

The RYERSON
POETRY
CHAP-BOOKS



Stars Before the
Wind

By
CHARLES FREDERICK BOYLE

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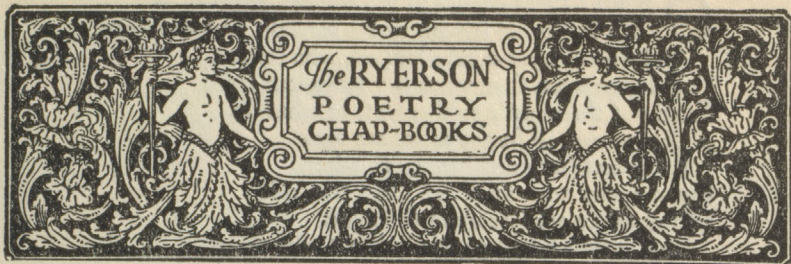
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Charles Frederick Boyle

Mr. Charles Frederick Boyle resides in Fredericton, N.B. The first recognition of his work, outside the press of his own province, came with the acceptance of one of his poems by *Canadian Poetry Magazine* of Toronto.

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Stars Before the Wind

By Charles Frederick Boyle



THE HOPE I HAVE

WHAT hope have I to hold your heart forever
 When strong eternal Sunlight holds your hair?
 When Midnight decks you with his jewels fair
 Can my gifts rival his for beauty?—Never!
 And when the wild breast of the main you sever
 And leave your clefted bosom on it there,
 Imprinted in its deeps, yet in foam fair,
 What hope have I to hold your heart forever?

Ah! I have held you: fiercely have I wooed,
 But when death comes, I can but stand aghast.
 With earth's sweet clinging warm you will be sued—
 But I forget—there is a God stands fast;
There is a God—'tis spoke in solitude,
 And I, who loved you first, will love you last.

SONNET TO FREDERICTON

OJEWELLED empire in the wooded hills,
With thy sweet stream where sunlight first was born
And where it yet drinks longest, who forlorn
Could gaze upon thee when thy splendour spills
From out the morn's gold goblet, or what ills
Can we not all forget as we are torn
Reluctant from one beauty to adorn
Our memory with another? But the frills
Of thy attire are lost upon the mind
And cannot here be gathered, but who tread
Thy green-roofed corridors are blest; they find
The ultimate of beauty. Thou hast bred
Thy share of those who find far beauty kind,
But all I ask is thine till I am dead.



RAIN AT EVENING

THIS is the sort of night you would have liked,
A rainy night, a night of summer showers
After a hot day—like tears in eyes at death
Making human a hard life. Through daylight hours
The earth lay bare in stupor without dream,
But now the night has come, the rain-cloud lowers
And all the world with melody's a-stream.

Sweet one, who always walked the sunny side
Of every street, yet revelled in the rain
That washed away vexatious, heated pride,
If you were here, were with me once again,
How we would splash through puddles without care
And dodge from tree to tree-shade without pain,
Strong in our youth, a happy, thoughtless pair!

I gaze from out my window on the night,
And almost think your laughter I can hear
In the soft raindrops; watch, beneath the light,
Where the paved street again is gleaming clear.
Is it the street, the city, that we knew?
It seems not so, however hard I peer.
What have I lost—all life, or only you?

VESPER SONNET

O LOVED ONE, when the sun's rays disappear
And twitterings of eaves-birds faint and swell,
And midget men are dancing in a dell
Far off, far off, yet very, very near,
Do you not from your window sometimes peer
Into the dusk, and does a sigh not dwell
Upon your lips? For something words ne'er tell
Do you not sometimes brush away a tear?

You must, for with the eve there comes surcease
Of pain and striving, and a consciousness
Of love, enfolding all in sweet release.
When far and silently the shadows press
Are you not stirred by something more than peace,
A moment's half-communion with my stress?



REQUIEM

WHEN Midnight throws its purple mantle o'er me
And the young grave-grass woos the hasting Spring,
Oh, mourn ye not, Beloved, mourn not for me;
Say, "Even yet he loves awakening."

If, when I lie beneath the flattering furrow,
The moon shines fitful through the tufted trees,
Oh! green not then my grave with useless sorrow
But say: "He beauty loved, so he loves these."

And when the Autumn dons its deepest raiment
To dare its foe, or greet its friend, Decease—
Say then, "In robes of glory, he is claimant
In land far fairer, to eternal peace."

And when the cold frost makes my bones crack loudly
And all the night shakes to the tempest's wail,
If you should think of me, say then most proudly:
"He faces, and he fights against, the gale."

Then grieve you not, my Love, and say no Masses
For me—for all my Heaven will be here;
But let this whisper reach me through the grasses:
"He must be happy, for he knows me near."

THE OLD WILLOWS

GRAND, staunch old willows 'neath the evening sun,
Grand, green old willows touched by shafts of gold
That gild their leaves a moment, one by one,
Before the dusk can seek them and enfold.

Straight, proud old trunks with young leaves reaching down,
While others clutch the red, red skies above,
And limbs and arms that fondle the old house
And, when the dusk comes, whisper tales of love.

Yes, through the long and else all-onesome night
They whisper things of love, of life, to me
And seem to sympathize the while they blight—
And seem to know the things no eyes can see.

They kiss my sill and sing to me of you,
As all things sweet, of beauty, ever must;
And then they rock and rage as all loves do
Until their passion burns itself to dust.



RETURN TO THE FOREST

IT has been long since I have visited
This forest of my childhood; as I climbed
The old wood-road this eve, I grieved to find
The way more steep that seemed it when I sped
It joyful in old days. My face and head
Were cooled, unfevered by the nectared wind.
I sat upon a fence, and redesigned
The world that once was mine, ere Fancy fled.

I plucked the roses of tranquillity
And found a flower never named in school,
And dreamed of things that may not ever be
And knew I was beloved, and learned the rule
Of recompense, while Night brought down to me
Peace, like a dew-wet flower soft and cool.

THE QUIET SPRING

I WANDERED with the Spring's whisper,
I walked a street of this city,
But still it came to me from far off—
The sound of life stirring in the deep woods.
The song of the season.

I felt the eyes of Spring upon my back
And her warm, sunny hand upon my cheek,
But this year I turned not to follow her across the fields of my
life
To the peace of the dark woods.

I can feel joy at her coming, but 'tis a tranquil joy,
For I have known Winter long.
I have lost much of the exuberance and fervour of youth.
I will stay here this spring, walking the streets and working,
And dream how the dog-tooth violets push through the soft
moss,
Where the little rills meet the marsh at the edge of the forest,
Under the dark breath of the firs.



THE MOON IN MEMORY

THERE is a moon caught in my memory,
A part of something that is mine no more.
When deep and bitter sleep lay on the floor
Of the lush Earth a brooding ecstasy
Was in my heart, and then solicitously
The lover Moon bent over the deep store
Of Night, while she, from out her virgin's lore,
Wafted to him her dreams and mystery.

How like to thine and mine is Nature's way!
Barred—we are barred, even as the moon was hung
In the trees' arms and but from far away
Could woo his lovèd earth. So we have sung
And wept, but nothing learned to do or say—
I but remember when a round moon swung.

FAREWELL IN BITTERNESS

OUR love is over. What is there to tell?
I have a memory of a few wild hours.
You have a dream, perhaps, of gods and flowers
And one strange heart that might have loved.—Farewell!
We knew some part of heaven, and much of hell,
And you decided which would last be ours.
We wooed one Spring, and builded ivory towers.
I builded mine too high, and so it fell.

Yet, strangely, I am glad that in my youth
I had no chance to learn of love the whole.
'Tis best to part like this, with words of ruth
And with no shame to stifle or control.
This is our epitaph, the bitter truth:
I set too high a price upon your soul.



NIGHT'S UNREST

WHEN the clouds float past the moon to darkness,
And the moon winks on a quiet world,
When shadows alone have depth and soothing
And the trees sob and the leaves are skirled
Over the ground by the wild wind's playing
And up the street and over the hill,
When the frogs call from the misty marshes
And the night lists to the music shrill—
When the dark comes for the eyes so weary
And the time comes for the head to rest,
Still do I wander, sad and musing,
To add night's joys to the endless quest.
And I gaze aloft, with arms uplifted
And sobbing throat, while my mind is dinned
With some foolish words of my own unfolding,
While the stars scuttle before the wind.

SOUNDS AND SHADOWS

THE cool, sweet breath of the May night;
The faint, almost-inaudible stirring of wind in the budding
branches;
The great grey hand of darkness spread over the earth, except
for a little space in the north-west
Where a church tower set in trees still points up against the
light of another world;
The delicious feeling of stirrings and vapors floating up to the
moon;
The silence so intense that it is pregnant with sounding sig-
nificance,
So still we can almost hear the whisperings and supplications
of flowers and grasses,
The love songs of things we can see and things that are purely
ethereal;
The low, solemn church-bells wavering and flying to the arms
of Night,
Lingering long, then dying, making more distinct the quietude;
And especially the warm, live smell of the freshened, clinging
earth—
All these I love, with a love that is blind and unreasoning.
All these bring joy, but at the same time an ineffable sadness:
They are the sober reef to the restless surge of my mind.
They quiet me, comfort me, but cannot hold me forever—
Still must I mourn, and dream of the joys of my vanished love.



SPRING SONNET

IF I could hold the splendour of the dawn
Forever before my wan and weary eyes,
Could catch the languor that the sunbeams spawn—
The languor that this April morning lies
Upon the earth and waters; if I could
But keep the magic of the thrush's song
Forever ringing from the shaded wood
In one high note, all passionate and strong—

If I could hold these joys, these reveries
Forever in my heart, until each breath
Is drawn from out their deeps and mysteries—
Ah! then my words might lose their hue of death;
Then I might praise your beauty, make you see
How dear, how pure, how sweet you are to me.

THE VISIT

K NOW ye, heart that is sleeping far away
In some white room,
That my heart journeys on its long, long way
Through the night's gloom,
Like a bird homeward, through the strong rain's sway,
On yours to swoon!

Ah, but the night is wild and shrill with rain
And deep with woe;
But my soul, driven by the old, old pain
That will not go,
Sweeps on, while blood drops from every vein
And the winds blow.

And this is all the boon that I request
From this wild flight:
That your heart quicken at a dream's behest
When mine shall light
Upon your bosom, for a moment's rest
In your eyes' unsight;

That you will wake, perhaps, with a little sigh
Upon your lips;
That there may be a half-shed tear in your eye,
To be brushed by the tips
Of your lash, and a sense of music far away,
Falling into the day.

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Lorne Pierce—Editor

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