summer sea stirs all its sanded bars.

### II

Whenever midnight comes, stealing with stars and wind,  
Wind moving lightly in the listening poplars, then  
I shall be in your garden, walking there to find  
The glory that lives once and never comes again.  
Only when, from the page of some old treasured poem  
That once you read to me, I hear your voice sound low,  
Break with the heart-break of the weary world, and come  
Back like the tragedy of princes—then I know!

### III

Know that to love too well, one heart may love too long  
And so forget there is a thing on earth but love,  
That nothing's left the weak in triumph of the strong,  
That, as the truant wind, a woman's heart may move  
From one she loved beyond her very self. . . . And yet  
The poplars whisper still that once, in one December,  
Two lovers wandered there . . . and does the wind forget  
As one long since, or does the wind, with me, remember?

*Twenty-eight*



## MY FRIEND

LAST time I saw you, Harold, that afternoon  
Of April sunlight on the tennis-ground,  
Then through the leaves the wind its merry tune  
Sang on; we played with rush and bound.  
Your smile, when losing, was a victory.  
Ever the same your boyish laughter sped;  
Then we were young—and youth was ecstasy!—  
When next I saw you, you were lying dead.  
Dark and discoloured, dead and still forever,  
Silent and meaningless, all earth you were—  
What if I still can run, laugh, love, if ever  
Some day I must, like you, be stiffening there,  
Clod to all loveliness, insensate earth,  
Mattering no more than long before my birth—



## FUTILITY

WHAT is the meaning of the course we run  
On this faint track that winds to nothingness?  
For none are satisfied when all is done,  
And there is little left of loveliness,  
When all the dreams one ever had are gone,  
When each bright vision meets reality;  
All nights of wonder die in dreary dawn  
Where every glory is what cannot be.  
The longing infinite, the kiss of rain,  
Of woman, sunrise, and of fame's brief fire  
Are each a madness that will lie again  
And burn the dreamer on his builded pyre;  
Since man's best hopes are vain Icarian wings  
That bear him high to deathless, mocking things.



## THE LAMPMAN CAIRN AT MORPETH

**B**UILD high this cairn, for here was Lampman born,  
Here fell that silver seed of high endeavor,  
Here first he raised that echoing golden horn;  
Beauty his creed, and truth his sign forever.

Here he first heard the secrets of the Spring  
Whose white feet passed between the early flowers,  
And listened as the April winds would sing  
The lyric of a poet's childhood hours.

Little he gained of gold, that lustrous sign  
Of all the world's acclaim—yet in the mind  
He was a Cræsus of pure song, whose arts  
To poets' hands the wandering winds resign.  
These touched him and he is forever enshrined  
Imperishable in Canadian hearts.



## THE OLD HAMLET, TORONTO

(Broadway Avenue, Winnipeg, July, 1929)

**J**UST now the prairies are in bloom  
As I sit in my lonely room,  
While in Toronto now, I think,  
The highbrows gather still, to drink;  
The intelligentsia's keen quorum  
Murmurs above the latest Forum,  
While in the studios foregather  
Some who might sculp and paint, yet rather  
In fair discussion stretch the mind,  
Knowing that effort's unrefined.  
Oh, there the righteous wear a robe  
As stainless as the godly *Globe*,  
And there the good without a scar  
Turn to the comics in the *Star*.  
O darn! I know it and I know  
The great red street-cars stop and go  
With their immeasurable calm  
Through many a hopeless traffic jalm;  
There old Big Ben still booms his hours,  
And Varsity's green fields and towers  
Breathe all their ancient storied charm  
On starry summer nights and warm.  
The Family Compact gathers still  
Serene and splendid on The Hill.



Say, do the boys with balls and bats  
Still battle on the old Don Flats?  
Do lovers yet, whom none may number,  
Walk by the dark and singing Humber  
And feel that strange and childish fear  
To look on sleeping Grenadier?  
Oh, are there screams at Sunnyside  
And tempests still, and Sam McBride?

The Fog-Horn at the Eastern Gap  
Still bellows while the wavelets lap?  
At night do adolescent "wilds"  
Still swallow coffee neat at Childs?  
Is Sunday still a whole week long,  
And the Alliance just as strong?  
Would I were there!

I must go pronto  
To my home town, my old Toronto,  
Where there's a few who understand  
And shake you warmly by the hand,  
Giving some gifts of which a shortage  
Is all that I can find on Portage.  
Ambitious lads may still turn West  
To open spaces—but the best  
Is there, and eastward I shall roam  
Back to my old Toronto home.



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# THE RYERSON POETRY CHAP-BOOKS

*Lorne Pierce—Editor*

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