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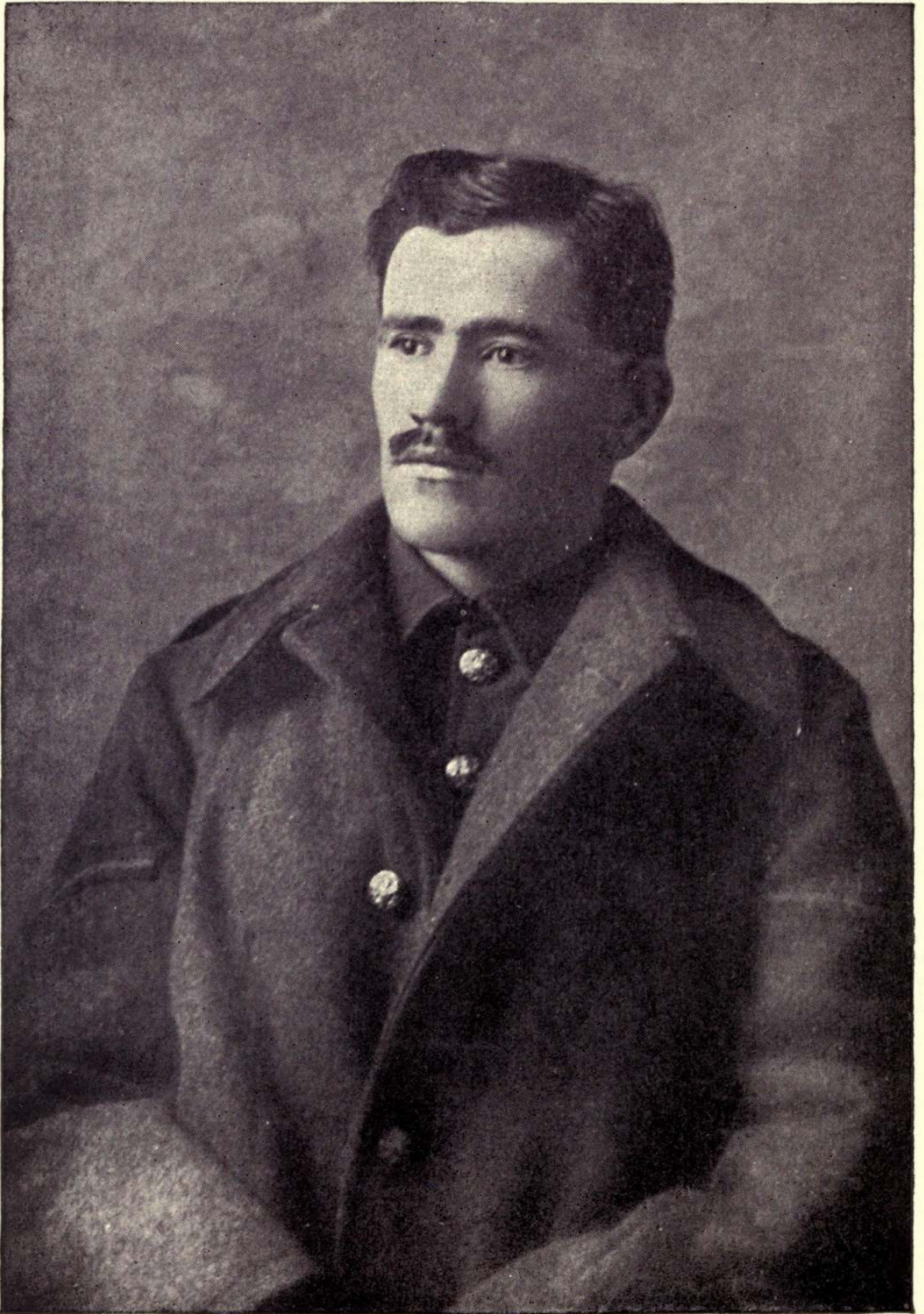
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THE COMPLETE POEMS  
OF FRANCIS LEDWIDGE





FRANCIS LEDWIDGE



THE  
COMPLETE POEMS  
OF  
FRANCIS LEDWIDGE

WITH INTRODUCTIONS  
BY LORD DUNSANY

HERBERT JENKINS LIMITED  
3 YORK STREET ST. JAMES'S  
LONDON S.W.1 : : : MCMXIX





*Printed in Great Britain by Ebenezer Baylis & Son,  
Trinity Works, Worcester.*

PR  
6023  
E25A17  
1919



TO  
MY MOTHER  
THE FIRST SINGER I KNEW







# INTRODUCTION TO SONGS OF THE FIELDS

DUNSANY CASTLE,

*June, 1914.*

**I**F one who looked from a tower for a new star, watching for years the same part of the sky, suddenly saw it (quite by chance while thinking of other things), and knew it for the star for which he had hoped, how many millions of men would never care?

And the star might blaze over deserts and forests and seas, cheering lost wanderers in desolate lands, or guiding dangerous quests; millions would never know it.

And a poet is no more than a star.

If one has arisen where I have so long looked for one, amongst the Irish peasants, it can be little more than a secret that I shall share with those who read this book because they care for poetry.

I have looked for a poet amongst the Irish peasants because it seemed to me that almost only amongst them there was in daily use a



diction worthy of poetry, as well as an imagination capable of dealing with the great and simple things that are a poet's wares. Their thoughts are in the spring-time, and all their metaphors fresh: in London no one makes metaphors any more, but daily speech is strewn thickly with dead ones that their users should write upon paper and give to their gardeners to burn.

In this same London, two years ago, where I was wasting June, I received a letter one day from Mr. Ledwidge and a very old copy-book. The letter asked whether there was any good in the verses that filled the copy-book, the produce apparently of four or five years. It began with a play in verse that no manager would dream of, there were mistakes in grammar, in spelling of course, and worse—there were such phrases as “’thwart the rolling foam,” “waiting for my true love on the lea,” etc., which are vulgarly considered to be the appurtenances of poetry; but out of these and many similar errors there arose continually, like a mountain sheer out of marshes, that easy fluency of shapely lines which is now so noticeable in all that he writes; that and sudden glimpses of the fields that he seems at times to bring so near to one that one exclaims,



“ Why, that is how Meath looks,” or “ It is just like that along the Boyne in April,” quite taken by surprise by familiar things : for none of us knows, till the poets point them out, how many beautiful things are close about us.

Of pure poetry there are two kinds, that which mirrors the beauty of the world in which our bodies are, and that which builds the more mysterious kingdoms where geography ends and fairyland begins, with gods and heroes at war, and the sirens singing still, and Alph going down to the darkness from Xanadu. Mr. Ledwidge gives us the first kind. When they have read through the profounder poets, and seen the problem plays, and studied all the perplexities that puzzle man in the cities, the small circle of readers that I predict for him will turn to Ledwidge as to a mirror reflecting beautiful fields, as to a very still lake rather on a very cloudless evening.

There is scarcely a smile of Spring or a sigh of Autumn that is not reflected here, scarcely a phase of the large benedictions of Summer ; even of Winter he gives us clear glimpses sometimes, albeit mournfully, remembering Spring.

“ In the red west the twisted moon is low,  
And on the bubbles there are half-lit stars .



Music and twilight : and the deep blue flow  
 Of water : and the watching fire of Mars.  
 The deep fish slipping through the moonlit bars  
 Make death a thing of sweet dreams,—”

What a Summer's evening is here.

And this is a Summer's night in a much longer poem that I have not included in this selection, a summer's night seen by two lovers :

“The large moon rose up queenly as a flower  
 Charmed by some Indian pipes. A hare went by,  
 A snipe above them circled in the sky.”

And elsewhere he writes, giving us the mood and picture of Autumn in a single line :

“And somewhere all the wandering birds have flown.”

With such simple scenes as this the book is full, giving nothing at all to those that look for a “message,” but bringing a feeling of quiet from gleaming Irish evenings, a book to read between the Strand and Piccadilly Circus amidst the thunder and hootings.

To every poet is given the revelation of some living thing so intimate that he speaks, when he speaks of it, as an ambassador speaking for his sovereign ; with Homer it was the heroes, with Ledwidge it is the small birds that sing, but in particular especially the blackbird, whose cause he champions against all other



birds almost with a vehemence such as that with which men discuss whether Mr. —, M.P., or his friend the Right Honourable — is really the greater ruffian. This is how he speaks of the blackbird in one of his earliest poems ; he was sixteen when he wrote it, in a grocer's shop in Dublin, dreaming of Slane, where he was born ; and his dreams turned out to be too strong for the grocery business, for he walked home one night, a distance of thirty miles :

“Above me smokes the little town  
With its whitewashed walls and roofs of brown  
And its octagon spire toned smoothly down  
As the holy minds within.  
And wondrous, impudently sweet,  
Half of him passion, half conceit,  
The blackbird calls adown the street,  
Like the piper of Hamelin.”

Let us not call him the Burns of Ireland, you who may like this book, nor even the Irish John Clare, though he is more like him, for poets are all incomparable (it is only the versifiers that resemble the great ones), but let us know him by his own individual song : he is the poet of the blackbird.

I hope that not too many will be attracted to this book on account of the author being a peasant, lest he come to be praised by the how-



interesting ! school ; for know that neither in any class, nor in any country, nor in any age, shall you predict the foctfall of Pegasus, who touches the earth where he pleaseth and is bridled by whom he will.

DUNSANY.

*June, 1914.*

BASINGSTOKE CAMP.

I WROTE this preface in such a different June, that if I sent it out with no addition it would make the book appear to have dropped a long while since out of another world, a world that none of us remembers now, in which there used to be leisure.

Ledwidge came last October into the 5th Battalion of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, which is in one of the divisions of Kitchener's first army, and soon earned a lance-corporal's stripe.

All his future books lie on the knees of the gods. May They not be the only readers.

Any well-informed spy can probably tell you our movements, so of such things I say nothing.

DUNSANY, *Captain,*  
*5th R. Inniskilling Fusiliers.*

*June, 1915.*



## INTRODUCTION TO SONGS OF PEACE

EBRINGTON BARRACKS,

*September, 1916.*

**I**N this selection that Corporal Ledwidge has asked me to make from his poems I have included "A Dream of Artemis," though it was incomplete and has been hurriedly finished. Were it not included on that account many lines of extraordinary beauty would remain unseen. He asked me if I did not think that it ended too abruptly, but so many pleasant things ended abruptly in the summer of 1914, when this poem was being written, that the blame for that may rest on a meaner, though more exalted, head than that of the poet.

In this poem, as in the other one that has a classical theme, "The Departure of Proserpine," those who remember their classics may find faults, but I read the "Dream of Artemis" merely as an expression of things that the poet has seen and dreamed in Meath, including a most beautiful description of a fox-hunt in



the north of the county, in which he has probably taken part on foot; and in "The Departure of Proserpine," whether conscious or not, a crystallization in verse of an autumnal mood induced by falling leaves and exile and the possible nearness of death.

The second poem in the book was written about a little boy who used to drive cows for some farmer past the poet's door very early every morning, whistling as he went, and who died just before the war. I think that its beautiful and spontaneous simplicity would cost some of our writers gallons of midnight oil.

Of the next, "To a Distant One," who will not hope that when "Fame and other little things are won" its clear and confident prophecy will be happily fulfilled?

Quite perfect, if my judgment is of any value, is the little poem on page 175, "In the Mediterranean—Going to the War."

Another beautiful thing is "Homecoming" on page 192.

"The sheep are coming home in Greece,  
Hark the bells on every hill,  
Flock by flock and fleece by fleece."



One feels that the Greeks are of some use, after all, to have inspired—with the help of their sheep—so lovely a poem.

“The Shadow People” on page 205 seems to me another perfect poem. Written in Serbia and Egypt, it shows the poet still looking steadfastly at those fields, though so far distant then, of which he was surely born to be the singer. And this devotion to the fields of Meath that, in nearly all his songs, from such far places brings his spirit home, like the instinct that has been given to the swallows, seems to be the key-note of the book. For this reason I have named it *Songs of Peace*, in spite of the circumstances under which they were written.

There follow poems at which some may wonder: “To Thomas McDonagh,” “The Blackbirds,” “The Wedding Morning”; but rather than attribute curious sympathies to this brave young Irish soldier I would ask his readers to consider the irresistible attraction that a lost cause has for almost any Irishman.

Once the swallow instinct appears again—in the poem called “The Lure”—and a longing



for the South, and again in the poem called "Song": and then the Irish fields content him again, and we find him on the last page but one in the book making a poem for a little place called Faughan, because he finds that its hills and woods and streams are unsung. Surely for this if there be, as many believed, gods lesser than Those whose business is with destiny, thunder and war, small gods that haunt the groves, seen only at times by few, and then indistinctly at evening, surely from gratitude they will give him peace.

DUNSANY



## INTRODUCTION TO LAST SONGS

THE HINDENBERG LINE,  
*October 9th, 1917.*

**W**RITING amidst rather too much noise and squalor to do justice at all to the delicate rustic muse of Francis Ledwidge, I do not like to delay his book any longer, nor to fail in a promise long ago made to him to write this introduction. He has gone down in that vast maelstrom into which poets do well to adventure and from which their country might perhaps be wise to withhold them, but that is our Country's affair. He has left behind him verses of great beauty, simple rural lyrics that may be something of an anodyne for this stricken age. If ever an age needed beautiful little songs our age needs them; and I know few songs more peaceful and happy, or better suited to soothe the scars on the mind of those



who have looked on certain places, of which the prophecy in the gospels seems no more than an ominous hint when it speaks of the abomination of desolation.

He told me once that it was on one particular occasion, when walking at evening through the village of Slane in summer, that he heard a blackbird sing. The notes, he said, were very beautiful, and it is this blackbird that he tells of in three wonderful lines in his early poem called "Behind the Closed Eye," and it is this song perhaps more than anything else that has been the inspiration of his brief life. Dynasties shook and the earth shook; and the war, not yet described by any man, revelled and wallowed in destruction around him; and Francis Ledwidge stayed true to his inspiration, as his homeward songs will show.

I had hoped he would have seen the fame he has well deserved; but it is hard for a poet to live to see fame even in times of peace. In these days it is harder than ever.

DUNSANY.



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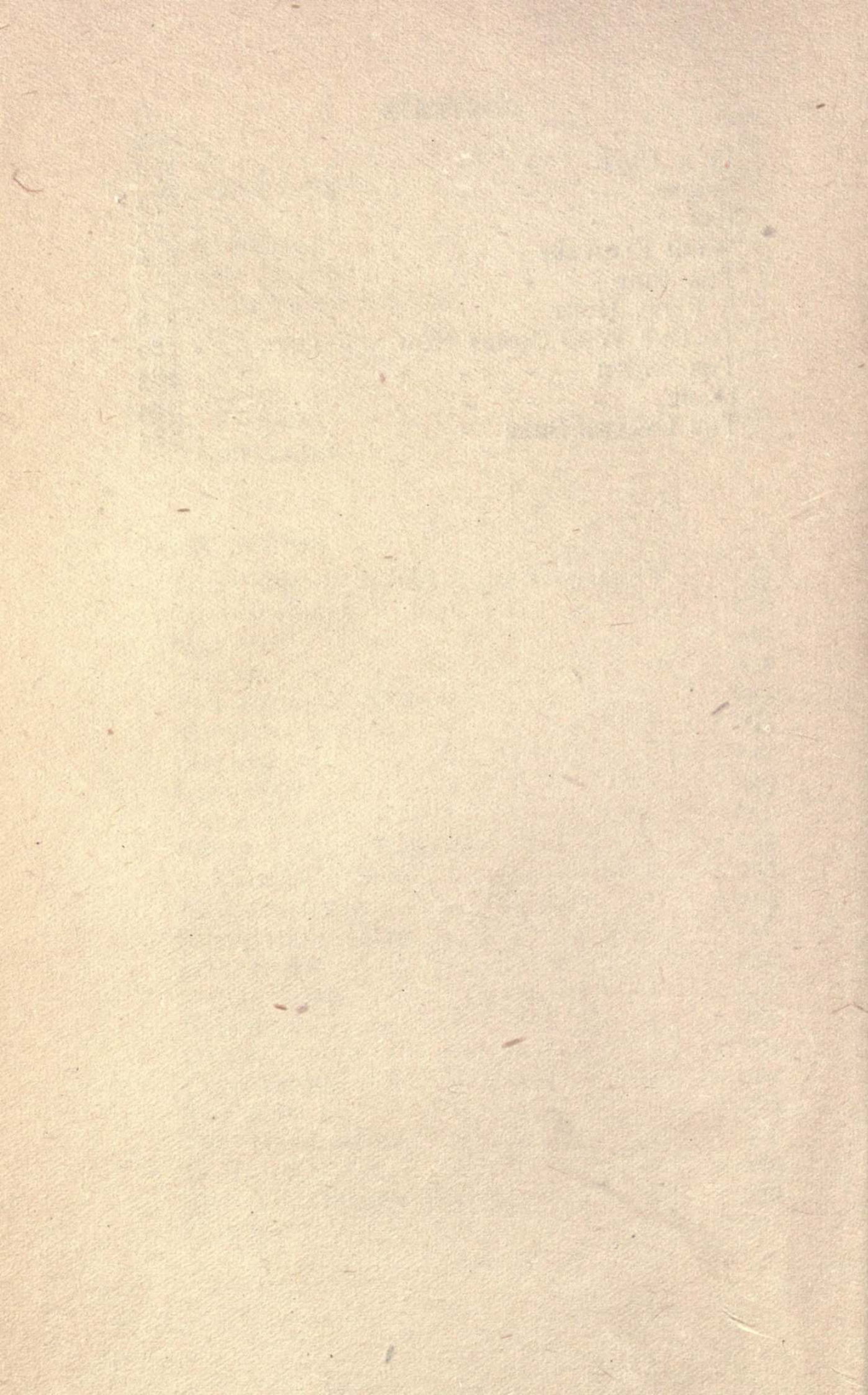
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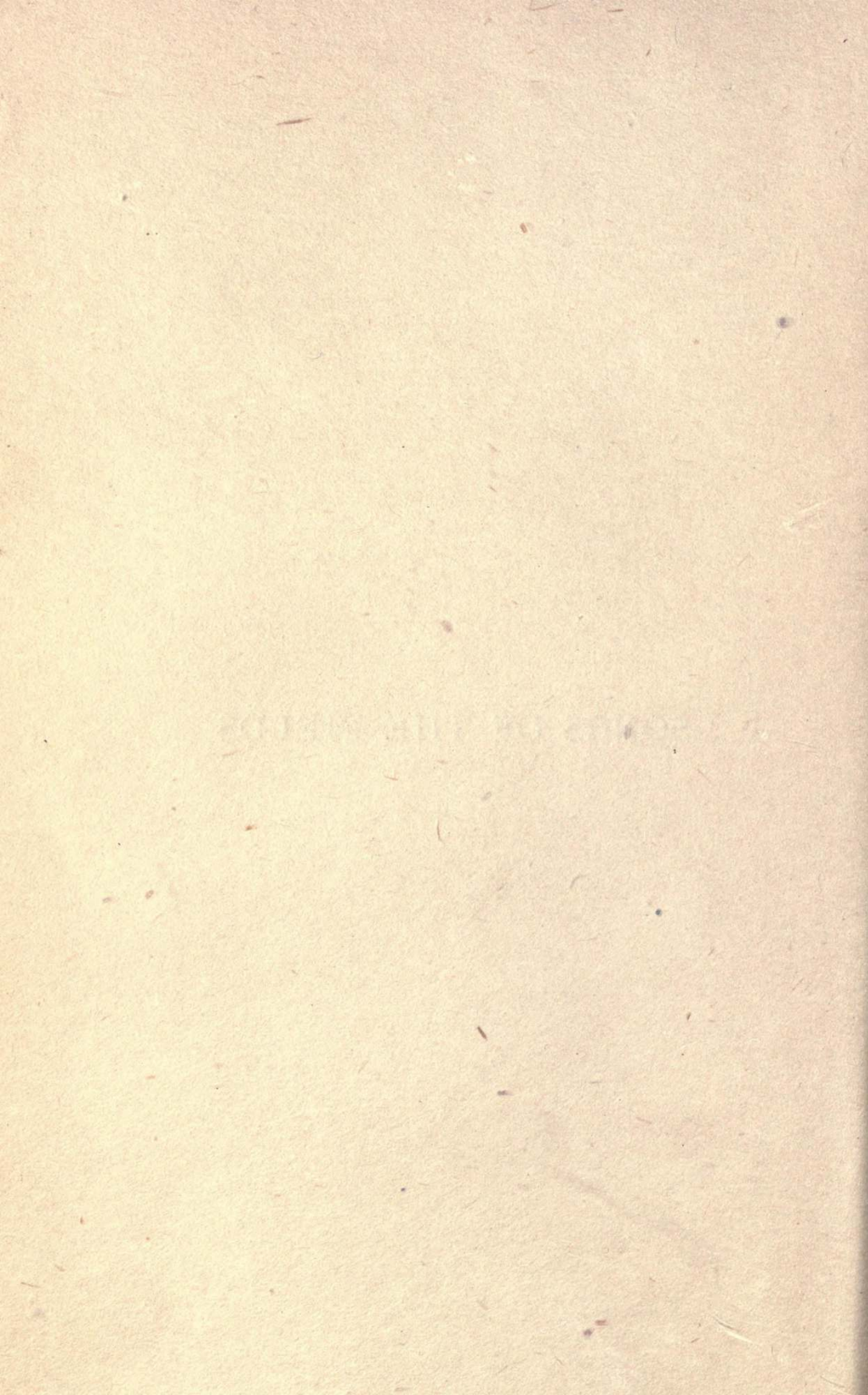






SONGS OF THE FIELDS







TO MY BEST FRIEND

I LOVE the wet-lipped wind that stirs the hedge

And kisses the bent flowers that drooped for

rain,

That stirs the poppy on the sun-burned ledge

And like a swan dies singing, without pain.

The golden bees go buzzing down to stain

The lilies' frills, and the blue harebell rings,

And the sweet blackbird in the rainbow

sings.

Deep in the meadows I would sing a song,

The shallow brook my tuning-fork, the birds

My masters ; and the boughs they hop along



Shall mark my time : but there shall be no  
words

For lurking Echo's mock ; an angel herds

Words that I may not know, within, for you,  
Words for the faithful meet, the good and true.



## BEHIND THE CLOSED EYE

I WALK the old frequented ways  
That wind around the tangled braes,  
I live again the sunny days  
Ere I the city knew.

And scenes of old again are born,  
The woodbine lassoing the thorn,  
And drooping Ruth-like in the corn  
The poppies weep the dew.

Above me in their hundred schools  
The magpies bend their young to rules,  
And like an apron full of jewels  
The dewy cobweb swings.



And frisking in the stream below

The troutlets make the circles flow,

And the hungry crane doth watch them grow

As a smoker does his rings.

Above me smokes the little town,

With its whitewashed walls and roofs of brown

And its octagon spire toned smoothly down

As the holy minds within.

And wondrous impudently sweet,

Half of him passion, half conceit,

The blackbird calls adown the street

Like the piper of Hamelin.

I hear him, and I feel the lure

Drawing me back to the homely moor,

I'll go and close the mountains' door

On the city's strife and din.



## BOUND TO THE MAST

WHEN mildly falls the deluge of the grass,  
And meads begin to rise like Noah's flood,  
And o'er the hedgerows flow, and onward pass,  
Dribbling thro' many a wood ;

When hawthorn trees their flags of truce un-  
furl,

And dykes are spitting violets to the breeze ;  
When meadow larks their jocund flight will  
curl

From Earth's to Heaven's leas ;

Ah ! then the poet's dreams are most sublime,  
A-sail on seas that know a heavenly calm,  
And in his song you hear the river's rhyme,



And the first bleat of the lamb.

Then when the summer evenings fall serene,  
Unto the country dance his songs repair,  
And you may meet some maids with angel mien,  
Bright eyes and twilight hair.

When Autumn's crayon tones the green leaves  
sere,

And breezes honed on icebergs hurry past ;  
When meadow-tides have ebbed and woods  
grow drear,

And bow before the blast ;

When briars make semicircles on the way ;  
When blackbirds hide their flutes and cower  
and die ;

When swollen rivers lose themselves and stray  
Beneath a murky sky ;



Then doth the poet's voice like cuckoo's  
break,

And round his verse the hungry lapwing  
grieves,

And melancholy in his dreary wake

The funeral of the leaves.

Then when the Autumn dies upon the plain,

Wound in the snow alike his right and wrong,

The poet sings,—albeit a sad strain,—

Bound to the Mast of Song.



TO A LINNET IN A CAGE

WHEN Spring is in the fields that stained your  
wing,

And the blue distance is alive with song,  
And finny quiets of the gabbling spring  
Rock lilies red and long,

At dewy daybreak, I will set you free

In ferny turnings of the woodbine lane,  
Where faint-voiced echoes leave and cross in  
glee

The hilly swollen plain.

In draughty houses you forget your tune,

The modulator of the changing hours,



You want the wide air of the moody noon.

And the slanting evening showers.

So I will loose you, and your song shall fall

When morn is white upon the dewy pane,

Across my eyelids, and my soul recall

From worlds of sleeping pain.



## A TWILIGHT IN MIDDLE MARCH

WITHIN the oak a throb of pigeon wings  
Fell silent, and grey twilight hushed the fold,  
And spiders' hammocks swung on half-oped  
things

That shook like foreigners upon our cold.  
A gipsy lit a fire and made a sound  
Of moving tins, and from an oblong moon  
The river seemed to gush across the ground  
To the cracked metre of a marching tune.

And then three syllables of melody  
Dropped from a blackbird's flute, and died  
apart

Far in the dewy dark. No more but three,



Yet sweeter music never touched a heart  
Neath the blue domes of London. Flute and  
reed,  
Suggesting feelings of the solitude  
When will was all the Delphi I would heed,  
Lost like a wind within a summer wood  
From little knowledge where great sorrows  
brood.



## SPRING

THE dews drip roses on the meadows  
Where the meek daisies dot the sward.  
And Æolus whispers through the shadows,  
“ Behold the handmaid of the Lord ! ”  
The golden news the skylark waketh  
And 'thwart the heavens his flight is curled ;  
Attend ye as the first note breaketh  
And chrisp droppeth on the world.

The velvet dusk still haunts the stream  
Where Pan makes music light and gay.  
The mountain mist hath caught a beam  
And slowly weeps itself away.



The young leaf bursts its chrysalis  
And gem-like hangs upon the bough,  
Where the mad throstle sings in bliss  
O'er earth's rejuvenated brow.

## ENVOI

Slowly fall, O golden sands,  
Slowly fall and let me sing,  
Wrapt in the ecstasy of youth,  
The wild delights of Spring.



## DESIRE IN SPRING

I LOVE the cradle songs the mothers sing  
In lonely places when the twilight drops,  
The slow endearing melodies that bring  
Sleep to the weeping lids ; and, when she stops,  
I love the roadside birds upon the tops  
Of dusty hedges in a world of Spring.

And when the sunny rain drips from the edge  
Of midday wind, and meadows lean one way,  
And a long whisper passes thro' the sedge,  
Beside the broken water let me stay,  
While these old airs upon my memory play,  
And silent changes colour up the hedge.



## A RAINY DAY IN APRIL

WHEN the clouds shake their hyssops, and the  
rain

Like holy water falls upon the plain,  
'Tis sweet to gaze upon the springing grain  
And see your harvest born.

And sweet the little breeze of melody,  
The blackbird puffs upon the budding tree,  
While the wild poppy lights upon the lea  
And blazes 'mid the corn.

The skylark soars the freshening shower to  
hail,

And the meek daisy holds aloft her pail,



And Spring all radiant by the wayside pale,  
Sets up her rock and reel.

See how she weaves her mantle fold on fold,  
Hemming the woods and carpeting the wold.  
Her warp is of the green, her woof the gold,  
The spinning world her wheel.

By'n by above the hills a pilgrim moon  
Will rise to light upon the midnight noon,  
But still she plieth to the lonesome tune  
Of the brown meadow rail.

No heavy dreams upon her eyelids weigh,  
Nor do her busy fingers ever stay ;  
She knows a fairy prince is on the way  
To wake a sleeping beauty.



To deck the pathway that his feet must tread,  
To fringe the 'broidery of the roses' bed,  
To show the Summer she but sleeps,—not  
dead,  
This is her fixed duty.

## ENVOI

To-day while leaving my dear home behind,  
My eyes with salty homesick teardrops blind,  
The rain fell on me sorrowful and kind  
Like angels' tears of pity.

'Twas then I heard the small birds' melodies,  
And saw the poppies' bonfire on the leas,  
As Spring came whispering thro' the leafing  
trees  
Giving to me my ditty.



## A SONG OF APRIL

THE censer of the eglantine was moved  
By little lane winds, and the watching faces  
Of garden flowerets, which of old she loved,  
Peep shyly outward from their silent places.  
But when the sun arose the flowers grew  
bolder,

And she will be in white, I thought, and she  
Will have a cuckoo on her either shoulder,  
And woodbine twines and fragrant wings of  
pea.

And I will meet her on the hills of South,  
And I will lead her to a northern water,



My wild one, the sweet beautiful uncouth,  
The eldest maiden of the Winter's daughter.  
And down the rainbows of her noon shall slide  
Lark music, and the little sunbeam people,  
And nomad wings shall fill the river side,  
And ground winds rocking in the lily's steeple.



## THE BROKEN TRYST

THE dropping words of larks, the sweetest  
tongue

That sings between the dusks, tell all of you ;

The bursting white of Peace is all along

Wing-ways, and pearly droppings of the dew

Emberyl the cobwebs' greyness, and the blue

Of hiding violets, watching for your face,

Listen for you in every dusky place.

You will not answer when I call your name,

But in the fog of blossom do you hide

To change my doubts into a red-faced shame

By'n by when you are laughing by my side ?



Or will you never come, or have you died,  
And I in anguish have forgotten all ?  
And shall the world now end and the heavens  
fall ?



THOUGHTS AT THE TRYSTING STILE

COME, May, and hang a white flag on each  
thorn,

Make truce with earth and heaven; the April  
child

Now hides her sulky face deep in the morn

Of your new flowers by the water wild

And in the ripples of the rising grass,

And rushes bent to let the south wind pass

On with her tumult of swift nomad wings,

And broken domes of downy dandelion.

Only in spasms now the blackbird sings.

The hour is all a-dream.

Nets of woodbine

Throw woven shadows over dreaming flowers,



And dreaming, a bee-luring lily bends  
Its tender bell where blue dyke-water cowers  
Thro' briars, and folded ferns, and gripping  
ends  
Of wild convolvulus.

The lark's sky-way

Is desolate.

I watch an apple-spray

Beckon across a wall as if it knew  
I wait the calling of the orchard maid.

Inly I feel that she will come in blue,  
With yellow on her hair, and two curls strayed  
Out of her comb's loose stocks, and I shall  
steal

Behind and lay my hands upon her eyes,

"Look not, but be my Psyche!"



And her peal

Of laughter will ring far, and as she tries

For freedom I will call her names of flowers

That climb up walls ; then thro' the twilight  
hours

We'll talk about the loves of ancient queens,

And kisses like wasp-honey, false and sweet,

And how we are entangled in love's snares

Like wind-looped flowers.



## EVENING IN MAY

THERE is nought tragic here, tho' night uplifts

A narrow curtain where the footlights burned,

But one long act where Love each bold heart  
sifts

And blushes in the dark, but has not spurned

The strong resolve of noon. The maiden's  
head

Is brown upon the shoulder of her youth,

Hearts are exchanged, long pent up words are  
said,

Blushes burn out at the long tale of truth.

The blackbird blows his yellow flute so strong,

And rolls away the notes in careless glee,



It breaks the rhythm of the thrushes' song,

And puts red shame upon his rivalry.

The yellowhammers on the roof tiles beat

Sweet little dulcimers to broken time,

And here the robin with a heart replete

Has all in one short plagiariséd rhyme.



## AN ATTEMPT AT A CITY SUNSET

(TO J. K. Q.)

THERE was a quiet glory in the sky  
When thro' the gables sank the large red sun,  
And toppling mounts of rugged cloud went by  
Heavy with whiteness, and the moon had won  
Her way above the woods, with her small star  
Behind her like the cuckoo's little mother. . . .  
It was the hour when visions from some far  
Strange Eastern dreams like twilight bats take  
wing  
Out of the ruin of memories.

O brother  
Of high song, wand'ring where the Muses fling



Rich gifts as prodigal as winter rain,  
Like stepping-stones within a swollen river  
The hidden words are sounding in my brain,  
Too wild for taming ; and I must for ever  
Think of the hills upon the wilderness,  
And leave the city sunset to your song.  
For there I am a stranger like the trees  
That sigh upon the traffic all day long.



## WAITING

A STRANGE old woman on the wayside sate,  
Looked far away and shook her head and  
sighed.

And when anon, close by, a rusty gate  
Loud on the warm winds cried,  
She lifted up her eyes and said, " You're late."  
Then shook her head and sighed.

And evening found her thus, and night in state  
Walked thro' the starlight, and a heavy tide  
Followed the yellow moon around her wait,  
And morning walked in wide.  
She lifted up her eyes and said, " You're late."  
Then shook her head and sighed.



## THE SINGER'S MUSE

I BROUGHT in these to make her kitchen sweet,  
Haw blossoms and the roses of the lane.  
Her heart seemed in her eyes so wild they beat  
With welcome for the boughs of Spring again.  
She never heard of Babylon or Troy,  
She read no book, but once saw Dublin town ;  
Yet she made a poet of her servant boy  
And from Parnassus earned the laurel crown.

If Fame, the Gorgon, turns me into stone  
Upon some city square, let someone place  
Thorn blossoms and lane roses newly blown  
Beside my feet, and underneath them trace :



“ His heart was like a bookful of girls’ song,  
With little loves and mighty Care’s alloy.  
These did he bring his muse, and suffered long,  
Her bashful singer and her servant boy.”



## INAMORATA

THE bees were holding levees in the flowers,  
Do you remember how each puff of wind  
Made every wing a hum? My hand in yours  
Was listening to your heart, but now  
The glory is all faded, and I find  
No more the olden mystery of the hours  
When you were lovely and our hearts would  
    bow

Each to the will of each, but one bright day  
Is stretching like an isthmus in a bay  
From the glad years that I have left behind.

I look across the edge of things that were  
And you are lovely in the April ways,



Holy and mute, the sigh of my despair. . . .

I hear once more the linnets' April tune

Beyond the rainbow's warp, as in the days

You brought me facefuls of your smiles to  
share

Some of your new-found wonders. . . . Oh  
when soon

I'm wandering the wide seas for other lands,

Sometimes remember me with folded hands,

And keep me happy in your pious prayer.



## THE WIFE OF LLEW

AND Gwydion said to Math, when it was

Spring :

“ Come now and let us make a wife for Llew.”

And so they broke broad boughs yet moist  
with dew,

And in a shadow made a magic ring :

They took the violet and the meadow-sweet

To form her pretty face, and for her feet

They built a mound of daisies on a wing,

And for her voice they made a linnet sing

In the wide poppy blowing for her mouth.

And over all they chanted twenty hours.

And Llew came singing from the azure south

And bore away his wife of birds and flowers.



## THE HILLS

THE hills are crying from the fields to me,  
And calling me with music from a choir  
Of waters in their woods where I can see  
The bloom unfolded on the whins like fire.  
And, as the evening moon climbs ever higher  
And blots away the shadows from the slope,  
They cry to me like things devoid of hope.

Pigeons are home. Day droops. The fields  
are cold.

Now a slow wind comes labouring up the sky  
With a small cloud long steeped in sunset gold,  
Like Jason with the precious fleece anigh  
The harbour of Iolcos. Day's bright eye



Is filmed with the twilight, and the rill  
Shines like a scimitar upon the hill.

And moonbeams drooping thro' the coloured  
wood

Are full of little people wingéd white.

I'll wander thro' the moon-pale solitude

That calls across the intervening night

With river voices at their utmost height,

Sweet as rain-water in the blackbird's flute

That strikes the world in admiration mute.



## JUNE

BROOM out the floor now, lay the fender by,  
And plant this bee-sucked bough of woodbine  
there,

And let the window down. The butterfly  
Floats in upon the sunbeam, and the fair  
Tanned face of June, the nomad gipsy, laughs  
Above her widespread wares, the while she  
tells

The farmers' fortunes in the fields, and quaffs  
The water from the spider-peopled wells.

The hedges are all drowned in green grass seas,  
And bobbing poppies flare like Elmor's light,



While siren-like the pollen-stainéd bees  
Drone in the clover depths. And up the height  
The cuckoo's voice is hoarse and broke with  
joy.

And on the lowland crops the crows make raid,  
Nor fear the clappers of the farmer's boy,  
Who sleeps, like drunken Noah, in the shade.

And loop this red rose in that hazel ring  
That snares your little ear, for June is short  
And we must joy in it and dance and sing,  
And from her bounty draw her rosy worth.  
Ay! soon the swallows will be flying south,  
The wind wheel north to gather in the snow,  
Even the roses spilt on youth's red mouth  
Will soon blow down the road all roses go.



## IN MANCHESTER

THERE is a noise of feet that move in sin  
Under the side-faced moon here where I stray,  
Want by me like a Nemesis. The din  
Of noon is in my ears, but far away  
My thoughts are, where Peace shuts the black-  
birds' wings

And it is cherry time by all the springs.

And this same moon floats like a trail of fire  
Down the long Boyne, and darts white arrows  
thro'

The mill wood ; her white skirt is on the weir,  
She walks thro' crystal mazes of the dew,



And rests awhile upon the dewy slope  
Where I will hope again the old, old hope.

With wandering we are worn my muse and I,  
And, if I sing, my song knows nought of mirth.  
I often think my soul is an old lie  
In sackcloth, it repents so much of birth.  
But I will build it yet a cloister home  
Near the peace of lakes when I have ceased to  
roam.



## MUSIC ON WATER

WHERE does Remembrance weep when we  
forget ?

From whither brings she back an old delight ?

Why do we weep that once we laughed ? and  
yet

Why are we sad that once our hearts were  
light ?

I sometimes think the days that we made  
bright

Are damned within us, and we hear them yell,

Deep in the solitude of that wide hell,

Because we welcome in some new regret.



I will remember with sad heart next year  
This music and this water, but to-day  
Let me be part of all this joy. My ear  
Caught far-off music which I bid away,  
The light of one fair face that fain would stay  
Upon the heart's broad canvas, as the Face  
On Mary's towel, lighting up the place.  
Too sad for joy, too happy for a tear.

Methinks I see the music like a light  
Low on the bobbing water, and the fields  
Yellow and brown alternate on the height,  
Hanging in silence there like battered shields,  
Lean forward heavy with their coloured yields  
As if they paid it homage ; and the strains,  
Prisoners of Echo, up the sunburnt plains  
Fade on the cross-cut to a future night.



In the red West the twisted moon is low,  
And on the bubbles there are half-lit stars :  
Music and twilight : and the deep blue flow  
Of water : and the watching fire of Mars :  
The deep fish slipping thro' the moonlit bars  
Make Death a thing of sweet dreams, life a  
mock.

And the soul patient by the heart's loud clock  
Watches the time, and thinks it wondrous  
slow.



TO M. McG.

(WHO CAME ONE DAY WHEN WE WERE ALL  
GLOOMY AND CHEERED US WITH SAD  
MUSIC)

WE were all sad and could not weep,  
Because our sorrow had not tears :  
You came a silent thing like Sleep,  
And stole away our fears.

Old memories knocking at each heart  
Troubled us with the world's great lie :  
You sat a little way apart  
And made a fiddle cry.



And April with her sunny showers  
Came laughing up the fields again :  
White wings went flashing thro' the hours  
So lately full of pain.

And rivers full of little lights  
Came down the fields of waving green :  
Our immemorial delights  
Stole in on us unseen.

For this may Good Luck let you loose  
Upon her treasures many years,  
And Peace unfurl her flag of truce  
To any threat'ning fears.



## IN THE DUSK

DAY hangs its light between two dusks, my  
heart,

Always beyond the dark there is the blue.

Sometime we'll leave the dark, myself and  
you,

And revel in the light for evermore.

But the deep pain of you is aching smart,

And a long calling weighs upon you sore.

Day hangs its light between two dusks, and  
song

Is there at the beginning and the end.



You, in the singing dusk, how could you wend  
The songless way Contentment fleetly wings?  
But in the dark your beauty shall be strong,  
Tho' only one should listen how it sings.



## THE DEATH OF AILILL

WHEN there was heard no more the war's loud  
sound,

And only the rough corn-crake filled the hours,  
And hill winds in the furze and drowsy flowers,  
Maeve in her chamber with her white head  
bowed

On Ailill's heart was sobbing: "I have found  
The way to love you now," she said, and he  
Winked an old tear away and said: "The  
proud

Unyielding heart loves never." And then she:  
"I love you now, tho' once when we were  
young



We walked apart like two who were estranged  
Because I loved you not, now all is changed."

And he who loved her always called her name

And said: "You do not love me, 'tis your

tongue

Talks in the dusk; you love the blazing gold

Won in the battles, and the soldier's fame.

You love the stories that are often told

By poets in the hall." Then Maeve arose

And sought her daughter Findebar: "O,

child,

Go tell your father that my love went wild

With all my wars in youth, and say that now

I love him stronger than I hate my foes. . . ."

And Findebar unto her father sped

And touched him gently on the rugged brow,

And knew by the cold touch that he was dead.



## AUGUST

SHE'LL come at dusky first of day,  
White over yellow harvest's song.  
Upon her dewy rainbow way  
She shall be beautiful and strong.  
The lidless eye of noon shall spray  
Tan on her ankles in the hay,  
Shall kiss her brown the whole day long.

I'll know her in the windrows, tall  
Above the crickets of the hay.  
I'll know her when her odd eyes fall,  
One May-blue, one November-grey.  
I'll watch her from the red barn wall  
Take down her rusty scythe, and call,  
And I will follow her away.



## THE VISITATION OF PEACE

I CLOSED the book of verse where Sorrow wept  
Above Love's broken fane where Hope once  
prayed,

And thought of old trysts broken and trysts  
kept

Only to chide my fondness. Then I strayed  
Down a green coil of lanes where murmuring  
wings

Moved up and down like lights upon the sea,  
Searching for calm amid untroubled things  
Of wood and water. The industrious bee  
Sang in his barn within the hollow beech,  
And in a distant haggard a loud mill



Hummed like a war of hives. A whispered  
speech

Of corn and wind was on the yellow hill,  
And tattered scarecrows nodded their assent  
And waved their arms like orators. The brown  
Nude beauty of the Autumn sweetly bent  
Over the woods, across the little town.

I sat in a retreating shade beside  
The river, where it fell across a weir  
Like a white mane, and in a flourish wide  
Roars by an island field and thro' a tier  
Of leaning sallies, like an avenue  
When the moon's flambeau hunts the shadows  
out  
And strikes the borders white across the dew.  
Where little ringlets ended, the fleet trout



Fed on the water moths. A marsh hen crossed  
On flying wings and swimming feet to where  
Her mate was in the rushes forest, tossed  
On the heaving dusk like swallows in the air.

Beyond the river a walled rood of graves  
Hung dead with all its hemlock wan and sere,  
Save where the wall was broken and long waves  
Of yellow grass flowed outward like a weir,  
As if the dead were striving for more room  
And their old places in the scheme of things ;  
For sometimes the thought comes that the  
    brown tomb  
Is not the end of all our labourings,  
But we are born once more of wind and rain,  
To sow the world with harvest young and strong,



That men may live by men 'til the stars wane,  
And still sweet music fill the blackbird's song.

But O for truths about the soul denied.

Shall I meet Keats in some wild isle of balm,

Dreaming beside a tarn where green and wide

Boughs of sweet cinnamon protect the calm

Of the dark water? And together walk

Thro' hills with dimples full of water where

White angels rest, and all the dead years talk

About the changes of the earth? Despair

Sometimes takes hold of me but yet I hope

To hope the old hope in the better times

When I am free to cast aside the rope

That binds me to all sadness 'till my rhymes

Cry like lost birds. But O, if I should die

Ere this millennium, and my hands be crossed



Under the flowers I loved, the passers-by  
Shall scowl at me as one whose soul is lost.

But a soft peace came to me when the West  
Shut its red door and a thin streak of moon  
Was twisted on the twilight's dusky breast.  
It wrapped me up as sometimes a sweet tune  
Heard for the first time wraps the scenes  
around,

That we may have their memories when some  
hand

Strikes it in other times and hopes unbound  
Rising see clear the everlasting land.



## BEFORE THE TEARS

You looked as sad as an eclipséd moon  
Above the sheaves of harvest, and there lay  
A light lisp on your tongue, and very soon  
The petals of your deep blush fell away ;  
White smiles that come with an uneasy grace  
From inner sorrow crossed your forehead fair,  
When the wind passing took your scattered  
hair

And flung it like a brown shower in my face.

Tear-fringéd winds that fill the heart's low  
sighs

And never break upon the bosom's pain,



But blow unto the windows of the eyes

Their misty promises of silver rain,

Around your loud heart ever rose and fell.

I thought 'twere better that the tears should  
come

And strike your every feeling wholly numb,

So thrust my hand in yours and shook fare-  
well.



## GOD'S REMEMBRANCE

THERE came a whisper from the night to me  
Like music of the sea, a mighty breath  
From out the valley's dewy mouth, and Death  
Shook his lean bones, and every coloured tree  
Wept in the fog of morning. From the town  
Of nests among the branches one old crow  
With gaps upon his wings flew far away.  
And, thinking of the golden summer glow,  
I heard a blackbird whistle half his lay  
Among the spinning leaves that slanted down.

And I who am a thought of God's now long  
Forgotten in His Mind, and desolate



With other dreams long over, as a gate  
Singing upon the wind the anvil song,  
Sang of the Spring when first He dreamt of me  
In that old town all hills and signs that creak :—  
And He remembered me as something far  
In old imaginations, something weak  
With distance, like a little sparking star  
Drowned in the lavender of evening sea.



## AN OLD PAIN

WHAT old, old pain is this that bleeds anew ?  
What old and wandering dream forgotten long  
Hobbles back to my mind ? With faces two,  
Like Janus of old Rome, I look about,  
And yet discover not what ancient wrong  
Lies unrequited still. No speck of doubt  
Upon to-morrow's promise. Yet a pain  
Of some dumb thing is on me, and I feel  
How men go mad, how faculties do reel  
When these old querns turn round within the  
brain.



'Tis something to have known one day of joy,  
Now to remember when the heart is low,  
An antidote of thought that will destroy  
The asp bite of Regret. Deep will I drink  
By'n by the purple cups that overflow,  
And fill the shattered heart's urn to the brink.  
But some are dead who laughed! Some  
scattered are  
Around the sultry breadth of foreign zones.  
You, with the warm clay wrapt about your  
bones,  
Are nearer to me than the live afar.

My heart has grown as dry as an old crust,  
Deep in book lumber and moth-eaten wood,  
So long it has forgot the old love lust,  
So long forgot the thing that made youth dear,



Two blue love lamps, a heart exceeding good,  
And how, when first I heard that voice ring  
clear

Among the sering hedges of the plain,  
I knew not which from which beyond the corn,  
The laughter by the callow twisted thorn,  
The jay-thrush whistling in the haws for rain.

I hold the mind is the imprisoned soul,  
And all our aspirations are its own  
Struggles and strivings for a golden goal,  
That wear us out like snow men at the thaw.  
And we shall make our Heaven where we have  
sown

Our purple longings. Oh! can the loved dead  
draw

Anear us when we moan, or watching wait



Our coming in the woods where first we met,  
The dead leaves falling on their wild hair wet,  
Their hands upon the fastenings of the gate ?

This is the old, old pain come home once more,  
Bent down with answers wild and very lame  
For all my delving in old dog-eared lore  
That drove the Sages mad. And boots the  
world

Aught for their wisdom ? I have asked them,  
tame,

And watched the Earth by its own self be  
hurled

Atom by atom into nothingness,  
Loll out of the deep canyons, drops of fire,  
And kindle on the hills its funeral pyre,  
And all we learn but shows we know the less.



## THE LOST ONES

SOMEWHERE is music from the linnets' bills,  
And thro' the sunny flowers the bee-wings  
drone,

And white bells of convolvulus on hills  
Of quiet May make silent ringing, blown  
Hither and thither by the wind of showers,  
And somewhere all the wandering birds have  
flown ;

And the brown breath of Autumn chills the  
flowers.

But where are all the loves of long ago ?

Oh, little twilight ship blown up the tide,



Where are the faces laughing in the glow  
Of morning years, the lost ones scattered wide ?  
Give me your hand, Oh brother, let us go  
Crying about the dark for those who died.



## ALL-HALLOWS EVE

THE dreadful hour is sighing for a moon  
To light old lovers to the place of tryst,  
And old footsteps from blessed acres soon  
On old known pathways will be lightly  
prest ;  
And winds that went to eavesdrop since the  
noon,  
Kinking<sup>1</sup> at some old tale told sweetly brief,  
Will give a cowslick<sup>2</sup> to the yarrow leaf,<sup>3</sup>  
And sling the round nut from the hazel down.

<sup>1</sup> Provincially a kind of laughter.

<sup>2</sup> A curl of hair thrown back from the forehead : used metaphorically here, and itself a metaphor taken from the curl of a cow's tongue.

<sup>3</sup> Maidens on Hallows Eve pull leaves of yarrow, and, saying over them certain words, put them under their pillows and so dream of their true-loves.



And there will be old yarn balls,<sup>1</sup> and old spells

In broken lime-kilns, and old eyes will peer

For constant lovers in old spidery wells,<sup>2</sup>

And old embraces will grow newly dear.

And some may meet old lovers in old dells,

And some in doors ajar in towns light-lorn ;—

But two will meet beneath a gnarly thorn

Deep in the bosom of the windy fells.

Then when the night slopes home and white-  
faced day

Yawns in the east there will be sad fare-  
wells ;

And many feet will tap a lonely way

Back to the comfort of their chilly cells,

<sup>1</sup> They also throw balls of yarn (which must be black) over their left shoulders into old lime-kilns, holding one end and then winding it in till they feel it somehow caught, and expect to see in the darkness the face of their lover.

<sup>2</sup> Also they look for his face in old wells.



And eyes will backward turn and long to stay  
Where love first found them in the clover  
bloom—

But one will never seek the lonely tomb,  
And two will linger at the tryst alway.



## A MEMORY

Low sounds of night that drip upon the ear,  
The pluméd lapwing's cry, the curlew's call,  
Clear in the far dark heard, a sound as drear  
As raindrops pelted from a nodding rush  
To give a white wink once and broken fall  
Into a deep dark pool : they pain the hush,  
As if the fiery meteor's slanting lance  
Had found their empty craws : they fill with  
sound

The silence, with the merry round,  
The sounding mazes of a last year's dance.



I thought to watch the stars come spark by  
spark

Out on the muffled night, and watch the moon  
Go round the full, and turn upon the dark,  
And sharpen towards the new, and waiting  
watch

The grand Kaleidoscope of midnight noon  
Change colours on the dew, where high hills  
notch

The low and moony sky. But who dare cast  
One brief hour's horoscope, whose tuned ear  
Makes every sound the music of last year?  
Whose hopes are built up in the door of Past?

No, not more silent does the spider stitch  
A cobweb on the fern, nor fogdrops fall  
On sheaves of harvest when the night is rich



With moonbeams, than the spirits of delight  
Walk the dark passages of Memory's hall.  
We feel them not, but in the wastes of night  
We hear their low-voiced mediums, and we rise  
To wrestle old Regrets, to see old faces,  
To meet and part in old tryst-trodden places  
With breaking heart, and emptying of eyes.

I feel the warm hand on my shoulder light,  
I hear the music of a voice that words  
The slow time of the feet, I see the white  
Arms slanting, and the dimples fold and fill. . . .  
I hear wing-flutters of the early birds,  
I see the tide of morning landward spill,  
The cloaking maidens, hear the voice that tells  
"You'd never know" and "Soon perhaps  
again,"



With white teeth biting down the inly pain,  
Then sounds of going away and sad farewells.

A year ago ! It seems but yesterday.

Yesterday ! And a hundred years ! All one.

'Tis laid a something finished, dark, away,

To gather mould upon the shelves of Time.

What matters hours or æons when 'tis gone ?

And yet the heart will dust it of its grime,

And hover round it in a silver spell,

Be lost in it and cry aloud in fear ;

And like a lost soul in a pious ear,

Hammer in mine a never easy bell.



## A SONG

My heart has flown on wings to you, away  
In the lonely places where your footsteps lie  
Full up of stars when the short showers of day  
Have passed like ancient sorrows. I would fly  
To your green solitude of woods to hear  
You singing in the sounds of leaves and birds ;  
But I am sad below the depth of words  
That nevermore we two shall draw anear.

Had I but wealth of land and bleating flocks  
And barnfuls of the yellow harvest yield,  
And a large house with climbing hollyhocks  
And servant maidens singing in the field,



You'd love me ; but I own no roaming herds,  
My only wealth is songs of love for you,  
And now that you are lost I may pursue  
A sad life deep below the depth of words.



## A FEAR

I ROAMED the woods to-day and seemed to hear,

As Dante heard, the voice of suffering trees.

The twisted roots seemed bare contorted  
knees,

The bark was full of faces strange with fear.

I hurried home still wrapt in that dark spell,

And all the night upon the world's great lie

I pondered, and a voice seemed whisp'ring  
nigh,

“ You died long since, and all this thing is  
hell ! ”



## THE COMING POET

“ Is it far to the town ? ” said the poet,  
As he stood 'neath the groaning vane,  
And the warm lights shimmered silver  
On the skirts of the windy rain.

“ There are those who call me,” he pleaded,  
“ And I'm wet and travel sore.”

But nobody spoke from the shelter,  
And he turned from the bolted door.

And they wait in the town for the poet  
With stones at the gates, and jeers,  
But away on the wolds of distance  
In the blue of a thousand years



He sleeps with the age that knows him,  
In the clay of the unborn, dead,  
Rest at his weary insteps,  
Fame at his crumbled head.



## THE VISION ON THE BRINK

TO-NIGHT when you sit in the deep hours alone,  
And from the sleeps you snatch wake quick  
and feel

You hear my step upon the threshold-stone,  
My hand upon the doorway latchward steal,  
Be sure 'tis but the white winds of the snow,  
For I shall come no more.

And when the candle in the pane is wore,  
And moonbeams down the hill long shadows  
throw,  
When night's white eyes are in the chinky  
door,



Think of a long road in a valley low,  
 Think of a wanderer in the distance far,  
 Lost like a voice among the scattered hills.

And when the moon has gone and ocean spills  
 Its waters backward from the trysting bar,  
 And in dark furrows of the night there tills  
 A jewelled plough, and many a falling star  
 Moves you to prayer, then will you think of me  
 On the long road that will not ever end.

Jonah is hoarse in Nineveh—I'd lend  
 My voice to save the town—and hurriedly  
 Goes Abraham with murdering knife, and  
 Ruth

Is weary in the corn. . . . Yet will I stay,  
 For one flower blooms upon the rocks of truth,  
 God is in all our hurry and delay.



## TO LORD DUNSANY

(ON HIS RETURN FROM EAST AFRICA)

FOR you I knit these lines, and on their ends

Hang little tossing bells to ring you home.

The music is all cracked, and Poesy tends

To richer blooms than mine ; but you who

roam

Thro' coloured gardens of the highest muse,

And leave the door ajar sometimes that we

May steal small breathing things of reds and

blues

And things of white sucked empty by the bee,

Will listen to this bunch of bells from me.



My cowslips ring you welcome to the land  
Your muse brings honour to in many a tongue,  
Not only that I long to clasp your hand,  
But that you're missed by poets who have sung  
And viewed with doubt the music of their verse  
All the long winter, for you love to bring  
The true note in and say the wise thing terse,  
And show what birds go lame upon a wing,  
And where the weeds among the flowers do  
spring.



## ON AN OATEN STRAW

My harp is out of tune, and so I take  
An oaten straw some shepherd dropped of old.  
It is the hour when Beauty doth awake  
With trembling limbs upon the dewy cold.  
And shapes of green show where the woolly  
fold  
Slept in the winding shelter of the brake.  
This I will pipe for you, how all the year  
The one I love like Beauty takes her way.  
Wrapped in the wind of winter she doth cheer  
The loud woods like a sunbeam of the May.  
This I will pipe for you the whole blue day  
Seated with Pan upon the mossy weir.



## EVENING IN FEBRUARY

THE windy evening drops a grey  
Old eyelid down across the sun,  
The last crow leaves the ploughman's way,  
And happy lambs make no more fun.

Wild parsley buds beside my feet,  
A doubtful thrush makes hurried tune,  
The steeple in the village street  
Doth seem to pierce the twilight moon.

I hear and see those changing charms,  
For all—my thoughts are fixed upon  
The hurry and the loud alarms  
Before the fall of Babylon.



## THE SISTER

I SAW the little quiet town,  
And the whitewashed gables on the hill,  
And laughing children coming down  
The laneway to the mill.

Wind-blushes up their faces glowed,  
And they were happy as could be,  
The wobbling water never flowed  
So merry and so free.

One little maid withdrew aside  
To pick a pebble from the sands.  
Her golden hair was long and wide,  
And there were dimples on her hands.



And when I saw her large blue eyes,  
What was the pain that went thro' me ?  
Why did I think on Southern skies  
And ships upon the sea ?



## BEFORE THE WAR OF COOLEY

AT daybreak Maeve rose up from where she  
prayed

And took her prophetess across her door

To gaze upon her hosts. Tall spear and blade

Burnished for early battle dimly shook

The morning's colours, and then Maeve said :

“ Look

And tell me how you see them now.”

And then

The woman that was lean with knowledge said :

“ There's crimson on them, and there's dripping red.”

And a tall soldier galloped up the glen



With foam upon his boot, and halted there  
Beside old Maeve. She said, "Not yet," and  
turned

Into her blazing dun, and knelt in prayer  
One solemn hour, and once again she came  
And sought her prophetess. With voice that  
mourned,

"How do you see them now?" she asked.

"All lame  
And broken in the noon." And once again  
The soldier stood before her.

"No, not yet."

Maeve answered his inquiring look and turned  
Once more unto her prayer, and yet once more  
"How do you see them now?" she asked.

"All wet

With storm rains, and all broken, and all tore



With midnight wolves." And when the  
soldier came

Maeve said, "It is the hour." There was a  
flash

Of trumpets in the dim, a silver flame  
Of rising shields, loud words passed down the  
ranks,

And twenty feet they saw the lances leap.

They passed the dun with one short noisy dash.

And turning proud Maeve gave the wise one  
thanks,

And sought her chamber in the dun to weep.



## LOW-MOON LAND

I OFTEN look when the moon is low  
Thro' that other window on the wall,  
At a land all beautiful under snow,  
Blotted with shadows that come and go  
When the winds rise up and fall.  
And the form of a beautiful maid  
In the white silence stands,  
And beckons me with her hands.

And when the cares of the day are laid,  
Like sacred things, in the mart away,  
I dream of the low-moon land and the maid  
Who will not weary of waiting, or jade



Of calling to me for aye.

And I would go if I knew the sea

That lips the shore where the moon is low,

For a longing is on me that will not go.



## THE SORROW OF FINDEBAR

“WHY do you sorrow, child? There is loud  
cheer

In the wide halls, and poets red with wine  
Tell of your eyebrows and your tresses long,  
And pause to let your royal mother hear  
The brown bull low amid her silken kine.  
And you who are the harpstring and the song  
Weep like a memory born of some old pain.”

And Findebar made answer, “I have slain  
More than Cuculain’s sword, for I have been  
The promised meed of every warrior brave  
In Tain Bo Cualigne wars, and I am sad  
As is the red banshee that goes to keen



Above the wet dark of the deep brown grave,  
For the warm loves that made my memory  
glad."

And her old nurse bent down and took a wild  
Curl from her eye and hung it on her ear,  
And said, "The woman at the heavy quern,  
Who weeps that she will never bring a child,  
And sees her sadness in the coming year,  
Will roll up all her beauty like a fern;  
Not you, whose years stretch purple to the  
end."

And Findebar, "Beside the broad blue bend  
Of the slow river where the dark banks slope  
Wide to the woods sleeps Ferdia apart.



I loved him, and then drove him for pride's

sake

To early death, and now I have no hope,

For mine is Maeve's proud heart, Ailill's kind

heart,

And that is why it pines and will not break."



## ON DREAM WATER

AND so, o'er many a league of sea  
We sang of those we left behind.  
Our ship split thro' the phosphor free,  
Her white sails pregnant with the wind,  
And I was wondering in my mind  
How many would remember me.

Then red-edged dawn expanded wide,  
A stony foreland stretched away,  
And bowed capes gathering round the tide  
Kept many a little homely bay.  
O joy of living there for aye,  
O Soul so often tried !



## THE DEATH OF SUALTEM

AFTER the brown bull passed from Cooley's  
fields

And all Muirevne was a wail of pain,

Sualtem came at evening thro' the slain

And heard a noise like water rushing loud,

A thunder like the noise of mighty shields.

And in his dread he shouted : " Earth is bowed,

The heavens are split and stars make war with

stars

And the sea runs in fear ! "

For all his scars

He hastened to Dun Dealgan, and there found

It was his son, Cuculain, making moan.



His hair was red with blood, and he was wound  
In wicker full of grass, and a cold stone  
Was on his head.

“Cuculain, is it so?”

Sualtem said, and then, “My hair is snow,  
My strength leaks thro’ my wounds, but I will  
die

Avenging you.”

And then Cuculain said :

“Not so, old father, but take horse and ride  
To Emain Macha, and tell Connor this.”

Sualtem from his red lips took a kiss,  
And turned the stone upon Cuculain’s head.

The Lia-Macha with a heavy sigh  
Ran up and halted by his wounded side.



In Emain Macha to low lights and song  
Connor was dreaming of the beauteous Maeve.  
He saw her as at first, by Shannon's wave,  
Her insteps in the water, mounds of white.  
It was in Spring, and music loud and strong  
Rocked all the coloured woods, and the blue  
height  
Of heaven was round the lark, and in his heart  
There was a pain of love.

Then with a start

He wakened as a loud voice from below  
Shouted, "The land is robbed, the women  
shamed,  
The children stolen, and Cuculain low!"  
Then Connor rose, his war-worn soul inflamed,  
And shouted down for Cathbad; then to greet  
The messenger he hurried to the street.



And there he saw Sualtem shouting still  
The message of Muirevne 'mid the sound  
Of hurried bucklings and uneasy horse.  
At sight of him the Lia-Macha wheeled,  
So that Sualtem fell upon his shield,  
And his grey head came shouting to the ground.  
They buried him by moonlight on the hill,  
And all about him waves the heavy gorse.



## THE MAID IN LOW-MOON LAND

I KNOW not where she be, and yet  
I see her waiting white and tall.  
Her eyes are blue, her lips are wet,  
And move as tho' they'd love to call.  
I see her shadow on the wall  
Before the changing moon has set.

She stands there lovely and alone  
And up her porch blue creepers swing.  
The world she moves in is her own,  
To sun and shade and hasty wing.  
And I would wed her in the Spring,  
But only I sit here and moan.



THE DEATH OF LEAG, CUCHULAIN'S  
CHARIOTEER

CONALL

" I ONLY heard the loud ebb on the sand,  
The high ducks talking in the chilly sky.  
The voices that you fancied floated by  
Were wind notes, or the whisper on the trees.  
But you are still so full of war's red din,  
You hear impatient hoof-beats up the land  
When the sea's changing, or a lispig breeze  
Is playing on the waters of the linn."

LEAG

" I hear Cuchulain's voice, and Emer's voice,  
The Lia Macha's neigh, the chariot's wheels,



Farther away a bell bough's drowsy peals ;  
And sleep lays heavy thumbs upon my eyes.  
I hear Cuchulain sing above the chime  
Of One Who comes to make the world rejoice,  
And comes again to blot away the skies,  
To wipe away the world and roll up Time."

## CONALL

"In the dark ground forever mouth to mouth  
They kiss thro' all the changes of the world,  
The grey sea fogs above them are unfurled  
At evening when the sea walks with the moon,  
And peace is with them in the long cairn shut.  
You loved him as the swallow loves the South,  
And Love speaks with you since the evening  
put  
Mist and white dews upon short shadowed  
noon."



## LEAG

“ Sleep lays his heavy thumbs upon my eyes,  
Shuts out all sounds and shakes me at the  
wrists.

By Nanny water where the salty mists  
Weep o'er Riángabra let me stand deep  
Beside my father. Sleep lays heavy thumbs  
Upon my eyebrows, and I hear the sighs  
Of far loud waters, and a troop that comes  
With boughs of bells——”

## CONALL

“ They come to you with sleep.”



## THE PASSING OF CAOILTE

'Twas just before the truce sang thro' the din  
Caoilte, the thin man, at the war's red end  
Leaned from the crooked ranks and saw his  
friend

Fall in the farther fury ; so when truce  
Halted advancing spears the thin man came  
And bending by pale Oscar called his name ;  
And then he knew of all who followed Finn,  
He only felt the cool of Gavra's dews.

And Caoilte, the thin man, went down the  
field

To where slow water moved among the whins,



And sat above a pool of twinkling fins  
To court old memories of the Fenian men,  
Of how Finn's laugh at Conan's tale of glee  
Brought down the rowan's boughs on Knoc-  
naree,

And how he made swift comets with his shield  
At moonlight in the Fomar's rivered glen.

And Caoilte, the thin man, was weary now,  
And nodding in short sleeps of half a dream :  
There came a golden barge down middle stream,  
And a tall maiden coloured like a bird  
Pulled noiseless oars, but not a word she said.  
And Caoilte, the thin man, raised up his head  
And took her kiss upon his throbbing brow,  
And where they went away what man has  
heard ?



## GROWING OLD

WE'LL fill a Provence bowl and pledge us deep  
The memory of the far ones, and between  
The soothing pipes, in heavy-lidded sleep,  
Perhaps we'll dream the things that once have  
been.

'Tis only noon and still too soon to die,  
Yet we are growing old, my heart and I.

A hundred books are ready in my head  
To open out where Beauty bent a leaf.  
What do we want with Beauty? We are wed  
Like ancient Proserpine to dismal grief.



And we are changing with the hours that fly,  
And growing odd and old, my heart and I.

Across a bed of bells the river flows,  
And roses dawn, but not for us; we want  
The new thing ever as the old thing grows  
Spectral and weary on the hills we haunt.  
And that is why we feast, and that is why  
We're growing odd and old, my heart and I.



## AFTER MY LAST SONG

WHERE I shall rest when my last song is over  
The air is smelling like a feast of wine ;  
And purple breakers of the windy clover  
Shall roll to cool this burning brow of mine ;  
And there shall come to me, when day is told  
The peace of sleep when I am grey and old.

I'm wild for wandering to the far-off places  
Since one forsook me whom I held most dear.  
I want to see new wonders and new faces  
Beyond East seas ; but I will win back here  
When my last song is sung, and veins are cold  
As thawing snow, and I am grey and old.



Oh paining eyes, but not with salty weeping,  
My heart is like a sod in winter rain ;  
Ere you will see those baying waters leaping  
Like hungry hounds once more, how many a  
    pain  
Shall heal ; but when my last short song is  
    trolled  
You'll sleep here on wan cheeks grown thin  
    and old.



SONGS OF PEACE  
AT HOME







## A DREAM OF ARTEMIS

THERE was soft beauty on the linnet's tongue  
To see the rainbow's coloured bands arch wide.  
The thunder darted his red fangs among  
South mountains, but the East was like a  
bride

Drest for the altar at her mother's door  
Weeping between two loves. The fields were  
pied

With May's munificence of flowers, that wore  
The fashion of the days when Eve was young,  
God's kirtles, ere the first sweet summer died.  
The blackbird in a thorn of waving white  
Sang bouquets of small tunes that bid me turn  
From twilight wanderings thro' some old  
delight



I heard in my far memory making mourn.  
Such music fills me with a joy half pain,  
And beats a track across my life I spurn  
In sober moments. Ah, this wandering brain  
Could play its hurdy-gurdy all the night  
To vagrant joys of days beyond the bourn.

I heard the river warble sweetly nigh  
To meet the warm salt tide below the weir,  
And saw a coloured line of cows pass by,—  
And then a voice said quickly, " Iris here ! "  
" What message now hath Hera ? " then I  
woke,

An exile in Arcadia, and a spear  
Flashed by me, and ten nymphs fleet-footed  
broke  
Out of the coppice with a silver cry,  
Into the bow of lights to disappear.



For one blue minute then there was no sound  
Save water-noise, slow round a rushy bend,  
And bird-delight, and ripples on the ground  
Of windy flowers that swelling would ascend  
The coloured hill and break all beautiful  
And, falling backwards, to the woods would  
send

The full tide of their love. What soft moons pull  
Their moving fragrance? did I ask, and found  
Sad Io in far Egypt met a friend.—

It was my body thought so, far away

In the grey future, not the wild bird **tied**

That is the wandering soul. Behind the **day**

We may behold thee, soft one, hunted wide

By the loud gadfly; but the truant soul

Knows thee before thou lay by night's **dark**  
side,

Wed to the dimness; long before its dole



Was meted it, to be thus pound in clay  
That daubs its whiteness and offends its pride.

There were loud questions in the rainbow's end,  
And hurried answers, and a sound of spears.

And through the yellow blaze I saw one bend  
Down on a trembling white knee, and her tears  
Fell down in globes of light, and her small  
mouth

Was filled up with a name unspoken. Years  
Of waiting love, and all their long, long drought  
Of kisses parched her lips, and did she spend  
Her eyes blue candles searching thro' her  
fears.

"She hath loved Ganymede, the stolen boy."

Said one, and then another, "Let us sing  
To Zeus that he may give her living joy  
Above Olympus, where the cool hill-spring



Of Lethe bubbles up to bathe the heart  
Sorrow's lean fingers bruised. There eagles  
wing  
To eyries in the stars, and when they part  
Their broad dark wings a wind is born to  
buoy  
The bee home heavy in the far evening."

## HYMN TO ZEUS

"GOD, whose kindly hand doth sow  
The rainbow showers on hill and lawn,  
To make the young sweet grasses grow  
And fill the udder of the fawn.  
Whose light is life of leaf and flower,  
And all the colours of the birds.  
Whose song goes on from hour to hour  
Upon the river's liquid words.



Reach out a golden beam of thine  
And touch her pain. Your finger-tips  
Do make the violets' blue eclipse  
Like milk upon a daisy shine.

God, who lights the little stars,  
And over night the white dew spills.  
Whose hand doth move the season's cars  
And clouds that mock our pointed hills.  
Whose bounty fills the cow-trod wold,  
And fills with bread the warm brown sod.  
Who brings us sleep, where we grow old  
'Til sleep and age together nod.

Reach out a beam and touch the pain  
A heart has oozed thro' all the years.  
Your pity dries the morning's tears  
And fills the world with joy again!"



The rainbow's lights were shut, and all the  
maids

Stood round the sad nymph in a snow-white  
ring,

She rising spoke, "A blue and soft light  
bathes

Me to the fingers. Lo, I upward swing!"

And round her fell a mantle of blue light.

"Watch for me on the forehead of evening."

And lifting beautiful went out of sight.

And all the flowers flowed backward from the  
glades,

An ebb of colours redolent of Spring.

Beauty and Love are sisters of the heart,

Love has no voice, and Beauty whispered song.

Now in my own, drawn silently apart

Love looked, and Beauty sang. I felt a strong



Pulse on my wrist, a feeling like a pain  
In my quick heart, for Love with gazes long  
Was worshipping at Artemis, now lain  
Among the heaving flowers . . . I longed to  
    dart

And fold her to my breast, nor saw the wrong.  
She lay there, a tall beauty by her spear,  
Her kirtle falling to her soft round knee.  
Her hair was like the day when evening's near,  
And her moist mouth might tempt the golden  
    bee.

Smile's creases ran from dimples pink and  
    deep,

And when she raised her arms I loved to see  
The white mounds of her muscles. Gentle  
    sleep

Threatened her far blue looks. The noisy weir  
Fell into a low murmuring lullaby.



And then the flowers came back behind the  
heel

Of hunted Io: she, poor maid, had fear  
Wide in her eyes looking half back to steal  
A glimpse of the loud gadfly fiercely near.  
In her right hand she held a slanting light,  
And in her left her train. Artemis here  
Raised herself on her palms, and took a white  
Horn from her side and blew a silver peal  
'Til three hounds from the coppice did appear.

The white nine left the spaces of flowers, and  
now

Went calling thro' the wood the hunter's call.  
Young echoes sleeping in the hollow bough  
Took up the shouts and handed them to all  
Their sisters of the crags, 'til all the day  
Was filled with voices loud and musical.



I followed them across a tangled way  
'Til the red deer broke out and took the brow  
Of a wide hill in bounces like a ball.

Beside swift Artemis I joined the chase ;  
We roused up kine and scattered fleecy flocks ;  
Crossed at a mill a swift and bubbly race ;  
Scaled in a wood of pine the knotty rocks ;  
Past a grey vision of a valley town ;  
Past swains at labour in their coloured frocks ;  
Once saw a boar upon a windy down ;  
Once heard a cradle in a lonely place,  
And saw the red flash of a frightened fox.

We passed a garden where three maids in blue  
Were talking of a queen a long time dead.

We caught a green glimpse of the sea : then  
thro'

A town all hills ; now round a wood we sped



And killed our quarry in his native lair.

Then Artemis spun round to me and said,

“ Whence come you ? ” and I took her long  
damp hair

And made a ball of it, and said, “ Where you  
Are midnight’s dreams of love.” She dropped  
her head,

No word she spoke, but, panting in her side,  
I heard her heart. The trees were all at peace,  
And lifting slowly on the grey eve-tide  
A large and lovely star. Then to release  
Her hair, my hand dropped to her girded  
waist

And lay there shyly. “ O my love, the lease  
Of your existence is for ever : taste

No less with me the love of earth,” I cried.

“ Though for so short a while on lands and  
seas



Our mortal hearts know beauty, and overblow,  
And we are dust upon some passing wind,  
Dust and a memory. But for you the snow  
That so long cloaks the mountains to the  
knees

Is no more than a morning. It doth go  
And summer comes, and leaf upon the trees :  
Still you are fair and young, and nothing  
find

In all man's story that seems long ago.

I have not loved on Earth the strife for gold,  
Nor the great name that makes immortal  
man,

But all that struggle upward to behold  
What still is left of Beauty undisgraced,  
The snowdrop at the heel of winter cold  
And shivering, and the wayward cuckoo  
chased



By lingering March, and, in the thunder's van  
The poor lambs merry on the meagre wold,  
By-ways and cast-off things that lie therein,  
Old boots that trod the highways of the  
world,

The schoolboy's broken hoop, the battered  
bin

That heard the ragman's story, blackened  
places

Where gipsies camped and circuses made  
din,

Fast water and the melancholy traces

Of sea tides, and poor people madly whirled

Up, down, and through the black retreats of  
sin.

These things a god might love, and stooping  
bless

With benedictions of eternal song.—



But I have not loved Artemis the less  
For loving these, but deem it noble love  
To sing of live or dead things in distress  
And wake memorial memories above.

Such is the soul that comes to plead with you  
Oh, Artemis, to tend you in your needs.  
At mornings I will bring you bells of dew  
From honey places, and wild fish from streams  
Flowing in secret places. I will brew  
Sweet wine of alder for your evening dreams,  
And pipe you music in the dusky reeds  
When the four distances give up their blue.

And when the white procession of the stars  
Crosses the night, and on their tattered wings,  
Above the forest, cry the loud night-jars,  
We'll hunt the stag upon the mountain-side,



Slipping like light between the shadow bars  
'Til burst of dawn makes every distance wide.  
Oh, Artemis—what grief the silence brings!  
I hear the rolling chariot of Mars!"



## A LITTLE BOY IN THE MORNING

HE will not come, and still I wait.  
He whistles at another gate  
Where angels listen. Ah, I know  
He will not come, yet if I go  
How shall I know he did not pass  
Barefooted in the flowery grass ?

The moon leans on one silver horn  
Above the silhouettes of morn,  
And from their nest sills finches whistle  
Or stooping pluck the downy thistle.  
How is the morn so gay and fair  
Without his whistling in its air ?



The world is calling, I must go.

How shall I know he did not pass

Barefooted in the shining grass ?







IN BARRACKS



IN BARRAGES



## TO A DISTANT ONE

THROUGH wild by-ways I come to you, my love,  
Nor ask of those I meet the surest way,  
What way I turn I cannot go astray  
And miss you in my life. Though Fate may  
    prove

A tardy guide she will not make delay  
Leading me through strange seas and distant  
    lands,

I'm coming still, though slowly, to your hands.

    We'll meet one day.

There is so much to do, so little done,  
In my life's space that I perforce did leave  
Love at the moonlit trysting-place to grieve  
Till fame and other little things were won.



I have missed much that I shall not retrieve,  
Far will I wander yet with much to do.  
Much will I spurn before I yet meet you,  
So fair I can't deceive.

Your name is in the whisper of the woods  
Like Beauty calling for a poet's song  
To one whose harp had suffered many a wrong  
In the lean hands of Pain. And when the  
broods  
Of flower eyes waken all the streams along  
In tender whiles, I feel most near to you :—  
Oh, when we meet there shall be sun and blue  
— Strong as the spring is strong.



## THE PLACE

BLOSSOMS as old as May I scatter here,  
And a blue wave I lifted from the stream.  
It shall not know when winter days are drear  
Or March is hoarse with blowing. But a-dream  
The laurel boughs shall hold a canopy  
Peacefully over it the winter long,  
Till all the birds are back from oversea,  
And April rainbows win a blackbird's song.

And when the war is over I shall take  
My lute a-down to it and sing again  
Songs of the whispering things amongst the  
brake,  
And those I love shall know them by their  
- strain.



Their airs shall be the blackbird's twilight song,  
Their words shall be all flowers with fresh dews  
hoar.—

But it is lonely now in winter long,  
And, God! to hear the blackbird sing once  
more.



## MAY

SHE leans across an orchard gate somewhere,  
Bending from out the shadows to the light,  
A dappled spray of blossom in her hair  
Studded with dew-drops lovely from the night  
She smiles to think how many hearts she'll  
smite

With beauty ere her robes fade from the lawn.  
She hears the robin's cymbals with delight,  
The skylark in the rosebush of the dawn.

For her the cowslip rings its yellow bell,  
For her the violets watch with wide blue eyes.  
The wandering cuckoo doth its clear name tell  
Thro' the white mist of blossoms where she lies



Painting a sunset for the western skies.

You'd know her by her smile and by her tear

And by the way the swift and martin flies,

Where she is south of these wild days and  
drear.



TO EILISH OF THE FAIR HAIR

I'D make my heart a harp to play for you  
Love songs within the evening dim of day,  
Were it not dumb with ache and with mildew  
Of sorrow withered like a flower away.

It hears so many calls from homeland places,  
So many sighs from all it will remember,  
From the pale roads and woodlands where  
your face is

Like laughing sunlight running thro' December.

But this it singeth loud above its pain,  
To bring the greater ache: whate'er befall  
The love that oft-times woke the sweeter strain  
Shall turn to you always. And should you call



164 TO EILISH OF THE FAIR HAIR

To pity it some day in those old places  
Angels will covet the loud joy that fills it.  
But thinking of the by-ways where your face is  
Sunlight on other hearts—Ah ! how it kills it.



IN CAMP



THE CAMP



## CREWBAWN

WHITE clouds that change and pass,  
And stars that shine awhile,  
Dew water on the grass,  
A fox upon a stile.

A river broad and deep,  
A slow boat on the waves,  
My sad thoughts on the sleep  
That hollows out the graves.



## EVENING IN ENGLAND

FROM its blue vase the rose of evening drops.

Upon the streams its petals float away.

The hills all blue with distance hide their  
tops

In the dim silence falling on the grey.

A little wind said "Hush!" and shook a spray  
Heavy with May's white crop of opening  
bloom,

A silent bat went dipping up the gloom.

Night tells her rosary of stars full soon,

They drop from out her dark hand to her  
knees.

Upon a silhouette of woods the moon



Leans on one horn as if beseeching ease  
From all her changes which have stirred the  
    seas.

Across the ears of Toil Rest throws her veil,  
I and a marsh bird only make a wail.







AT SEA



AT 12A



## CROCKNAHARNA

ON the heights of Crocknaharna,  
(Oh, the lure of Crocknaharna)  
On a morning fair and early  
Of a dear remembered May,  
There I heard a colleen singing  
In the brown rocks and the grey.  
She, the pearl of Crocknaharna,  
Crocknaharna, Crocknaharna,  
Wild with girls is Crocknaharna  
Twenty hundred miles away.

ON the heights of Crocknaharna,  
(Oh, thy sorrow Crocknaharna)  
On an evening dim and misty  
Of a cold November day,



There I heard a woman weeping  
In the brown rocks and the grey.  
Oh, the pearl of Crocknaharna  
(Crocknaharna, Crocknaharna),  
Black with grief is Crocknaharna  
Twenty hundred miles away.



IN THE MEDITERRANEAN—GOING  
TO THE WAR

LOVELY wings of gold and green  
Flit about the sounds I hear,  
On my window when I lean  
To the shadows cool and clear.

. . . . .  
Roaming, I am listening still,  
Bending, listening overlong,  
In my soul a steadier will,  
In my heart a newer song.



## THE GARDENER

AMONG the flowers, like flowers, her slow  
hands move

Easing a muffled bell or stooping low  
To help sweet roses climb the stakes above,  
Where pansies stare and seem to whisper  
“Lo!”

Like gaudy butterflies her sweet peas blow  
Filling the garden with dim rustlings. Clear  
On the sweet Book she reads how long ago  
There was a garden to a woman dear.

She makes her life one grand beatitude  
Of Love and Peace, and with contented eyes  
She sees not in the whole world mean or rude,  
And her small lot she trebly multiplies.



And when the darkness muffles up the skies  
Still to be happy is her sole desire,  
She sings sweet songs about a great emprise,  
And sees a garden blowing in the fire.







IN SERBIA



IN LIBRIA



## AUTUMN EVENING IN SERBIA

ALL the thin shadows  
Have closed on the grass,  
With the drone on their dark wings  
The night beetles pass.  
Folded her eyelids,  
A maiden asleep,  
Day sees in her chamber  
The pallid moon peep.

From the bend of the briar  
The roses are torn,  
And the folds of the wood tops  
Are faded and worn.



A strange bird is singing  
Sweet notes of the sun,  
Tho' song time is over  
And Autumn begun.



## NOCTURNE

THE rim of the moon  
Is over the corn.  
The beetle's drone  
Is above the thorn.  
Grey days come soon  
And I am alone ;  
Can you hear my moan  
Where you rest, Aroon ?

When the wild tree bore  
The deep blue cherry,  
In night's deep hall  
Our love kissed merry.



But you come no more  
Where its woodlands call,  
And the grey days fall  
On my grief, Astore !



## SPRING AND AUTUMN

GREEN ripples singing down the corn,  
With blossoms dumb the path I tread,  
And in the music of the morn  
One with wild roses on her head.

Now the green ripples turn to gold  
And all the paths are loud with rain,  
I with desire am growing old  
And full of winter pain.







IN GREECE



IN CHARGE



## THE DEPARTURE OF PROSERPINE

OLD mother Earth for me already grieves,  
Her morns wake weeping and her noons are  
dim,

Silence has left her woods, and all the leaves  
Dance in the windy shadows on the rim  
Of the dull lake thro' which I soon shall pass

To my dark bridal bed

Down in the hollow chambers of the dead.

Will not the thunder hide me if I call,

Wrapt in the corner of some distant star

The gods have never known ?

Alas ! alas !

My voice has left with the last wing, my fall

Shall crush the flowery fields with gloom, as

far



As swallows fly.

Would I might die

And in a solitude of roses lie

As the last bud's outblown.

Then nevermore Demeter would be heard

Wail in the blowing rain, but every shower

Would come bound up with rainbows to the  
birds

Wrapt in a dusty wing, and the dry flower

Hanging a shrivelled lip.

This weary change from light to darkness fills

My heart with twilight, and my brightest day

Dawns over thunder and in thunder spills

Its urn of gladness

With a sadness

Through which the slow dews drip

And the bat goes over on a thorny wing.

Is it a dream that once I used to sing



From Ægean shores across her rocky isles,  
Making the bells of Babylon to ring  
    Over the wiles  
That lifted me from darkness to the Spring?  
    And the King  
Seeing his wine in blossom on the tree  
Danced with the queen a merry roundelay,  
And all the blue circumference of the day  
Was loud with flying song.—  
—But let me pass along:  
What brooks it the unfree to thus delay?  
No secret turning leads from the gods' way.



## THE HOMECOMING OF THE SHEEP

THE sheep are coming home in Greece,  
Hark the bells on every hill !  
Flock by flock, and fleece by fleece,  
Wandering wide a little piece  
Thro' the evening red and still,  
Stopping where the pathways cease,  
Cropping with a hurried will.

Thro' the cotton-bushes low  
Merry boys with shouldered crooks  
Close them in a single row,  
Shout among them as they go  
With one bell-ring o'er the brooks.  
Such delight you never know  
Reading it from gilded books.



Before the early stars are bright  
Cormorants and sea-gulls call,  
And the moon comes large and white  
Filling with a lovely light  
The ferny curtained waterfall.  
Then sleep wraps every bell up tight  
And the climbing moon grows small.



WHEN LOVE AND BEAUTY WANDER  
AWAY

WHEN Love and Beauty wander away,  
And there's no more hearts to be sought and  
won,  
When the old earth limps thro' the dreary day,  
And the work of the Seasons cry undone :  
Ah ! what shall we do for a song to sing,  
Who have known Beauty, and Love, and  
Spring?

When Love and Beauty wander away,  
And a pale fear lies on the cheeks of youth,  
When there's no more goal to strive for and  
pray,



And we live at the end of the world's untruth :

Ah ! what shall we do for a heart to prove,

Who have known Beauty, and Spring, and

Love ?







IN HOSPITAL IN EGYPT







## MY MOTHER

GOD made my mother on an April day,  
From sorrow and the mist along the sea,  
Lost birds' and wanderers' songs and ocean  
spray,  
And the moon loved her wandering jealously.

Beside the ocean's din she combed her hair,  
Singing the nocturne of the passing ships,  
Before her earthly lover found her there  
And kissed away the music from her lips.

She came unto the hills and saw the change  
That brings the swallow and the geese in turns.  
But there was not a grief she deeméd strange,  
For there is that in her which always mourns.



Kind heart she has for all on hill or wave  
Whose hopes grew wings like ants to fly away.  
I bless the God Who such a mother gave  
This poor bird-hearted singer of a day.



## SONG

NOTHING but sweet music wakes

My Beloved, my Beloved.

Sleeping by the blue lakes,

My own Beloved !

Song of lark and song of thrush,

My Beloved ! my Beloved !

Sing in morning's rosy bush,

My own Beloved !

When your eyes dawn blue and clear,

My Beloved ! my Beloved !

You will find me waiting here,

My own Beloved !



## TO ONE DEAD

A BLACKBIRD singing  
On a moss upholstered stone,  
Bluebells swinging,  
Shadows wildly blown,  
A song in the wood,  
A ship on the sea.  
The song was for you  
And the ship was for me.

A blackbird singing  
I hear in my troubled mind,  
Bluebells swinging  
I see in a distant wind.



But sorrow and silence  
Are the wood's threnody,  
The silence for you  
And the sorrow for me.



## THE RESURRECTION

My true love still is all that's fair,  
She is flower and blossom blowing free,  
For all her silence lying there  
She sings a spirit song to me.

New lovers seek her in her bower,  
The rain, the dew, the flying wind,  
And tempt her out to be a flower,  
Which throws a shadow on my mind.



## THE SHADOW PEOPLE

OLD lame Bridget doesn't hear  
Fairy music in the grass  
When the gloaming's on the mere  
And the shadow people pass :  
Never hears their slow grey feet  
Coming from the village street  
Just beyond the parson's wall,  
Where the clover globes are sweet  
And the mushroom's parasol  
Opens in the moonlit rain.  
Every night I hear them call  
From their long and merry train.  
Old lame Bridget says to me,  
" It is just your fancy, child."



She cannot believe I see  
Laughing faces in the wild,  
Hands that twinkle in the sedge  
Bowling at the water's edge  
Where the finny minnows quiver,  
Shaping on a blue wave's ledge  
Bubble foam to sail the river.  
And the sunny hands to me  
Beckon ever, beckon ever.  
Oh! I would be wild and free  
And with the shadow people be.



IN BARRACKS







## AN OLD DESIRE

I SEARCHED thro' memory's lumber-room  
And there I found an old desire,  
I took it gently from the gloom  
To cherish by my scanty fire.

And all the night a sweet-voiced one,  
Sang of the place my loves abide,  
'Til Earth leaned over from the dawn  
And hid the last star in her side.

And often since, when most alone,  
I ponder on my old desire,  
But never hear the sweet-voiced one,  
And there are ruins in my fire.



THOMAS McDONAGH

HE shall not hear the bittern cry  
In the wild sky, where he is lain,  
Nor voices of the sweeter birds  
Above the wailing of the rain.

Nor shall he know when loud March blows  
Thro' slanting snows her fanfare shrill,  
Blowing to flame the golden cup  
Of many an upset daffodil.

But when the Dark Cow leaves the moor,  
And pastures poor with greedy weeds,  
Perhaps he'll hear her low at morn  
Lifting her horn in pleasant meads.



## THE WEDDING MORNING

SPREAD the feast, and let there be  
Such music heard as best beseems  
A king's son coming from the sea  
To wed a maiden of the streams.

Poets, pale for long ago,  
Bring sweet sounds from rock and flood,  
You by echo's accent know  
Where the water is and wood.

Harpers whom the moths of Time  
Bent and wrinkled dusty brown,  
Her chains are falling with a chime,  
Sweet as bells in Heaven town.



But, harpers, leave your harps aside,  
And, poets, leave awhile your dreams.  
The storm has come upon the tide  
And Cathleen weeps among her streams.



## THE BLACKBIRDS

I HEARD the Poor Old Woman say :  
“ At break of day the fowler came,  
And took my blackbirds from their songs  
Who loved me well thro' shame and blame.

No more from lovely distances  
Their songs shall bless me mile by mile,  
Nor to white Ashbourne call me down  
To wear my crown another while.

With bended flowers the angels mark  
For the skylark the place they lie,  
From there its little family  
Shall dip their wings first in the sky.



And when the first surprise of flight  
Sweet songs excite, from the far dawn  
Shall there come blackbirds loud with love,  
Sweet echoes of the singers gone.

But in the lonely hush of eve  
Weeping I grieve the silent bills."  
I heard the Poor Old Woman say  
In Derry of the little hills.



## THE LURE

I SAW night leave her halos down  
On Mitylene's dark mountain isle,  
The silhouette of one fair town  
Like broken shadows in a pile.  
And in the farther dawn I heard  
The music of a foreign bird.

In fields of shady angles now  
I stand and dream in the half dark :  
The thrush is on the blossomed bough,  
Above the echoes sings the lark,  
And little rivers drop between  
Hills fairer than dark Mitylene.



Yet something calls me with no voice  
And wakes sweet echoes in my mind ;  
In the fair country of my choice  
Nor Peace nor Love again I find,  
Nor anything of rest I know  
When south-east winds are blowing low.



## THRO' BOGAC BAN

I MET the Silent Wandering Man,  
Thro' Bogac Ban he made his way,  
Humming a slow old Irish tune,  
On Joseph Plunkett's wedding day.

And all the little whispering things  
That love the springs of Bogac Ban,  
Spread some new rumour round the dark  
And turned their faces from the dawn.

. . . . .

My hand upon my harp I lay,  
I cannot say what things I know;  
To meet the Silent Wandering Man  
Of Bogac Ban once more I go.



## FATE

LUGH made a stir in the air  
With his sword of cries,  
And fairies thro' hidden ways  
Came from the skies,  
And their spells withered up the fair  
And vanquished the wise.

And old lame Balor came down  
With his gorgon eye  
Hidden behind its lid,  
Old, withered and dry.  
He looked on the wattle town,  
And the town passed by.



These things I know in my dreams,  
The crying sword of Lugh,  
And Balor's ancient eye  
Searching me through,  
Withering up my songs  
And my pipe yet new.



## EVENING CLOUDS

A LITTLE flock of clouds go down to rest  
In some blue corner off the moon's highway,  
With shepherd winds that shook them in the  
West

To borrowed shapes of earth, in bright array,  
Perhaps to weave a rainbow's gay festoons  
Around the lonesome isle which Brooke has  
made

A little England full of lovely noons,  
Or dot it with his country's mountain shade.

Ah, little wanderers, when you reach that  
isle  
Tell him, with dripping dew, they have not  
failed,



What he loved most ; for late I roamed awhile  
Thro' English fields and down her rivers sailed ;  
And they remember him with beauty caught  
From old desires of Oriental Spring  
Heard in his heart with singing overwrought ;  
And still on Purley Common gooseboys sing.



## SONG

THE winds are scented with woods after rain,  
And a raindrop shines in the daisy's eye.  
Shall we follow the swallow again, again,  
Ah ! little yearning thing, you and I ?

You and I to the South again,  
And heart ! Oh, heart, how you shall sigh,  
For the kind soft wind that follows the rain,  
And the raindrop shed from the daisy's eye.



## THE HERONS

As I was climbing Ardan Mor  
From the shore of Sheelan lake,  
I met the herons coming down  
Before the water's wake.

And they were talking in their flight  
Of dreamy ways the herons go  
When all the hills are withered up  
Nor any waters flow.



## IN THE SHADOWS

THE silent music of the flowers  
Wind-mingled shall not fail to cheer  
The lonely hours  
When I no more am here.

Then in some shady willow place  
Take up the book my heart has made,  
And hide your face  
Against my name which was a shade.



## THE SHIPS OF ARCADY

THRO' the faintest filigree  
Over the dim waters go  
Little ships of Arcady  
When the morning moon is low.

I can hear the sailors' song  
From the blue edge of the sea,  
Passing like the lights along  
Thro' the dusky filigree.

Then where moon and waters meet  
Sail by sail they pass away,  
With little friendly winds replete  
Blowing from the breaking day.



And when the little ships have flown,  
Dreaming still of Arcady  
I look across the waves, alone  
In the misty filigree.



## AFTER

AND in the after silences  
Of flower-lit distances I'll be,  
And who would find me travels far  
In lands unsung of minstrelsy.  
Strong winds shall cross my secret way,  
And planet mountains hide my goal,  
I shall go on from pass to pass,  
By monstrous rocks, a lonely soul.



## TO ONE WEEPING

MAIDEN, these are sacred tears,  
Let me not disturb your grief;  
Had I but your bosom's fears  
I should weep, nor seek relief.

My woe is a silent woe  
'Til I give it measured rhyme,  
When the blackbird's flute is low  
In my heart at singing time.



## A DREAM DANCE

MAEVE held a ball on the dún,  
Cuculain and Eimer were there,  
In the light of an old broken moon  
I was dancing with Deirdre the fair

How loud was the laughter of Finn  
As he blundered about thro' a reel,  
Tripping up Caoilte the thin,  
Or jostling the dreamy Aleel.

And when the dance ceased for a song,  
How sweet was the singing of Fand,  
We could hear her far, wandering along,  
My hand in that beautiful hand.



BY FAUGHAN

FOR hills and woods and streams unsung  
I pipe above a rippled cove.  
And here the weaver autumn hung  
Between the hills a wind she wove  
From sounds the hills remember yet  
Of purple days and violet.

The hills stand up to trip the sky,  
Sea-misted, and along the tops  
Wing after wing goes summer by,  
And many a little roadway stops  
And starts, and struggles to the sea,  
Cutting them up in filigree.



Twixt wind and silence Faughan flows,  
In music broken over rocks,  
Like mingled bells the poet knows  
Ring in the fields of Eastern flocks.  
And here this song for you I find  
Between the silence and the wind.



## IN SEPTEMBER

STILL are the meadowlands, and still  
Ripens the upland corn,  
And over the brown gradual hill  
The moon has dipped a horn.

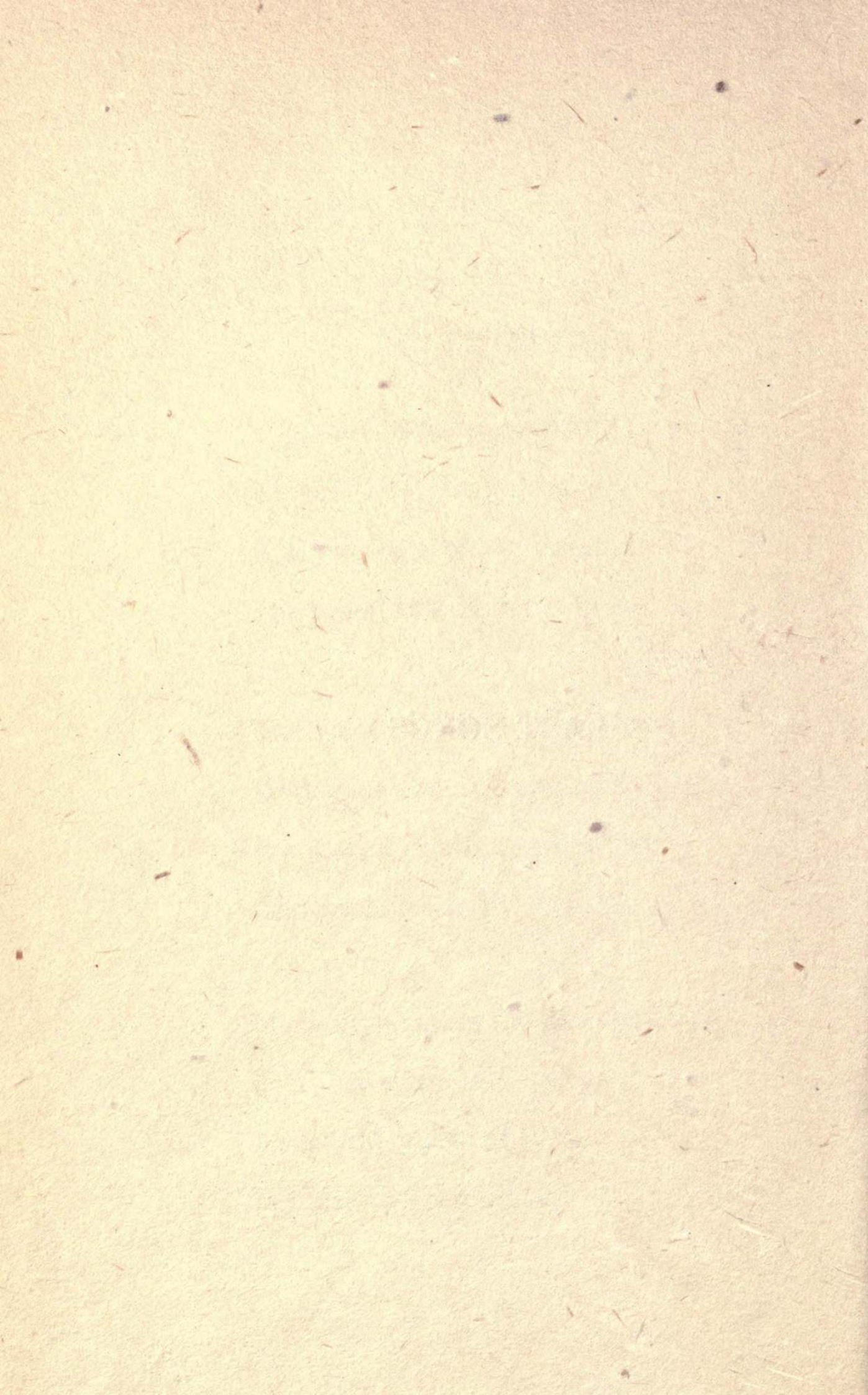
The voices of the dear unknown  
With silent hearts now call,  
My rose of youth is overblown  
And trembles to the fall.

My song forsakes me like the birds  
That leave the rain and grey,  
I hear the music of the words  
My lute can never say.



LAST SONGS







TO AN OLD QUILL OF LORD  
DUNSANY'S

BEFORE you leave my hands' abuses  
To lie where many odd things meet you,  
Neglected darkling of the Muses,  
I, the last of singers, greet you.

Snug in some white wing they found you,  
On the Common bleak and muddy,  
Noisy goslings gobbling round you  
In the pools of sunset, ruddy.

Have you sighed in wings untravelled  
For the heights where others view the  
Bluer widths of heaven, and marvelled  
At the utmost top of Beauty?



No! it cannot be; the soul you  
Sigh with craves nor begs of us.  
From such heights a poet stole you  
From a wing of Pegasus.

You have been where gods were sleeping  
In the dawn of new creations,  
Ere they woke to woman's weeping  
At the broken thrones of nations.

You have seen this old world shattered  
By old gods it disappointed,  
Lying up in darkness, battered  
By wild comets, unanointed.

But for Beauty unmolested  
Have you still the sighing olden?  
I know mountains heather-crested,  
Waters white, and waters golden.



There I'd keep you, in the lowly  
Beauty-haunts of bird and poet,  
Sailing in a wing, the holy  
Silences of lakes below it.

But I leave you by where no man  
Finds you, when I too be gone  
From the puddles on this common  
Over the dark Rubicon.

*Londonderry,  
September 18th, 1916.*



## TO A SPARROW

BECAUSE you have no fear to mingle  
Wings with those of greater part,  
So like me, with song I single  
Your sweet impudence of heart.

And when prouder feathers go where  
Summer holds her leafy show,  
You still come to us from nowhere  
Like grey leaves across the snow.

In back ways where odd and end go  
To your meals you drop down sure,  
Knowing every broken window  
Of the hospitable poor.



There is no bird half so harmless,  
None so sweetly rude as you,  
None so common and so charmless,  
None of virtues nude as you.

But for all your faults I love you,  
For you linger with us still,  
Though the wintry winds reprove you  
And the snow is on the hill.

*Londonderry,*

*September 20th, 1916.*



## OLD CLO'

I WAS just coming in from the garden,  
Or about to go fishing for eels,  
And, smiling, I asked you to pardon  
My boots very low at the heels.  
And I thought that you never would go,  
As you stood in the doorway ajar,  
For my heart would keep saying, "Old Clo',  
You're found out at last as you are."

I was almost ashamed to acknowledge  
That I was the quarry you sought,  
For was I not bred in a college  
And reared in a mansion, you thought.



And now in the latest style cut  
With fortune more kinder I go  
To welcome you half-ways. Ah! but  
I was nearer the gods when "Old Clo'."



## YOUTH

SHE paved the way with perfume sweet  
Of flowers that moved like winds alight,  
And never weary grew my feet  
Wandering through the spring's delight.

She dropped her sweet life to her lips  
And lured me with her melodies,  
To where the great big wandering ships  
Put out into the peaceful seas.

But when the year grew chill and brown,  
And all the wings of Summer flown,  
Within the tumult of a town  
She left me to grow old alone.



## THE LITTLE CHILDREN

HUNGER points a bony finger  
To the workhouse on the hill,  
But the little children linger  
While there's flowers to gather still  
For my sunny window sill.

In my hands I take their faces,  
Smiling to my smiles they run.  
Would that I could take their places  
Where the murky bye-ways shun  
The benedictions of the sun.

How they laugh and sing returning  
Lightly on their secret way.



While I listen in my yearning  
Their laughter fills the windy day  
With gladness, youth and May.



## AUTUMN

Now leafy winds are blowing cold,  
And South by West the sun goes down,  
A quiet huddles up the fold  
In sheltered corners of the brown.

Like scattered fire the wild fruit strews  
The ground beneath the blowing tree,  
And there the busy squirrel hews  
His deep and secret granary.

And when the night comes starry clear,  
The lonely quail complains beside  
The glistening waters on the mere  
Where widowed Beauties yet abide.



And I, too, make my own complaint  
Upon a reed I plucked in June,  
And love to hear it echoed faint  
Upon another heart in tune.

*Londonderry,  
September 29th, 1916.*



## IRELAND

I CALLED you by sweet names by wood and  
linn,

You answered not because my voice was new,  
And you were listening for the hounds of Finn  
And the long hosts of Lugh.

And so, I came unto a windy height  
And cried my sorrow, but you heard no wind,  
For you were listening to small ships in flight,  
And the wail on hills behind.

And then I left you, wandering the war  
Arméd with will, from distant goal to goal,  
To find you at the last free as of yore,  
Or die to save your soul.



And then you called to us from far and near  
To bring your crown from out the deeps of  
time,

It is my grief your voice I couldn't hear

In such a distant clime.



## LADY FAIR

LADY fair, have we not met  
In our lives elsewhere?  
Darkling in my mind to-night  
Faint fair faces dare  
Memory's old unfaithfulness  
To what was true and fair.  
Long of memory is Regret,  
But what Regret has taken flight  
Through my memory's silences?  
Lo! I turn it to the light.  
'Twas but a pleasure in distress,  
Too faint and far off for redress.  
But some light glancing in your hair



And in the liquid of your eyes  
Seem to murmur old good-byes  
In our lives elsewhere.  
Have we not met, Lady fair?

*Londonderry,  
October 27th, 1916.*



## AT A POET'S GRAVE

WHEN I leave down this pipe my friend  
And sleep with flowers I loved, apart,  
My songs shall rise in wilding things  
Whose roots are in my heart.

And here where that sweet poet sleeps  
I hear the songs he left unsung,  
When winds are fluttering the flowers  
And summer-bells are rung.

*November, 1916.*



## AFTER COURT MARTIAL

My mind is not my mind, therefore  
I take no heed of what men say,  
I lived ten thousand years before  
God cursed the town of Nineveh.

The Present is a dream I see  
Of horror and loud sufferings,  
At dawn a bird will waken me  
Unto my place among the kings.

And though men called me a vile name,  
And all my dream companions gone,  
'Tis I the soldier bears the shame,  
Not I the king of Babylon.



## A MOTHER'S SONG

LITTLE ships of whitest pearl  
With sailors who were ancient kings,  
Come over the sea when my little girl  
Sings.

And if my little girl should weep,  
Little ships with torn sails  
Go headlong down among the deep  
Whales.

*November, 1916.*



## AT CURRABWEE

EVERY night at Currabwee  
Little men with leather hats  
Mend the boots of Faery  
From the tough wings of the bats.  
So my mother told to me,  
And she is wise you will agree.  
  
Louder than a cricket's wing  
All night long their hammer's glee  
Times the merry songs they sing  
Of Ireland glorious and free.  
So I heard Joseph Plunkett say,  
You know he heard them but last May.  
  
And when the night is very cold  
They warm their hands against the light



Of stars that make the waters gold  
Where they are labouring all the night.  
So Pearse said, and he knew the truth,  
Among the stars he spent his youth.

And I, myself, have often heard  
Their singing as the stars went by,  
For am I not of those who reared  
The banner of old Ireland high,  
From Dublin town to Turkey's shores,  
And where the Vardar loudly roars?

*December, 1916.*



SONG-TIME IS OVER

I WILL come no more awhile,  
Song-time is over.

A fire is burning in my heart,  
I was ever a rover.

You will hear me no more awhile,  
The birds are dumb,  
And a voice in the distance calls  
“Come,” and “Come.”

*December 13th, 1916.*



## UNA BAWN

UNA BAWN, the days are long,  
And the seas I cross are wide,  
I must go when Ireland needs,  
And you must bide.

And should I not return to you  
When the sails are on the tide,  
'Tis you will find the days so long,  
Una Bawn, and I must bide.

*December 13th, 1916.*



## SPRING LOVE

I SAW her coming through the flowery grass,  
Round her swift ankles butterfly and bee  
Blent loud and silent wings; I saw her pass  
Where foam-bows shivered on the sunny sea.

Then came the swallow crowding up the dawn,  
And cuckoo-echoes filled the dewy South.

I left my love upon the hill, alone,  
My last kiss burning on her lovely mouth.

B.E.F.—*December 26th, 1916.*



## SOLILOQUY

WHEN I was young I had a care  
Lest I should cheat me of my share  
Of that which makes it sweet to strive  
For life, and dying still survive,  
A name in sunshine written higher  
Than lark or poet dare aspire.

But I grew weary doing well,  
Besides, 'twas sweeter in that hell,  
Down with the loud banditti people  
Who robbed the orchards, climbed the steeple  
For jackdaws' eggs and made the cock  
Crow ere 'twas daylight on the clock.  
I was so very bad the neighbours  
Spoke of me at their daily labours.



And now I'm drinking wine in France,  
The helpless child of circumstance.  
To-morrow will be loud with war,  
How will I be accounted for?

It is too late now to retrieve  
A fallen dream, too late to grieve  
A name unmade, but not too late  
To thank the gods for what is great;  
A keen-edged sword, a soldier's heart,  
Is greater than a poet's art.  
And greater than a poet's fame  
A little grave that has no name.



## DAWN

QUIET miles of golden sky,  
And in my heart a sudden flower.  
I want to clap my hands and cry  
For Beauty in her secret bower.

Quiet golden miles of dawn—  
Smiling all the East along;  
And in my heart nigh fully blown,  
A little rose-bud of a song.



## CEOL SIDHE<sup>1</sup>

WHEN May is here, and every morn  
Is dappled with pied bells,  
And dewdrops glance along the thorn  
And wings flash in the dells,  
I take my pipe and play a tune  
Of dreams, a whispered melody,  
For feet that dance beneath the moon  
In fairy jollity.

And when the pastoral hills are grey  
And the dim stars are spread,  
A scamper fills the grass like play  
Of feet where fairies tread.

<sup>1</sup>Fairy music.



And many a little whispering thing  
Is calling to the Shee.  
The dewy bells of evening ring,  
And all is melody.

*France,*

*December 29th, 1916.*



## THE RUSHES

THE rushes nod by the river  
As the winds on the loud waves go,  
And the things they nod of are many,  
For it's many the secret they know.

And I think they are wise as the fairies  
Who lived ere the hills were high,  
They nod so grave by the river  
To everyone passing by.

If they would tell me their secrets  
I would go by a hidden way,  
To the rath when the moon retiring  
Dips dim horns into the gray.



And a fairy-girl out of Leinster  
In a long dance I should meet,  
My heart to her heart beating,  
My feet in rhyme with her feet.

*France,*

*January 6th, 1917.*



## THE DEAD KINGS

ALL the dead kings came to me  
At Rosnaree, where I was dreaming.  
A few stars glimmered through the morn,  
And down the thorn the dews were streaming.

And every dead king had a story  
Of ancient glory, sweetly told.  
It was too early for the lark,  
But the starry dark had tints of gold.

I listened to the sorrows three  
Of that Eirë passed into song.  
A cock crowed near a hazel croft,  
And up aloft dim larks winged strong.



And I, too, told the kings a story  
Of later glory, her fourth sorrow :  
There was a sound like moving shields  
In high green fields and the lowland furrow.

And one said : " We who yet are kings  
Have heard these things lamenting inly."  
Sweet music flowed from many a bill  
And on the hill the morn stood queenly.

And one said : " Over is the singing,  
And bell bough ringing, whence we come ;  
With heavy hearts we'll tread the shadows,  
In honey meadows birds are dumb."

And one said : " Since the poets perished  
And all they cherished in the way,  
Their thoughts unsung, like petal showers  
Inflame the hours of blue and gray."



And one said: "A loud tramp of men  
We'll hear again at Rosnaree."

A bomb burst near me where I lay.

I woke, 'twas day in Picardy.

*France,*

*January 7th, 1917.*



## IN FRANCE

THE silence of maternal hills  
Is round me in my evening dreams;  
And round me music-making bills  
And mingling waves of pastoral streams.

Whatever way I turn I find  
The path is old unto me still.  
The hills of home are in my mind,  
And there I wander as I will.

*February 3rd, 1917.*



## HAD I A GOLDEN POUND

(AFTER THE IRISH)

HAD I a golden pound to spend,  
My love should mend and sew no more.  
And I would buy her a little quern,  
Easy to turn on the kitchen floor.

And for her windows curtains white,  
With birds in flight and flowers in bloom,  
To face with pride the road to town,  
And mellow down her sunlit room.

And with the silver change we'd prove  
The truth of Love to life's own end,  
With hearts the years could but embolden,  
Had I a golden pound to spend.

*February 5th, 1917.*



## FAIRIES

MAIDEN-POET, come with me  
To the heaped up cairn of Maeve,  
And there we'll dance a fairy dance  
Upon a fairy's grave.

In and out among the trees,  
Filling all the night with sound,  
The morning, strung upon her star,  
Shall chase us round and round.

What are we but fairies too,  
Living but in dreams alone,  
Or, at the most, but children still,  
Innocent and overgrown?

*February 6th, 1917.*



## IN A CAFÉ

Kiss the maid and pass her round,  
Lips like hers were made for many.

Our loves are far from us to-night,  
But these red lips are sweet as any.

Let no empty glass be seen  
Aloof from our good table's sparkle,  
At the acme of our cheer

Here are francs to keep the circle.

They are far who miss us most—

Sip and kiss—how well we love them,

Battling through the world to keep

Their hearts at peace, their God above them.

*February 11th, 1917.*



## SPRING

ONCE more the lark with song and speed  
Cleaves through the dawn, his hurried bars  
Fall, like the flute of Ganymede  
Twirling and whistling from the stars.

The primrose and the daffodil  
Surprise the valleys, and wild thyme  
Is sweet on every little hill,  
When lambs come down at folding time.

In every wild place now is heard  
The magpie's noisy house, and through  
The mingled tunes of many a bird  
The ruffled wood-dove's gentle coo.



Sweet by the river's noisy brink  
The water-lily bursts her crown,  
The kingfisher comes down to drink  
Like rainbow jewels falling down.

And when the blue and grey entwine  
The daisy shuts her golden eye,  
And peace wraps all those hills of mine  
Safe in my dearest memory.

*France,*

*March 8th, 1917.*



## PAN

HE knows the safe ways and unsafe  
And he will lead the lambs to fold,  
Gathering them with his merry pipe,  
The gentle and the overbold.

He counts them over one by one,  
And leads them back by cliff and steep,  
To grassy hills where dawn is wide,  
And they may run and skip and leap.

And just because he loves the lambs  
He settles them for rest at noon,  
And plays them on his oaten pipe  
The very wonder of a tune.

*France,*

*March 11th, 1917.*



## WITH FLOWERS

THESE have more language than my song,  
Take them and let them speak for me.

I whispered them a secret thing  
Down the green lanes of Allary.

You shall remember quiet ways  
Watching them fade, and quiet eyes,  
And two hearts given up to love,  
A foolish and an overwise.

*France,*  
*April, 1917.*



## THE FIND

I TOOK a reed and blew a tune,  
And sweet it was and very clear  
To be about a little thing  
That only few hold dear.

Three times the cuckoo named himself,  
But nothing heard him on the hill,  
Where I was piping like an elf  
The air was very still.

'Twas all about a little thing  
I made a mystery of sound,  
I found it in a fairy ring  
Upon a fairy mound.

*June 2nd, 1917.*



## A FAIRY HUNT

WHO would hear the fairy horn  
Calling all the hounds of Finn  
Must be in a lark's nest born  
When the moon is very thin.

I who have the gift can hear  
Hounds and horn and tally ho,  
And the tongue of Bran as clear  
As Christmas bells across the snow.

And beside my secret place  
Hurries by the fairy fox,  
With the moonrise on his face,  
Up and down the mossy rocks.



Then the music of a horn  
And the flash of scarlet men,  
Thick as poppies in the corn  
All across the dusky glen.

Oh! the mad delight of chase!  
Oh! the shouting and the cheer!  
Many an owl doth leave his place  
In the dusty tree to hear.



TO ONE WHO COMES NOW AND  
THEN

WHEN you come in, it seems a brighter fire  
Crackles upon the hearth invitingly,  
The household routine which was wont to  
tire  
Grows full of novelty.

You sit upon our home-upholstered chair  
And talk of matters wonderful and strange,  
Of books, and travel, customs old which dare  
The gods of Time and Change.

Till we with inner word our care refute  
Laughing that this our bosoms yet assails,  
While there are maidens dancing to a flute  
In Andalusian vales.



And sometimes from my shelf of poems you

take

And secret meanings to our hearts disclose,

As when the winds of June the mid bush

shake

We see the hidden rose.

And when the shadows muster, and each

tree

A moment flutters, full of shutting wings,

You take the fiddle and mysteriously

Wake wonders on the strings.

And in my garden, grey with misty flowers,

Low echoes fainter than a beetle's horn

Fill all the corners with it, like sweet showers

Of bells, in the owl's morn.



282 TO ONE WHO COMES NOW AND THEN

Come often, friend, with welcome and surprise  
We'll greet you from the sea or from the  
town;

Come when you like and from whatever skies  
Above you smile or frown.

*Belgium,*

*July 22nd, 1917.*



## THE SYLPH

I SAW you and I named a flower  
That lights with blue a woodland space,  
I named a bird of the red hour  
And a hidden fairy place.

And then I saw you not, and knew  
Dead leaves were whirling down the mist,  
And something lost was crying through  
An evening of amethyst.



## HOME

A BURST of sudden wings at dawn,  
Faint voices in a dreamy noon,  
Evenings of mist and murmurings,  
And nights with rainbows of the moon.

And through these things a wood-way dim,  
And waters dim, and slow sheep seen  
On uphill paths that wind away  
Through summer sounds and harvest green.

This is a song a robin sang  
This morning on a broken tree,  
It was about the little fields  
That call across the world to me.

*Belgium,*  
*July, 1917.*



## THE LANAWN SHEE

POWDERED and perfumed the full bee  
Winged heavily across the clover,  
And where the hills were dim with dew,  
Purple and blue the west leaned over.

A willow spray dipped in the stream,  
Moving a gleam of silver ringing,  
And by a finny creek a maid  
Filled all the shade with softest singing.

Listening, my heart and soul at strife,  
On the edge of life I seemed to hover,  
For I knew my love had come at last,  
That my joy was past and my gladness over.



I tiptoed gently up and stooped  
Above her looped and shining tresses,  
And asked her of her kin and name,  
And why she came from fairy places.

She told me of a sunny coast  
Beyond the most adventurous sailor,  
Where she had spent a thousand years  
Out of the fears that now assail her.

And there, she told me, honey drops  
Out of the tops of ash and willow,  
And in the mellow shadow Sleep  
Doth sweetly keep her poppy pillow.

Nor Autumn with her brown line marks  
The time of larks, the length of roses,  
But song-time there is over never  
Nor flower-time ever, ever closes.



And wildly through uncurling ferns  
Fast water turns down valleys singing,  
Filling with scented winds the dales,  
Setting the bells of sleep a-ringing.

And when the thin moon lowly sinks,  
Through cloudy chinks a silver glory  
Lingers upon the left of night  
Till dawn delights the meadows hoary.

And by the lakes the skies are white,  
(Oh, the delight!) when swans are coming,  
Among the flowers sweet joy-bells peal,  
And quick bees wheel in drowsy humming.

The squirrel leaves her dusty house  
And in the boughs makes fearless gambol,  
And, falling down in fire-drops, red,  
The fruit is shed from every bramble.



Then, gathered all about the trees  
Glad galaxies of youth are dancing,  
Treading the perfume of the flowers,  
Filling the hours with mazy glancing.

And when the dance is done, the trees  
Are left to Peace and the brown woodpecker,  
And on the western slopes of sky  
The day's blue eye begins to flicker.

But at the sighing of the leaves,  
When all earth grieves for lights departed  
An ancient and a sad desire  
Steals in to tire the human-hearted.

No fairy aid can save them now  
Nor turn their prow upon the ocean,  
The hundred years that missed each heart  
Above them start their wheels in motion.



And so our loves are lost, she sighed,  
And far and wide we seek new treasure,  
For who on Time or Timeless hills  
Can live the ills of loveless leisure?

("Fairer than Usna's youngest son,  
O, my poor one, what flower-bed holds you?  
Or, wrecked upon the shores of home,  
What wave of foam with white enfolds you?

"You rode with kings on hills of green,  
And lovely queens have served you banquet,  
Sweet wine from berries bruised they brought  
And shyly sought the lips which drank it.

"But in your dim grave of the sea  
There shall not be a friend to love you.  
And ever heedless of your loss  
The earth ships cross the storms above you.



“ And still the chase goes on, and still  
The wine shall spill, and vacant places  
Be given over to the new  
As love untrue keeps changing faces.

“ And I must wander with my song  
Far from the young till Love returning,  
Brings me the beautiful reward  
Of some heart stirred by my long yearning.”)

Friend, have you heard a bird lament  
When sleet is sent for April weather?  
As beautiful she told her grief,  
As down through leaf and flower I led her.

And friend, could I remain unstirred  
Without a word for such a sorrow?  
Say, can the lark forget the cloud  
When poppies shroud the seeded furrow?



Like a poor widow whose late grief  
Seeks for relief in lonely byeways,  
The moon, companionless and dim,  
Took her dull rim through starless highways.

I was too weak with dreams to feel  
Enchantment steal with guilt upon me,  
She slipped, a flower upon the wind,  
And laughed to find how she had won me.

From hill to hill, from land to land,  
Her lovely hand is beckoning for me,  
I follow on through dangerous zones,  
Cross dead men's bones and oceans stormy.

Some day I know she'll wait at last  
And lock me fast in white embraces,  
And down mysterious ways of love  
We two shall move to fairy places.

*Belgium,*  
*July, 1917.*











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