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The
Poet Confides

by
H. T. J. COLEMAN

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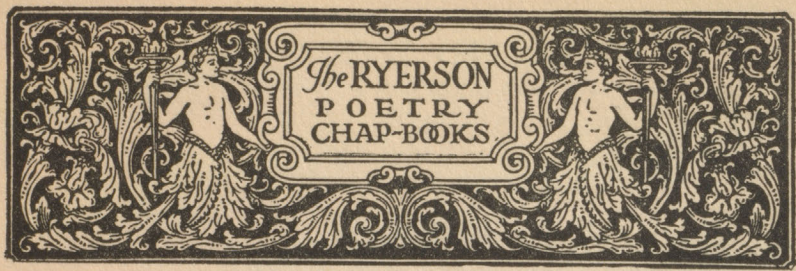
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To Father

from Marion & Edwin

Nov '28

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The Poet Confides

By H. T. J. Coleman



THE POET CONFIDES

SOMETIMES I write with the stub of a pencil
 On the back of an old envelope,
 Or an odd scrap of paper
 That I fish up out of an inside pocket.
 And sometimes I write on decent paper
 With pen and ink.
 But always I write (when I write truly)
 With my heart's blood.

And it is not I that write,
 At least it is not the man
 Who bears a conventional name,
 And sometimes wears evening clothes,
 And has a street address and a telephone number,
 And is mentioned in Who's Who.
 The one who writes is a very different person,
 He has been warmed by the suns of a million summers,
 And chilled by the frosts of a million winters,
 And gone naked in the jungle,
 And followed dim trails through primeval forests,
 And suffered indescribable agonies and experienced unimagin-
 able joys,
 Before streets or telephones or the banalities of publicity were
 ever thought of.

No! I am not the person you take me for,
 But so different, indeed, that you might not care to shake hands
 with me if you saw me truly,
 Yet I hope you could pity me even if you could not love me,
 For I am the soul of man.

One

MY TREE

LATE last fall,
I found, lying by the roadside, a tree
Which some workmen had thrown aside.
They had struck at its roots with a spade
Carelessly,
And then wrenched it from the ground.

And I took the tree
And set it in my garden
Tenderly,
So that the torn roots might nestle in the soft earth
And be healed of their wounds.

And when, this spring, all the other trees had budded and put
forth their leaves,
I looked at my tree
And it was still bare;
But there was life in its branches
And in the heart of the brown buds
There were traces of green.

Then I knew that my tree was only resting,
And that in time—its own time—
It would put forth leaves;
And they would dance in the breeze,
And drink of the sunshine and the rain,
And glisten in the light of the summer moon;
And perhaps a bird would come and build its nest in the branches,
And these very leaves would shelter its young.

And I have known men and women
Whose lives have been torn up by roots like my tree,
And set again in alien earth,
And they have looked brown and bare
Even in the springtime,
When others have budded
Into song and laughter,
But they were green at the heart, nevertheless,
And later,
When the roots of their lives had grown again,
They have rejoiced
In the glory of leaves,
The song of the bird,
The kiss of the sunshine,
And the mystery of the summer moonlight.

INTUITION

HOW FEEBLE is man's hold upon the earth!
How vast the powers with which he must contend
From that strange moment which he calls his birth
To that strange moment when this life shall end!

And yet to him the springtime suns are dear,
And the soft rains that waken leaf and flower;
And in the process of the changing year
There comes to him, perhaps, a glorious hour.

In which it seems all beauty were his own,
And he the lord of Nature's wide domain.
No suppliant he; he sits upon a throne
And dares a royal dignity maintain.

And though the vision fade and he once more
May fear that these were but imaginings,
He may not be that which he was before,
For he has seen the secret heart of things.



A LESSON

AH ME! what sorrow sometimes springs
From undesignèd little things.
One may in an unwitting hour
With heavy footstep crush a flower;
Or may without intent of wrong
Rob a shy wild-bird of its song;
Or, lacking sense or lacking art,
May take the sunshine from a heart
That God had made to beat alway
With all the gladness of May.
Ah me! what sorrow sometimes springs
From thoughtless, cruel, little things.

Oh joy! that one may sometimes sow
A joy which he shall never know;
May give some life an added brightness,
May give some step an added lightness,
May comfort give instead of pain,
And bid the song break forth again.
Oh joy! that God has made it so,
One gives a joy he may not know.

GUILD-BRETHREN

IN THE frozen North, in his hut of snow,
Somewhere beyond Point Barrow,
Aklavatik the Eskimo
Made out of bone an arrow.
And he scratched a pattern of lines on it
For reasons he could not tell,
Only it somehow seemed to fit;
And it pleased him passing well.

Hau Koranna the Hottentot,
Somewhere below the Equator,
Fashioned a spoon for his porridge-pot,
Which he gave to a white man later.
And on the spoon, since he had the knack
And could do the thing in a minute,
He stained a pattern of white and black,
And he found much pleasure in it.

I who sit at my desk and write
Some verses if it shall please me,
And make them, perhaps, for my delight,
Or only, that I may ease me
Of longings with which my soul is fraught,
Do a similar thing I know
To the squares on the spoon of the Hottentot
And the lines of the Eskimo.



THE GIFT-BRINGER

WHAT would I ask of Spring but what she gives
Freely to all who greet her as she walks
By woodland, or by field, or city street;
The pulsing of new life by which one lives
Again the springs of other days, and mocks
The solemn years that pass on tireless feet.

Though former springs may not return again
I will be happy with the spring that is,
Smell the faint perfume of the early flowers,
Feel on my cheek the kisses of the rain,
And with the lengthening days know Nature's bliss
That grows more vocal with the passing hours.

The frogs in marshy ponds are now rejoicing
At their release from winter's cruel sway,
When evening fills the sky their notes I hear.
The birds in morning choruses are voicing
Joy so abundant it must sing always
As if there were no winter in the year.

These are my fellow-revellers, and I,
Who long have waited for their coming, know
I may with them Spring's gracious influence prove
May sun my soul beneath her kindly sky,
And see while perfumed breezes gently blow
Spring crown herself with beauty and with love.



SLEEP

WHEN I was a little child
I often lay awake at night
Trying to catch myself going to sleep,
But I never did.
And when I awoke in the morning
I would try to recall
Just what I thought about
Before that wonderful thing happened
Which made the hours of darkness
Seem as if they had never been.

And now that I am grown,
The feelings of childhood
Often come back to me,
And I look curiously
To see the shadowy form of sleep slip through the door,
And I listen for her soft whisper,
And I wait to feel the gentle touch of her hand,
And her kiss upon my forehead,
As I listened and looked and waited
In the long ago.

And I pray that when the dusk of life's twilight shall gather,
And the sleep that men call death shall hover near me,
I shall await the mystery
With the wonder and confidence
That I knew as a little child.

A SHIPWRECKED SAILOR SPEAKS

I SAT an idle hour this afternoon
And watched the tide come in. How patiently
The little waves, beneath the ocean's urge,
Advanced, receded, then advanced again;
Till rocks that late were bare at length were touched
And then were covered: and the creatures small,
Waiting in crevices the tide's return,
Now found their world restored to them once more.

And all the while unto my heart there came
The tides of memory, each thought a wave
That, added to its fellows, covered quite
The sense of here and now; and I did pray
That that same Power which kept the changeful sea
True to its daily trysting with the shore
Would somehow bring my world to me again.



LILACS

MANY the blossoms in my garden showing,
Now that the welcome spring has come with blessing
Of showers falling, and of warm airs blowing,
To tempt them forth for the sun's soft caressing.

Yellow laburnum with its tassels gay;
The bleeding-heart that tells of lovers' sadness;
And bridal-wreath, the herald of the May,
That fills the hearts of all with thoughts of gladness;

The tulips in their stately pride outshining
The colors which the glowing West discloses.
Though these shall pass there need be no repining,
Since in a few short days will come the roses.

But I love most of all the lilac bloom
Of white and purple by my garden's side
The haunting fragrance of their faint perfume
Sets all the doors of memory open wide.

And I am then a child without a care
Within an old-time garden, and the grace
Of springs long past is in my heart, and there,
Smiling above me, is my mother's face.

THE RIVERS OF EDEN

FOUR rivers flowed out of Eden,
So we are told;
One compassed the land of Havilah
Where there was gold.
And of the second the waters
About Ethiopia flowed,
And the third upon Assyria
Its gracious gifts bestowed.
The fourth, the great Euphrates,
Eastward and southward ran,
Mother of cities and empires
Since the peopled world began.

Four rivers flow from the Eden
Of man's dream;
Their course is the course of history,
So it would seem.
The first is the river of hope;
On its bosom it bears
Stately vessels laden
With costly wares.
The next is the river of toil,
Its waters give
Life to herb and tree
By which men live.
The third is the river of peace;
Its quiet deeps,
Reflect the quiet stars
While nature sleeps.
And the last, the mightiest far,
To all men known,
Is the river of love that flows
About God's throne.



POMPEII

I ONCE did read how where a city stood
In ancient times, men dug and for their pains
Found treasures many. Marble palaces,
Baths, fountains, colonnades, all stood revealed,
And statues in whose beauty, still preserved,
The world might see the beauty that had been.

The city had been buried in an hour
By some volcanic outburst which had driven
All its inhabitants in panic flight
To regions where the deadly rain might cease.
Not all escaped, so swift the peril came;
And I recall that in one street were found
Two skeletons, a woman's and a boy's,
And careful scrutiny the fact revealed
The boy was lame, the woman had remained
To help him and had perished at his side.
She was his mother, one would surely guess,
And in that dreadful hour when others fled
She would not leave him though she could not save.

The palaces are vacant all, and curious folk
Now view the streets that have been echoless
Nearly two thousand years; and yet there lives
As though the thing had happened yesterday
This witness of a nameless mother's love.



HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

THREE hundred and more years ago,
In the spacious days of Good Queen Bess,
(So we are told)
That interesting lady was one day walking
With her lords and ladies,
And they came to a puddle in the roadway,
And they were greatly nonplussed
For it would never do in the world
For a queen to soil her shoes.
And Sir Walter Raleigh,
Who perhaps had an eye to the main chance
(Though I like to think that had nothing to do with it)
Took his brand-new cloak and spread it before her,
And the problem was solved.

Now I mention this,
Because the other day
I saw this incident re-enacted
Under somewhat different conditions.
He was shovelling earth on a street
That had recently been flooded,
And she stood on the sidewalk
And wanted to get across
To her car that was parked on the other side.

And he, seeing her dismay,
 Said, "Lady, let me help you!"
 Then he laid his shovel flat
 And she stepped on it
 And then to a bit of dry ground;
 And they repeated the performance
 Till she got to her car.
 Then she thanked him graciously,
 And I did not hear what he said in reply
 But he made a sweeping gesture
 That would have done credit
 To a Spanish grandee.
 Then I knew that his name must really have been Sir Walter
 Raleigh,
 Though his fellows called him Pete,
 And he looked as if he were a Mexican.
 And though she wore horn-rimmed glasses
 And had bobbed her hair,
 She might easily have been
 Queen Elizabeth.
 For if that interesting lady (as aforesaid)
 Were living now,
 She would certainly bob her hair,
 And perhaps wear horn-rimmed glasses,
 And, like as not,
 Drive a flivver.



THE WISH—A SONG

WOULD I might make for you a song to-night
 A song for you alone,
 To catch the glory of the pale moonlight,
 The brightness of the sun upon his throne,
 The joy that fades not with the passing hours,
 The charm that Nature wears when springtime sweet
 Garlands her love, the waking earth with flowers,
 As she passes on viewless feet.

 Then I would ask the many-scented breeze
 That wanders the woods among,
 Kissing the little leaves on all the trees,
 To give me for my song
 An elfin music; so when dreams should rise
 And hover o'er your bed
 Like archèd rainbows in the evening skies,
 You would hear and be comforted.

LITTLE WATERS

AFTER the rains the little waters run
Beside the roadway sparkling in the sun,
Gushing from every bank and eagerly
Hastening downward to their home, the sea.

In winter-time when briefest days have come
And trees are bare and all the birds are dumb,
And frosty silence rests upon the hill,
They make for me a jubilant music still.

They of the morning's gladness are a part,
They sing to me as if they knew my heart
Would feel the spring if only it could hear
The sound of little waters running clear.



THE SAGE-BRUSH

VAST regions have I seen where little grows
Within the wide horizon's limits, save
The sturdy sage-brush and it bravely shows
Its grey-green leaves beneath the burning sky,
While in its shadow starveling grasses wave
As aimlessly the desert winds drift by.

I wonder if the creatures small that live
Unheeded lives about its roots, regard
The sage-brush as a mighty tree and give
It worship as the Druids did of old
The stately oaks that kept their age-long ward
In forests long since crumbled into mould.



A MEMORY

ONCE we two as children went
Gathering beechnuts in a wood,
All the ground with leaves besprent,
All around us solitude.

Naked boughs above us hung,
Bright beyond, the evening sky,
As we searched the leaves among,
We were happy, you and I;

Happy as the squirrels that ran
Up and down the tree-trunks old,
Richer with our treasure than
Fabled Midas with his gold.

Tell me, do the beeches stand,
Tell me, do the sunsets glow
Still in childhood's fairyland.
Thither I would gladly go.

I would gladly cross the span
Of the years 'twixt now and then,
And where childhood first began
Gather beechnuts once again.



THE PROPHECY

THE WEST held naught but cloud and mystery.
The air with dark blue shadows seemed to fill,
When kindly fortune turned my gaze to see
A little patch of sunlight on the hill.

For a brief space a wavering bit of glory
Made radiant the forest's sombre green.
It told to watching eyes the welcome story
Eve would be brighter than the morn had been.

Happy the heart that, when the shadows gather
And little good appears to match life's ill,
Sees not the heavens dark with clouds but rather
The little patch of sunlight on the hill.



THE MESSAGE

ALWAYS the day speaks to my soul
A message which the night repeats,
"Never mayst thou know the whole
Of beauty, for she hourly greets
With new wonder and surprise
Those who scan her mysteries."

“Each morning is creation’s dawn
Each evening sets new stars alight,
The suns of other days are gone,
To-night is not as yesternight,
Thou hast changed and by that change
All outward things are new and strange.”

“So it shall be evermore,
Nature is not the same to thee
As Nature was in days of yore;
And in future thou shalt see
A miracle with each new morn
Because new beauty in thy soul is born.”



A SONG FOR A GREY DAY

ATHIN mist hovers and the rain is falling,
The night comes early and the days are drear.
But the dark earth listens for a low voice calling,
“Awake and deck yourself with joy; the spring is here.”

In the woodland shelters the snow still lingers,
Sombre are the wayside pools beneath a clouded sky,
But the willow-buds have felt the touch of spring’s soft fingers,
And the greening alders tell their faith that spring is nigh.

The day brings sorrow and the night brings longing,
And the heart is a-weary of life’s mist and rain,
But listen, Love, listen! to the new hopes thronging,
Winter soon will end and ’twill be spring again.



THE BROOM

WHOO HAS seen the broom in flower
By the rocky shore
Has within his heart a dower
Precious evermore.

Who has seen its yellow aisles
By the roadside stand
Has been sure the gladsome miles
Led to fairyland.

Who has seen its fairy gold
On the hillside gleam
Will the sight again behold
On the hills of dream.

Who has seen the broom in flower
In the days of spring
All the year will wait the hour
Of its blossoming.



ISLAND MEMORIES

(Deep Cove, Saanich Arm, V.I.)

IN MEMORY I see the tall trees stand
Calm and majestic in the cool of dawn;
I hear, as darkness broods o'er sea and land,
And from the western hills the day has gone,
Deep organ music as the night wind passes;
I feel the touch of spring's caressing hand,
And scent the flowers in the forest grasses.

And I recall that in that charmèd spot
The sunset glow of summer lavishly
Lays all its rainbow glories on the sea,
Lest beauty be by careless eyes forgot.



CHAOS AND ANCIENT NIGHT

I SAW this eve in solemn majesty
Chaos that was before the worlds were made,
Enthroned in mists upon a wintry sea,
And near at hand were heavy shadows laid,
A darkness deeper still, and this was Night,
The Ancient night who long with chaos reigned
In time that was before that time began
Within whose narrow limits is contained
All that makes up the little life of man.

Then, with the ancient sage I took my place,
And saw the mighty scheme of things unfold,
The spirit brooding on the water's face,
The primal mists and shadows backward rolled,
Chaos and Darkness in their headlong flight,
At that great mandate, "Let there now be light!"



THE ANSWER

"ALL THINGS flow; nothing abides,"
So Heraclitus spake of old;
"And he who thinks that nature hides
A purpose in her changes manifold,
Has nature's witness disregarded quite.
The clouds, the rivers, yea! the solid earth,
The seasons with their months, the day, the night,
For ever die; for ever come to birth."

Then answered him Parmenides:
"Ask not of Nature, she is blind,
Wisdom is not in such as these;
Ask thou of the Eternal Mind
That sits enthroned within thine inmost heart;
It is the Truth thy doctrine hath denied,
It is the Whole of which these are a part.
These might not change if it did not abide."



A SONNET

THE THOUGHTS these words of mine would fain convey
Are not at all for merit in men's eyes;
When darkness falls one sees within the skies
The little stars that shine the night away,
True to their humble tasks, till morning grey
Tells of a brighter star that soon shall rise;
And in its growing light their splendor dies
Yielding its homage to the Lord of Day.

No other purpose would my verses show
Than but to shine when all about seems dark
So here and there within the sky may grow,
For souls oppressed with tedious cares to mark,
A point of light which, till their night is gone,
May be to them a promise of the dawn.



THE PHILISTINE

I DO NOT read modern novels any more;
And the reason is not
That I condemn modern art
In a wholesale fashion,
And think that all the good stories have been told.

It is rather because I have seen life
And have felt its pressure in a thousand ways
Too subtle for words to describe;
And there are so many novels
Locked up in my own breast
That I would rather ponder them
Than the thoughts and acts of men and women
Who sometimes behave like human beings,
But are not human beings as I know them.

For frankness compels me to say
That I do not believe,
As most modern novelists seem to,
That the dirt is more real than the sunshine,
And that love is always an illusion,
And that sex is everything;
For if man is a brute
He is a divine brute
Who will some day outgrow his brutish ways.

This is at least the creed
I would wish to live by;
And might even be willing to die for,
Though dying for a creed is, I know
Somewhat out of fashion nowadays.

And so to certain superior persons I am a Philistine and
almost a fool.
Worse than all, I am Victorian;
For some of my stories have happy endings.

ANDROMEDA

Note: Andromeda, daughter of Cassiopeia, was, according to Greek mythology, chained to a rock to be devoured by a monster sent by Poseidon. She was rescued by the hero Perseus, who made her his queen. At her death she was placed in the sky as one of the constellations.

IT WAS your mother's boast that you outshone
Poseidon's daughters in your beauty rare;
And so the sea-god, vexed that one should dare
To challenge deity, his anger grown
To fierceness, sent against the hapless land
A monster terrible, who, far and wide,
Carried Poseidon's vengeance. None might hide,
Much less by strength of arm its power withstand.
So to a rock above the waves they chained
Your tender limbs to check the sea-god's ire,
Innocent victim of a fate most dire,
For so the mystic oracle ordained.
Then Perseus came and the dread monster slew
Who claimed you for its prey, and you he bore
To Argos by the bright Ægean shore,
Made you his queen and gave you honour due.
And when at last you died, Athena gave
A place within the sky to you who stood
Chained to a rock beside the cruel flood
So haply thus you might your people save.
And still remain throughout the years your charms;
For, as I walk abroad, I see to-night,
High in the southern sky, a line of light
Made by the stars which are your outstretched arms.



JUNE

In Stanley Park, Vancouver, B.C.

THE RISING tide of life in these long hours
Of brooding calm has reached its full; the trees
Now wear their amplest leafage, and the breeze
Bears all abroad the perfume of the flowers.
The snowy peaks rise clear from the blue haze
That clothes the mountains' shoulders and the sea,
Wide as the eye can range, smiles peacefully
In happy languor of warm sunny days.

June has no need that one should speak in praise
Of all her charms, nor yet her sisters twain
Who follow with her in the stately train
Of months and seasons, for the spell she lays
Upon the sad heart and the unquiet brain
Is woven all of mystery and delight,
The whisper and soft kiss of summer night,
And grateful coolness of dim forest ways.



SHADOWS

POETS have sung of sunlight-flooded fields,
Of gold of morn, and radiance of eve;
Of noontide warmth to which the spirit yields
All sense of care; and yet I dare believe
That shadows have a beauty all their own.
What soul has not been gladdened by the sight
Of patterns dark in rich profusion shown,
What time the forest aisles are flecked with light
In morning early or late afternoon:
Or has not seen with joy the shadows lie
Prone on the level landscape while the moon
Pale as a ghost hangs in the evening sky?
And who with eyes o'ertasked by too much seeing
Has not within his heart thanksgiving made
That He who gave the radiant sun its being
Gave also shade?



A PRAYER

LORD, give grace to-night to weary ones,
Who ask, perhaps, no other boon of Thee,
Than just to sleep, and wake to sleep again,
Or rest, perhaps, within some sunlit glade
Where enters not the babble of the crowd,
But where, instead, the voices of the trees
Come as soft music to the tired heart,
As they converse when morning breezes stir,
Or as, in noontide heats they softly whisper
Secrets philosophers shall never know.

The way of life is hard at times for such,
Who crave for joy as plants reach forth for light,
Who lack not courage, for they bear the weight
Of others' burdens, but who feel the need
Of Nature's consolations, which are Thine.
O Lord, give grace to-night to weary ones.



SUMMER NIGHT

THE CRICKET'S song seems faint and far away,
Yet steadily it falls upon my ear,
Its plaintive burden is the same alway
Nor will it cease until the dawn is here.

What is its meaning I shall never know
It is, perhaps, a token of love's spell
And seeks while starlit hours come and go
Love's ancient tale of faithfulness to tell.

Or is it that the velvet touch of night
That hides the world of objects from my view
Brings to his heart such raptures of delight
As my poor human senses never knew.

Such speculation is but idle guess,
And yet the cricket's monotone to me
Is of all voices fittest to express
Love's weight of longing and night's mystery.



AUTHORITIES

HOW DO I know that spring is here?
Why! less than a short hour ago
A robin on an apple bough
Spoke the word plainly in my ear.
He well deserves believing, you'll allow;
He surely ought to know.

How do I know that spring is here?
A band of wild geese from the blue
Proclaimed it as they sped along.
I paused to note the message clear
Northward they sped on wings so swift and strong.
One could but feel they knew.

How do I know that spring is here?
Each schoolboy has his marbles out;
Each girl her skipping-rope or ball.
They've heard the message, never fear,
Their ears were open to the season's call,
They know what they're about.

But mostly I believe the sun,
His yellow beams most surely say
Winter is overthrown at last.
The buds are swelling every one.
The flowers in field and wood will follow fast,
Let's all make holiday.



VARIATION ON A THEME

FOREVER" has been written
A million, million times,
It has been very useful
To poets in their rhymes.

"Forever" has been spoken
Quite often, I suppose,
In vows that soon have faded
Like petals from the rose,

But when I heard you say it,
It had a meaning new,
It seemed to mean forever
And not a day or two.

And so I use it in a way
To laws of verse untrue
And yet it's poetry to me,
I make it rhyme with "you."



THE IDEALIST

"HE is a dreamer," people say,
"Who will not see the sun at noon,
But seeks instead the shadows gray
And the pale radiance of the moon."

"He is the sort our logic hates,
He does not heed those stubborn things,
The facts of life, but sits and waits
To hear the beat of angels' wings."

"He looks beyond the commonplace
—All that we see in man and woman—
And seems to find in every face
A glimpse of something more than human."

Yet he is never over much
Concerned his critics to refute,
Because his soul has felt a touch
That gives it knowledge absolute.

And Truth is more than lucky guess,
And Friendship more than idle whim,
And Beauty more than prettiness,
And Love is more than life to him.



A MARCH DAY

CHEERFUL and changeable
Days of Spring,
New life showing
In everything.

Skies of the bluest,
Then again
Clouds wind-driven
Bring the rain.

Daffodils shine
By the garden side
Close beside them
Violets hide.

March speaks promise;
April lingers
To touch the hills
With magic fingers.

Why should my heart
Not wake and sing
With the cheerful and changeable
Days of Spring?



FACES

IT IS a common saying
That no two human faces are alike,
And no doubt the saying is true;
But what strikes me most about the faces of the people that I
meet
Is that they are so much alike.

Many are tired looking and furrowed with lines, not of thought,
but of care,
And though a thoughtful face may inspire,
A tired face only saddens me.
Many others look merely bored,
As if their owners having sat partly through the show that we
call life,
Regret that they cannot go to the box-office and get their
money back.

But I thank Heaven that there are some faces
That shine with an inner light of humour and understanding and
sympathy.
And these brighten my day
Like the smile of the sun
On the May morning;
For they confirm a suspicion I have always held,
That, in spite of appearances,
Life is really worth while.



TO THE MOON

YOU HAVE looked down in cold serenity
Upon a barren planet void of life:
And your mild radiance over land and sea
Careless was cast when land and sea were rife
With promise of the shapes that were to be,
The growth prolific of the mighty deep,
The grass, the flower and the forest tree,
And myriad forms that fly and run and creep.
With equal calm you view the creature man
Who fronts the universe with curious eyes,
And dares with mind unsatisfied to scan
The farthest star within the farthest skies.

Yet from your shining orb have come the themes
By poets sung in every land and age.
Your rays have woven magic with the dreams
Of lovers, long before the crowded page
Of history began; and men have worship given
And nightly watched to see your splendour grow;
You were Astarte, beauteous Queen of Heaven,
You were Diana of the silver bow.
To-night there come to me the while you move
Among the little stars that faintly show,
Longing and loneliness and wistful love,
Passions these are which you may never know.

STARS

THE ROWS of street lamps shining,
Pearls on a sombre thread,
Are stars of man's designing,
God's stars are overhead.

Man sets his stars a-gleaming
His little hour to light.
For ages beyond dreaming
The stars of God are bright.

Without man's stars to aid me
My earthly way were dim.
The stars of God have made me
A shining path to Him.



THE BUILDER

I LAUNCHED a vessel, unafraid,
Of stout oak and iron made.
"She will stand the storm," I thought,
"Harm to her can ne'er be wrought,"
Yet her planks have strewn the shore
For a score of years and more.

I set a tiny ship afloat,
Fragile as a paper boat.
Fitted with sails of gossamer,
What should be the fate of her?
She would be a pretty toy
Wind and wave would soon destroy.
Yet she sailed the wintry sea,
Brought my dearest hope to me.

I built a house upon a rock,
All the power of time to mock.
Deep were its foundations set,
Massive, wall and parapet;
Yet an earthquake laid it low
Many, many years ago.

I built a castle in the sky,
Out of dream and fantasy,
Shaped it to an idle tune
On a summer afternoon.
It is standing yet, I know,
I can see its outlines show
When the sunset turns to grey.
I shall live in it some day.

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