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Title: Poems

Author: Elinor Jenkins

Release date: February 3, 2013 [EBook #41985]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by David E. Brown, Bryan Ness and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net> (This file was produced from images generously made available by The Internet Archive/Canadian Libraries)

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Poems by Elinor Jenkins

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POEMS

[Pg 3]

By **ELINOR JENKINS**

**London: Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd.
3 Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C. 1915**

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DEDICATION

[Pg 5]

To
H. S. T.
15·viii·15

*F*AIN had I given precious things and sweet,
But having neither frankincense nor gem,
Only sad flowers—last year's fading yield
Gathered about that bitter harvest field—
I made a sorry garland out of them,
And laid it where immortelles had been meet.

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Poems

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H. S. T. *Requiescat*

[Pg 11]

WE were bereft ere we were well aware
 Of all our precious fears, and had
 instead
 A hopeless safety, a secure despair.
 We know that fate dealt kindly with our dead,
 Tenderer to that fair face we held so dear
 Than unto many another's best beloved.
 Whate'er befall, we know him far removed
 From all the weary labours of last year,
 And even in paying this most bitter price
 We know the cause worthy the sacrifice.
 Now he is safe from any further ill,
 Nor toils in peril while at ease we sit,
 Yet bides our loss in thinking of him still,—
 Of sombre eyes, by sudden laughter lit,
 Darkened till all the eternal stars shall wane;
 And lost the incommunicable lore
 Of cunning fingers ne'er to limn again
 And restless hands at rest for ever more.

The Dead Comrade

[Pg 12]

"COURAGE, invention, mirth we ill can spare
Lie lost with him, the greatest loss of all,
We grudge to well-won rest
His swiftness to devise and dare
That never failed the call."

Thus they all spoke together of the dead
Who was their comrade many a dark hour through,
As one whose work was ended quite,
But he that held him dearest said
Nothing, for well he knew

His friend forsook them not in dying.
—Often above the din he seemed to hear
His well known voice beloved,
Often in mud and darkness lying,
Felt he was working near,

By star-shell light oft with that commonplace
Familiar kindness knowing not surprise
Just as in other nights now lost,
Suddenly glimpsed his face,
Unchanged the same sleep-burdened eyes,

Whimsical brows and laughter-lifted lip;
And turned again to labours lighter grown,
Glad of that unforgetful soul's
Imperishable fellowship
That left him not to serve alone.

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The Choice

[Pg 14]

TOO well they saw the road where they must tread
Was shrouded in a misty winding sheet,
Among whose strangling coils their souls might meet
Death, and delaying not to go, they said
Farewell to hope, to dear tasks left undone,
To well-loved faces and to length of days.—
So came they to the parting of the ways,
A year ago, and saw no way but one.

Others, and they were many, watched them go
But turned not from the pleasant path of ease,
With hedges full of flowers, and fields of sheep.
Their hearts waxed gross, battenning on braver woe
And their eyes heavy.—God, for such as these
No trump avails but Thine to break their sleep!

The House by the Highway

[Pg 15]

ALL night, from the quiet street
Comes the sound, without pause or
break
Of the marching legions' feet
To listeners lying awake.

Their faces may none descry;
Night folds them close like a pall;
But the feet of them passing by
Tramp on the hearts of all.

What comforting makes them strong?
What trust and what fears have they
That march without music or song
To death at the end of the way?

What faith in our victory?
What hopes that beguile and bless?
What heaven-sent hilarity?
What mirth and what weariness?

What valour from vanished years
In the heart of youth confined?
What wellsprings of unshed tears
For the loves they leave behind?

No sleep, my soul to befriend;
No voice, neither answering light!
But darkness that knows no end
And feet going by in the night.

[Pg 16]

Night in the Suburbs, August, 1914

[Pg 17]

THE misty night broods o'er this peopled place,
Chimneys and trees stand black against the
sky,
One goes belated by with echoing pace
And careless whistle, shrilling loud and high.

And ere his steps into the stillness merge
Some labouring giant of our later day
Passes with hollow roar of distant surge
And clouds of steam as white as ocean spray.

In turn the lighted windows, twinkling fair,
Darken, till all these earthborn stars are down;
Stained dusky red by the great city's glare
The waning moon hangs low o'er London Town.

E'en now that moon in her own silver guise
Looks down on some stretched on a stricken plain,
Yet she shows red unto their blood-dimmed eyes
That never shall behold the sun again.

We, weary of the idle watch we keep,
Turn from the window to our sure repose
And pass into the pleasant realms of sleep,
Or snug and drowsy muse upon their woes.

And whether we that sleep or they that wake,—
We that have laboured light and slumber well
Or they that bled and battled for our sake—
Have the best portion scarce seems hard to tell.

[Pg 18]

Soon shall the sun behold them, where they lie,
Yet his fierce rays may never warm them more;
No further need have they to strive or cry,
They have found rest that laboured long and sore;

While we take up again in street and mart
The burden and the business of the day:
And which of these two is the better part
God only knows, whose face is turned away.

Autumn Wind

[Pg 19]

A MONTH ago they marched to fight
Away 'twixt the woodland and the
sown,
I walked that lonely road to-night
And yet I could not feel alone.

The voice of the wind called shrill and high

Like a bugle band of ghosts,
And the restless leaves that shuffled by
Seemed the tread of the phantom hosts.

Mayhap when the shadows gather round
And the low skies lower with rain,
The dead that rot upon outland ground
March down the road again.

The Battle of the Rivers

[Pg 20]

FOR fifteen hundred valiant men and tried,
These waters were as Lethe's, dark and deep
And bitter as the bitterest tears we weep;
Their high hearts rose above the swollen tide,
Fain of the foe upon the further side,
Though in death's draught their lips they needs must steep.
Since their own lives their valour might not keep,
Our tall young men drank of that cup and died.

Now are their faces hidden from the sky,
Under the trampled turf where last they trod;
Yet unforsaken sleeps that sad array;
The living hearts of all their mothers lie
Buried with them, and beat below the sod,
As their poor pulse could stir the senseless clay.

A Legend of Ypres

[Pg 21]

BEFORE the throne the spirits of the slain
With a loud voice importunately cried,
"Oh, Lord of Hosts, whose name be glorified,
Scarce may the line one onslaught more sustain
Wanting our help. Let it not be in vain,
Not all in vain, Oh God, that we have died."
And smiling on them our good Lord replied,
"Begone then, foolish ones, and fight again."

Our eyes were holden, that we saw them not;
Disheartened foes beheld—our prisoners said—
Behind us massed, a mighty host indeed,
Where no host was. On comrades unforgot
We thought, and knew that all those valiant dead
Forwent their rest to save us at our need.

Ecce Homo!

[Pg 22]

HE hung upon a wayside Calvary,
From whence no more the carven Christ looks
down
With wide, blank eyes beneath the thorny crown,
On the devout and careless, passing by.
The Cross had shaken with his agony,
His blood had stained the dancing grasses brown,
But when we found him, though the weary frown,
That waited on death's long delayed mercy,
Still bent his brow, yet he was dead and cold,
With drooping head and patient eyes astare,
That would not shut. As we stood turned to ice
The sun remembered Golgotha of old,
And made a halo of his yellow hair
In mockery of that fruitless sacrifice.

April Nights

[Pg 23]

WHEN the night watches slowly downwards creep,
And heavy darkness lays her leaden wings
On aged eyes that ache but cannot weep,
For burning time hath dried the water-springs—
Yearneth the watcher then with sleepless pain
For eager hearts that in the grave lie cold,
For all the toil and pride of years made vain,
And grieveth sore to be alive, and old.

Without, the lost wind desolately crying
Scatters poor spring's frail children rent and torn,
And when the moon looks, wearily a-dying,
A moment 'thwart her shroud, faint and forlorn,
Gleams ghostly through the trees her fickle light
On barren blossoms, strewn upon the night.

Rupert Brooke. April, 1915

[Pg 24]

YOUNG and great hearted, went he forth to dare
Death on the field of honour; all he sought,
Was leave to lay life down a thing of naught
And spill its hopes and promise on the air.
Then lest vile foes should vaunt a spoil so rare
The sun that loved him gave a kiss death-fraught
Quenching the heaven-enkindled fire that wrought
Fair fancies, bodied forth in words more fair,
And lit the dreaming beauty of his face
With tender mirth and strength-begetting trust,—
Impotent strength, and mirth that might not save.
Therefore we mourn, counting each vanished grace.
Ne'er was so much, since dust returned to dust,
Cribbed in the compass of a narrow grave.

The Last Evening

[Pg 25]

ROUND a bright isle, set in a sea of gloom,
We sat together, dining,
And spoke and laughed even as in better times
Though each one knew no other might misdoubt
The doom that marched moment by moment nigher,
Whose couriers knocked on every heart like death,
And changed all things familiar to our sight
Into strange shapes and grieving ghosts that wept.
The crimson-shaded light
Shed in the garden roses of red fire
That burned and bloomed on the decorous limes.
The hungry night that lay in wait without
Made blind, blue eyes against the silver's shining
And waked the affrighted candles with its breath
Out of their steady sleep, while round the room
The shadows crouched and crept.
Among the legions of beleaguering fears,
Still we sat on and kept them still at bay,
A little while, a little longer yet,
And wooed the hurrying moments to forget
What we remembered well,
—Till the hour struck—then desperately we sought
And found no further respite—only tears
We would not shed, and words we might not say.
We needs must know that now the time was come
Yet still against the strangling foe we fought,
And some of us were brave and some

[Pg 26]

Borrowed a bubble courage nigh to breaking,
And he that went, perforce went speedily
And stayed not for leave-taking.
But even in going, as he would dispel
The bitterness of incomplete good-byes,
He paused within the circle of dim light,
And turned to us a face, lit seemingly
Less by the lamp than by his shining eyes.
So, in the radiance of his mastered fate,
A moment stood our soldier by the gate
And laughed his long farewell—
Then passed into the silence and the night.

The Letter

[Pg 27]

SHE read the words of him that was her own:
The dauntless brow that grief itself had
steeled
Quickened with listening ever, not in vain
Amid brave stories of the stricken field,
For strange, sad echoes from a child's heart grown
Untimely old, that scarce will dance again
This side the grave, but nathless keeps a leaven
Of mirth most bitter sweet.
So changed her face, 'twixt pride and sorrowing,
As stirs and shadows sun-bleached wheat
With winds that walk the stair of heaven
And high clouds hovering.

Frigga. (Up to date)

[Pg 28]

FOR the last time I kissed
The lips of my dearest son,
For the last time looked in his face—
My brave, my beautiful one.

Reaching up to his breast,
But lately as low as my knee,
I felt with my hands in his heart
A shadow I might not see.

Scarce could I bid him farewell,
Scarce to bless him find breath,
For I felt the shape of the shade
And knew 'twas the shadow of death.

Farewells à la Mode

[Pg 29]

THE limbs she bore and cherished tenderly,
And rocked against her heart, with loving
fears,
Through helpless infancy that all endears,
Unto the verge of manhood's empery,
Were fostered for this cruel end, and she
Kneeling beside him, looks through blinding tears
Down the long vista of the lonely years,
Void of all light, drear as eternity.

But her young son, who knows not that he dies,
Gives good-night lightly, on the utmost brink,
And, anguish overmastered for her sake,
Says smiling with stiff lips and death-dimmed eyes,
"Why, Mother, if you kiss me so, I'll think

Sunset

[Pg 30]

DEAR is young morning's tender-hued attire:
To us and ours, 'stead of that promise, came
A brief and burning sunset, blood and flame,
And, looking on the end of our desire,
Yet said we, "What if fealty to a name
Have built our hearts' beloved a funeral pyre?
Their death hath kindled a fair beacon fire
To lighten all this world of fear and shame,
And none shall quench it." As the words were said,
Darkened and failed the strange, unearthly light,
And faded all the surging sea of gold,
And nought was left of the fierce glories fled
But ashen skies slow deepening into night,
Lit by pale memory's stars that shake for cold.

Sursum Corda

[Pg 31]

OH faint and feeble hearted, comfort ye!
Nor shame those dead whose death was great
indeed,
Greater than life in death. It doth not need,
Since we seek strength where healing may not be,
Faith in fair fables of eternal rest,
Nor seer's eyes to look beyond the grave.
That they endured and dared for us shall save
Our souls alive:—they met, our tenderest,
Pain without plaint and death without dismay,
Bore and beheld sorrows unspeakable,
Yet shrank not from that double-edged distress,
But, eyes set steadfastly where ends the way,
They through all perils laughed and laboured well,
Nor ceased from mercy on the merciless.

Lying in State

[Pg 32]

IF with his fathers he had fallen asleep,
Far different would have been this drear lyke-
wake.
Lonely and lampless lies he, for whose sake
Many might well a night-long vigil keep,
And, though we have not time nor heart to weep,
Yet fain would we some slight observance make,
E'er sad to-morrow's earliest dawn shall break
When he must lie yet darker and more deep.

Therefore we've laid him 'neath a chestnut tree,
That bears a myriad candles all alight,
And faintly glimmering through the starry gloom—
No dimmer than a holy vault might be—
It sheds abroad upon the quiet night
A gentle radiance and a faint perfume.

Wind-pedlars

[Pg 33]

PURPLE and grey the vacant moor lies spread
And all the storms of heaven sweep and cry
Among the barrows of forgotten dead,
Who died as we shall die.

There dwelt of yore, upon such desert land,
Strange merchants of a stranger merchandise,
Who stole the Winds from out God's hollowed hand
And loosed them, at a price.

Thither mayhap the reiving marchman rode
And bought a gale to ruffle the red cock
That he would set upon his foe's abode,
And leave no standing stock.

And thither, with hearts tossing to and fro
On stormy seas, came foolish maids and fain,
And chattered for a favouring wind to blow
Their lovers home again.

Oh were such mighty witches living still,
Those whistle tempests and light airs obeyed,
We have more need the wind should do our will
Than e'er had love-sick maid.

At body's peril and in soul's despite
We would give all we had of gold and gem
For a west wind, where our beloved fight,
To blow the reek from them.

[Pg 34]

But these wind-pedlars with their hard-earned fee
Mocked and forsaken of the fiend their sire
'Spite of all powers of spell and gramarye
Passed long ago in fire.

So to High God let humble prayers be said,
From bursting hearts that wait in vain, and He
In His good time, when all your dears are dead,
May stoop to answer ye.

Dulce et Decorum?

[Pg 35]

WE buried of our dead the dearest one—
Said each to other, "Here then let him lie,
And they may find the place, when all is done,
From the old may tree standing guard near by."

Strong limbs whereon the wasted life blood dries,
And soft cheeks that a girl might wish her own,
A scholar's brow, o'ershadowing valiant eyes,
Henceforth shall pleasure charnel-worms alone.

For we, that loved him, covered up his face,
And laid him in the sodden earth away,
And left him lying in that lonely place
To rot and moulder with the mouldering clay.

The hawthorn that above his grave head grew
Like an old crone toward the raw earth bowed,
Wept softly over him, the whole night through,
And made him of her tears a glimmering shroud.

.

Oh Lord of Hosts, no hallowed prayer we bring,
Here for Thy grace is no importuning,
No room for those that will not strive nor cry
When loving kindness with our dead lies slain:
Give us our fathers' heathen hearts again,
Valour to dare, and fortitude to die.

Succory

[Pg 36]

IN a strange burial ground
Searching strange graves
above,
By a sure sign I found
Where lay my love.

Bluer than summer skies,
Than summer seas more blue,
Looked from the dust his eyes
Whose death I rue.

Sweet eyes of my sweet slain
Lost all these weary hours,
Lo, I beheld again
Turned into flowers.

Dreams Trespassing

[Pg 37]

OF all the spectres feared and then forgot
That haunt us sleeping, this is dreadfulest—
Still to seek help and find it not
Through those dim lands that sleep and know not rest;

Followed for ever by a formless fear
That drawing near and nearer hungrily
Lowers against our dearest dear,
And nought can shield them from that jeopardy;

To see the unknown horror rearing slow,
Hang high above them like a craning wave,
And in that endless moment know
Intolerable impotence to save.

Yet 'whelmed the dream-doom never one dear head,
Our own hearts woke us with their passionate beat:
Straightway we found all peril fled
And lay, awaiting dawn's deliverance sweet.

.

Now growing with the strengthening daylight strong
Doth that ill dream, the sleep-world's confines breaking,
Walk at our elbow all day long
To leave us only at a worse awaking.

"What shall be done with all these tears of ours?"

[Pg 38]

THE poor proud mother in the sad old tale,
That wept her lovely children's loss in vain
Grew one with her own tears' most bitter rain;
The immortal Gods that spared not for her wail
Then made from out her grief's eternal flow
A never-failing fountain, at whose brink
Wayfaring men oft stooped them down to drink
And blessed those Gods, whose envy wrought her woe.

So may these bitter springs with years grow sweet,
And welling ever upward full and strong,
As when from many a broken heart they burst,
Stay not for frost nor fail for summer heat,
But make fair pools life's desert way along
Where unborn generations slake their thirst.

In Hereford Cathedral

[Pg 39]

WHILE the noonday prayers were said,
For the warriors in our War,
And many bowed the head
With heavy hearts and sore,
Each with his voiceless dread,
Each with his hidden pain,
Each thinking on his own,
The living and the dead,—
Then on the pillared stone
Behind the altar, fell
A cross-shaped stain,
A shadow strong and dark
That all may mark,
And know it well,
That doth dear won salvation spell.
Awhile the sad sign stayed,
And the shadow-shape, concealed
In the hearts of them that prayed,
Stood for a space revealed.

Poppyfields

[Pg 40]

A WILDERNESS were better than this place
Where foregone seasons set a gentle spell
Decking it with such fair and tender grace
An angel might be pleased here to dwell;
Now all its gay delights are dismal grown
In the full glory of the summer time,
As from the horror of some evil thing
Its every grace had flown,—
Laid under penance for an unknown crime
The garden close lies sick and sorrowing.

Pale in the sultry splendour of the day
Each shoot a finger, stiffened wearily,
The harsh-leaved rosemary stands stark and grey
Pointing at that which none may ever see,
And darker grows the pansy's brooding face
With dark foreboding; and the lily's cup
Turns loathsome, festering sourly in the sun;
In the cypress's embrace
The valiant scented bay is swallowed up.
The roses all have withered, one by one.

Beyond the close, smothering the wholesome corn,
A flight of scarlet locusts fallen to earth
Baleful, and blighting all that they adorn,
The burnished heralds of a bitterer dearth,
Coral and flame and blood among the gold,
Like Eastern armies gorgeously dight
And raised by gramarye from English sod
With banners brave unrolled
Each silken tent enclosing dusky night,
Drowsy dream-laden poppies beck and nod.

[Pg 41]

Brighter than stains of that imperial hue
Spilled from the vats of sea-enthronèd Tyre,
Their flaunting ranks grow dull and blow anew
From smouldering rubies to fierce coals of fire,
As through the thunder-burdened air of noon
The slow clouds slowly drift and pass
Casting soft shifting shadows on the field.
Alas, and all too soon
The wearied eye 'gins ache for shaded grass

Though the charmed sense would to the glamour yield.

Now that love's rose has crumbled into dust,
And nought is left but sharp envenomed thorns,
Burning remorse with many a cruel thrust,
Bitter regret that unavailing mourns,
Now thought is fear and memory is pain
And hope a sickly pulse that will not cease,
And fame a gaping grave whereby we weep,
Nowhere now doth remain
A place of refuge for us, or release,
Save in the shadowy wastes of idle sleep.

[Pg 42]

Therefore, scorn not these flowers of phantasy
That blow about the ivory gate of dreams,
For though they have not truth or constancy
Yet very fair their idle semblance seems.
Though short the blest relief they bring to woe,
And wakening the worm 'gins gnaw again,
Yet comely truth is grown a grim death's head.
Fly the unconquerable foe;
Go, in an empty dream lost joys regain
And down among the poppies meet your dead.

Artificial Light

[Pg 43]

WARM and golden and dear
In custom and kindness set,
We builded against our fear
A place wherein to forget
Darkness that rings us near.

Here our hearts we deceive
And will not understand.
Whether we laugh or grieve
We dwell in a lamp-lit land—
A land of make-believe

Not too high for our pride
Whereto we are ever bond
Nor for our souls too wide—
And all is night beyond
Where monstrous things abide.

Still without ceasing we
Watch on our stronghold keep,
Lest lamps burn flickeringly,
And, while we slumber and sleep,
Outcast eternity

Break in a moment through
Our soul-built barriers slight,
Look in on us with blue
Lustreless eyes, whose light
Life everlasting slew.

[Pg 44]

Heavy with endless days,
With endless wisdom sad,
Should those eyes behold our days
And our loves wherein we are glad,
We might not abide their gaze.

Our sorrows flee fast away
Like shadows before the morn,
In the light of eternal day
Pale all our joys forlorn,
Elf-gold that will not stay;

Find we, looking again,
For all our cherished treasures
And all our labours vain,

Weariness all our pleasures
And worthless all our pain.

Our vanities kissed and curled,
Ere the swift vision is gone,
Into the void are hurled;
But we ourselves live on,
Waifs in a blasted world,

Where light and laughter and love
Lie dead in the dark together
And we brood their dust above,
Knowing not surely whether
'Tis life at our hearts doth move.

Lost without remedy,
We sit under pitiless skies
Mourning the moment we
Looked with our finite eyes
Into Infinity!

[Pg 45]

Epitaph

[Pg 46]

On a Child left Buried Abroad

FATHER, forget not, now that we must go,
A little one in alien earth low laid;
Send some kind angel when thy trumpets blow
Lest he should wake alone, and be afraid.

Veronica

[Pg 47]

SHE lifted up her eyes and looked at me;—
Straightway, methought that I was gazing
down
Through lacy lattices of meadow grass,
Into the face of that low, little flower,
That holds all fathomless eternity,
Inscrutable, immeasurable dusk's
Heart-breaking blue, and night's first timid star,
Prisoned and mirrored in a shallow cup,
So small a single dewdrop would o'erflow it,
So frail no vagrant bee could rest thereon.
But unaware of its own loveliness
This symbol of all mysteries sad and sweet
Fixes on heaven the wide unwinking stare
Of blind, bright eyes, coloured and glorified,
By light and hues, it apprehendeth not.—
Even so, lovely, senseless and aloof,
Round-eyed Veronica looked up at me.

Moonlight

[Pg 48]

EVEN as walk on middle earth
The shades of the unquiet dead
That loathe the graves allotted them from birth
And wander without end, uncomforted;
So the dead moon, poor restless rover
That died by fire, long, long ago,
Wanders forlorn the steeps of heaven over;
With death's despair and life's outwearied woe
She journeys, a reluctant lustre giving

To this world's throbbing life and strong,
And, being dead, envieth all things living,
And sheds a passing death her beams along.
To that weird corpse-light worse than dark,
All fair things for a little die;
The spell-bound earth lies, colourless and stark,
Beneath the wan ghost witch's jealous eye.

Waking

[Pg 49]

SO fair a dream last night my heart had kissed,
I sought some token of it, but 'twould give
Nothing, save formless fancies fugitive,
That slipped from words' encirclement away—
As, when hell's shades 'gan quicken with the day,
His lost beloved fled the lutanist.

Feather Boats

[Pg 50]

WHILE the wind low o'er the green pool creeps
Spoiling with kisses the wood's mirrored
beauty,
Kneel we close down by the margin preparing
To launch the frail craft on those perilous deeps.
Swift the wind takes them, we lean to see
Over the water gallantly faring
Forth our fantastical argosy.

Silver-white galleons beating to seaward,
Freighted with fancies lighter than foam,
Bound for far havens and tall towns enchanted—
Stir, sleepy breezes, and bring them safe home.

Cabot sailing for ever and ever
To the unknown where the wild ducks nest;
Morgan mooring to rape the treasure
Hid in a lily's unsullied breast;
Nearer, in shore among lowering leaf-bergs
Franklin, crushed on his fatal quest.

So I behold in your eyes re-awaken
Brave sad tales that the sea wind sings,
Tales of old mariners, daring hid dangers,
Ghosts of forgotten adventurings.

Heart of my heart, in your manhood's hereafter,
When you've grown taller, and harder to please,
Will you turn sometimes your wandering wishes
Back to the hours when with eyes full of laughter
You watched where the day-dreaming willow trees
Dipped their long fingers to catch at the fishes,
Mock sails flying on mimic seas?

[Pg 51]

The Lovers' Walk

[Pg 52]

TWO lovers walked in a green garden way
'Neath towering poplar pillars all arow;
The still June midnight close about them lay:
They whispered soft and low.

Though they could feel no wind, they heard it creep
High in the poplars, whispering secret schemes;
The tall trees stood as sentinels asleep,

And listening through their dreams.

The full moon's white fire lamp hung round and fair
Above the highest poplar's shivering crest,
The lazy fountain's waters stirred the air
And softly sank to rest.

Unseen the honeysuckle trailed that fills
The dim air with its heavy sweet perfume,
But the wan fire-eyed wraiths of daffodils
Stared spectral through the gloom.

They felt no footsteps fall beside their own,
But long their like had loved the garden well;
And never two may walk this walk alone:
Their presence wakes a spell.

When here live lovers loiter to and fro
With tender words and lips of kisses fain,
Then those dead men that walked here long ago
Meet their lost loves again.

[Pg 53]

The grey dew keeps no traces of their feet,
Their speech is lighter than the bat's shrill cry,
They hover where of yore they used to meet
Like shadows passing by.

Though many wander where the moonlight lies
Yet are they lonely as in life they were,
For each ghost looks into his own love's eyes
And sees no other there.

And when the living lips their farewells frame
And the live feet turn to the garden door,
The shades depart in darkness as they came
And are not any more.

Did those two guess who loved that night in June
That others trod the grass as well as they,
And won from them a passing moment's boon
To love as in life's day?

Or did they think in that still haunted place,
As those poor phantoms were they soon must be
And pluck at other unknown lovers' grace
The joys that once were free?

[Pg 54]

Perchance their glad hearts thrust such thoughts away;
Of that night's tryst no more than this they own:
That they two, in a grassy garden way
Once walked an hour alone.

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