

## The Project Gutenberg eBook of I Run with the Fox, by Mona Gould

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**Title:** I Run with the Fox

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I Run With the Fox  
By  
Mona Gould

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Frontespiece:  
For "Mook"

(Lt.-Col. Howard McTavish, Royal Canadian  
Engineers, killed in action, Dieppe, 1942)

In proud and loving remembrance

This was my brother  
At Dieppe,  
Quietly a hero  
Who gave his life  
Like a gift,  
Withholding nothing.

His youth... his Love...  
His enjoyment of being alive...  
His future, like a book  
With half the pages still uncut —

This was my brother  
At Dieppe —  
The one who built me a doll house  
When I was seven,

Complete to the last small picture frame,  
Nothing forgotten.

He was awfully good at fixing things,  
At stepping into the breach when he was needed.

That's what he did at Dieppe;  
He was needed.  
And even death must have been a little shamed  
At his eagerness.

Mona Gould

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### I Run With the Fox

Better to be proud and hunted  
Than to ride with the Pink Coats.

Better than the smell of warm blood after a quick kill, Bitter and bright the scent of hidden fern.

Though the heart fail in the panting side  
And the eye be clouded with straining  
after the deep copse  
Still is there thrill in flight —  
Soft are oak leaves under the swift feet.

Sweet are the distant notes of the hunter's horn  
And the hounds' baying,  
Sweet to the trembling ears of the hidden  
and hunted.

I run with the fox!

### Memory Sharp

It has come to this... my darling...  
With the years gone over,  
With the truth acknowledged  
You are not coming back.

It is entering a room  
Where the curtains are drawn,  
Where dust lies heavy  
On the table top.  
Sudden — your name — scrawled in the gloom —  
And the mouth gone dry,  
And the heart stopped!

### Gift Shop Window

Apple Annie, ancient and weather-beaten  
Her amazing garments huddled about her,  
Bent almost double to peer in the window —  
She stood on the one foot... and then on the other  
And nodded her head like a great dark crow.  
Her old lips moved in some mumbo-jumbo  
But what she said was her own dark secret.

The wine-glasses winked in their pewter holders,  
A bewildering array of costume jewellery  
Of filigreed ivory and cornflower crystal  
Was spread like the spoils of a pirate frigate  
For Apple Annie's remote appraisal.  
Some place, far back in the mind's recess  
The hunger for Beauty stirred in sleep.

A little smile, like a secret fragment  
Of dimly-remembered and lost delight  
Moved, like the stir of a small frail fan  
On a face that was wrinkled and dim with age.  
With a hesitant gesture, desire engendered,  
Her old hands fluttered against the pane  
Twisted and gnarled... and pitifully empty...  
Fluttered ... and moved ... and were still again!

## Sire

My mother was a lady  
With hair like silk  
And eyes like gentians  
And a skin like milk.

But my father loved laughter  
And the flowing bowl —  
And his eyes were dark mischief —  
"Rest his soul!"

My mother often stopped me  
From having fun  
With the echo of her proper  
"It isn't done!"

But I'd feel my father's hand  
As he'd rough my hair  
Saying "black... and rebellious.  
We're a bold, bad pair!"

And now I'm woman grown  
With a son - ah me!  
Who am I to tell him  
What the "score" should be!

## Communion

The rain falls down silverly  
On the dark night.  
Oh, but the air is soft to touch  
And your face white.

This is for remembering,  
For putting away in the mind's pocket  
Like a shell - or a treasured stone, found  
at the beach—  
This touch - this kiss - this heart turning  
toward heart —  
This is for remembering  
When you are beyond reach.

Words, at best, are like thistledown.  
Let us be quiet, then.  
Give me your hand!  
You are my friend, and my love till the  
world ends —  
You understand!

## Loud Silence

This is loud silence,  
This bewildering space  
Untenanted by you.  
It has the ugly face  
Of loneliness!

Hush... foolish heart ...  
You have been here before —  
This is your blood  
That rusts upon the door!

## He Will Not Go Unremembered

(For Sir Charles G. D. Roberts)

Into fire, and air,  
And finally soft and subtle ash  
This clay  
In which bright Beauty burned,  
Became articulate  
And lived a little while.

He will not go unremembered.  
Small boys,  
Belly-flat on floor  
Will pad with him  
Down wooded ways  
Where creatures of the forest  
Are realer than the room  
And its four quite solid walls.

Young girls  
Will pore with shining eyes  
Over verse that sings  
Of life... and beauty.

He will not go unremembered  
Who served his Muse  
With faithful plying pen.

This, his bright spark of lovely immortality  
Struck from the cycle of his life and work...  
He will not go unremembered!

Bagpipes Skirl in Heaven

Ah ... not irreverent this...  
For I am very sure  
The bagpipes skirl in Heaven!

You see ... 'twould not be Heaven ... for him ...  
Without his native music —  
Dear to his heart...  
Called up at will,  
Shrill ... and sweet  
Defiant as all "get out" ...  
Remembered past death!

And angels ...  
Yes, even angels  
Must smile to see him marching by  
Brave in his kilt ...  
His head thrown back  
His "Plaidie" streaming in the wind.

Who could be sad for one so young and fair,  
Immortal as a god, who gave his life  
With never a backward glance?

Ah.. . not irreverent this,  
When bagpipes skirl in Heaven!

Howd'Ya Do!

When we were very small children  
In kindergarten  
We used to play a game.  
It was called "Howd'ya do, my Partner".

And you bowed, each to the other,  
And clasped hands,  
And solemnly went round in a circle  
Which ended with a triumphant, rollicking skip!

It's the strangest thing —  
Looking back from so many years  
I can still remember distinctly  
That the only little boy I'd skip with  
Had eyes exactly like yours!  
I can remember stamping my foot  
And being unspeakably difficult  
When the teacher tried to persuade me  
That another little boy would do.

That's one of the most important features  
Of that particular game —  
Another little boy won't do!

### Big Bay

This is fall  
So I must remember Big Bay  
And the nets drying on the dock  
And the birches stripped for winter  
And wine in the sun!

There were scarlet berries  
Maybe they were bittersweet,  
And all the ferns  
Were tobacco-coloured.

Some places you long for  
With a physical longing.  
It is like that with Big Bay,  
Now... in October!

### Prayer, In a Hospital

Dear God ... let him play games  
For a little while, yet!

Let his hands curve to a hockey stick  
And the thrust of a canoe paddle.

Let him dive like a young arrow  
Into clean water.

But, dear God  
Let him play games! ...

I have been to a Military Hospital.  
I have talked to Mike ...

Mike isn't much older.  
His two boots hang at the foot of his bed.  
Two carefully "dubbed" boots.  
But Mike doesn't need two boots.

He just had a leg taken off.  
He was cut down at Dieppe.  
He was fourteen months in prison camp in  
Germany.  
"O, yes ... they looked after us good enough —  
But they had to tend their own wounded, first...

And there were so damn many of us!"

I talked to John,  
After I got over the first shock.  
John has both arms off... well above the elbow.  
They call him "Arms" in the hospital ward.

It's sort of a grim... institutional joke.  
John has an eye out, too —  
The new glass one doesn't match his own eye.  
"Are you married... or single... John?"  
I managed.  
"Single," he said ... "Oh yes, ... single."  
He said it, thankfully,  
Like a l-o-n-g sigh —  
Like the sigh a child gives  
Who has cried himself to sleep.  
A hand grenade exploded in John's two hands.  
It was the last thing he'll ever hold - in his  
two hands!

And then there was Fred.  
Fred got his at Sicily.  
He'd been training for three and one half years  
And he was in on the Big Push... three weeks!  
Sure... it was shrapnel.  
Took an eye out... and gave him a bum leg.  
He had a picture of his English bride...  
"Coming out to Canada, by God!  
Next month — if they'll let her.  
Pretty good-looking guy  
Wasn't I... in the wedding picture?"  
You're doggone right!  
But it made a fellow so damn mad!  
Three and one half years' training  
To "get into it" — for three weeks.  
And then ... hospitals ...  
One after the other ...  
For God-knows-how-long.  
It made a guy so damn mad!

Mac hasn't any arms, now, either.  
"How did he blow his nose?" —  
Well ... he could laugh at that feeble crack,  
And even give it serious consideration.  
"By Gosh! — I don't think I've had a cold  
Since I got `knocked off' in Italy."

Mac is married.  
He'd even had some leave  
Out of "this here" hospital.  
Getting ready for artificial arms, now.  
Has to "stay put" for a while, yet ...  
Oh, it takes quite a while,  
This business of making a man  
Makeshift-whole, again!  
(Wonderful how a guy can pick up a book  
in his teeth —  
Smoke a cigarette, even — with a little help!)

Further down the line there's a chap  
with no nose.  
And a very young, fair-haired boy  
So badly burned  
That you couldn't identify a feature  
But his bright blue eyes.

Bright ... and hard ... and sharp...  
On the look-out for pity.  
(Don't let your lips quiver  
In front of the young, fair-haired boy.  
Don't look at him with tears in your eyes —  
Can't you see how he feels?)

Going out, there are wheelchairs —  
Doors opening on to rooms  
Where wisps of men like grey shadows  
Lie, curled up against their pillows.

The hospital smell clings to your skin,  
To your palate.  
You breathe it... taste it...  
Stifle, in it!

Dear God! Let him play games  
For a little while, yet!  
Let him laugh out loud  
And run like a young god  
In the path of the sun.  
I have been to a Military Hospital  
And I know there is nothing we can give  
To Mike and John, and Freddie and Mac  
That will make up for their Gethsemane.

There is nothing!  
Glass eyes are not enough!  
Artificial limbs are not a fair exchange...

Dear God... let him play games  
For a little while, yet!

#### So Fair a Season

How could he tell them  
There was a sleek small vixen  
With a silken pelt  
Who held his heart in thrall?  
How could he tell them when that call  
Came down the wind  
His bones were thinn'd  
With longing,  
And he turned his back  
On the pack?

Even he couldn't tell the strange enchanted reason Why fall should suddenly be so fair a season!

#### Spring Comes to a Small Town

The pool players  
That all winter long have lingered lazily  
over the green-topped tables  
Half-somnolent in the cloud of cigarette smoke,  
Are seen lounging at precarious angles  
Against the nearest tobacconist's windows.

Teen-age boys and girls link arms, and  
Roller-skate on the paved streets,  
Shoulders touching; and laughter like  
a living thing between them.  
Later, in the summer they will dance on Saturday evenings  
Under gaudy Chinese lanterns.

And the prophecy of spring will be fulfilled.

A short stout lady bustles off her doorstep  
Broom in hand  
To do a little sweeping;  
Her knitted suit fits closely  
Like the sleek, green plumage of a plump  
soft bird.

Babies... babies — everywhere  
Bouncing busily in their prams —  
Eyes like bits of rain-washed sky...  
And everyone exclaiming as they ride past  
"Isn't he a darling!"

Old, old gentlemen taking little walks,  
Their canes tapping the sidewalk  
More and more confidently.  
You can see how they feel about the sun,  
It's a downright comfort!

Everything looks suddenly clean and shining.  
The lettuce in the fruit-shop window  
has a fresh-cut look  
Like an accidental bouquet;  
It suddenly becomes imperative to  
speak to someone  
And it doesn't matter in the least  
If a perfect stranger goes white with surprise  
When you tell them "It's a lovely day!"...  
In no uncertain terms.

Spring comes to a small town  
In rather a special sort of way!  
After all, she can't add an awful lot to  
Fifth Avenue,  
But there's room for just her kind of glamour  
On Main Street!

For a Brown Dog

And the rusted spade turned in the dark earth  
And we committed his body to the dust —  
His little brown dog's body  
That three minutes before  
Had jumped for joy  
And emitted joyous barks.

(But you couldn't go out and shoot the motorist  
Who had run over him...  
Especially when it was a woman  
Who had shed appropriate tears!)

Only, you could burn inside with a fierce flame  
Because he wouldn't come running to you  
Any more  
With a grin on his face  
And his funny little plume of a tail  
Frantic with love!

The rusted spade turned in the dark earth  
And something of you went into the ground  
With the little brown dog's body!

## Right out of Pickwick

Right out of Pickwick! You would have said:  
His quaint neat figure  
Rotund, but tapered.  
His trousers looked to be always peg-top,  
Narrowing down to his shining foot gear.  
His woollen vests were from far-famed Bond Street,  
Checked, and horsey and dear to his heart.  
You might have thought him a figure for laughter;  
You might have laughed and said "Humpty Dumpty!"  
If you hadn't known him, and hadn't loved him  
He was Uncle Reg to the young and the old —  
He was Uncle Reg and his heart was gold...

He'd been a Banker for many years  
And then he'd retired, to the laughter and tears  
Of nursing his mother... delicate... old...  
But precious to him. She thought him a bold  
Brave knight, who chose to stay at her side.  
You hardly saw him, when she first died!

When Kathie, his niece, married the mayor —  
A tall young Scotsman with sandy hair —  
In his high silk hat, that sat "just so",  
Old Uncle Reg was a regular Beau.  
His cravat was faultless, his dignity sweet...  
From his topper top, to his gleaming feet! ...

On birthdays, in fine Spencerian hand  
A letter would come. The words were grand  
And the style heroic. In dark green ink  
Uncle Reg would say, "I think  
You the fairest lady this side of the sea  
Who wears her birthdays with gaiety.  
You have my wishes for scores and scores."  
And the letters were signed "Admiringly, Yours."

There'd come a bottle of fine liqueur  
At Christmas. A gift was always the best  
With a label. He thought it a very test  
Of friendship. You thought a person was dear and fine  
So you gave him your choicest, rarest wine!

He was at his best when the lights were high  
And laughter gleamed in the dancer's eye;  
He never would ask for your hand outright,  
But would seek your partner, and there in sight  
Would ask permission to squire you round  
In a waltz; he was light as a blowing feather!  
His conversation was always whether  
The party was fun for you. Compliments came to his lips more swift  
Than the dancing music's whirling lift.

He was no relation to us, by blood...  
He was "Uncle" because of the great warm flood  
Of affection. We adopted him right from the time we met...  
And he's Uncle Reg in our memory yet.

And there's never a birthday or Christmas night  
When the candles burn high and the eyes are bright  
But a gentle whimsical courtly ghost  
Sits at our table. We miss him most  
Anniversary times!

"Right out of Pickwick," you would have said,  
If you'd seen him strolling along the street,

His neat small figure against the sky.

But Uncle Reg was a symbol, too  
Of the way the Quality used to do  
What was expected. He knew the rules  
And he carried them out, to the last fine letter.  
Somewhere I think his dear small ghost  
Treads a gay measure ... murmuring, "Most  
Sweet gracious lady ..." to some slim shade  
Who finds him a gallant entrancing Blade!

#### Man is a Lonely One

Man is a lonely one.  
How close he huddles to his hearth and house,  
Walks quiet as a mouse  
Down echoing streets... Gathers about him neighbours,  
Friends,  
Puts up with being bored  
While endless, pointless stories  
Roll from indifferent lips.

He does not like to wake  
In an empty house.  
His spouse is his retreat from single-ness,  
His friendly bosom that will take him in  
And quiet his awareness,  
Lull him to comfort and insentient peace;  
Build tender walls about his shivering self;  
Gather within the crescent of her arms  
The core of his alarms.  
Man is a lonely one.  
He builds himself a shelter from the night,  
Turns himself inward where the lamplight falls,  
Takes comfort in the stoutness of four walls.  
Only when he strides out to face a gun  
Suddenly... strickenly, bravely  
He is one!  
War breaks his shell, and spews him forth alone  
Into a world most savagely his own!

#### This Bitter Brew

This is a bitter brew  
Mixed with my own hand,  
I recall how the herbs grew  
Flowering over the land.

How the wind blew sweet  
And your eyes held the sun,  
And this need grew in my heart  
That will never be quite done.

A cloud furred like midnight  
Covered the rising sea  
And slipt like a raven shadow  
Bitterly over me.

You knew the sudden knowledge  
That filled my heart with fear  
And stood against the darkness  
As long as you were here!

It Was Tall in the Forest  
(Browning Island, Muskoka)

It was tall in the forest  
This morning...  
The trees were on tiptoe  
With their shoulders hunched,  
And every daisy lifted its frill  
Skyward.  
Down the lane between the trees  
I was a sudden giant!  
"Ho!" I said to a tree toad  
Who crossed my path,  
"Out of the way... Small Fry...  
The world is tall to-day  
And walking on long legs!  
Ho!" I said to the Small Flat One,  
"Out of the way!"

Child ... Waiting in a Drawing-Room

Her room reminded me  
Of a rich, dark fruit-cake.  
There was a "plum-iness" about it...  
A claret sort of aura.

Nervous as a witch  
On a sea of red carpet  
I sat on the edge  
Of a high-backed chair,

Longing to hide behind the grave grey portieres  
Or run like a rabbit  
From her step on the stair!

Stars and the Dead

Stars and the dead  
Are faithful;  
These, you may set your clock by;  
Promise to meet at such-and-such a time,  
And such a place —  
The living can keep face  
With no such constancy.

Look on this thing  
With disenchanted eyes —  
Do not expect the living  
In such wise!

The Old Lady and the Cat!

At the very top storey the old lady sat  
Telling her love to a smoky grey cat.  
In a high, dark, old house like a tenement place.  
There were twinkles of merriment touching her face.

With a few bits of bread for the pigeons to eat  
She sat in her eyrie above the dark street;  
And the language she spoke to the cat and the birds  
Was half made of poetry, half made of words.

She was something remembered from tales you'd been told

Of witchcraft and crones when you weren't very old.  
From beneath those high eaves in the middle of town  
A page from your childhood looked piquantly down!

### This Green

This is the newest green  
As if an unseen Leprechaun  
Rushing across the lawn  
Had tipped his hand!  
Every tree  
Is filigree.  
There is a brush of colour  
In the hedges.  
The Scillas and the tulip spears  
Conspire against you.  
Tenderness runs like bright fire  
Along the evening.

Turn quickly, if this thing can get you down...  
This green... this little love, that wraps the town!

### Weather-Vane

When I was small  
And it would rain  
Against the widest window-pane  
I'd press my face and taste despair —  
And streaked with woe I'd cry  
"Unfair!"

Useless to say  
The clouds would pass  
The lovely rain would green the grass,  
Would drench the lilacs,  
Wash the world.  
My heart was small and tense  
And curl'd  
Tight as a snail...

Only the smell of sun on clover  
Could make me glad the rain was over,  
Could set me free to walk enchanted  
The fresh, bright lanes;  
Geared like a weather-vane am I  
By what goes on in yonder sky!

### Noel

Christmas to a little girl  
When she is small,  
Means a toy tea-set  
Or a beautiful doll,  
Or a little grey muff  
With a matching fur  
Beautiful beyond words  
These... to her!

Christmas to a woman grown  
Is different again.  
It's all tangled crazily  
With mistletoe and men,  
With stardust and flowers

And tunes for dancing feet,  
And packets out of jewellers'  
Marked "My sweet!"

But best of all, later on...  
Best of all three...  
It's children's eyes by candlelight  
Around the tree!

#### Immortal

We may be now a sphere apart  
And yet I find you in my heart  
As warm and live, as once you were.  
A little stir, like candle flame  
Still touches me.  
Your very name  
Can call you up to quicken me  
To trembling silence.  
You may be  
To all intents and purposes  
As far away as yon bright star  
That pricks the midnight. Very far  
A love can be... and yet... and yet...  
There is no way I may forget  
Your essence. The "you"  
That walked my nights and days  
I carry with me, deep inside,  
As much a part of me as eyes  
Or hands or lips — or sudden laughter!

How sweet to know there is no death,  
Not in the heart, that is...  
A breath  
Of shaken longing and you come  
To company me.  
And I am dumb  
With this bright knowledge  
Certain ... sure...  
This then is deathless —  
Does endure!

#### Release

The bird in my breast  
That long had lain  
Ruffled of feather,  
Drenched with rain,  
Rises to fly.  
You've set him free  
To sing himself  
Right out of me!

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK I RUN WITH THE FOX \*\*\*

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