

Classic Poetry Series

Bliss William Carman
- poems -

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Bliss William Carman(15 April 1861 – 8 June 1929)

Bliss Carman FRSC was a Canadian poet. He was born William Bliss Carman in Fredericton, in the Maritime province of New Brunswick. He published under the name "Bliss Carman," although the "Bliss" is his mother's surname.

As with many Canadian poets, nature figures prominently as a theme in his work. In his time, he was arguably Canada's best known poet, and was dubbed by some the "unofficial poet laureate of Canada."

Bliss Carman was the great-grandson of United Empire Loyalists who fled to Nova Scotia after the American Revolution, settling in New Brunswick (then part of Nova Scotia). His literary roots run deep with an ancestry that includes a mother who was a descendant of Daniel Bliss of Concord, Massachusetts, the great-grandfather of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Also on his mother's side, he was a first cousin to another famous Canadian poet, Sir Charles G. D. Roberts. His sister was married to the botanist and historian William Francis Ganong.

Carman was educated at the University of New Brunswick, the University of Edinburgh, Harvard University and New York University. After relocating to New York City, Carman became influential as an editor and writer for the *Independent*, the *Cosmopolitan*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *Chap Book* and other literary journals. He is also well known for his anthology and editing work on *The World's Best Poetry* (10 volumes, 1904) and *The Oxford Book of American Verse* (1927).

After 1909, he lived in New Canaan, Connecticut but became a corresponding Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. In 1928, the Society awarded him its Lorne Pierce Medal.

Bliss Carman died at the age of 68 in New Canaan, Connecticut. His body was returned home and interred in the Forest Hill Cemetery in Fredericton, New Brunswick.

There is a middle school named after him in Fredericton, New Brunswick. There is also a school named after him in Toronto, Ontario. "Bliss Carman Heights" (an extension of the Skyline Acres subdivision) is a subdivision located in Fredericton, New Brunswick overlooking the Saint John River. It consists of Essex Street, Gloucester Crescent, Reading Street, Ascot Court, and Ascot Drive. A extension of the Bliss Carman Heights subdivision is named "Poet's Hill" and consists of Bliss Carman Drive and Poets Lane.

A Captain Of The Press Gang

SHIPMATE, leave the ghostly shadows,
Where thy boon companions throng!
We will put to sea together
Through the twilight with a song.

Leering closer, rank and girding,
In this Black Port where we bide,
Reel a thousand flaring faces;
But escape is on the tide.

Let the tap-rooms of the city
Reek till the red dawn comes round.
There is better wine in plenty
On the cruise where we are bound.

I've aboard a hundred messmates
Better than these 'long-shore knaves.
There is wreckage on the shallows;
It's the open sea that saves.

Hark, lad, dost not hear it calling?
That's the voice thy father knew,
When he took the King's good cutlass
In his grip, and fought it through.

Who would palter at press-money
When he heard that sea-cry vast?
That's the call makes lords of lubbers,
When they ship before the mast.

Let thy cronies of the tavern
Keep their kisses bought with gold;
On the high seas there are regions
Where the heart is never old,

Where the great winds every morning
Sweep the sea-floor clean and white,
And upon the steel-blue arches
Burnish the great stars of night;

There the open hand will lose not,
Nor the loosened tongue betray.
Signed, and with our sailing orders,
We will clear before the day;

On the shining yards of heaven
See a wider dawn unfurled. . . .
The eternal slaves of beauty
Are the masters of the world.

Bliss William Carman

A Christmas Eve Choral

Halleluja!

What sound is this across the dark
While all the earth is sleeping? Hark!

Halleluja! Halleluja! Halleluja!

Why are thy tender eyes so bright,
Mary, Mary?

On the prophetic deep of night

Joseph, Joseph,

I see the borders of the light,

And in the day that is to be

An aureoled man-child I see,

Great love's son, Joseph.

Halleluja!

He hears not, but she hears afar,

The Minstrel Angel of the star.

Halleluja! Halleluja! Halleluja!

Why is thy gentle smile so deep,

Mary, Mary?

It is the secret I must keep,

Joseph, Joseph, —

The joy that will not let me sleep,

The glory of the coming days,

When all the world shall turn to praise

God's goodness, Joseph.

Halleluja!

Clear as the bird that brings the morn

She hears the heavenly music borne.

Halleluja! Halleluja! Halleluja!

Why is thy radiant face so calm,

Mary, Mary?

His strength is like a royal palm,

Joseph, Joseph;

His beauty like the victor's psalm,

He moves like morning o'er the lands

And there is healing in his hands

For sorrow, Joseph.

Halleluja!

Tender as dew-fall on the earth

She hears the choral of love's birth.

Halleluja! Halleluja! Halleluja!
What is the message come to thee,
Mary, Mary?
I hear like wind within the tree,
Joseph, Joseph,
Or like a far-off melody
His deathless voice proclaiming peace,
And bidding ruthless wrong to cease,
For love's sake, Joseph.

Halleluja!

Moving as rain-wind in the spring
She hears the angel chorus ring.

Halleluja! Halleluja! Halleluja!

Why are thy patient hands so still,
Mary, Mary?

I see the shadow on the hill,
Joseph, Joseph,
And wonder if it is God's will
That courage, service, and glad youth
Shall perish in the cause of truth
Forever, Joseph.

Halleluja!

Her heart in that celestial chime
Has heard the harmony of time.

Halleluja! Halleluja! Halleluja!

Why is thy voice so strange and far,
Mary, Mary?

I see the glory of the star,
Joseph, Joseph,
And in its light all things that are
Made glad and wise beyond the sway
Of death and darkness and dismay,
In God's time, Joseph.

Halleluja!

To every heart in love 't is given
To hear the ecstasy of heaven.

Halleluja! Halleluja! Halleluja!

Bliss William Carman

A Creature Catechism

I

Soul, what art thou in the tribes of the sea?

LORD, said a flying fish,
Below the foundations of storm
We feel the primal wish
Of the earth take form.

Through the dim green water-fire
We see the red sun loom,
And the quake of a new desire
Takes hold on us down in the gloom.

No more can the filmy drift
Nor draughty currents buoy
Our whim to its bent, nor lift
Our heart to the height of its joy.

When sheering down to the Line
Come polar tides from the North,
Thy silver folk of the brine
Must glimmer and forth.

Down in the crumbling mill
Grinding eternally,
We are the type of thy will
To the tribes of the sea.

II

Soul, what art thou in the tribes of the air

Lord, said a butterfly,
Out of a creeping thing,
For days in the dust put by,
The spread of a wing

Emerges with pulvil of gold
On a tissue of green and blue,
And there is thy purpose of old
Unspoiled and fashioned anew.

Ephemera, ravellings of sky
And shreds of the Northern light,
We age in a heart-beat and die
Under the eaves of night.

What if the small breath quail,
Or cease at a touch of the frost?
Not a tremor of joy shall fail,
Nor a pulse be lost.

This fluttering life, never still,
Survives to oblivion's despair.
We are the type of thy will
To the tribes of the air.

III

Soul, what art thou in the tribes of the field?

Lord, said a maple seed,
Though well we are wrapped and bound,
We are the first to give heed,
When thy bugles give sound.

We banner thy House of the Hills
With green and vermilion and gold,
When the floor of April thrills
With the myriad stir of the mould,

And her hosts for migration prepare.
We too have the veined twin-wings,
Vans for the journey of air.
With the urge of a thousand springs

Pent for a germ in our side,
We perish of joy, being dumb,

That our race may be and abide
For aeons to come.

When rivulet answers to rill
In snow-blue valleys unsealed,
We are the type of thy will
To the tribes of the field.

IV

Soul, what art thou in the tribes of the ground?

Lord, when the time is ripe,
Said a frog through the quiet rain,
We take up the silver pipe
For the pageant again.

When the melting wind of the South
Is over meadow and pond,
We draw the breath of thy mouth,
Reviving the ancient bond.

Then must we fife and declare
The unquenchable joy of earth,—
Testify hearts still dare,
Signalize beauty's worth.

Then must we rouse and blow
On the magic reed once more,
Till the glad earth-children know
Not a thing to deplore.

When rises the marshy trill
To the soft spring night's profound,
We are the type of thy will
To the tribes of the ground.

V

Soul, what art thou in the tribes of the earth?

Lord, said an artist born,
We leave the city behind
For the hills of open morn,
For fear of our kind.

Our brother they nailed to a tree
For sedition; they bully and curse
All those whom love makes free.
Yet the very winds disperse

Rapture of birds and brooks,
Colours of sea and cloud,—
Beauty not learned of books,
Truth that is never loud.

We model our joy into clay,
Or help it with line and hue,
Or hark for its breath in stray
Wild chords and new.

For to-morrow can only fulfil
Dreams which to-day have birth;
We are the type of thy will
To the tribes of the earth.

Bliss William Carman

A Fireside Vision

ONCE I walked the world enchanted
Through the scented woods of spring,
Hand in hand with Love, in rapture
Just to hear a bluebird sing.
Now the lonely winds of autumn
Moan about my gusty eaves,
As I sit beside the fire
Listening to the flying leaves.
As the dying embers settle
And the twilight falls apace,
Through the gloom I see a vision
Full of ardor, full of grace.
When the Architect of Beauty
Breathed the lyric soul in man,
Lo, the being that he fashioned
Was of such a mould and plan!
Bravely through the deepening shadows
Moves that figure half divine,
With its tenderness of bearing,
With its dignity of line.
Eyes more wonderful than evening.
With the new moon on the hill,
Mouth with traces of God's humor
In its corners lurking still.
Ah, she smiles, in recollection;
Lays a hand upon my brow;
Rests this head upon Love's bosom!
Surely it is April now!

Bliss William Carman

A More Ancient Mariner

The swarthy bee is a buccaneer,
A burly velveted rover,
Who loves the booming wind in his ear
As he sails the seas of clover.

A waif of the goblin pirate crew,
With not a soul to deplore him,
He steers for the open verge of blue
With the filmy world before him.

His flimsy sails abroad on the wind
Are shivered with fairy thunder;
On a line that sings to the light of his wings
He makes for the lands of wonder.

He harries the ports of Hollyhocks,
And levies on poor Sweetbriar;
He drinks the whitest wine of Phlox,
And the Rose is his desire.

He hangs in the Willows a night and a day;
He rifles the Buckwheat patches;
Then battens his store of pelf galore
Under the taughtest hatches.

He woos the Poppy and weds the Peach,
Inveigles Daffodilly,
And then like a tramp abandons each
For the gorgeous Canada Lily.

There's not a soul in the garden world
But wishes the day were shorter,
When Mariner B. puts out to sea
With the wind in the proper quarter.

Or, so they say! But I have my doubts;
For the flowers are only human,
And the valor and gold of a vagrant bold
Were always dear to woman.

He dares to boast, along the coast,
The beauty of Highland Heather,-
How he and she, with night on the sea,
Lay out on the hills together.

He pilfers every port of the wind,
From April to golden autumn;
But the theiving ways of his mortal days
Are those his mother taught him.

His morals are mixed, but his will is fixed;
He prospers after his kind,
And follows an instinct compass-sure,
The philosophers call blind.

And that is why, when he comes to die,
He'll have an earlier sentence
Than someone I know who thinks just so,
And then leaves room for repentance.

He never could box the compass round;
He doesn't know port from starboard;
But he knows the gates of the Sundown Straits,
Where the choicest goods are harbored.

He never could see the Rule of Three,
But he knows the rule of thumb
Better than Euclid's, better than yours,
Or the teachers' yet to come.

He knows the smell of the hydromel
As if two and two were five;
And hides it away for a year and a day
In his own hexagonal hive.

Out in the day, hap-hazard, alone,
Booms the old vagrant hummer,
With only his whim to pilot him
Throught the splendid vast of summer.

He steers and steers on the slant of the gale,

Like the fiend or Vanderdecken;
And there's never an unknown course to sail
But his crazy log can reckon.

He drones along with his rough sea-song
And the throat of a salty tar,
This devil-may-care, till he makes his lair
By the light of a yellow star.

He looks like a gentleman, lives like a lord,
And makes like a Trojan hero;
Then loafs all winter upon his hoard,
With the mercury at zero.

Bliss William Carman

A Mountain Gateway

I know a vale where I would go one day,
When June comes back and all the world once more
Is glad with summer. Deep in shade it lies
A mighty cleft between the bosoming hills,
A cool dim gateway to the mountains' heart.

On either side the wooded slopes come down,
Hemlock and beech and chestnut. Here and there
Through the deep forest laurel spreads and gleams,
Pink-white as Daphne in her loveliness.
Among the sunlit shadows I can see
That still perfection from the world withdrawn,
As if the wood-gods had arrested there
Immortal beauty in her breathless flight.

The road winds in from the broad river-lands,
Luring the happy traveller turn by turn
Up to the lofty mountains of the sky.
And as he marches with uplifted face,
Far overhead against the arching blue
Gray ledges overhang from dizzy heights,
Scarred by a thousand winters and untamed.

And where the road runs in the valley's foot,
Through the dark woods a mountain stream comes down,

Singing and dancing all its youth away
Among the boulders and the shallow runs,
Where sunbeams pierce and mossy tree trunks hang
Drenched all day long with murmuring sound and spray.

There light of heart and footfree, I would go
Up to my home among the lasting hills.
Nearing the day's end, I would leave the road,
Turn to the left and take the steeper trail
That climbs among the hemlocks, and at last
In my own cabin doorway sit me down,
Companioned in that leafy solitude
By the wood ghosts of twilight and of peace,

While evening passes to absolve the day
And leave the tranquil mountains to the stars.

And in that sweet seclusion I should hear,
Among the cool-leafed beeches in the dusk,
The calm-voiced thrushes at their twilight hymn.
So undistraught, so rapturous, so pure,
They well might be, in wisdom and in joy,
The seraphs singing at the birth of time
The unworn ritual of eternal things.

Bliss William Carman

A New England Thanksgiving

IT is the mellow season
When gold enchantment lies
On stream and road and woodland,
To gladden soul's surmise.
The little old grey homesteads
Are quiet as can be,
Among their stone-fenced orchards
And meadows by the sea.

Here lived the men who gave us
The purpose that holds fast,
The dream that nerves endeavor,
The glory that shall last.
Here strong as pines in winter
And free as ripening corn,
Our faith in fair ideals —
Our fathers' faiths —was born.

Here shone through simple living,
With pride in word and deed,
And consciences of granite,
The old New England breed.
With souls assayed by hardship,
Illumined, self-possessed,
Strongly they lived, and left us
Their passion for the best.

On trails that cut the sunset,
Above the last divide,
The vision has not vanished,
The whisper has not died.
From Shasta to Katahdin,
Blue Hill to Smoky Ridge,
Still stand the just convictions
That stood at Concord Bridge.

Beneath our gilded revel,
Behind our ardent boast,
Above our young impatience
To value least and most,
Sure as the swinging compass
To serve at touch of need,
Square to the world's four corners,
Abides their fearless creed.

Still fired with wonder-working,
Intolerant of peers,
Impetuous and sanguine
After the hundred years,
In likeness to our fathers,
Beyond the safe-marked scope
Of reason and decorum,
We jest and dare and hope.

Thank we the Blood that bred us,
Clear fibre and clean strain —
The Truth which straightly sighted
Lets no one swerve again.
And may almighty Goodness
Give us the will to be
As sweet as upland pastures,
And strong as wind at sea.

Bliss William Carman

A Northern Vigil

HERE by the gray north sea,
In the wintry heart of the wild,
Comes the old dream of thee,
Guendolen, mistress and child.

The heart of the forest grieves
In the drift against my door;
A voice is under the eaves,
A footfall on the floor.

Threshold, mirror, and hall,
Vacant and strangely aware,
Wait for their soul's recall
With the dumb expectant air.

Here when the smouldering west
Burns down into the sea,
I take no heed of rest
And keep the watch for thee.

I sit by the fire and hear
The restless wind go by,
On the long dirge and drear,
Under the low bleak sky.

When day puts out to sea
And night makes in for land,
There is no lock for thee,
Each door awaits thy hand!

When night goes over the hill
And dawn comes down the dale,
It's O for the wild sweet will
That shall no more prevail!

When the zenith moon is round,
And snow-wraiths gather and run,
And there is set no bound
To love beneath the sun,

O wayward will, come near
The old mad wilful way,
The soft mouth at my ear
With words too sweet to say!

Come, for the night is cold,
The ghostly moonlight fills
Hollow and rift and fold
Of the eerie Ardise hills!

The windows of my room
Are dark with bitter frost,
The stillness aches with doom
Of something loved and lost.

Outside, the great blue star
Burns in the ghostland pale,
Where giant Algebar
Holds on the endless trail.

Come, for the years are long
And silence keeps the door,
Where shapes with the shadows throng
The firelit chamber floor.

Come, for thy kiss was warm,
With the red embers' glare
Across thy folding arm
And dark tumultuous hair!

And though thy coming rouse
The sleep-cry of no bird,
The keepers of the house
Shall tremble at thy word.

Come, for the soul is free!
In all the vast dreamland
There is no lock for thee,
Each door awaits thy hand.

Ah, not in dreams at all,

Fleering, perishing, dim,
But thy old self, supple and tall,
Mistress and child of whim!

The proud imperious guise,
Impetuous and serene,
The sad mysterious eyes,
And dignity of mien!

Yea, wilt thou not return,
When the late hill-winds veer,
And the bright hill-flowers burn
With the reviving year?

When April comes, and the sea
Sparkles as if it smiled,
Will they restore to me
My dark Love, empress and child?

The curtains seem to part;
A sound is on the stair,
As if at the last . . . I start;
Only the wind is there.

Lo, now far on the hills
The crimson fumes uncurled,
Where the caldron mantles and spills
Another dawn on the world!

Bliss William Carman

A Portrait

A. M. M.

BEHOLD her sitting in the sun
This lovely April morn,
As eager with the breath of life
As daffodils new-born!
A priestess of the toiling earth,
Yet kindred to the spheres,
A touch of the eternal spring
Is over all her years.
No fashion frets her dignity,
Untrammeled, debonair;
A fold of lace about her throat
Falls from her whitening hair.
A seraph visiting the earth
Might wear that fearless guise,
The heartening regard of such
All-comprehending eyes.
How comes she by preëminence,
Desired, beloved, revered?
Heroic living gained those heights
Through ills she never feared.
A spirit kindly as the dew
And daring as a flame,
With a distinguished, reckless wit
No eighty years could tame.
A mother of the Spartan strain,
She held self-rule and sway,
And single-handed braved the world
And bore the prize away.
No task too humble for her skill,
No worthy way too long;
She filled her work with ecstasy
And crowned it with a song.
The treasures she most dearly prized
Were of the rarest kind —
A gentle fortitude of soul
And honesty of mind.
To feed, to clothe, to teach, to cheer,
To guard and guide and save —

These were her fine accomplishments,
To these her best she gave.
With ringing word and instant cure
She draws from far and near
The gay, the witty, the forlorn,
Priest, artist, beggar, seer.
Unhesitant and sure they come,
Hearing the human call,
As of a mighty motherhood
That understands them all.
Ungrudging, without grief, she lives
Each charged potential hour,
Holding her loftiness of aim
With agelessness of power.
Immortal friendship, great with years!
She shames the faltering,
And heartens every struggling hope,
Like hyacinths in spring!

Bliss William Carman

A Remembrance

HERE in lovely New England
When summer is come, a sea-turn
Flutters a page of remembrance
In the volume of long ago.
Soft is the wind over Grand Pré
Stirring the heads of the grasses,
Sweet is the breath of the orchards
White with their apple-blow.
There at their infinite business
Of measuring time forever,
Murmuring songs of the sea,
The great tides come and go.
Over the dikes and the uplands
Wander the great cloud shadows,
Strange as the passing of sorrow,
Beautiful, solemn, and slow.
For, spreading her old enchantment
Of tender ineffable wonder,
Summer is there in the Northland!
How should my heart not know?

Bliss William Carman

A Sea Child

The lover of child Marjory
Had one white hour of life brim full;
Now the old nurse, the rocking sea,
Hath him to lull.

The daughter of child Marjory
Hath in her veins, to beat and run,
The glad indomitable sea,
The strong white sun.

Bliss William Carman

A Seamark

A Threnody for Robert Louis Stevenson

COLD, the dull cold! What ails the sun,
And takes the heart out of the day?
What makes the morning look so mean,
The Common so forlorn and gray?

The wintry city's granite heart
Beats on in iron mockery,
And like the roaming mountain rains,
I hear the thresh of feet go by.

It is the lonely human surf
Surging through alleys chill with grime,
The muttering churning ceaseless floe
Adrift out of the North of time.

Fades, it all fades! I only see
The poster with its reds and blues
Bidding the heart stand still to take
Its desolating stab of news.

That intimate and magic name:
' Dead in Samoa.' . . . Cry your cries,
O city of the golden dome,
Under the gray Atlantic skies!

But I have wander-biddings now.
Far down the latitudes of sun,
An island mountain of the sea,
Piercing the green and rosy zone,

Goes up into the wondrous day.
And there the brown-limbed island men
Are bearing up for burial,
Within the sun's departing ken,

The master of the roving kind.

And there where time will set no mark
For his irrevocable rest,
Under the spacious melting dark,

With all the nomad tented stars
About him, they have laid him down
Above the crumbling of the sea,
Beyond the turmoil of renown.

O all you hearts about the world
In whom the truant gipsy blood,
Under the frost of this pale time,
Sleeps like the daring sap and flood

That dream of April and reprieve!
You whom the haunted vision drives,
Incredulous of home and ease,
Perfection's lovers all your lives!

You whom the wander-spirit loves
To lead by some forgotten clue
For ever vanishing beyond
Horizon brinks for ever new;

The road, unmarked, ordained, whereby
Your brothers of the field and air
Before you, faithful, blind, and glad,
Emerged from chaos pair by pair;

The road whereby you too must come,
In the unvexed and fabled years
Into the country of your dream,
With all your knowledge in arrears!

You who can never quite forget
Your glimpse of Beauty as she passed,
The well-head where her knee was pressed,
The dew wherein her foot was cast;

O you who bid the paint and clay
Be glorious when you are dead,
And fit the plangent words in rhyme

Where the dark secret lurks unsaid;

You brethren of the light-heart guild,
The mystic fellowcraft of joy,
Who tarry for the news of truth,
And listen for some vast ahoy

Blown in from sea, who crowd the wharves
With eager eyes that wait the ship
Whose foreign tongue may fill the world
With wondrous tales from lip to lip;

Our restless loved adventurer,
On secret orders come to him,
Has slipped his cable, cleared the reef,
And melted on the white sea-rim.

O granite hills, go down in blue!
And like green clouds in opal calms,
You anchored islands of the main,
Float up your loom of feathery palms!

For deep within your dales, where lies
A valiant earthling stark and dumb,
This savage undiscerning heart
Is with the silent chiefs who come

To mourn their kin and bear him gifts,—
Who kiss his hand, and take their place,
This last night he receives his friends,
The journey-wonder on his face.

He 'was not born for age.' Ah no,
For everlasting youth is his!
Part of the lyric of the earth
With spring and leaf and blade he is.

'Twill nevermore be April now
But there will lurk a thought of him
At the street corners, gay with flowers
From rainy valleys purple-dim.

O chiefs, you do not mourn alone!
In that stern North where mystery broods,
Our mother grief has many sons
Bred in those iron solitudes.

It does not help them, to have laid
Their coil of lightning under seas;
They are as impotent as you
To mend the loosened wrists and knees.

And yet how many a harvest night,
When the great luminous meteors flare
Along the trenches of the dusk,
The men who dwell beneath the Bear,

Seeing those vagrants of the sky
Float through the deep beyond their hark,
Like Arabs through the wastes of air,—
A flash, a dream, from dark to dark,—

Must feel the solemn large surmise:
By a dim, vast and perilous way
We sweep through undetermined time,
Illumining this quench of clay,

A moment stanch'd, then forth again.
Ah, not alone you climb the steep
To set your loving burden down
Against the mighty knees of sleep.

With you we hold the sombre faith
Where creeds are sown like rain at sea;
And leave the loveliest child of earth
To slumber where he longed to be.

His fathers lit the dangerous coast
To steer the daring merchant home;
His courage lights the darkling port
Where every sea-worn sail must come.

And since he was the type of all
That strain in us which still must fare,

The fleeting migrant of a day,
Heart-high, outbound for elsewhere,

Now therefore, where the passing ships
Hang on the edges of the noon,
And Northern liners trail their smoke
Across the rising yellow moon,

Bound for his home, with shuddering screw
That beats its strength out into speed,
Until the pacing watch descries
On the sea-line a scarlet seed

Smoulder and kindle and set fire
To the dark selvedge of the night,
The deep blue tapestry of stars,
Then sheet the dome in pearly light,

There in perpetual tides of day,
Where men may praise him and deplore,
The place of his lone grave shall be
A seamark set for evermore,

High on a peak adrift with mist,
And round whose bases, far beneath
The snow-white wheeling tropic birds,
The emerald dragon breaks his teeth.

Bliss William Carman

A Song Before Sailing

Wind of the dead men's feet,
Blow down the empty street
Of this old city by the sea
With news for me!
Blow me beyond the grime
And pestilence of time!
I am too sick at heart to war
With failure any more.
Thy chill is in my bones;
The moonlight on the stones
Is pale, and palpable, and cold;
I am as one grown old.

I call from room to room
Through the deserted gloom;
The echoes are all words I know,
Lost in some long ago.

I prowl from door to door,
And find no comrade more.
The wolfish fear that children feel
Is snuffing at my heel.

I hear the hollow sound
Of a great ship coming round,
The thunder of tackle and the tread
Of sailors overhead.

That stormy-blown hulloo
Has orders for me, too.
I see thee, hand at mouth, and hark,
My captain of the dark.

O wind of the great East,
By whom we are released
From this strange dusty port to sail
Beyond our fellows' hail,

Under the stars that keep

The entry of the deep,
Thy somber voice brings up the sea's
Forgotten melodies;

And I have no more need
Of bread, or wine, or creed,
Bound for the colonies of time
Beyond the farthest prime.

Wind of the dead men's feet,
Blow through the empty street;
The last adventurer am I,
Then, world, goodbye!

Bliss William Carman

A Vagabond Song

There is something in the autumn that is native to my blood—
Touch of manner, hint of mood;
And my heart is like a rhyme,
With the yellow and the purple and the crimson keeping time.

The scarlet of the maples can shake me like a cry
Of bugles going by.
And my lonely spirit thrills
To see the frosty asters like a smoke upon the hills.

There is something in October sets the gypsy blood astir;
We must rise and follow her,
When from every hill of flame
She calls and calls each vagabond by name.

Bliss William Carman

A Winter Piece

OVER the rim of a lacquered bowl,
Where a cold blue water-color stands
I see the wintry breakers roll
And heave their froth up the freezing sands.
Here in immunity safe and dull,
Soul treads her circuit of trivial things.
There soul's brother, a shining gull,
Dares the rough weather on dauntless wings.

Bliss William Carman

Above The Gaspereau

To H. E. C.

THERE are sunflowers too in my garden on top of the hill,
Where now in the early September the sun has his will—
The slow autumn sun that goes leisurely, taking his fill
Of life in the orchards and fir-woods so moveless and still;
As if, should they stir, they might break some illusion and spill
The germ of their long summer musing on top of the hill.

The crowds of black spruces in tiers from the valley below,
Ranged round their sky-roofed coliseum, mount row after row.
How often there, rank above rank, they have watched for the slow
Silver-lanterned processions of twilight—the moon's come and go!
How often, as if they expected some bugle to blow,
Announcing a bringer of news they were breathless to know,
They have hushed every leaf,—to hear only the murmurous flow
Of the small mountain river sent up from the valley below!

How still through the sweet summer sun, through the soft summer rain,
They have stood there awaiting the summons should bid them attain
The freedom of knowledge, the last touch of truth to explain
The great golden gist of their brooding, the marvellous train
Of thought they have followed so far, been so strong to sustain,—
The white gospel of sun and the long revelations of rain!

Then the orchards that dot, all in order, the green valley floor,
Every tree with its boughs weighed to earth, like a tent from whose door
Not a lodger looks forth,—yet the signs are there gay and galore,
The great ropes of red fruitage and russet, crisp snow to the core.
Can the dark-eyed Romany here have deserted of yore
Their camp at the coming of frost? Will they seek it no more?
Who dwells in St. Eulalie's village? Who knows the fine lore
Of the tribes of the apple-trees there on the green valley floor?

Who, indeed? From the blue mountain gorge to the dikes by the sea,
Goes that stilly wanderer, small Gaspereau; who but he
Should give the last hint of perfection, the touch that sets free
From the taut string of silence the whisper of beauties to be!
The very sun seems to have tarried, turned back a degree,
To lengthen out noon for the apple folk here by the sea.

What is it? Who comes? What's abroad on the blue mountain side?
A hush has been laid on the leaves and will not be defied.
Is the great Scarlet Hunter at last setting out on his ride
From the North with deliverance now? Were the lights we descried
Last night in the heavens his camp-fire seen far and wide,
The white signal of peace for whose coming the ages have cried?
'Expectancy lingers; fulfilment postponed,' I replied,
When soul said uneasily, 'Who is it haunts your hillside?'

All the while not a word from my sunflowers here on the hill.
And to-night when the stars over Blomidon flower and fill
The blue Northern garden of heaven, so pale and so still,
From the lordly king-aster Aldebaran there by the sill
Of the East, where the moonlight will enter, not one will fulfil
A lordlier lot than my sunflowers here on the hill.

So much for mere fact, mere impression. So much I portray
Of the atmosphere, colour, illusion of one autumn day
In the little Acadian valley above the Grand Pré;
Just the quiet of orchards and firs, where the sun had full sway,
And the river went trolling his soft wander-song to the bay,
While roseberry, aster, and sagaban tangled his way.
Be you their interpreter, reasoner; tell what they say,
These children of silence whose patient regard I portray.

You Londoner, walking in Bishopsgate, strolling the Strand,
Some morning in autumn afford, at a fruit-dealer's stand,
The leisure to look at his apples there ruddy and tanned.
Then ask, when he's smiling to serve you, if choice can command
A Gravenstein grown oversea on Canadian land.
(And just for the whim's sake, for once, you'll have no other brand!)
How teach you to tell them? Pick one, and with that in your hand,
Bethink you a while as you turn again into the Strand.

'What if,' you will say,—so smooth in your hand it will lie,
So round and so firm, of so rich a red to the eye,
Like a dash of Fortuny, a tinge of some Indian dye,
While you turn it and toss, mark the bloom, ere you taste it and try—
'Now what if this grew where the same bright pavilion of sky
Is stretched o'er the valley and hillside he bids me descry,
The windless valley of peace, where the seasons go by,

And the river goes down through the orchards where long shadows lie!

There's the fruit in your hand, in your ears is the roar of the street,
The pulse of an empire keeping its volume and beat,
Its sure come and go day and night, while we sleep or we eat.
Taste the apple, bite in to the juice—how abundant and sweet!
As sound as your own English heart, and wholesome as wheat,—
There grow no such apples as that in your Bishopsgate Street.

Or perhaps in St. Helen's Place, when your business is done
And the ledgers put by, you will think of the hundred and one
Commissions and errands to do; but what under the sun
Was that, so important? Ah, yes! the new books overrun
The old shelves. It is high time to order a new set begun.
Then off to the joiner's. You enter, to see his plane run
With a long high shriek through the lumber he's working upon.
Then he turns from his shavings to query what you would have done.

But homeward 'tis you who make question. That song of the blade!
And the sharp sweet cry of the wood, what an answer it made!
What stories the joiner must hear, as he plies his clean trade,
Of all the wild life of the forest where long shadows wade
The untrodden moss, and the firs send a journeying shade
So slow through the valley so far from the song of his blade.

Come back to my orchards a moment. They're waiting for you.
How still are the little gray leaves where the pippins peep through!
The boughs where the ribstons hang red are half breaking in two.
Above them September in magical soft Northern blue
Has woven the spell of her silence, like frost or like dew,
Yet warm as a poppy's red dream. When All Saints shall renew
The beauty of summer a while, will their dreaming come true?
Ah, not of my Grand Pré they dream, nor your London and you!

Their life is their own, and the surge of it. All through the spring
They pushed forth their buds, and the rainbirds at twilight would sing.
They put forth their bloom, and the world was as fairy a thing
As a Japanese garden. Then midsummer came with the zing
And the clack of the locust; then fruit time and coolness, to bring
This aftermath deep underfoot with its velvety spring.

And they all the while with the fatherly, motherly care,

Taking sap from the strength of the ground, taking sun from the air,
Taking chance of the frost and the worm, taking courage to dare,
Have given their life that the life might be goodly and fair
In their kind for the seasons to come, with good witness to bear
How the sturdy old race of the apples could give and not spare.
To-morrow the harvest begins. We shall rifle them there
Of the beautiful fruit of their bodies, the crown of their care.

How lovingly then shall the picker set hand to the bough!—
Bid it yield, ere the seed come to earth or the graft to the plough,
Not only sweet life for its kind, as the instincts allow,
That savour and shape may survive generations from now,
But life to its kin who can say, 'I am stronger than thou,'—
Fulfilling a lordlier law than the law of the bough.

I heard before dawn, with planets beginning to quail,—
'Whoso hath life, let him give, that my purpose prevail;
Whoso hath none, let him take, that his strength may be hale.
Behold, I have reckoned the tally, I keep the full tale.
Whoso hath love, let him give, lest his spirit grow stale;
Whoso hath none, let him die; he shall wither and fail.
Behold, I will plenish the loss at the turn of the scale.
He hath law to himself, who hath love; ye shall hope and not quail.'

Then the sun arose, and my sunflowers here on the hill,
Like good little Catholics, turned to the East to fulfil
Their daily observance, receiving his peace and his will,—
The lord of their light who alone bids the darkness be nil,
The lord of their love who alone bids the life in them thrill;
Undismayed and serene, they awaited him here on the hill.

Ah, the patience of earth! Look down at the dark pointed firs;
They are carved out of blackness; one pattern recurs and recurs.
They crowd all the gullies and hillsides, the gashes and spurs,
As silent as death. What an image! How nature avers
The goodness of calm with that taciturn beauty of hers!
As silent as sleep. Yet the life in them climbs and stirs.
They too have received the great law, know that haste but defers
The perfection of time,—the initiate gospeller firs.

So year after year, slow ring upon ring, they have grown,
Putting infinite long-loving care into leafage and cone,

By the old ancient craft of the earth they have pondered and known
In the dead of the hot summer noons, as still as a stone.
Not for them the gay fruit of the thorn, nor the high scarlet roan,
Nor the plots of the deep orchard land where the apples are grown.

In winter the wind, all huddled and shuddering, came
To warm his old bones by the fires of sunset aflame
Behind the black house of the firs. When the moose-birds grew tame
In the lumberers' camps in the woods, what marvellous fame
His talk and the ice of his touch would spread and proclaim,
Of the berg and the floe and the lands without nation or name,
Where the earth and the sky, night and noon, north and south are the same,
The white and awful Nirvana of cold whence he came!

Then April, some twilight picked out with a great yellow star,
Returning, like Hylas long lost and come back with his jar
Of sweet living water at last, having wandered so far,
Leads the heart out of doors, and the eye to the point of a spar,
At whose base in the half-melted snow the first Mayflowers are,—
And there the first robin is peeling below the great star.

So soon, over-soon, the full summer. Within those dark boughs,
Deliberate and far, a faltering reed-note will rouse
The shy transports of earth, till the wood-creatures hear where they house,
And grow bold as the tremble-eared rabbits that nibble and mouse.
While up through the pasture-lot, startling the sheep as they browse,
Where kingbirds and warblers are piercing the heat's golden drowse,
Some girl, whom the sun has made tawny, the wind had to blowse,
Will come there to gentle her lover beneath those dark boughs.

Then out of the hush, when the grasses are frosty and old,
Will the chickadee's tiny alarm against winter be rolled;
And soon, when the ledges and ponds are bitten with cold,
The honk of the geese, that wander-cry stirring and bold,
Will sound through the night, where those hardy mariners hold
The uncharted course through the dark, as it was from of old.

Ah, the life of the woods, how they share and partake of it all,
These evergreens, silent as Indians, solemn and tall!
From the goldenwing's first far-heard awakening call,
The serene flute of the thrush in his high beech hall,
And the pipe of the frog, to the bannered approach of the fall,

And the sullen wind, when snow arrives on a squall,
Trooping in all night from the North with news would appal
Any outposts but these; with a zest they partake of it all.

Lo, out of the hush they seem to mount and aspire!
From basement to tip they have builded, with heed to go higher,
One circlet of branches a year with their lift of green spire.
Nay, rather they seem to repose, having done with desire,
Awaiting the frost, with the fruit scarlet-bright on the brier,
Each purpose fulfilled, each ardour that bade them aspire.

Then hate be afar from the bite of the axe that shall fell
These keepers of solitude, makers of quiet, who dwell
On the Slopes of the North. And clean be the hand that shall quell
The tread of the sap that was wont to go mounting so well,
Round on round with the sun in a spiral, slow cell after cell,
As a bellringer climbs in a turret. That resinous smell
From the eighth angel's hand might have risen with the incense to swell
His offering in heaven, when the half-hour's silence befell.

Behold, as the prayers of the saints that went up to God's knees
In John's Revelation, the silence and patience of these
Our brothers of orchard and hill, the unhurrying trees,
To better the burden of earth till the dark suns freeze,
Shall go out to the stars with the sound of Acadian seas,
And the scent of the wood-flowers blowing about their great knees.

To-night when Altair and Alshain are ruling the West,
Whence Boötes is driving his dogs to long hunting addressed;
With Alioth sheer over Blomidon standing at rest;
When Algol is leading the Pleiades over the crest
Of the magical East, and the South puts Alpherat to test
With Menkar just risen; will come, like a sigh from Earth's breast,
The first sob of the tide turning home,—one distraught in his quest
For ever, and calling for ever the wind in the west.

And to-night there will answer the ghost of a sigh on the hill,
So small you would say, Is it wind, or the frost with a will
Walking down through the woods, and to-morrow shall show us his skill
In yellows and reds? So noiseless, it hardly will thrill
The timorous aspens, which tremble when all else is still;
Yet the orchards will know, and the firs be aware on the hill.

'O Night, I am old, I endure. Since my being began,
When out of the dark thy aurora spread up like a fan,
I have founded the lands and the islands; the hills are my plan.
I have covered the pits of the earth with my bridge of one span.
From the Horn to Dunedin unbroken my long rollers ran,
From Pentland and Fastnet and Foyle to Bras d'Or and Manan,
To dredge and upbuild for the creatures of tribe and of clan.
Lo, now who shall end the contriving my fingers began?'

Then the little wind that blows from the great star-drift
Will answer: 'Thou tide in the least of the planets I lift,
Consider the journeys of light. Are thy journeyings swift?
Thy sands are as smoke to the star-banks I huddle and shift.
Peace! I have seeds of the grasses to scatter and sift.
I have freighting to do for the weed and the frail thistle drift.'

'O ye apples and firs, great and small are as one in the end.
Because ye had life to the full, and spared not to spend;
Because ye had love of your kind, to cherish and fend;
Held hard the good instinct to thrive, cleaving close to life's trend;
Nor questioned where impulse had origin,—purpose might tend;
Now, beauty is yours, and the freedom whose promptings transcend
Attainment for ever, in death with new being to blend.
O ye orchards and woods, death is naught, love is all in the end.'

Ah, friend of mine over the sea, shall we not discern,
In the life of our brother the beech and our sister the fern,
As St. Francis would call them (his Minorites, too, would we learn!)
In death but a door to new being no creature may spurn,
But must enter for beauty's completion,—pass up in his turn
To the last round of joy, yours and mine, whence to think and discern?

Who shall say 'the last round'? Have I passed by the exit of soul?
From behind the tall door that swings outward, replies no patrol
To our restless Qui vive? when is paid each implacable toll.
Not a fin of the tribes shall return, having cleared the great shoal;
Not a wing of the migrants come back from below the dark knoll;
Yet the zest of the flight and the swimming who fails to extol?
Saith the Riddle, 'The parts are all plain; ye may guess at the whole.'
I guess, 'Immortality, knowledge, survival of Soul.'

To-night, with the orchards below and the firs on the hill
Asleep in the long solemn moonlight and taking no ill,
A hand will open the sluice of the great sea-mill,—
Start the gear and the belts of the tide. Then a murmur will fill
The hollows of midnight with sound, when all else is still,
And stray through the dream of the sunflowers here on the hill.

Bliss William Carman

An April Morning

ONCE more in misted April
The world is growing green.
Along the winding river
The plumey willows lean.
Beyond the sweeping meadows
The looming mountains rise,
Like battlements of dreamland
Against the brooding skies.
In every wooded valley
The buds are breaking through,
As though the heart of all things
No languor ever knew.
The golden-wings and bluebirds
Call to their heavenly choirs.
The pines are blued and drifted
With smoke of brushwood fires.
And in my sister's garden
Where little breezes run,
The golden daffodillies
Are blowing in the sun.

Bliss William Carman

An Autumn Garden

My tent stands in a garden
Of aster and golden-rod,
Tilled by the rain and the sunshine,
And sown by the hand of God, -
An old New England pasture
Abandoned to peace and time,
And by the magic of beauty
Reclaimed to the sublime.

About it are golden woodlands
Of tulip and hickory;
On the open ridge behind it
You may mount to a glimpse of sea, -
The far-off, blue, Homeric
Rim of the world's great shield,
A border of boundless glamor
For the soul's familiar field.

In purple and gray-wrought lichen
The boulders lie in the sun;
Along its grassy footpath,
The white-tailed rabbits run.
The crickets work and chirrup
Through the still afternoon;
And the owl calls at twilight
Under the frosty moon.

The odorous wild grape clambers
Over the tumbling wall,
And through the autumnal quiet
The chestnuts open and fall.
Sharing time's freshness and fragrance,
Part of the earth's great soul,
Here man's spirit may ripen
To wisdom serene and whole.

Shall we not grow with the asters? -
Never reluctant nor sad,
Not counting the cost of being,

Living to dare and be glad.
Shall we not lift with the crickets
A chorus of ready cheer,
Braving the frost of oblivion,
Quick to be happy here?

The deep red cones of the sumach
And the woodbine's crimson sprays
Have bannered the common roadside
For the pageant of passing days.
These are the oracles Nature
Fills with her holy breath,
Giving them glory of color,
Transcending the shadow of death.

Here in the sifted sunlight
A spirit seems to brood
On the beauty and worth of being,
In tranquil, instinctive mood;
And the heart, athrob with gladness
Such as the wise earth knows,
Wells with a full thanksgiving
For the gifts that life bestows:

For the ancient and virile nurture
Of the teeming primordial ground,
For the splendid gospel of color,

The rapt revelations of sound;
For the morning-blue above us
And the rusted gold of the fern,
For the chickadee's call to valor
Bidding the faint-heart turn;

For fire and running water,
Snowfall and summer rain;
For sunsets and quiet meadows,
The fruit and the standing grain;
For the solemn hour of moonrise
Over the crest of trees,
When the mellow lights are kindled
In the lamps of the centuries.

For those who wrought aforetime,
Led by the mystic strain
To strive for the larger freedom,
And live for the greater gain;
For plenty and peace and playtime,
The homely goods of earth,
And for rare immaterial treasures
Accounted of little worth;

For art and learning and friendship,
Where beneficent truth is supreme,
Those everlasting cities
Built on the hills of dream;
For all things growing and goodly
That foster this life, and breed
The immortal flower of wisdom
Out of the mortal seed.

But most of all for the spirit
That can not rest nor bide
In stale and sterile convenience,
Nor safety proven and tried,
But still inspired and driven,
Must seek what better may be,
And up from the loveliest garden
Must climb for a glimpse of sea.

Bliss William Carman

At Columbine's Grave

AH, Pierrot,
Where is thy Columbine?
What vandal could untwine
That gay rose-rope of thine,
And spill thy joy like wine,
Poor Pierrot?

Ah, Pierrot,
The moon is rising red
Above thy grief-bowed head;
Thy roses are all shed.
And Columbine is dead!
Poor Pierrot!

Ah, Pierrot,
Kneel down beside her tomb.
The gray wind of the gloom,
In the world's empty room,
Has shut the door of doom.
Poor Pierrot!

Ah, Pierrot,
Is there not one sweet word
Of brook or breeze or bird
A mortal ever heard,
Could cheer thee—not one word,
Poor Pierrot?

Ah, Pierrot,
A thousand times the spring
Will come to dance and sing
Up the green earth, and bring
Joy to each living thing,
Poor Pierrot!

But, Pierrot,
When all that pomp shall pass
Her lowly house in the grass,
Will any say, 'Alas,

Poor Columbine; alas,
Poor Pierrot'?

Ah, Pierrot,
Thy loving tears in vain
Shall fall like quiet rain
For her; till the stars wane,
She will not come again,
Poor Pierrot.

Yet, Pierrot,
The mighty Mother now
Hath her in care somehow.
Listen, and clear that brow:
'O earthling, grieve not thou,
Poor Pierrot!

'Ah, Pierrot,
Here on my cool green floor
I do transmute, restore,
All things once fair before
To beauty more and more.
Poor Pierrot!'

Bliss William Carman

At Sunrise

NOW the stars have faded
In the purple chill,
Lo, the sun is kindling
On the eastern hill.
Tree by tree the forest
Takes the golden tinge,
As the shafts of glory
Pierce the summit's fringe.
Rock by rock the ledges
Take the rosy sheen,
As the tide of splendor
Floods the dark ravine.
Like a shining angel
At my cabin door,
Shod with hope and silence,
Day is come once more.
Then, as if in sorrow
That you are not here,
All his magic beauties
Gray and disappear.

Bliss William Carman

At The Making Of Man

First all the host of Raphael
In liveries of gold,
Lifted the chorus on whose rhythm
The spinning spheres are rolled,–
The Seraphs of the morning calm
Whose hearts are never cold.

He shall be born a spirit,
Part of the soul that yearns,
The core of vital gladness
That suffers and discerns,
The stir that breaks the budding sheath
When the green spring returns,–

The gist of power and patience
Hid in the plasmic clay,
The calm behind the senses,
The passionate essay
To make his wise and lovely dream
Immortal on a day.

The soft Aprilian ardours
That warm the waiting loam
Shall whisper in his pulses
To bid him overcome,
And he shall learn the wonder-cry
Beneath the azure dome.

And though all-dying nature
Should teach him to deplore,
The ruddy fires of autumn
Shall lure him but the more
To pass from joy to stronger joy,
As through an open door.

He shall have hope and honour,
Proud trust and courage stark,
To hold him to his purpose
Through the unlighted dark,

And love that sees the moon's full orb
In the first silver arc.

And he shall live by kindness
And the heart's certitude,
Which moves without misgiving
In ways not understood,
Sure only of the vast event,—
The large and simple good.

Then Gabriel's host in silver gear
And vesture twilight blue,
The spirits of immortal mind,
The warders of the true,
Took up the theme that gives the world
Significance anew.

He shall be born to reason,
And have the primal need
To understand and follow
Wherever truth may lead,—
To grow in wisdom like a tree
Unfolding from a seed.

A watcher by the sheepfolds,
With wonder in his eyes,
He shall behold the seasons,
And mark the planets rise,
Till all the marching firmament
Shall rouse his vast surmise.

Beyond the sweep of vision,
Or utmost reach of sound,
This cunning fire-maker,
This tiller of the ground,
Shall learn the secrets of the suns
And fathom the profound.

For he must prove all being,
Sane, beauteous, benign,
And at the heart of nature
Discover the divine,—

Himself the type and symbol
Of the eternal trine.

He shall perceive the kindling
Of knowledge, far and dim,
As of the fire that brightens
Below the dark sea-rim,
When ray by ray the splendid sun
Floats to the world's wide brim.

And out of primal instinct,
The lore of lair and den,
He shall emerge to question
How, wherefore, whence, and when,
Till the last frontier of the truth
Shall lie within his ken.

Then Michael's scarlet-suited host
Took up the word and sang;
As though a trumpet had been loosed
In heaven, the arches rang;
For these were they who feel the thrill
Of beauty like a pang.

He shall be framed and balanced
For loveliness and power,
Lithe as the supple creatures,
And coloured as a flower,
Sustained by the all-feeding earth,
Nurtured by wind and shower,

To stand within the vortex
Where surging forces play,
A poised and pliant figure
Immutable as they,
Till time and space and energy
Surrender to his sway.

He shall be free to journey
Over the teeming earth,
An insatiable seeker,
A wanderer from his birth,

Clothed in the fragile veil of sense,
With fortitude for girth.

His hands shall have dominion
Of all created things,
To fashion in the likeness
Of his imaginings,
To make his will and thought survive
Unto a thousand springs.

The world shall be his province,
The principedom of his skill;
The tides shall wear his harness,
The winds obey his will;
Till neither flood, nor fire, nor frost,
Shall work to do him ill.

A creature fit to carry
The pure creative fire,
Whatever truth inform him,
Whatever good inspire,
He shall make lovely in all things
To the end of his desire.

Bliss William Carman

At Twilight

NOW the fire is lighted
On the chimney stone,
Day goes down the valley,
I am left alone.
Now the misty purple
Floods the darkened vale,
And the stars come out
On the twilight trail.
The mountain river murmurs
In his rocky bed,
And the stealthy shadows
Fill the house with dread.
Then I hear your laughter
At the open door, —
Brightly burns the fire,
I need fear no more.

Bliss William Carman

Bahaman

To T. B. M.

IN the crowd that thronged the pierhead, come to see their friends take ship
For new ventures in seafaring, when the hawsers were let slip
And we swung out in the current, with good-byes on every lip,
'Midst the waving caps and kisses, as we dropped down with the tide
And the faces blurred and faded, last of all your hand I spied
Signalling, Farewell, Good fortune! then my heart rose up and cried:
'While the world holds one such comrade, whose sweet durable regard
Would so speed my safe departure, lest home-leaving should be hard,
What care I who keeps the ferry, whether Charon or Cunard!'
Then we cleared the bar, and laid her on the course, the thousand miles
From the Hook to the Bahamas, from midwinter to the isles
Where frost never laid a finger, and eternal summer smiles.
Three days through the surly storm-beat, while the surf-heads threshed and
flew,
And the rolling mountains thundered to the trample of the screw,
The black liner heaved and scuffled and strained on, as if she knew.
On the fourth, the round blue morning sparkled there, all light and breeze,
Clean and tenuous as a bubble blown from two immensities,
Shot and coloured with sheer sunlight and the magic of those seas.
In that bright new world of wonder, it was life enough to laze
All day underneath the awnings, and through half-shut eyes to gaze
At the marvel of the sea-blue; and I faltered for a phrase
Should half give you the impression, tell you how the very tint
Justified your finest daring, as if Nature gave the hint,
'Plodders, see Imagination set his pallet without stint!'
Cobalt, goblin, and azure, turquoise, sapphire, indigo,
Changing from the spectral bluish of a shadow upon snow
To the deep of Canton china,—one unfathomable glow.
And the flying-fish,—to see them in a scurry lift and flee,
Silvery as the foam they sprang from, fragile people of the sea,
Whom their heart's great aspiration for a moment had set free.
From the dim and cloudy ocean, thunder-centred, rosy-verged,
At the lord sun's Sursum Corda, as implicit impulse urged,
Frail as vapour, fine as music, these bright spirit-things emerged;
Like those flocks of small white snowbirds we have seen start up before
Our brisk walk in winter weather by the snowy Scituate shore;
And the tiny shining sea-folk brought you back to me once more.
So we ran down Abaco; and passing that tall sentinel

Black against the sundown, sighted, as the sudden twilight fell,
Nassau light; and the warm darkness breathed on us from breeze and swell.
Stand-by bell and stop of engine; clank of anchor going down;
And we're riding in the roadstead off a twinkling-lighted town,
Low dark shore with boom of breakers and white beach the palm-trees crown.
In the soft wash of the sea air, on the long swing of the tide,
Here for once the dream came true, the voyage ended close beside
The Hesperides in moonlight on mid-ocean where they ride!
And those Hesperidean joy-lands were not strange to you and me.
Just beyond the lost horizon, every time we looked to sea
From Testudo, there they floated, looming plain as plain could be.
Who believed us? 'Myth and fable are a science in our time.'
'Never saw the sea that colour. "Never heard of such a rhyme.'
Well, we've proved it, prince of idlers,—knowledge wrong and faith sublime.
Right were you to follow fancy, give the vaguer instinct room
In a heaven of clear colour, where the spirit might assume
All her elemental beauty, past the fact of sky or bloom.
Paint the vision, not the view,—the touch that bids the sense good-bye,
Lifting spirit at a bound beyond the frontiers of the eye,
To suburb unguessed dominions of the soul's credulity.
Never yet was painter, poet, born content with things that are,—
Must divine from every beauty other beauties greater far,
Till the arc of truth be circled, and her lantern blaze, a star.
This alone is art's ambition, to arrest with form and hue
Dominant ungrasped ideals, known to credence, hid from view,
In a mimic of creation,—to the life, yet fairer too,—
Where the soul may take her pleasure, contemplate perfection's plan,
And returning bring the tidings of his heritage to man,—
News of continents uncharted she has stood tip-toe to scan.
So she fires his gorgeous fancy with a cadence, with a line,
Till the artist wakes within him, and the toiler grows divine,
Shaping the rough world about him nearer to some fair design.
Every heart must have its Indies,—an inheritance unclaimed
In the unsubstantial treasure of a province never named,
Loved and longed for through a lifetime, dull, laborious, and unfamed,
Never wholly disillusioned. Spiritus, read, haeres sit
Patriæ quæ tristia mescit. This alone the great king writ
O'er the tomb of her he cherished in this fair world she must quit.
Love in one farewell for ever, taking counsel to implore
Best of human benedictions on its dead, could ask no more.
The heart's country for a dwelling, this at last is all our lore.
But the fairies at your cradle gave you craft to build a home

In the wide bright world of colour, with the cunning of a gnome;
Blessed you so above your fellows of the tribe that still must roam.
Still across the world they go, tormented by a strange unrest,
And the unabiding spirit knocks for ever at their breast,
Bidding them away to fortune in some undiscovered West;
While at home you sit and call the Orient up at your command,
Master of the iris seas and Prospero of the purple land.
Listen, here was one world-corner matched the cunning of your hand.
Not, my friend, since we were children, and all wonder-tales were true,—
Jason, Hengest, Hiawatha, fairy prince or pirate crew—
Was there ever such a landing in a country strange and new?
Up the harbour where there gathered, fought and revelled many a year,
Swarthy Spaniard, lost Lucayan, Loyalist, and Buccaneer,
'Once upon a time' was now, and 'far across the sea' was here.
Tropic moonlight, in great floods and fathoms pouring through the trees
On a ground as white as sea-froth its fantastic trceries,
While the poincianas, rustling like the rain, moved in the breeze,
Showed a city, coral-streeted, melting in the mellow shine,
Built of creamstone and enchantment, fairy work in every line,
In a velvet atmosphere that bids the heart her haste resign.
Thanks to Julian Hospitator, saint of travellers by sea,
Roving minstrels and all boatmen,—just such vagabonds as we—
On the shaded wharf we landed, rich in leisure, hale and free.
What more would you for God's creatures, but the little tide of sleep?
In a clean white room I wakened, saw the careless sunlight peep
Through the roses at the window, lay and listened to the creep
Of the soft wind in the shutters, heard the palm-tops stirring high,
And that strange mysterious shuffle of the slipshod foot go by.
In a world all glad with colour, gladdest of all things was I;
In a quiet convent garden, tranquil as the day is long,
Here to sit without intrusion of the world or strife or wrong,—
Watch the lizards chase each other, and the green bird make his song;
Warmed and freshened, lulled yet quickened in that Paradisal air,
Motherly and uncapricious, healing every hurt or care,
Wooing body, mind, and spirit, firmly back to strong and fair;
By the Angelus reminded, silence waits the touch of sound,
As the soul waits her awaking to some Gloria profound;
Till the mighty Southern Cross is lighted at the day's last bound.
And if ever your fair fortune make you good Saint Vincent's guest,
At his door take leave of trouble, welcomed to his decent rest,
Of his ordered peace partaker, by his solace healed and blessed;
Where this flowered cloister garden, hidden from the passing view,

Lies behind its yellow walls in prayer the holy hours through:
And beyond, that fairy harbour, floored in malachite and blue.
In that old white-streeted city gladness has her way at last
Under burdens finely poised, and with a freedom unsurpassed,
Move the naked-footed bearers in the blue day deep and vast.
This is Bay Street broad and low-built, basking in its quiet trade;
Here the sponging fleet is anchored; here shell trinkets are displayed;
Here the cable news is posted daily; here the market's made,
With its oranges from Andros, heaps of yam and tamarind,
Red-juiced shadducks from the Current, ripened in the long trade-wind,
Gaudy fish from their sea-gardens, yellow-tailed and azure-tinned.
Here a group of diving boys in bronze and ivory, bright and slim,
Sparkling copper in the high noon, dripping loin-cloth, polished limb,
Poised a moment and then plunged in that deep daylight green and dim.
Here the great rich Spanish laurels spread across the public square
Their dense, solemn shade; and near by, half within the open glare,
Mannerly in their clean cottons, knots of blacks are waiting there
By the court-house, where a magistrate is hearing cases through,
Dealing justice prompt and level, as the sturdy English do,—
One more tent-peg of the Empire, holding that great shelter true.
Last the picture from the town's end, palmed and foam-fringed through the cane,
Where the gorgeous sunset yellows pour aloft and spill and stain
The pure amethystine sea and far faint islands of the main.
Loveliest of the Lucayas, peace be yours till time be done!
In the gray North I shall see you, with your white streets in the sun,
Old pink walls and purple gateways, where the lizards bask and run,
Where the great hibiscus blossoms in their scarlet loll and glow,
And the idling gay bandannas through the hot noons come and go,
While the ever-stirring sea-wind sways the palm-tops to and fro.
Far from stress and storm for ever, dream behind your jealousies,
While the long white lines of breakers crumble on your reefs and keys,
And the crimson oleanders burn against the peacock seas.

Bliss William Carman

Before The Snow

NOW soon, ah, very soon, I know
The trumpets of the north will blow,
And the great winds will come to bring
The pale wild riders of the snow.
Darkening the sun with level flight,
At arrowy speed, they will alight,
Unnumbered as the desert sands,
To bivouac on the edge of night.
Then I, within their somber ring,
Shall hear a voice that seems to sing,
Deep, deep within my tranquil heart,
The valiant prophecy of spring.

Bliss William Carman

Behind The Arras

I like the old house tolerably well,
Where I must dwell
Like a familiar gnome;
And yet I never shall feel quite at home.
I love to roam.
Day after day I loiter and explore
From door to door;
So many treasures lure
The curious mind. What histories obscure
They must immure!

I hardly know which room I care for best;
This fronting west,
With the strange hills in view,
Where the great sun goes,—where I may go too,
When my lease is through,—

Or this one for the morning and the east,
Where a man may feast
His eyes on looming sails,
And be the first to catch their foreign hails
Or spy their bales

Then the pale summer twilights towards the pole!
It thrills my soul
With wonder and delight,
When gold-green shadows walk the world at night,
So still, so bright.

There at the window many a time of year,
Strange faces peer,
Solemn though not unkind,
Their wits in search of something left behind
Time out of mind;

As if they once had lived here, and stole back
To the window crack
For a peep which seems to say,
'Good fortune, brother, in your house of clay!'

And then, 'Good day!'

I hear their footsteps on the gravel walk,
Their scraps of talk,
And hurrying after, reach
Only the crazy sea-drone of the beach
In endless speech.

And often when the autumn noons are still,
By swale and hill
I see their gipsy signs,
Trespassing somewhere on my border lines;
With what designs?

I forth afoot; but when I reach the place,
Hardly a trace,
Save the soft purple haze
Of smouldering camp-fires, any hint betrays
Who went these ways.

Or tatters of pale aster blue, descried
By the roadside,
Reveal whither they fled;
Or the swamp maples, here and there a shred
Of Indian red.

But most of all, the marvellous tapestry
Engrosses me,
Where such strange things are rife,
Fancies of beasts and flowers, and love and strife,
Woven to the life;

Degraded shapes and splendid seraph forms,
And teeming swarms
Of creatures gauzy dim
That cloud the dusk, and painted fish that swim,
At the weaver's whim;

And wonderful birds that wheel and hang in the air;
And beings with hair,
And moving eyes in the face,
And white bone teeth and hideous grins, who race

From place to place;

They build great temples to their John-a-nod,
And fume and plod
To deck themselves with gold,
And paint themselves like chattels to be sold,
Then turn to mould.

Sometimes they seem almost as real as I;
I hear them sigh;
I see them bow with grief,
Or dance for joy like any aspen leaf;
But that is brief.

They have mad wars and phantom marriages;
Nor seem to guess
There are dimensions still,
Beyond thought's reach, though not beyond love's will,
For soul to fill.

And some I call my friends, and make believe
Their spirits grieve,
Brood, and rejoice with mine;
I talk to them in phrases quaint and fine
Over the wine;

I tell them all my secrets; touch their hands;
One understands
Perhaps. How hard he tries
To speak! And yet those glorious mild eyes,
His best replies!

I even have my cronies, one or two,
My cherished few.
But ah, they do not stay!
For the sun fades them and they pass away,
As I grow gray.

Yet while they last how actual they seem!
Their faces beam;
I give them all their names,

Bertram and Gilbert, Louis, Frank and James,
Each with his aims;

One thinks he is a poet, and writes verse
His friends rehearse;
Another is full of law;
A third sees pictures which his hand can draw
Without a flaw.

Strangest of all, they never rest. Day long
They shift and throng,
Moved by invisible will,
Like a great breath which puffs across my sill,
And then is still;

It shakes my lovely manikins on the wall;
Squall after squall,
Gust upon crowding gust,
It sweeps them willy nilly like blown dust
With glory or lust.

It is the world-ghost, the time-spirit, come
None knows wherefrom,
The viewless draughty tide
And wash of being. I hear it yaw and glide,
And then subside,

Along these ghostly corridors and halls
Like faint footfalls;
The hangings stir in the air;
And when I start and challenge, 'Who goes there?'
It answers, 'Where?'

The wail and sob and moan of the sea's dirge,
Its plangor and surge;
The awful biting sough

Of drifted snows along some arctic bluff,
That veer and luff,

And have the vacant boding human cry,
As they go by;—
Is it a banished soul
Dredging the dark like a distracted mole
Under a knoll?

Like some invisible henchman old and gray,
Day after day
I hear it come and go,
With stealthy swift unmeaning to and fro,
Muttering low,

Ceaseless and daft and terrible and blind,
Like a lost mind.
I often chill with fear
When I bethink me, What if it should peer
At my shoulder here!

Perchance he drives the merry-go-round whose track
Is the zodiac;
His name is No-man's-friend;
And his gabbling parrot-talk has neither trend,
Beginning, nor end.

A prince of madness too, I'd cry, 'A rat!'
And lunge thereat,—
Let out at one swift thrust
The cunning arch-delusion of the dust
I so mistrust,

But that I fear I should disclose a face
Wearing the trace
Of my own human guise,

Piteous, unharmed, loving, sad, and wise
With the speaking eyes.

I would the house were rid of his grim pranks,
Moaning from banks
Of pine trees in the moon,
Startling the silence like a demoniac loon
At dead of noon.

Or whispering his fool-talk to the leaves
About my eaves.
And yet how can I know
'T is not a happy Ariel masking so
In mocking woe?

Then with a little broken laugh I say,
Snatching away
The curtain where he grinned
(My feverish sight thought) like a sin unsinned,
'Only the wind!'

Yet often too he steals so softly by.
With half a sigh,
I deem he must be mild,
Fair as a woman, gentle as a child,
And forest wild.

Passing the door where an old wind-harp swings,
With its five strings,
Contrived long years ago
By my first predecessor bent to show
His handcraft so,

He lay his fingers on the aeolian wire,
As a core of fire
Is laid upon the blast

To kindle and glow and fill the purple vast
Of dark at last.

Weird wise, and low, piercing and keen and glad,
Or dim and sad
As a forgotten strain
Born when the broken legions of the rain
Swept through the plain—

He plays, like some dread veiled mysteriarch,
Lighting the dark,
Bidding the spring grow warm,
The gendering merge and loosing of spirit in form,
Peace out of storm.

For music is the sacrament of love;
He broods above
The virgin silence, till
She yields for rapture shuddering, yearning still
To his sweet will.

I hear him sing, 'Your harp is like a mesh,
Woven of flesh
And spread within the shoal
Of life, where runs the tide-race of the soul
In my control.

'Though my wild way may ruin what it bends,
It makes amends
To the frail downy clocks,
Telling their seed a secret that unlocks
The granite rocks.

'The womb of silence to the crave of sound
Is heaven unfound,
Till I, to soothe and slake

Being's most utter and imperious ache,
Bid rhythm awake.

'If with such agonies of bliss, my kin,
I enter in
Your prison house of sense,
With what a joyous freed intelligence
I shall go hence.'

I need no more to guess the weaver's name,
Nor ask his aim,
Who hung each hall and room
With swarthy-tinged vermilion upon gloom;
I know that loom.

Give me a little space and time enough,
From ravelings rough
I could revive, reweave,
A fabric of beauty art might well believe
Were past retrieve.

O men and women in that rich design,
Sleep-soft, sun-fine,
Dew-tenuous and free,
A tone of the infinite wind-themes of the sea,
Borne in to me,

Reveals how you were woven to the might
Of shadow and light.
You are the dream of One
Who loves to haunt and yet appears to shun
My door in the sun;

As the white roving sea tern fleck and skim
The morning's rim;
Or the dark thrushes clear

Their flutes of music leisurely and sheer,
Then hush to hear.

I know him when the last red brands of day
Smoulder away,
And when the vernal showers
Bring back the heart to all my valley flowers
In the soft hours.

O hand of mine and brain of mine, be yours,
While time endures,
To acquiesce and learn!
For what we best may dare and drudge and yearn,
Let soul discern.

So, fellows, we shall reach the gusty gate,
Early or late,
And part without remorse,
A cadence dying down unto its source
In music's course;

You to the perfect rhythms of flowers and birds,
Colors and words,
The heart-beats of the earth,
To be remoulded always of one worth
From birth to birth;

I to the broken rhythm of thought and man,
The sweep and span
Of memory and hope
About the orbit where they still must grope
For wider scope,

To be through thousand springs restored, renewed,
With love imbrued,
With increments of will

Made strong, perceiving unattainment still
From each new skill.

Always the flawless beauty, always the chord
Of the Overword,
Dominant, pleading, sure,
No truth too small to save and make endure.
No good too poor!

And since no mortal can at last disdain
That sweet refrain,
But lets go strife and care,
Borne like a strain of bird notes on the air,
The wind knows where;

Some quiet April evening soft and strange,
When comes the change
No spirit can deplore,
I shall be one with all I was before,
In death once more.

Bliss William Carman

Bloodroot

When April winds arrive
And the soft rains are here,
Some morning by the roadside
These gipsy folk appear.
We never see their coming,
However sharp our eyes;
Each year as if by magic
They take us by surprise.
Along the ragged woodside
And by the green spring-run,
Their small white heads are nodding
And twinkling in the sun.
They crowd across the meadow
In innocence and mirth,
As if there were no sorrow
In all the lovely earth.
So frail, so unregarded,—
And yet about them clings
That exquisite perfection,
The soul of common things!
Think you the springing pastures
Their starry vigil kept,
To hear along the midnight
Some message, while we slept?
How else should spring requicken
Such glory in the sod?
I guess that trail of beauty
Is where the angel trod.

Bliss William Carman

By Still Waters

MY tent stands in a garden
Of aster and goldenrod,
Tilled by the rain and the sunshine,
And sown by the hand of God, —
An old New England pasture
Abandoned to peace and time,
And by the magic of beauty
Reclaimed to the sublime.

About it are golden woodlands
Of tulip and hickory;
On the open ridge behind it
You may mount to a glimpse of sea, —
The far-off, blue, Homeric
Rim of the world's great shield,
A border of boundless glamor
For the soul's familiar field.

In purple and gray-wrought lichen
The boulders lie in the sun;
Along its grassy footpath
The white-tailed rabbits run.
The crickets work and chirrup
Through the still afternoon;
And the owl calls from the hillside
Under the frosty moon.

The odorous wild grape clammers
Over the tumbling wall,
And through the autumnal quiet
The chestnuts open and fall.
Sharing time's freshness and fragrance,
Part of the earth's great soul,
Here man's spirit may ripen
To wisdom serene and whole.

Shall we not grow with the asters —
Never reluctant nor sad,
Not counting the cost of being,
Living to dare and be glad?
Shall we not lift with the crickets
A chorus of ready cheer,
Braving the frost of oblivion,
Quick to be happy here?

Is my will as sweet as the wild grape,
Spreading delight on the air
For the passer-by's enchantment,
Subtle and unaware?
Have I as brave a spirit,
Sprung from the self-same mould,
As this weed from its own contentment
Lifting its shaft of gold?

The deep red cones of the sumach
And the woodbine's crimson's sprays
Have bannered the common roadside
For the pageant of passing days.
These are the oracles Nature
Fills with her holy breath,
Giving them glory of color,
Transcending the shadow of death.

Here in the sifted sunlight
A spirit seems to brood
On the beauty and worth of being,
In tranquil, instinctive mood;
And the heart, filled full of gladness
Such as the wise earth knows,
Wells with a full thanksgiving
For the gifts that life bestows:

For the ancient and virile nurture

Of the teeming primordial ground,
For the splendid gospel of color,
The rapt revelations of sound;
For the morning-blue above us
And the rusted gold of the fern,
For the chickadee's call to valor
Bidding the faint-heart turn;

For fire and running water,
Snowfall and summer rain;
For sunsets and quiet meadows,
The fruit and the standing grain;
For the solemn hour of moonrise
Over the crest of trees,
When the mellow lights are kindled
In the lamps of the centuries;

For those who wrought aforetime,
Led by the mystic strain
To strive for the larger freedom,
And live for the greater gain;
For plenty and peace and playtime,
The homely goods of earth,
And for rare immaterial treasures
Accounted of little worth;

For art and learning and friendship,
Where beneficent truth is supreme, —
Those everlasting cities
Built on the hills of dream;
For all things growing and goodly
That foster this life, and breed
The immortal flower of wisdom
Out of the mortal seed.

But most of all for the spirit
That cannot rest nor bide
In stale and sterile convenience,

Nor safely proven and tried,
But still inspired and driven,
Must seek what better may be,
And up from the loveliest garden
Must climb for a glimpse of sea.

Bliss William Carman

By The Aurelian Wall

In Memory of John Keats
By the Aurelian Wall,
Where the long shadows of the centuries fall
From Caius Cestius' tomb,
A weary mortal seeking rest found room
For quiet burial,
Leaving among his friends
A book of lyrics.
Such untold amends
A traveller might make
In a strange country, bidden to partake
Before he farther wends;

Who slyly should bestow
The foreign reed-flute they had seen him blow
And finger cunningly,
On one of the dark children standing by,
Then lift his cloak and go.

The years pass. And the child
Thoughtful beyond his fellows, grave and mild,
Treasures the rough-made toy,
Until one day he blows it for clear joy,
And wakes the music wild.

His fondness makes it seem
A thing first fashioned in delirious dream,
Some god had cut and tried,
And filled with yearning passion, and cast aside
On some far woodland stream,-

After long years to be
Found by the stranger and brought over sea,
A marvel and delight
To ease the noon and pierce the dark blue night,
For children such as he.

He learns the silver strain
Wherewith the ghostly houses of gray rain

And lonely valleys ring,
When the untroubled whitethroats make the spring
A world without a stain;

Then on his river reed,
With strange and unsuspected notes that plead
Of their own wild accord
For utterances no bird's throat could afford,
Lifts it to human need.

His comrades leave their play,
When calling and compelling far away
By river-slope and hill,
He pipes their wayward footsteps where he will,
All the long lovely day.

Even his elders come.
'Surely the child is elvish,' murmur some,
And shake the knowing head;
'Give us the good old simple things instead,
Our fathers used to hum.'

Others at open door
Smile when they hear what they have hearkened for
These many summers now,
Believing they should live to learn somehow
Things never known before.

But he can only tell
How the flute's whisper lures him with a spell,
Yet always just eludes
The lost perfection over which he broods;
And how he loves it well.
Till all the country-side ,
Familiar with his piping far and wide,
Has taken for its own
That weird enchantment down the evening blown,-
Its glory and its pride.

And so his splendid name,
Who left the book of lyrics and small fame
Among his fellows then,

Spreads through the world like autumn-who knows when?-
Till all the hillsides flame.

Grand Pré and Margaree
Hear it upbrought from the unresting sea;
And the small Gaspereau,
Whose yellow leaves repeat it, seems to know
A new felicity.

Even the shadows tall,
Walking at sundown through the plain, recall
A mound the grasses keep,
Where once a mortal came and found long sleep
By the Aurelian Wall.

Bliss William Carman

Christmas Song

ABOVE the weary waiting world,
Asleep in chill despair,
There breaks a sound of joyous bells
Upon the frosted air.
And o'er the humblest rooftree, lo,
A star is dancing on the snow.
What makes the yellow star to dance
Upon the brink of night?
What makes the breaking dawn to glow
So magically bright,—
And all the earth to be renewed
With infinite beatitude?
The singing bells, the throbbing star,
The sunbeams on the snow,
And the awakening heart that leaps
New ecstasy to know, —
They all are dancing in the morn
Because a little child is born.

Bliss William Carman

Daises

Over the shoulders and slopes of the dune
I saw the white daisies go down to the sea,
A host in the sunshine, an army in June,
The people God sends us to set our hearts free.

The bobolinks rallied them up from the dell,
The orioles whistled them out of the wood;
And all of their singing was, 'Earth, it is well!'
And all of their dancing was, 'Life, thou art good!'

Bliss William Carman

Dance Of The Sunbeams

WHEN morning is high o'er the hilltops
On river and stream and lake,
Wherever a young breeze whispers,
The sun-clad dancers wake.
One after one up-springing,
They flash from their dim retreat.
Merry as running laughter
Is the news of their twinkling feet.
Over the floors of azure
Wherever the wind-flaws run,
Sparkling, leaping, and racing,
Their antics scatter the sun.
As long as water ripples
And weather is clear and glad,
Day after day they are dancing,
Never a moment sad.
But when through the field of heaven
The wings of storm take flight,
At a touch of the flying shadows
They falter and slip from sight.
Until at the gray day's ending,
As the squadrons of cloud retire,
They pass in the triumph of sunset
With banners of crimson fire.

Bliss William Carman

Earth Voices

I

I heard the spring wind whisper
Above the brushwood fire,
'The world is made forever
Of transport and desire.
'I am the breath of being,
The primal urge of things;
I am the whirl of star dust,
I am the lift of wings.
'I am the splendid impulse
That comes before the thought,
The joy and exaltation
Wherein the life is caught.

'Across the sleeping furrows
I call the buried seed,
And blade and bud and blossom
Awaken at my need.

'Within the dying ashes
I blow the sacred spark,
And make the hearts of lovers
To leap against the dark.'II

I heard the spring light whisper
Above the dancing stream,
'The world is made forever
In likeness of a dream.

'I am the law of planets,
I am the guide of man;
The evening and the morning
Are fashioned to my plan.

'I tint the dawn with crimson,
I tinge the sea with blue;
My track is in the desert,
My trail is in the dew.

'I paint the hills with color,
And in my magic dome
I light the star of evening
To steer the traveller home.

'Within the house of being,
I feed the lamp of truth
With tales of ancient wisdom
And prophecies of youth.'III

I heard the spring rain murmur
Above the roadside flower,
'The world is made forever
In melody and power.

'I keep the rhythmic measure
That marks the steps of time,
And all my toil is fashioned
To symmetry and rhyme.

'I plow the untilled upland,
I ripe the seeding grass,
And fill the leafy forest
With music as I pass.

'I hew the raw, rough granite
To loveliness of line,
And when my work is finished,
Behold, it is divine!

'I am the master-build
er
In whom the ages trust.
I lift the lost perfection
To blossom from the dust.'IV

Then Earth to them made answer,
As with a slow refrain
Born of the blended voices
Of wind and sun and rain,

'This is the law of being

That links the threefold chain:
The life we give to beauty
Returns to us again.'

Bliss William Carman

Edward Thring

This was a leader of the sons of light,
Of winsome cheer and strenuous command.
Upon the veteran hordes of Bigot-land
All day his vanguard spirit, flaming bright,
Bore up the brunt of unavailing fight.
Then, with the iron in his soul, one hand
Still on the hilt, he passed from that slim band
Out through the ranks to rearward and the night.
The day is lost, but not the day of days,
And ye his comrades in the losing war
Stand once again for liberty and love!
Close up the ranks; his deed your deeds let praise!
Against the front of dark where gleams one star,
Strive on to death as this great captain strove!

Bliss William Carman

Fireflies

THE fireflies across the dusk
Are flashing signals through the gloom—
Courageous messengers of light
That dare immensities of doom.
About the seeding meadow-grass,
Like busy watchmen in the street,
They come and go, they turn and pass,
Lighting the way for Beauty's feet.
Or up they float on viewless wings
To twinkle high among the trees,
And rival with soft glimmerings
The shining of the Pleiades.
The stars that wheel above the hill
Are not more wonderful to see,
Nor the great tasks that they fulfill
More needed in eternity.

Bliss William Carman

Garden Magic

WITHIN my stone-walled garden
(I see her standing now,
Uplifted in the twilight,
With glory on her brow!)
I love to walk at evening
And watch, when winds are low,
The new moon in the tree-tops,
Because she loved it so!
And there entranced I listen,
While flowers and winds confer,
And all their conversation
Is redolent of her.
I love the trees that guard it,
Upstanding and serene,
So noble, so undaunted,
Because that was her mien.
I love the brook that bounds it,
Because its silver voice
Is like her bubbling laughter
That made the world rejoice.
I love the golden jonquils,
Because she used to say,
If Soul could choose a color
It would be clothed as they.
I love the blue-gray iris,
Because her eyes were blue,
Sea-deep and heaven-tender
In meaning and in hue.
I love the small wild roses,
Because she used to stand
Adoringly above them
And bless them with her hand.
These were her boon companions,
But more than all the rest
I love the April lilac,
Because she loved it best.
Soul of undying rapture!
How love's enchantment clings,
With sorcery and fragrance,

About familiar things!

Bliss William Carman

Garden Shadows

When the dawn winds whisper
To the standing corn,
And the rose of morning
From the dark is born,
All my shadowy garden
Seems to grow aware
Of a fragrant presence,
Half expected there.

In the golden shimmer
Of the burning noon,
When the birds are silent
And the poppies swoon,
Once more I behold her
Smile and turn her face,
With its infinite regard,
Its immortal grace.
When the twilight silvers
Every nodding flower,
When the new moon hallows
The first evening hour,
Is it not her footfall
Down the garden walks,
Where the drowsy blossoms
Slumber on their stalks?

In the starry quiet,
When the soul is free,
And a vernal message
Stirs the lilac tree,
Surely I have felt her
Pass and brush my cheek,
With the eloquence of love
That does not need to speak!

Bliss William Carman

Hack And Hew

Hack and Hew were the sons of God
In the earlier earth than now:
One at his right hand, one at his left,
To obey as he taught them how.

And Hack was blind, and Hew was dumb,
Both both had the wild, wild heart;
And God's calm will was their burning will,
And the gist of their toil was art.

They made the moon and the belted stars,
They set the sun to ride;
They loosed the girdle and veil of the sea,
The wind and the purple tide.

Both flower and beast beneath their hands
To beauty and speed outgrew,--
The furious, fumbling hand of Hack,
And the glorying hand of Hew.

Then, fire and clay, they fashioned a man,
And painted him rosy brown;
And God himself blew hard in his eyes:
'Let them burn till they smoulder down!'

And 'There!' said Hack, and 'There' thought Hew,
'We'll rest, for our toil is done.'
But 'Nay,' the Master Workman said,
'For your toil is just begun.

'And ye who served me of old as God
Shall serve me anew as man,
Till I compass the dream that is in my heart,
And perfect the vaster plan.'

And still the craftsman over his craft,
In the vague white light of dawn,
With God's calm will for his burning will,
While the mounting day comes on,

Yearning, wind-swift, indolent, wild,
Toils with those shadowy two,--
The faltering, restless hand of Hack,
And the tireless hand of Hew.

Bliss William Carman

Hem And Haw

Hem and Haw were the sons of sin,
Created to shally and shirk;
Hem lay 'round and Haw looked on
While God did all the work.

Hem was a foggy, and Haw was a prig,
For both had the dull, dull mind;
And whenever they found a thing to do,
They yammered and went it blind.

Hem was the father of bigots and bores;
As the sands of the sea were they.
And Haw was the father of all the tribe
Who criticize to-day.

But God was an artist from the first,
And knew what he was about;
While over his shoulder sneered these two,
And advised him to rub it out.

They prophesied ruin ere man was made;
'Such folly must surely fail!'
And when he was done, 'Do you think, my Lord,
He's better without a tail?'

And still in the honest working world,
With posture and hint and smirk,
These sons of the devil are standing by
While man does all the work.

They balk endeavor and baffle reform,
In the sacred name of law;
And over the quavering voice of Hem
Is the droning voice of Haw.

Bliss William Carman

I Loved Thee, Atthis, In The Long Ago

(Sappho XXIII)

I loved thee, Atthis, in the long ago,
When the great oleanders were in flower
In the broad herded meadows full of sun.
And we would often at the fall of dusk
Wander together by the silver stream,
When the soft grass-heads were all wet with dew
And purple-misted in the fading light.
And joy I knew and sorrow at thy voice,
And the superb magnificence of love,—
The loneliness that saddens solitude,
And the sweet speech that makes it durable,—
The bitter longing and the keen desire,
The sweet companionship through quiet days
In the slow ample beauty of the world,
And the unutterable glad release
Within the temple of the holy night.
O Atthis, how I loved thee long ago
In that fair perished summer by the sea!

Bliss William Carman

If Death Be Good

(Sappho LXXIV)

If death be good,

Why do the gods not die?

If life be ill,

Why do the gods still live?

If love be naught,

Why do the gods still love?

If love be all,

What should men do but love?

Bliss William Carman

In A Copy Of Browning

BROWNING, old fellow,
Your leaves grow yellow,
Beginning to mellow
As seasons pass.
Your cover is wrinkled,
And stained and sprinkled,
And warped and crinkled
From sleep on the grass.

Is it a wine stain,
Or only a pine stain,
That makes such a fine stain
On your dull blue,—
Got as we numbered
The clouds that lumbered
Southward and slumbered
When day was through?

What is the dear mark
There like an earmark,
Only a tear mark
A woman let fall?—
As bending over
She bade me discover,
'Who plays the lover,
He loses all!'

With you for teacher
We learned love's feature
In every creature
That roves or grieves;
When winds were brawling,
Or bird-folk calling,
Or leaf-folk falling,
About our eaves.

No law must straiten
The ways they wait in,
Whose spirits greaten

And hearts aspire.
The world may dwindle,
And summer brindle,
So love but kindle
The soul to fire.

Here many a red line,
Or pencilled headline,
Shows love could wed line
To golden sense;
And something better
Than wisdom's fetter
Has made your letter
Dense to the dense.

No April robin,
Nor clacking bobbin,
Can make of Dobbin
A Pegasus;
But Nature's pleading
To man's unheeding,
Your subtile reading
Made clear to us.

You made us farers
And equal sharers
With homespun wearers
In home-made joys;
You made us princes
No plea convinces
That spirit winces
At dust and noise.

When Fate was nagging,
And days were dragging,
And fancy lagging,
You gave it scope,—
When eaves were drippy,
And pavements slippery,—
From Lippo Lippi
To Evelyn Hope.

When winter's arrow
Pierced to the marrow,
And thought was narrow,
You gave it room;
We guessed the warder
On Roland's border,
And helped to order
The Bishop's Tomb.

When winds were harshish,
And ways were marshish,
We found with Karshish
Escape at need;
Were bold with Waring
In far seafaring,
And strong in sharing
Ben Ezra's creed.

We felt the menace
Of lovers pen us,
Afloat in Venice
Devising fibs;
And little mattered
The rain that pattered,
While Blougram chattered
To Gigadibs.

And we too waited
With heart elated
And breathing bated,
For Pippa's song;
Saw Satan hover,
With wings to cover
Porphyria's lover,
Pompilia's wrong.

Long thoughts were started,
When youth departed
From the half-hearted
Riccardi's bride;
For, saith your fable,
Great Love is able

To slip the cable
And take the tide.

Or truth compels us
With Paracelsus,
Till nothing else is
Of worth at all.
Del Sarto's vision
Is our own mission,
And art's ambition
Is God's own call.

Through all the seasons,
You gave us reasons
For splendid treasons
To doubt and fear;
Bade no foot falter,
Though weaklings palter,
And friendships alter
From year to year.

Since first I sought you,
Found you and bought you,
Hugged you and brought you
Home from Cornhill,
While some upbraid you,
And some parade you,
Nine years have made you
My master still.

Bliss William Carman

In A Garden

THOUGHT is a garden wide and old
For airy creatures to explore,
Where grow the great fantastic flowers
With truth for honey at the core.

There like a wild marauding bee
Made desperate by hungry fears,
From gorgeous If to dark Perhaps
I blunder down the dusk of years.

Bliss William Carman

In Early May

O MY dear, the world to-day
Is more lovely than a dream!
Magic hints from far away
Haunt the woodland, and the stream
Murmurs in his rocky bed
Things that never can be said.
Starry dogwood is in flower,
Gleaming through the mystic woods.
It is beauty's perfect hour
In the wild spring solitudes.
Now the orchards in full blow
Shed their petals white as snow.
All the air is honey-sweet
With the lilacs white and red,
Where the blossoming branches meet
In an arbor overhead.
And the laden cherry trees
Murmur with the hum of bees.
All the earth is fairy green,
And the sunlight filmy gold,
Full of ecstasies unseen,
Full of mysteries untold.
Who would not be out-of-door,
Now the spring is here once more!

Bliss William Carman

In October

NOW come the rosy dogwoods,
The golden tulip-tree,
And the scarlet yellow maple,
To make a day for me.
The ash-trees on the ridges,
The alders in the swamp,
Put on their red and purple
To join the autumn pomp.
The woodbine hangs her crimson
Along the pasture wall,
And all the bannered sumacs
Have heard the frosty call.
Who then so dead to valor
As not to raise a cheer,
When all the woods are marching
In triumph of the year?

Bliss William Carman

In The Day Of Battle

IN the day of battle,
In the night of dread,
Let one hymn be lifted,
Let one prayer be said.
Not for pride of conquest,
Not for vengeance wrought,
Nor for peace and safety
With dishonor bought!
Praise for faith in freedom,
Our fighting fathers' stay,
Born of dreams and daring,
Bred above dismay.
Prayer for cloudless vision,
And the valiant hand,
That the right may triumph
To the last demand.

Bliss William Carman

In The House Of Idiedaily

OH, but life went gaily, gaily,
In the house of Idiedaily!
There were always throats to sing
Down the river-banks with spring,
When the stir of heart's desire
Set the sapling's heart on fire.
Bobolincolns in the meadows,
Leisure in the purple shadows,
Till the poppies without number
Bowed their heads in crimson slumber,
And the twilight came to cover
Every unreluctant lover.
Not a night but some brown maiden
Bettered all the dusk she strayed in,
While the roses in her hair
Bankrupted oblivion there.
Oh, but life went gaily, gaily,
In the house of Idiedaily!
But this hostelry, The Barrow,
With its chambers, bare and narrow,
Mean, ill-windowed, damp, and wormy,
Where the silence makes you squirmy,
And the guests are never seen to,
Is a vile place, a mere lean-to,
Not a traveller speaks well of,
Even worse than I heard tell of,
Mouldy, ramshackle, and foul—
What a dwelling for a soul!
Oh, but life went gaily, gaily,
In the house of Idiedaily!
There the hearth was always warm
From the slander of the storm.
There your comrade was your neighbour,
Living on to-morrow's labour.
And the board was always steaming,
Though Sir Ringlets might be dreaming.
Not a plate but scoffed at porridge,
Not a cup but floated borage.
There were always jugs of sherry

Waiting for the makers merry,
And the dark Burgundian wine
That would make a fool divine.
Oh, but life went gaily, gaily,
In the house of Idiedaily!

Bliss William Carman

In The Wings

THE play is Life; and this round earth
The narrow stage whereon
We act before an audience
Of actors dead and gone.

There is a figure in the wings
That never goes away,
And though I cannot see his face,
I shudder while I play.

His shadow looms behind me here,
Or capers at my side;
And when I mouth my lines in dread,
Those scornful lips deride.

Sometimes a hooting laugh breaks out,
And startles me alone;
While all my fellows, wondering
At my stage-fright, play on.

I fear that when my Exit comes,
I shall encounter there,
Stronger than fate, or time, or love
And sterner than despair,

The Final Critic of the craft,
As stage tradition tells;
And yet—perhaps 'twill only be
The jester with his bells.

Bliss William Carman

In The Workshop

ONCE in the Workshop, ages ago,
The clay was wet and the fire was low.

And He who was bent on fashioning man
Moulded a shape from a clod,
And put the loyal heart therein;
While another stood watching by.

'What's that?' said Beelzebub.
'A lover,' said God.
And Beelzebub frowned, for he knew that kind.

And then God fashioned a fellow shape
As lithe as a willow rod,
And gave it the merry roving eye
And the range of the open road.

'What's that?' said Beelzebub.
'A vagrant,' said God.
And Beelzebub smiled, for he knew that kind.

And last of all God fashioned a form,
And gave it, what was odd,
The loyal heart, and the roving eye;
And he whistled, light of care.

'What's that?' said Beelzebub.
'A poet,' said God.
And Beelzebub frowned, for he did not know.

Bliss William Carman

Lament

WHEN you hear the white-throat pealing
From a tree-top far away,
And the hills are touched with purple
At the borders of the day;
When the redwing sounds his whistle
At the coming on of spring,
And the joyous April pipers
Make the alder marshes ring;
When the wild new breath of being
Whispers to the World once more,
And before the shrine of beauty
Every spirit must adore;
When long thoughts come back with twilight,
And a tender deepened mood
Shows the eyes of the beloved
Like hepaticas in the wood;
Ah, remember, when to nothing
Save to love your heart gives heed,
And spring takes you to her bosom,—
So it was with Golden Weed!

Bliss William Carman

Lockerbie Street

For The Brthday Of James Whitcomb Riley, October 7, 1914

LOCKERBIE STREET is a little street,
Just one block long;
But the days go there with a magical air,
The whole year long.
The sun in his journey across the sky
Slows his car as he passes by;
The sighing wind and the grieving rain
Change their tune and cease to complain;
And the birds have a wonderful call that seems
Like a street-cry out of the land of dreams;
For there the real and the make-believe meet.
Time does not hurry in Lockerbie Street.
Lockerbie Street is a little street,
Only one block long;
But the moonlight there is strange and fair
All the year long,
As ever it was in old romance,
When fairies would sing and fauns would dance,
Proving this earth is subject still
To a blithesome wonder-working Will,
Spreading beauty over the land,
That every beholder may understand
How glory shines round the Mercy-seat.
That is the gospel of Lockerbie Street.
Lockerbie Street is a little street,
Only one block long,
A little apart, yet near the heart
Of the city's throng.
If you are a stranger looking to find
Respite and cheer for soul and mind,
And have lost your way, and would inquire
For a street that will lead to Heart's Desire,—
To a place where the spirit is never old,
And gladness and love are worth more than gold, —
Ask the first boy or girl you meet!
Everyone knows where is Lockerbie Street.
Lockerbie Street is a little street,
Only one block long;

But never a street in all the world,
In story or song,
Is better beloved by old and young;
For there a poet has lived and sung,
Wise as an angel, glad as a bird,
Fearless and fond in every word,
Many a year. And if you would know
The secret of joy and the cure of woe,—
How to be gentle and brave and sweet,—
Ask your way to Lockerbie Street.

Bliss William Carman

Lord Of My Heart's Elation

Lord of my heart's elation,
Spirit of things unseen,
Be thou my aspiration
Consuming and serene!
Bear up, bear out, bear onward
This mortal soul alone,
To selfhood or oblivion,
Incredibly thine own,—
As the foamheads are loosened
And blown along the sea,
Or sink and merge forever
In that which bids them be.

I, too, must climb in wonder,
Uplift at thy command,—
Be one with my frail fellows
Beneath the wind's strong hand,

A fleet and shadowy column
Of dust or mountain rain,
To walk the earth a moment
And be dissolved again.

Be thou my exaltation
Or fortitude of mien,
Lord of the world's elation,
Thou breath of things unseen!

Bliss William Carman

Low Tide On Grand Pré

The sun goes down, and over all
These barren reaches by the tide
Such unelusive glories fall,
I almost dream they yet will bide
Until the coming of the tide.
And yet I know that not for us,
By any ecstasy of dream,
He lingers to keep luminous
A little while the grievous stream,
Which frets, uncomforted of dream-

A grievous stream, that to and fro
Athrough the fields of Acadie
Goes wandering, as if to know
Why one beloved face should be
So long from home and Acadie.

Was it a year or lives ago
We took the grasses in our hands,
And caught the summer flying low
Over the waving meadow lands,
And held it there between our hands?

The while the river at our feet-
A drowsy inland meadow stream-
At set of sun the after-heat
Made running gold, and in the gleam
We freed our birch upon the stream.

There down along the elms at dusk
We lifted dripping blade to drift,
Through twilight scented fine like musk,
Where night and gloom awhile uplift,
Nor sunder soul and soul adrift.

And that we took into our hands
Spirit of life or subtler thing-
Breathed on us there, and loosed the bands
Of death, and taught us, whispering,

The secret of some wonder-thing .

Then all your face grew light, and seemed
To hold the shadow of the sun;
The evening faltered, and I deemed
That time was ripe, and years had done
Their wheeling underneath the sun.

So all desire and all regret,
And fear and memory, were naught;
One to remember or forget
The keen delight our hands had caught;
Morrow and yesterday were naught.

The night has fallen, and the tide . . .
Now and again comes drifting home,
Across these aching barrens wide,
A sigh like driven wind or foam:
In grief the flood is bursting home.

Bliss William Carman

Moonrise

AT the end of the road through the wood
I see the great moon rise.
The fields are flooded with shine,
And my soul with surmise.
What if that mystic orb
With her shadowy beams,
Should be the revealer at last
Of my darkest dreams!
What if this tender fire
In my heart's deep hold
Should be wiser than all the lore
Of the sages of old!

Bliss William Carman

Mr. Moon: A Song Of The Little People

O MOON, Mr. Moon,
When you comin' down?
Down on the hilltop,
Down in the glen,
Out in the clearin',
To play with little men?
Moon, Mr. Moon,
When you comin' down?

O Mr. Moon,
Hurry up your stumps!
Don't you hear Bullfrog
Callin' to his wife,
And old black Cricket
A-wheezin' at his fife?
Hurry up your stumps,
And get on your pumps!
Moon, Mr. Moon,
When you comin' down?

O Mr. Moon,
Hurry up along!
The reeds in the current
Are whisperin' slow;
The river's a-wimplin'
To and fro.
Hurry up along,
Or you'll miss the song!
Moon, Mr. Moon,
When you comin' down?

O Mr. Moon,
We're all here!
Honey-bug, Thistledrift,
White-imp, Weird,
Wryface, Billiken,
Quidnunc, Queered;
We're all here,
And the coast is clear!

Moon, Mr. Moon,
When you comin' down?

O Mr. Moon,
We're the little men!
Dewlap, Pussymouse,
Ferntip, Freak,
Drink-again, Shambler,
Talkytalk, Squeak;
Three times ten
Of us little men!
Moon, Mr. Moon,
When you comin' down?

O Mr. Moon,
We're all ready!
Tallenough, Squaretoes,
Amble, Tip,
Buddybud, Heigho,
Little black Pip;
We're all ready,
And the wind walks steady!
Moon, Mr. Moon,
When you comin' down?

O Mr. Moon,
We're thirty score;
Yellowbeard, Piper,
Lieabed, Toots,
Meadowbee, Moonboy,
Bully-in-boots;
Three times more
Than thirty score.
Moon, Mr. Moon,
When you comin' down?

O Mr. Moon,
Keep your eye peeled;
Watch out to windward,
Or you'll miss the fun,
Down by the acre
Where the wheat-waves run;

Keep your eye peeled
For the open field.
Moon, Mr. Moon,
When you comin' down?

O Mr. Moon,
There's not much time!
Hurry, if you're comin',
You lazy old bones!
You can sleep to-morrow
While the Buzbuz drones;
There's not much time
Till the church-bells chime.
Moon, Mr. Moon,
When you comin' down?

O Mr. Moon,
Just see the clover!
Soon we'll be going
Where the Gray Goose went
When all her money
Was spent, spent, spent!
Down through the clover,
When the revel's over!
Moon, Mr. Moon,
When you comin' down?

O Moon, Mr. Moon,
When you comin' down?
Down where the Good Folk
Dance in a ring,
Down where the Little Folk
Sing?
Moon, Mr. Moon,
When you comin' down?

Bliss William Carman

New England June

THESE things I remember
Of New England June,
Like a vivid day-dream
In the azure noon,
While one haunting figure
Strays through every scene,
Like the soul of beauty
Through her lost demesne.
Gardens full of roses
And peonies a-blow
In the dewy morning,
Row on stately row,
Spreading their gay patterns,
Crimson, pied and cream,
Like some gorgeous fresco
Or an Eastern dream.
Nets of waving sunlight
Falling through the trees;
Fields of gold-white daisies
Rippling in the breeze;
Lazy lifting groundswells,
Breaking green as jade
On the lilac beaches,
Where the shore-birds wade.
Orchards full of blossom,
Where the bob-white calls
And the honeysuckle
Climbs the old gray walls;
Groves of silver birches,
Beds of roadside fern,
In the stone-fenced pasture
At the river's turn.
Out of every picture
Still she comes to me
With the morning freshness
Of the summer sea, —
A glory in her bearing,
A sea-light in her eyes,
As if she could not forget

The spell of Paradise.
Thrushes in the deep woods,
With their golden themes,
Fluting like the choirs
At the birth of dreams.
Fireflies in the meadows
At the gate of Night,
With their fairy lanterns
Twinkling soft and bright.
Ah, not in the roses,
Nor the azure noon,
Nor the thrushes' music,
Lies the soul of June.
It is something finer,
More unfading far,
Than the primrose evening
And the silver star;
Something of the rapture
My beloved had,
When she made the morning
Radiant and glad,—
Something of her gracious
Ecstasy of mien,
That still haunts the twilight,
Loving though unseen.
When the ghostly moonlight
Walks my garden ground,
Like a leisurely patrol
On his nightly round,
These things I remember
Of the long ago,
While the slumbrous roses
Neither care nor know.

Bliss William Carman

Night Lyric

ON the world's far edges
Faint and blue,
Where the rocky ledges
Stand in view,
Fades the rosy tender
Evening light;
Then in starry splendor
Comes the night.
So a stormy lifetime
Comes to close,
Spirit's mortal strifetyme
Finds repose.
Faith and toil and vision
Crowned at last,
Failure and derision
Overpast,—
All the daylight splendor
Far above,
Calm and sure and tender
Comes thy love.

Bliss William Carman

Now Is The Time Of The Year

NOW is the time of year
When all the flutes begin, —
The redwing bold and clear,
The rainbird far and thin.
In all the waking lands
There's not a wilding thing
But knows and understands
The burden of the spring.
Now every voice alive
By rocky wood and stream
Is lifted to revive
The ecstasy, the dream.
For Nature, never old,
But busy as of yore,
From sun and rain and mould
Is making spring once more.
She sounds her magic note
By river-marge and hill,
And every woodland throat
Re-echoes with a thrill.
O mother of our days,
Hearing thy music call,
Teach us to know thy ways
And fear no more at all!

Bliss William Carman

Now The Lilac Tree's In Bud

NOW the lilac tree's in bud,
And the morning birds are loud.
Now a stirring in the blood
Moves the heart of every crowd.
Word has gone abroad somewhere
Of a great impending change.
There's a message in the air
Of an import glad and strange.
Not an idler in the street,
But is better off to-day.
Not a traveller you meet,
But has something wise to say.
Now there's not a road too long,
Not a day that is not good,
Not a mile but hears a song
Lifted from the misty wood.
Down along the Silvermine
That's the blackbird's cheerful note!
You can see him flash and shine
With the scarlet on his coat.
Now the winds are soft with rain,
And the twilight has a spell,
Who from gladness could refrain
Or with olden sorrows dwell?

Bliss William Carman

Off Monomoy

HAVE you sailed Nantucket Sound
By lightship, buoy, and bell,
And lain becalmed at noon
On an oily summer swell?
Lazily drooped the sail,
Moveless the pennant hung,
Sagging over the rail
Idle the main boom swung;
The sea, one mirror of shine
A single breath would destroy,
Save for the far low line
Of treacherous Monomoy.
Yet eastward there toward Spain,
What castled cities rise
From the Atlantic plain,
To our enchanted eyes!
Turret and spire and roof
Looming out of the sea,
Where the prosy chart gives proof
No cape nor isle can be!
Can a vision shine so clear
Wherein no substance dwells?
One almost harks to hear
The sound of the city's bells.
And yet no pealing notes
Within those belfries be,
Save echoes from the throats
Of ship-bells lost at sea.
For none shall anchor there
Save those who long of yore,
When tide and wind were fair,
Sailed and came back no more.
And none shall climb the stairs
Within those ghostly towers,
Save those for whom sad prayers
Went up through fateful hours.
O image of the world,
O mirage of the sea,
Cloud-built and foam-impearled,

What sorcery fashioned thee?
What architect of dream,
What painter of desire,
Conceived that fairy scheme
Touched with fantastic fire?
Even so our city of hope
We mortal dreamers rear
Upon the perilous slope
Above the deep of fear;
Leaving half-known the good
Our kindly earth bestows,
For the feigned beatitude
Of a future no man knows.
Lord of the summer sea,
Whose tides are in thy hand,
Into immensity
The vision at thy command
Fades now, and leaves no sign, —
No light nor bell nor buoy, —
Only the faint low line
Of dangerous Monomoy.

Bliss William Carman

On Love

TO the assembled folk
At great St. Kavin's spoke
Young Brother Amiel on Christmas Eve;
I give you joy, my friends,
That as the round year ends,
We meet once more for gladness by God's leave.

On other festal days
For penitence or praise
Or prayer we meet, or fullness of thanksgiving;
To-night we calendar
The rising of that star
Which lit the old world with new joy of living.

Ah, we disparage still
The Tidings of Good Will,
Discrediting Love's gospel now as then!
And with the verbal creed
That God is love indeed,
Who dares make Love his god before all men?

Shall we not, therefore, friends,
Resolve to make amends
To that glad inspiration of the heart;
To grudge not, to cast out
Selfishness, malice, doubt,
Anger and fear; and for the better part,

To love so much, so well,
The spirit cannot tell
The range and sweep of her own boundary!
There is no period
Between the soul and God;
Love is the tide, God the eternal sea....

To-day we walk by love;
To strive is not enough,
Save against greed and ignorance and might.
We apprehend peace comes

Not with the roll of drums,
But in the still processions of the night.

And we perceive, not awe
But love is the great law
That binds the world together safe and whole.
The splendid planets run
Their courses in the sun;
Love is the gravitation of the soul.

In the profound unknown,
Illumined, fair, and lone,
Each star is set to shimmer in its place.
In the profound divine
Each soul is set to shine,
And its unique appointed orbit trace.

There is no near nor far,
Where glorious Algebar
Swings round his mighty circuit through the night,
Yet where without a sound
The winged seed comes to ground,
And the red leaf seems hardly to alight.

One force, one lore, one need
For satellite and seed,
In the serene benignity for all.
Letting her time-glass run
With star-dust, sun by sun,
In Nature's thought there is no great nor small.

There is no far nor near
Within the spirit's sphere.
The summer sunset's scarlet-yellow wings
Are tinged with the same dye
That paints the tulip's ply.
And what is colour but the soul of things?

(The earth was without form;
God moulded it with storm,
Ice, flood, and tempest, gleaming tint and hue;
Lest it should come to ill

For lack of spirit still,
He gave it colour,—let the love shine through.)...

Of old, men said, 'Sin not;
By every line and jot
Ye shall abide; man's heart is false and vile.'
Christ said, 'By love alone
In man's heart is God known;
Obey the word no falsehood can defile.'...

And since that day we prove
Only how great is love,
Nor to this hour its greatness half believe.
For to what other power
Will life give equal dower,
Or chaos grant one moment of reprieve!

Look down the ages' line,
Where slowly the divine
Evinces energy, puts forth control;
See mighty love alone
Transmuting stock and stone,
Infusing being, helping sense and soul.

And what is energy,
In-working, which bids be
The starry pageant and the life of earth?
What is the genesis
Of every joy and bliss,
Each action dared, each beauty brought to birth?

What hangs the sun on high?
What swells the growing rye?
What bids the loons cry on the Northern lake?
What stirs in swamp and swale,
When April winds prevail,
And all the dwellers of the ground awake?...

What lurks in the deep gaze
Of the old wolf? Amaze,
Hope, recognition, gladness, anger, fear.
But deeper than all these

Love muses, yearns, and sees,
And is the self that does not change nor veer.

Not love of self alone,
Struggle for lair and bone,
But self-denying love of mate and young,
Love that is kind and wise,
Knows trust and sacrifice,
And croons the old dark universal tongue....

And who has understood
Our brothers of the wood,
Save he who puts off guile and every guise
Of violence,—made truce
With panther, bear, and moose,
As beings like ourselves whom love makes wise?

For they, too, do love's will,
Our lesser clansmen still;
The House of Many Mansions holds us all;
Courageous, glad and hale,
They go forth on the trail,
Hearing the message, hearkening to the call....

Open the door to-night
Within your heart, and light
The lantern of love there to shine afar.
On a tumultuous sea
Some straining craft, maybe,
With bearings lost, shall sight love's silver star.

Bliss William Carman

On The Plaza

One August day I sat beside
A café window open wide
To let the shower-fresh ened air
Blow in across the Plaza, where
In golden pomp against the dark
Green leafy background of the Park,
St. Gaudens' hero, gaunt and grim,
Rides on with Victory leading him.
The wet, black asphalt seemed to hold
In every hollow pools of gold,
And clouds of gold and pink and gray
Were piled up at the end of day,
Far down the cross street, where one tower
Still glistened from the drenching shower.
A weary, white-haired man went by,
Cooling his forehead gratefully
After the day's great heat. A girl,
Her thin white garments in a swirl
Blown back against her breasts and knees,
Like a Winged Victory in the breeze,
Alive and modern and superb,
Crossed from the circle of the curb.
We sat there watching people pass,
Clinking the ice against the glass
And talking idly—books or art,
Or something equally apart
From the essential stress and strife
That rudely form and further life,
Glad of a respite from the heat,
When down the middle of the street,
Trundling a hurdy-gurdy, gay
In spite of the dull-stifflin g day,
Three street-music ians came. The man,
With hair and beard as black as Pan,
Strolled on one side with lordly grace,
While a young girl tugged at a trace
Upon the other. And between
The shafts there walked a laughing queen,
Bright as a poppy, strong and free.

What likelier land than Italy
Breeds such abandon? Confident
And rapturous in mere living spent
Each moment to the utmost, there
With broad, deep chest and kerchiefed hair,
With head thrown back, bare throat, and waist
Supple, heroic and free-laced,
Between her two companions walked
This splendid woman, chaffed and talked,
Did half the work, made all the cheer
Of that small company.

No Fear
Of failure in a soul like hers
That every moment throbs and stirs
With merry ardor, virile hope,
Brave effort, nor in all its scope
Has room for thought of discontent,
Each day its own sufficient vent
And source of happiness.

Without

A trace of bitterness or doubt
Of life's true worth, she strode at ease
Before those empty palaces,
A simple heiress of the earth
And all its joys by happy birth,
Beneficent as breeze or dew,
And fresh as though the world were new
And toil and grief were not. How rare
A personality was there!

Bliss William Carman

Over The Wintry Threshold

Over the wintry threshold
Who comes with joy today,
So frail, yet so enduring,
To triumph o'er dismay?

Ah, quick her tears are springing,
And quickly they are dried,
For sorrow walks before her,
But gladness walks beside.

She comes with gusts of laughter, -
The music as it rills;
With tenderness and sweetness,
The wisdom of the hills.

Her hands are strong to comfort,
Her heart is quick to heed;
She knows the signs of sadness,
She knows the voice of need;

There is no living creature,
However poor or small,
But she will know its trouble,
And hearken to its call.

Oh, well they fare forever,
By mighty dreams possessed,
Whose hearts have lain a moment
On that eternal breast.

Bliss William Carman

Peace

THE sleeping tarn is dark
Below the wooded hill.
Save for its homing sounds,
The twilit world grows still.
And I am left to muse
In grave-eyed mystery,
And watch the stars come out
As sandalled dusk goes by.
And now the light is gone,
The drowsy murmurs cease,
And through the still unknown
I wonder whence comes peace.
Then softly falls the word
Of one beyond a name,
'Peace only comes to him
Who guards his life from shame, —
'Who gives his heart to love,
And holding truth for guide,
Girds him with fearless strength,
That freedom may abide.'

Bliss William Carman

Phi Beta Kappa Poem

Harvard, 1914

SIR, friends, and scholars, we are here to serve
A high occasion. Our New England wears
All her unrivalled beauty as of old;
And June, with scent of bayberry and rose
And song of orioles— as she only comes
By Massachusetts Bay —is here once more,
Companionship our fête of fellowship.
The open trails, South, West, and North, lead back
From populous cities or from lonely plains,
Ranch, pulpit, office, factory, desk, or mill,
To this fair tribunal of ambitious youth,
The shadowy town beside the placid Charles,
Where Harvard waits us through the passing years,
Conserving and administering still
Her savor for the gladdening of the race.
Yearly, of all the sons she has sent forth,
And men her admiration would adopt,
She summons whom she will back to her side
As if to ask, 'How fares my cause of truth
In the great world beyond these studious walls?'
Here, from their store of life experience,
They must make answer as grace is given them,
And their plain creed, in verity, declare.
Among the many, there is sometimes called
One who, like Arnold's scholar gypsy poor,
Is but a seeker on the dusky way,
'Still waiting for the spark from heaven to fall.'
He must bethink him first of other days,
And that old scholar of the seraphic smile,
As we recall him in this very place
With all the sweetest culture of his age,
His gentle courtesy and friendliness,
A chivalry of soul now strangely rare,
And that ironic wit which made him, too,
The unflinching critic and most dreaded foe
Of all things mean, unlovely, and untrue.
What Mr. Norton said, with that slow smile,
Has put the fear of God in many a heart,

Even while his hand encouraged eager youth.
From such enheartening who would not dare speak—
Seeing no truth can be too small to serve,
And no word worthless that is born of love?
Within the noisy workshop of the world,
Where still the strife is upward out of gloom,
Men doubt the value of high teaching —cry,
'What use is learning? Man must have his will!
The élan of life alone is paramount!
Away with old traditions! We are free!
So folly mocks at truth in Freedom's name.
Pale Anarchy leads on, with furious shriek,
Her envious horde of reckless malcontents
And mad destroyers of the Commonwealth,
While Privilege with indifference grows corrupt,
Till the Republic stands in jeopardy
From following false idols and ideals,
Though sane men cry for honesty once more,
Order and duty and self-sacrifice.
Our world and all it holds of good for us
Our fathers and unselfish mothers made,
With noble passion and enduring toil,
Strenuous, frugal, reverent, and elate,
Caring above all else to guard and save
The ampler life of the intelligence
And the fine honor of a scrupulous code —
Ideals of manhood touched with the divine.
For this they founded these great schools we serve,
Harvard, Columbia, Princeton, Dartmouth, Yale,
Amherst and Williams, trusting to our hands
The heritage of all they held most high,
Possessions of the spirit and the mind,
Investments in the provinces of joy.
Vast provinces are these! And fortunate they
Who at their will may go adventuring there,
Exploring all the boundaries of Truth,
Learning the roads that run through Beauty's realm,
Sighting the pinnacles where Good meets God,
Encompassed by the eternal unknown sea!
Even for a little to o'erlook those lands,
The kingdoms of Religion, Science, Art,
Is to be made forever happier

With blameless memories that shall bring content
And inspiration for all after days.
And fortunate they whom destiny allows
To rest within those provinces and serve
The dominion of ideals all their lives.
For whoso will, putting dull greed aside,
And holding fond allegiance to the best,
May dwell there and find fortitude and joy.
In the free fellowship of kindred minds,
One band of scholar gypsies I have known,
Whose purpose all unworldly was to find
An answer to the riddle of the Earth —
A key that should unlock the book of life
And secrets of its sorceries reveal.
This, they discovered, had long since been found
And laid aside forgotten and unused.
Our dark young poet who from Dartmouth came
Was told the secret by his gypsy bride,
Who had it from a master over seas,
And he it was first hinted to the band
The magic of that universal lore,
Before the great Mysteriarch summoned him.
It was the doctrine of the threefold life,
The beginning of the end of all their doubt.
In that Victorian age it has become
So much the fashion now to half despise,
Within the shadow of Cathedral walls
They had been schooled, and heard the mellow chimes
For Lenten litanies and daily prayers,
With a mild, eloquent, beloved voice
Exhorting to all virtue and that peace
Surpassing understanding — casting there
That 'last enchantment of the Middle Age,'
The spell of Oxford and her ritual.
So duteous youth was trained, until there grew
Restive outreaching in men's thought to find
Some certitude beyond the dusk of faith.
They cried on mysticism to be gone,
Mazed in the shadowy pryncedom of the soul.
Then as old creeds fell round them into dust,
They reached through science to belief in law,
Made reason paramount in man, and guessed

At reigning mind within the universe.
Piecing the fragments of a fair design
With reverent patience and courageous skill,
They saw the world from chaos step by step,
Under far-seeing guidance and restraint,
Emerge to order and to symmetry,
As logical and sure as music's own.
With Spencer, Darwin, Tyndall, and the rest,
Our band saw roads of knowledge open wide
Through the uncharted province of the truth,
As on they fared through that unfolding world.
Yet there they found no rest-house for the heart,
No wells sufficient for the spirit's thirst,
No shade nor glory for the senses starved. . . .
Turning— they fled by moonlit trails to seek
The magic principality of Art,
Where loveliness, not learning, rules supreme.
They stood intoxicated with delight before
The poised unanxious splendor of the Greek;
They mused upon the Gothic minsters gray,
Where mystic spirit took on mighty form,
Until their prayers to lovely churches turned —
(Like a remembrance of the Middle Age
They rose where Ralph or Bertram dreamed in stone);
Entranced they trod a painters' paradise,
Where color wasted by the Scituate shore
Between the changing marshes and the sea;
They heard the golden voice of poesie
Lulling the senses with its last caress
In Tennysonian accents pure and fine;
And all their laurels were for Beauty's brow,
Though toiling Reason went ungarlanded.
Then poisonous weeds of artifice sprang up,
Defiling Nature at her sacred source;
And there the questing World-soul could not stay,
Onward must journey with the changing time,
To come to this uncouth rebellious age,
Where not an ancient creed nor courtesy
Is underided, and each demagogue
Cries some new nostrum for the cure of ills.
To-day the unreasoning iconoclast
Would scoff at science and abolish art,

To let untutored impulse rule the world.
Let learning perish, and the race returns
To that first anarchy from which we came,
When spirit moved upon the deep and laid
The primal chaos under cosmic law.
And even now, in all our wilful might,
The satiated being cannot bide,
But to that austere country turns again,
The little province of the saints of God,
Where lofty peaks rise upward to the stars
From the gray twilight of Gethsemane,
And spirit dares to climb with wounded feet
Where justice, peace, and loving kindness are.
What says the lore of human power we hold
Through all these striving and tumultuous days?
'Why not accept each several bloom of good,
Without discarding good already gained,
As one might weed a garden overgrown —
Save the new shoots, yet not destroy the old?
Only the fool would root up his whole patch
Of fragrant flowers, to plant the newer seed.'
Ah, softly, brothers! Have we not the key,
Whose first fine luminous use Plotinus gave,
Teaching that ecstasy must lead the man?
Three things, we see, men in this life require,
(As they are needed in the universe):
First of all spirit, energy, or love,
The soul and mainspring of created things;
Next wisdom, knowledge, culture, discipline,
To guide impetuous spirit to its goal;
And lastly strength, the sound apt instrument,
Adjusted and controlled to lawful needs.
The next world-teacher must be one whose word
Shall reaffirm the primacy of soul,
Hold scholarship in her high guiding place,
And recognize the body's equal right
To culture such as it has never known,
In power and beauty serving soul and mind.
Inheritors of this divine ideal,
With courage to be fine as well as strong,
Shall know what common manhood may become,
Regain the gladness of the sons of morn,

The radiance of immortality.
Out of heroic wanderings of the past,
And all the wayward gropings of our time,
Unswerved by doubt, unconquered by despair,
The messengers of such a hope must go;
As one who hears far off before the dawn,
On some lone trail among the darkling hills,
The hermit thrushes in the paling dusk,
And at the omen lifts his eyes to see
Above him, with its silent shafts of light,
The sunrise kindling all the peaks with fire.

Bliss William Carman

Resignation

WHEN I am only fit to go to bed,
Or hobble out to sit within the sun,
Ring down the curtain, say the play is done,
And the last petals of the poppy shed!

I do not want to live when I am old,
I have no use for things I cannot love;
And when the day that I am talking of
(Which God forbend!) is come, it will be cold.

But if there is another place than this,
Where all the men will greet me as 'Old Man,'
And all the women wrap me in a smile,
Where money is more useless than a kiss,
And good wine is not put beneath the ban,
I will go there and stay a little while.

Bliss William Carman

Rivers Of Canada

O all the little rivers that run to Hudson's Bay,
They call me and call me to follow them away.
Missinaibi, Abitibi, Little Current-where they run
Dancing and sparkling I see them in the sun.
I hear the brawling rapid, the thunder of the fall,
And when I think upon them I cannot stay at all.
At the far end of the carry, where the wilderness begins,
Set me down with my canoe-load- and forgiveness of my sins.
O all the mighty rivers beneath the Polar Star,
They call me and call me to follow them afar.

Peace and Athabasca and Coppermine and Slave,
And Yukon and Mackenzie-the highroads of the brave.

Saskatchewan, Assiniboine, the Bow and the Qu'Appelle,
And many a prairie river whose name is like a spell.

They rumor through the twilight at the edge of the unknown,
'There's a message waiting for you, and a kingdom all your own.

'The wilderness shall feed you, her gleam shall be your guide.
Come out from desolations, our path of hope is wide.'

O all the headlong rivers that hurry to the West,
They call me and lure me with the joy of their unrest.

Columbia and Fraser and Bear and Kootenay,
I love their fearless reaches where winds untarnished play-

The rush of glacial water across the pebbly bar
To polished pools of azure where the hidden boulders are.

Just there, with heaven smiling, any morning I would be,
Where all the silver rivers go racing to the sea.

O well remembered rivers that sing of long ago,
Ajourneying through summer or dreaming under snow.

Among their meadow islands through placid days they glide,

And where the peaceful orchards are diked against the tide.

Tobique and Madawaska and shining Gaspereaux,
St. Croix and Nashwaak and St. John whose haunts I used to know.

And all the pleasant rivers that seek the Fundy foam,
They call me and call me to follow them home.

Bliss William Carman

Roadside Flowers

WE are the roadside flowers,
Straying from garden grounds, —
Lovers of idle hours,
Breakers of ordered bounds.
If only the earth will feed us,
If only the wind be kind,
We blossom for those who need us,
The stragglers left behind.
And lo, the Lord of the Garden,
He makes his sun to rise,
And his rain to fall like pardon
On our dusty paradise.
On us he has laid the duty, —
The task of the wandering breed,—
To better the world with beauty,
Wherever the way may lead.
Who shall inquire of the season,
Or question the wind where it blows?
We blossom and ask no reason.
The Lord of the Garden knows.

Bliss William Carman

Songs Of The Grass

I

On The Dunes

HERE all night on the dunes
In the rocking wind we sleep;
Watched by the sentry stars,
Lulled by the drone of the deep.
Till hark, in the chill of the dawn
A field lark wakes and cries,
And over the floor of the sea
We watch the round sun rise.
The world is washed once more
In a tide of purple and gold,
And the heart of the land is filled
With desires and dreams untold.

II

Lord Of Morning

Lord of morning, light of day,
Sacred color-kindling sun,
We salute thee in the way, —
Pilgrims robed in rose and dun.
For thou art a pilgrim too,
Overlord of all our band.
In thy fervor we renew
Quests we do not understand.
At thy summons we arise,
At thy touch put glory on,
And with glad unanxious eyes
Take the journey thou hast gone.

III

The Traveller

Before the night-blue fades
And the stars are quite gone,
I lift my head
At the noiseless tread
Of the angel of dawn.
I hear no word, yet my heart
Is beating apace;
Then in glory all still
On the eastern hill

I behold his face.
All day through the world he goes,
Making glad, setting free;
Then his day's work done,
On the galleon sun
He sinks in the sea.

Bliss William Carman

Spring Night

IN the wondrous star-sown night,
In the first sweet warmth of spring,
I lie awake and listen
To hear the glad earth sing.
I hear the brook in the wood
Murmuring, as it goes,
The song of the happy journey
Only the wise heart knows.
I hear the trilling note
Of the tree-frog under the hill,
And the clear and watery treble
Of his brother, silvery shrill.
And then I wander away
Through the mighty forest of Sleep,
To follow the fairy music
To the shore of an endless deep.

Bliss William Carman

Spring Song

Make me over, Mother April,
When the sap begins to stir!
When thy flowery hand delivers
All the mountain-prisoned rivers,
And thy great heart beats and quivers
To revive the days that were,
Make me over, Mother April,
When the sap begins to stir!

Take my dust and all my dreaming,
Count my heart-beats one by one,
Send them where the winters perish;
Then some golden noon cherish
And restore them in the sun,
Flower and scent and dust and dreaming,
With their heart-beats every one!

Set me in the urge and tide-drift
Of the streaming hosts a-wing!
Breast of scarlet, throat of yellow,
Raucous challenge, woings mellow -
Every migrant is my fellow,
Making northward with the spring.
Loose me in the urge and tide-drift
Of the streaming hosts a-wing!

Shrilling pipe or fluting whistle,
In the valleys come again;
Fife of frog and call of tree-toad,
All my brothers, five or three-toed,
With their revel no more vetoed,
Making music in the rain;
Shrilling pipe or fluting whistle,
In the valleys come again.

Make me of thy seed to-morrow,
When the sap begins to stir!
Tawny light-foot, sleepy bruin,
Bright-eyes in the orchard ruin,

Gnarl the good life goes askew in,
Whiskey-jack, or tanager, -
Make me anything to-morrow,
When the sap begins to stir!

Make me even (How do I know?)
Like my friend the gargoyle there;
It may be the heart within him
Swells that doltish hands should pin him
Fixed forever in mid-air.
Make me even sport for swallows,
Like the soaring gargoyle there!

Give me the old clue to follow,
Through the labyrinth of night!
Clod of clay with heart of fire,
Things that burrow and aspire,
With the vanishing desire,
For the perishing delight, -
Only the old clue to follow,
Through the labyrinth of night!

Make me over, Mother April,
When the sap begins to stir!
Fashion me from swamp or meadow,
Garden plot or ferny shadow,
Hyacinth or humble burr!
Make me over, Mother April,
When the sap begins to stir!

Let me hear the far, low summons,
When the silver winds return;
Rills that run and streams that stammer,
Goldenwing with his loud hammer,
Icy brooks that brawl and clamor,
Where the Indian willows burn;
Let me hearken to the calling,
When the silver winds return,

Till recurring and recurring,
Long since wandered and come back,

Like a whim of Grieg's or Gounod's,
This same self, bird, bud, or Bluenose,
Some day I may capture (Who knows?)
Just the one last joy I lack,
Waking to the far new summons,
When the old spring winds come back.

For I have no choice of being,
When the sap begins to climb, -
Strong insistence, sweet intrusion,
Vasts and verges of illusion, -
So I win, to time's confusion,
The one perfect pearl of time,
Joy and joy and joy forever,
Till the sap forgets to climb!

Make me over in the morning
From the rag-bag of the world!
Scraps of dream and duds of daring,
Home-brought stuff from far sea-faring,
Faded colors once so flaring,
Shreds of banners long since furled!
Hues of ash and glints of glory,
In the rag-bag of the world!

Let me taste the old immortal
Indolence of life once more;
Not recalling nor foreseeing,
Let the great slow joys of being
Well my heart through as of yore!
Let me taste the old immortal
Indolence of life once more!

Give me the old drink for rapture,
The delirium to drain,
All my fellows drank in plenty
At the Three Score Inns and Twenty
From the mountains to the main!
Give me the old drink for rapture,
The delirium to drain!

Only make me over, April,

When the sap begins to stir!
Make me man or make me woman,
Make me oaf or ape or human,
Cup of flower or cone of fir;
Make me anything but neuter
When the sap begins to stir!

Bliss William Carman

Spring's Saraband

Over the hills of April
With soft winds hand in hand,
Impassionate and dreamy-eyed,
Spring leads her saraband.
Her garments float and gather
And swirl along the plain,
Her headgear is the golden sun,
Her cloak the silver rain.

With colour and with music,
With perfumes and with pomp,
By meadowland and upland,
Through pasture, wood, and swamp,
With promise and enchantment
Leading her mystic mime,
She comes to lure the world anew
With joy as old as time.

Quick lifts the marshy chorus
To transport, trill on trill;
There's not a rod of stony ground
Unanswering on the hill.
The brooks and little rivers
Dance down their wild ravines,
And children in the city squares
Keep time, to tambourines.

The blue bird in the orchard
Is lyrical for her,
The starling with his meadow pipe
Sets all the wood astir,
The hooded white spring-beauties
Are curtsyng in the breeze,
The blue hepaticas are out
Under the chestnut trees.
The maple buds make glamour
Vibenum waves its bloom,
The daffodils and tulips
Are risen from the tomb.

The lances of narcissus
Have pierced the wintry mold;
The commonplace seems paradise
To veils of greening gold.

O hark, hear thou the summons,
Put every grief away,
When all the motley masques of earth
Are glad upon a day.
Alack, that any mortal
Should less than gladness bring
Into the choral joy that sounds
The saraband of spring!

Bliss William Carman

Summer Storm

THE hilltop trees are bowing
Under the coming of storm.
The low gray clouds are trailing
Like squadrons that sweep and form,
With their ammunition of rain.
Then the trumpeter wind gives signal
To unlimber the viewless guns;
The cattle huddle together;
Indoors the farmer runs;
And the first shot lashes the pane.
They charge through the quiet orchard;
One pear tree is snapped like a wand;
As they sweep from the shattered hillside,
Ruffling the blackened pond,
Ere the sun takes the field again.

Bliss William Carman

Summer Streams

ALL day long beneath the sun
Shining through the fields they run,
Singing in a cadence known
To the seraphs round the throne.
And the traveller drawing near
Through the meadow, halts to hear
Anthems of a natural joy
No disaster can destroy.
All night long from set of sun
Through the starry woods they run,
Singing through the purple dark
Songs to make a traveller hark.
All night long, when winds are low,
Underneath my window go
The immortal happy streams,
Making music through my dreams.

Bliss William Carman

Thanksgiving

I thank thee, Earth, for water good,
The sea's great bath of buoyant green
Or the cold mountain torrent's flood,
That I may keep this body clean.

I thank thee more for goodly wine,
That wise as Omar I may be,
Or Horace when he went to dine
With Lydia or with Lalage.

Bliss William Carman

The Blue Heron

I SEE the great blue heron
Rising among the reeds
And floating down the wind,
Like a gliding sail
With the set of the stream.
I hear the two-horse mower
Clacking among the hay,
In the heat of a July noon,
And the driver's voice
As he turns his team.
I see the meadow lilies
Flecked with their darker tan,
The elms, and the great white clouds;
And all the world
Is a passing dream.

Bliss William Carman

The Campfire Of The Sun

LO, now, the journeying sun,
Another day's march done,
Kindles his campfire at the edge of night!
And in the twilight pale
Above his crimson trail,
The stars move out their cordons still and bright.
Now in the darkening hush
A solitary thrush
Sings on in silvery rapture to the deep;
While brooding on her best,
The wandering soul has rest,
And earth receives her sacred gift of sleep.

Bliss William Carman

The Deserted Pasture

I love the stony pasture
That no one else will have.
The old gray rocks so friendly seem,
So durable and brave.

In tranquil contemplation
It watches through the year,
Seeing the frosty stars arise,
The slender moons appear.

Its music is the rain-wind,
Its choristers the birds,
And there are secrets in its heart
Too wonderful for words.

It keeps the bright-eyed creatures
That play about its walls,
Though long ago its milking herds
Were banished from their stalls.

Only the children come there,
For buttercups in May,
Or nuts in autumn, where it lies
Dreaming the hours away.

Long since its strength was given
To making good increase,
And now its soul is turned again
To beauty and to peace.

There in the early springtime
The violets are blue,
And adder-tongues in coats of gold
Are garmented anew.

There bayberry and aster
Are crowded on its floors,
When marching summer halts to praise
The Lord of Out-of-doors.

And there October passes
In gorgeous livery, -
In purple ash, and crimson oak,
And golden tulip tree.

And when the winds of winter
Their bugle blasts begin,
The snowy hosts of heaven arrive
To pitch their tents therein.

Bliss William Carman

The Dustman

'DUSTMAN, dustman!'
Through the deserted square he cries,
And babies put their rosy fists
Into their eyes.

There's nothing out of No-man's-land
So drowsy since the world began,
As 'Dustman, dustman,
Dustman.'

He goes his village round at dusk
From door to door, from day to day;
And when the children hear his step
They stop their play.

'Dustman, dustman!'
Far up the street he is descried,
And soberly the twilight games
Are laid aside.

'Dustman, dustman!'
There, Drowsyhead, the old refrain,
'Dustman, dustman!'
It goes again.

Dustman, dustman,
Hurry by and let me sleep.
When most I wish for you to come,
You always creep.

Dustman, dustman,
And when I want to play some more,
You never then are farther off
Than the next door.

'Dustman, dustman!'
He beckles down the echoing curb,
A step that neither hopes nor hates
Ever disturb.

'Dustman, dustman!'
He never varies from one pace,
And the monotony of time
Is in his face.

And some day, with more potent dust,
Brought from his home beyond the deep,
And gently scattered on our eyes,
We, too, shall sleep,—

Hearing the call we know so well
Fade softly out as it began,
'Dustman, dustman,
Dustman!'

Bliss William Carman

The Eavesdropper

In a still room at hush of dawn,
My Love and I lay side by side
And heard the roaming forest wind
Stir in the paling autumn-tide.

I watched her earth-brown eyes grow glad
Because the round day was so fair;
While memories of reluctant night
Lurked in the blue dusk of her hair.
Outside, a yellow maple tree,
Shifting upon the silvery blue
With tiny multitudinous
sounds,
Rustled to let the sunlight through.

The livelong day the elvish leaves
Danced with their shadows on the floor;
And the lost children of the wind
Went straying homeward by our door.

And all the swarthy afternoon
We watched the great deliberate sun
Walk through the crimsoned hazy world,
Counting his hilltops one by one.

Then as the purple twilight came
And touched the vines along our eaves,
Another Shadow stood without
And gloomed the dancing of the leaves.

The silence fell on my Love's lips;
Her great brown eyes were veiled and sad
With pondering some maze of dream,
Through all the splendid year was glad.

Restless and vague as a gray wind
Her heart had grown, she knew not why.
But hurrying to the open door,
Against the verge of western sky

I saw retreating on the hills,
Looming and sinister and black,
The stealthy figure swift and huge
Of One who strode and looked not back.

Bliss William Carman

The Faithless Lover

I

O LIFE, dear Life, in this fair house
Long since did I, it seems to me,
In some mysterious doleful way
Fall out of love with thee.

For, Life, thou art become a ghost,
A memory of days gone by,
A poor forsaken thing between
A heartache and a sigh.

And now, with shadows from the hills
Thronging the twilight, wraith on wraith,
Unlock the door and let me go
To thy dark rival Death!

II

O Heart, dear Heart, in this fair house
Why hast thou wearied and grown tired,
Between a morning and a night,
Of all thy soul desired?

Fond one, who cannot understand,
Even these shadows on the floor,
Yet must be dreaming of dark loves
And joys beyond my door!

But I am beautiful past all
The timid tumult of thy mood,
And thou returning not must still
Be mine in solitude.

Bliss William Carman

The Garden Of Dreams

MY heart is a garden of dreams
Where you walk when day is done,
Fair as the royal flowers,
Calm as the lingering sun.
Never a drouth comes there,
Nor any frost that mars,
Only the wind of love
Under the early stars,—
The living breath that moves
Whispering to and fro,
Like the voice of God in the dusk
Of the garden long ago.

Bliss William Carman

The Garden Of Saint Rose

THIS is a holy refuge,
The garden of Saint Rose,
A fragrant altar to that peace
The world no longer knows.
Below a solemn hillside,
Within the folding shade
Of overhanging beech and pine
Its walls and walks are laid.
Cool through the heat of summer,
Still as a sacred grove,
It has the rapt unworldly air
Of mystery and love.
All day before its outlook
The mist-blue mountains loom,
And in its trees at tranquil dusk
The early stars will bloom.
Down its enchanted borders
Glad ranks of color stand,
Like hosts of silent seraphim
Awaiting love's command.
Lovely in adoration
They wait in patient line,
Snow-white and purple and deep gold
About the rose-gold shrine.
And there they guard the silence,
While still from her recess
Through sun and shade Saint Rose looks down
In mellow loveliness.
She seems to say, 'O stranger,
Behold how loving care
That gives its life for beauty's sake,
Makes everything more fair!
'Then praise the Lord of gardens
For tree and flower and vine,
And bless all gardeners who have wrought
A resting place like mine!'

Bliss William Carman

The Ghost-Yard Of The Goldenrod

WHEN the first silent frost has trod
The ghost-yard of the goldenrod,
And laid the blight of his cold hand
Upon the warm autumnal land,
And all things wait the subtle change
That men call death, is it not strange
That I— without a care or need,
Who only am an idle weed —
Should wait unmoved, so frail, so bold,
The coming of the final cold!

Bliss William Carman

The Gift

I SAID to Life, 'How comes it,
With all this wealth in store,
Of beauty, joy, and knowledge,
Thy cry is still for more?
'Count all the years of striving
To make thy burden less, —
The things designed and fashioned
To gladden thy success!
'The treasures sought and gathered
Thy lightest whim to please, —
The loot of all the ages,
The spoil of all the seas!
'Is there no end of labor,
No limit to thy need?
Must man go bowed forever
In bondage to thy greed?'
With tears of pride and passion
She answered, 'God above!
I only wait the asking,
To spend it all for love!'

Bliss William Carman

The Givers Of Life

I.

WHO called us forth out of darkness and gave us the gift of life,
Who set our hands to the toiling, our feet in the field of strife?
Darkly they mused, predestined to knowledge of viewless things,
Sowing the seed of wisdom, guarding the living springs.
Little they reckoned privation, hunger or hardship or cold,
If only the life might prosper, and the joy that grows not old.
With sorceries subtler than music, with knowledge older than speech,
Gentle as wind in the wheat-field, strong as the tide on the beach,
Out of their beauty and longing, out of their raptures and tears,
In patience and pride they bore us, to war with the warring years.

2.

Who looked on the world before them, and summoned and chose our sires,
Subduing the wayward impulse to the will of their deep desires?
Sovereigns of ultimate issues under the greater laws,
Theirs was the mystic mission of the eternal cause;
Confident, tender, courageous, leaving the low for the higher,
Lifting the feet of the nations out of the dust and the mire;
Luring civilization on to the fair and new,
Given God's bidding to follow, having God's business to do.

3.

Who strengthened our souls with courage, and taught us the ways of Earth?
Who gave us our patterns of beauty, our standards of flawless worth?
Mothers, unmilitant, lovely, moulding our manhood then,
Walked in their woman's glory, swaying the might of men.
They schooled us to service and honor, modest and clean and fair, —
The code of their worth of living, taught with the sanction of prayer.
They were our sharers of sorrow, they were our makers of joy,
Lighting the lamp of manhood in the heart of the lonely boy.
Haloed with love and with wonder, in sheltered ways they trod,
Seers of sublime divination, keeping the truce of God.

4.

Who called us from youth and dreaming, and set ambition alight,
And made us fit for the contest, —men, by their tender rite?
Sweethearts above our merit, charming our strength and skill
To be the pride of their loving, to be the means of their will.
If we be the builders of beauty, if we be the masters of art,
Theirs were the gleaming ideals, theirs the uplift of the heart.
Truly they measure the lightness of trappings and ease and fame,

For the teeming desire of their yearning is ever and ever the same:
To crown their lovers with gladness, to clothe their sons with delight,
And see the men of their making lords in the best man's right.
Lavish of joy and labor, broken only by wrong,
These are the guardians of being, spirited, sentient and strong.
Theirs is the starry vision, theirs the inspiriting hope,
Since Night, the brooding enchantress, promised that day should ope.
5.

Lo, we have built and invented, reasoned, discovered and planned,
To rear us a palace of splendor, and make us a heaven by hand.
We are shaken with dark misgiving, as kingdoms rise and fall;
But the women who went to found them are never counted at all.
Versed in the soul's traditions, skilled in humanity's lore,
They wait for their crown of rapture, and weep for the sins of war.
And behold they turn from our triumphs, as it was in the first of days,
For a little heaven of ardor and a little heartening of praise.
These are the rulers of kingdoms beyond the domains of state,
Martyrs of all men's folly, over-rulers of fate.
These we will love and honor, these we will serve and defend,
Fulfilling the pride of nature, till nature shall have an end.

6.
This is the code unwritten, this is the creed we hold,
Guarding the little and lonely, gladdening the helpless and old,—
Apart from the brunt of the battle our wondrous women shall bide,
For the sake of a tranquil wisdom and the need of a spirit's guide.
Come they into assembly, or keep they another door,
Our makers of life shall lighten the days as the years of yore.
The lure of their laughter shall lead us, the lilt of their words shall sway.
Though life and death should defeat us, their solace shall be our stay.
Veiled in mysterious beauty, vested in magical grace,
They have walked with angels at twilight and looked upon glory's face.
Life we will give for their safety, care for their fruitful ease,
Though we break at the toiling benches or go down in the smoky seas.
This is the gospel appointed to govern a world of men,
Till love has died, and the echoes have whispered the last Amen.

Bliss William Carman

The God Of The Wood

HERE all the forces of the wood
As one converge,
To make the soul of solitude
Where all things merge.
The sun, the rain-wind, and the rain,
The visiting moon,
The hurrying cloud by peak and plain,
Each with its boon.
Here power attains perfection still
In mighty ease,
That the great earth may have her will
Of joy and peace.
And so through me, the mortal born
Of plasmic clay,
Immortal powers, kind, fierce, forlorn,
And glad, have sway.
Eternal passions, ardors fine,
And monstrous fears,
Rule and rebel, serene, malign,
Or loosed in tears;
Until at last they shall evolve
From griefs and joys
Some steady light, some firm resolve,
Some Godlike poise.

Bliss William Carman

The Gravedigger

OH, the shambling sea is a sexton old,
And well his work is done.
With an equal grave for lord and knave,
He buries them every one.

Then hoy and rip, with a rolling hip,
He makes for the nearest shore;
And God, who sent him a thousand ship,
Will send him a thousand more;
But some he'll save for a bleaching grave,
And shoulder them in to shore,—
Shoulder them in, shoulder them in,
Shoulder them in to shore.

Oh, the ships of Greece and the ships of Tyre
Went out, and where are they?
In the port they made, they are delayed
With the ships of yesterday.

He followed the ships of England far,
As the ships of long ago;
And the ships of France they led him a dance,
But he laid them all arow.

Oh, a loafing, idle lubber to him
Is the sexton of the town;
For sure and swift, with a guiding lift,
He shovels the dead men down.

But though he delves so fierce and grim,
His honest graves are wide,
As well they know who sleep below
The dredge of the deepest tide.

Oh, he works with a rollicking stave at lip,
And loud is the chorus skirled;
With the burly rote of his rumbling throat
He batters it down the world.

He learned it once in his father's house,
Where the ballads of eld were sung;
And merry enough is the burden rough,
But no man knows the tongue.

Oh, fair, they say, was his bride to see,
And wilful she must have been,
That she could bide at his gruesome side
When the first red dawn came in.

And sweet, they say, is her kiss to those
She greets to his border home;
And softer than sleep her hand's first sweep
That beckons, and they come.

Oh, crooked is he, but strong enough
To handle the tallest mast;
From the royal barque to the slaver dark,
He buries them all at last.

Then hoy and rip, with a rolling hip,
He makes for the nearest shore;
And God, who sent him a thousand ship,
Will send him a thousand more;
But some he'll save for a bleaching grave,
And shoulder them in to shore,—
Shoulder them in, shoulder them in,
Shoulder them in to shore

Bliss William Carman

The Grave-Tree

LET me have a scarlet maple
For the grave-tree at my head,
With the quiet sun behind it,
In the years when I am dead.

Let me have it for a signal,
Where the long winds stream and stream,
Clear across the dim blue distance,
Like at horn blown in at dream;

Scarlet when the April vanguard
Bugles up the laggard Spring,
Scarlet when the bannered Autumn
Marches by unwavering.

It will comfort me with honey
When the shining rifts and showers
Sweep across the purple valley
And bring back the forest flowers.

It will be my leafy cabin,
Large enough when June returns
And I hear the golden thrushes
Flute and hesitate by turns.

And in fall, some yellow morning,
When the stealthy frost has come,
Leaf by leaf it will befriend me
As with comrades going home.

Let me have the Silent Valley
And the hill that fronts the east,
So that I can watch the morning
Redden and the stars released.

Leave me in the Great Lone Country,
For I shall not be afraid
With the shy moose and the beaver
There within my scarlet shade.

I would sleep, but not too soundly,
Where the sunning partridge drums,
Till the crickets hush before him
When the Scarlet Hunter comes.

That will be in warm September,
In the stillness of the year,
When the river-blue is deepest
And the other world is near.

When the apples burn their reddest
And the corn is in the sheaves,
I shall stir and waken lightly
At a footfall in the leaves.

It will be the Scarlet Hunter
Come to tell me time is done;
On the idle hills for ever
There will stand the idle sun.

There the wind will stay to whisper
Many wonders to the reeds;
But I shall not fear to follow
Where my Scarlet Hunter leads.

I shall know him in the darkling
Murmur of the river bars,
While his feet are on the mountains
Treading out the smouldering stars.

I shall know him, in the sunshine
Sleeping in my scarlet tree,
Long before he halts beside it
Stooping down to summon me.

Then fear not, my friends, to leave me
In the boding autumn vast;
There are many things to think of
When the roving days are past.

Leave me by the scarlet maple,

When the journeying shadows fail,
Waiting till the Scarlet Hunter
Pass upon the endless trail.

Bliss William Carman

The Heart Of Night

When all the stars are sown
Across the night-blue space,
With the immense unknown,
In silence face to face.
We stand in speechless awe
While Beauty marches by,
And wonder at the Law
Which wears such majesty.
How small a thing is man
In all that world-sown vast,
That he should hope or plan
Or dream his dream could last!

O doubter of the light,
Confused by fear and wrong,
Lean on the heart of night
And let love make thee strong!

The Good that is the True
Is clothed with Beauty still.
Lo, in their tent of blue,
The stars above the hill!

Bliss William Carman

The Homestead

HERE we came when love was young.
Now that love is old,
Shall we leave the floor unswept
And the hearth acold?
Here the hill-wind in the dusk,
Wandering to and fro,
Moves the moonflowers, like a ghost
Of the long ago.
Here from every doorway looks
A remembered face,
Every sill and panel wears
A familiar grace.
Let the windows smile again
To the morning light,
And the door stand open wide
When the moon is bright.
Let the breeze of twilight blow
Through the silent hall,
And the dreaming rafters hear
How the thrushes call.
Oh, be merciful and fond
To the house that gave
All its best to shelter love,
Built when love was brave!
Here we came when love was young.
Now that love is old,
Never let its day be lone,
Nor its heart acold!

Bliss William Carman

The Joys Of The Road

NOW the joys of the road are chiefly these:
A crimson touch on the hard-wood trees;

A vagrant's morning wide and blue,
In early fall, when the wind walks too;

A shadowy highway cool and brown,
Alluring up and enticing down

From rippled water to dappled swamp,
From purple glory to scarlet pomp;

The outward eye, the quiet will,
And the striding heart from hill to hill;

The tempter apple over the fence;
The cobweb bloom on the yellow quince;

The palish asters along the wood,-
A lyric touch of solitude;

An open hand, an easy shoe,
And a hope to make the day go through,-

Another to sleep with, and a third
To wake me up at the voice of a bird;

A scrap of gossip at the ferry;
A comrade neither glum nor merry,

Who never defers and never demands,
But, smiling, takes the world in his hands,-

Seeing it good as when God first saw
And gave it the weight of his will for law.

And oh, the joy that is never won,
But follows and follows the journeying sun,

By marsh and tide, by meadow and stream,
A will-o'-the-wind, a light-o'-dream,

The racy smell of the forest loam,
When the stealthy sad-heart leaves go home;

The broad gold wake of the afternoon;
The silent fleck of the cold new moon;

The sound of the hollow sea's release
From stormy tumult to starry peace;

With only another league to wend;
And two brown arms at the journey's end!

These are the joys of the open road-
For him who travels without a load.

Bliss William Carman

The Last Room

THERE, close the door!
I shall not need these lodgings any more.
Now that I go, dismantled wall and floor
Reproach me and deplore.

'How well,' they say,
'And silently we served you day by day,—
Took every mood, as you were sad or gay
In that strange mortal way.'

These patient walls
Seem half to know what suffering befalls
The steadfast soul whom destiny appalls
And circumstance enthralls.

A solitude,
Dim as an orchard, quiet as a wood;
My six mute friends who stolidly withstood
Tempest and turmoil rude;

One door, wherethrough
Came human love in little gown and shoe;
One window, where great Nature robed in blue
Smiled benediction too;

And one hearthstone,
The kind primeval fire-god made his own,—
Bringing us back the wood life we had known,
With lighted log and cone.

Here life was spent
To glorify one mortal tenement,
Where freedom turned the key on discontent
And bade the world relent.

Great friendship here
Turned falsehood out of doors without a fear,
And brought the golden age of dreamers near
For one all too brief year.

Good friends, good-bye!
The soul is but a child; hear its poor cry,
'Remember in what lovers' tenancy
We lived here, she and I!'

Will you forget
Spilt fragrances of rose and cigarette,
And those faint odours more delirious yet,
Marked in Time's margin, Stet?

Will you not hold
Some echo of bright laughter uncontrolled,
As water bubbling out of jugs of gold,
Until the world is old?

With one farewell
I leave you now, with not a word to tell
Where comedy and moonshine used to dwell
Within a brick-built cell.

In days to be
Others shall laugh here, roister and make free,
Be bold or gay,—but no such comedy
As blessed this life for me.

In nights to come
Others shall dream here, radiant or glum,
Pondering the book God gives us each to thumb,—
Our page to solve and sum,—

But nevermore
Such moonshine as would tread this square of floor,
And for love's sake illumine and explore
The dark at sorrow's core.

'The sad Pierrot
Lived here and loved,'—how will the story go?—
'Caught rapture from the moment's zest or woe,
One winter long ago.

'Here did Pierrette

Throw dice with destiny to pay love's debt,
Gay, kind, and fearless, without one regret
When the last stake was set.'

Peace, peace, fair room,—
My peace be with them still, through shine and gloom,
Who here may sojourn, ere they too resume
This search for house and home.

Now, to explore!
The impatient wind is in the corridor;
Fate lays a finger on my sleeve once more;
And I must close this door.

Bliss William Carman

The Mendicants

We are as mendicants who wait
Along the roadside in the sun.
Tatters of yesterday and shreds
Of morrow clothe us every one.

And some are dotards, who believe
And glory in the days of old;
While some are dreamers, harping still
Upon an unknown age of gold.

Hopeless or witless! Not one heeds,
As lavish Time comes down the way
And tosses in the suppliant hat
One great new-minted gold To-day.

Ungrateful heart and grudging thanks,
His beggar's wisdom only sees
Housing and bread and beer enough;
He knows no other things than these.

O foolish ones, put by your care!
Where wants are many, joys are few;
And at the wilding springs of peace,
God keeps an open house for you.

But that some Fortunatus' gift
Is lying there within his hand,
More costly than a pot of pearls,
His dullness does not understand.

And so his creature heart is filled;
His shrunken self goes starved away.
Let him wear brand-new garments still,
Who has a threadbare soul, I say.

But there be others, happier few,
The vagabondish sons of God,
Who know the by-ways and the flowers,
And care not how the world may plod.

They idle down the traffic lands,
And loiter through the woods with spring;
To them the glory of the earth
Is but to hear a bluebird sing.

They too receive each one his Day;
But their wise heart knows many things
Beyond the sating of desire,
Above the dignity of kings.

One I remember kept his coin,
And laughing flipped it in the air;
But when two strolling pipe-players
Came by, he tossed it to the pair.

Spendthrift of joy, his childish heart
Danced to their wild outlandish bars;
Then supperless he laid him down
That night, and slept beneath the stars.

Bliss William Carman

The Nancy's Pride

ON the long slow heave of a lazy sea,
To the flap of an idle sail,
The Nancy's Pride went out on the tide;
And the skipper stood by the rail.

All down, all down by the sleepy town,
With the hollyhocks a-row
In the little poppy gardens,
The sea had her in tow.

They let her slip by the breathing rip,
Where the bell is never still,
And over the sounding harbour bar,
And under the harbour hill.

She melted into the dreaming noon,
Out of the drowsy land,
In sight of a flag of goldy hair,
To the kiss of a girlish hand.

For the lass who hailed the lad who sailed,
Was —who but his April bride?
And of all the fleet of Grand Latite,
Her pride was the Nancy's Pride.

So the little vessel faded down
With her creaking boom a-swing,
Till a wind from the deep came up with a creep,
And caught her wing and wing.

She made for the lost horizon line,
Where the clouds a-castled lay,
While the boil and seethe of the open sea
Hung on her frothing way.

She lifted her hull like a breasting gull
Where the rolling valleys be,
And dipped where the shining porpoises
Put ploughshares through the sea.

A fading sail on the far sea-line,
About the turn of the tide,
As she made for the Banks on her maiden cruise
Was the last of the Nancy's Pride.

To-day a boy with goldy hair,
In a garden of Grand Latite,
From his mother's knee looks out to sea
For the coming of the fleet.

They all may home on a sleepy tide,
To the flap of the idle sail;
But it's never again the Nancy's Pride
That answers a human hail.

They all may home on a sleepy tide
To the sag of an idle sheet;
But it's never again the Nancy's Pride
That draws men down the street.

On the Banks to-night a fearsome sight
The fishermen behold,
Keeping the ghost-watch in the moon
When the small hours are cold.

When the light wind veers, and the white fog clears,
They see by the after rail
An unknown schooner creeping up
With mildewed spar and sail.

Her crew lean forth by the rotting shrouds,
With the Judgment in their face;
And to their mates' 'God save you!'
Have never a word of grace.

Then into the gray they sheer away,
On the awful polar tide;
And the sailors know they have seen the wraith
Of the missing Nancy's Pride.

The Old Gray Wall

Time out of mind I have stood
Fronting the frost and the sun,
That the dream of the world might endure,
And the goodly will be done.

Did the hand of the builder guess,
As he laid me stone by stone,
A heart in the granite lurked,
Patient and fond as his own?

Lovers have leaned on me
Under the summer moon,
And mowers laughed in my shade
In the harvest heat at noon.

Children roving the fields
With early flowers in spring,
Old men turning to look,
When they heard a blue-bird sing,

Have seen me a thousand times
Standing here in the sun,

Yet never a moment dreamed

Whose likeness they gazed upon.

Ah, when will ye understand,

Mortals who strive and plod,—

Who rests on this old gray wall

Lays a hand on the shoulder of God!

Bliss William Carman

The Queen Of Night

MORTAL, mortal, have you seen
In the scented summer night,
Great Astarte, clad in green
With a veil of mystic light,
Passing on her silent way,
Pale and lovelier than day?
Mortal, mortal, have you heard,
On an odorous summer eve,
Rumors of an unknown word
Bidding sorrow not to grieve,—
Echoes of a silver voice
Bidding every heart rejoice?
Mortal, when the slim new moon
Hangs above the western hill,
When the year comes round to June
And the leafy world is still,
Then, enraptured, you shall hear
Secrets for a poet's ear.
Mortal, mortal, come with me,
When the moon is rising large,
Through the wood or from the sea,
Or by some lone river marge.
There, entranced, you shall behold
Beauty's self, that grows not old.

Bliss William Carman

The Rainbird

I HEAR a rainbird singing
Far off. How fine and clear
His plaintive voice comes ringing
With rapture to the ear!
Over the misty wood-lots,
Across the first spring heat,
Comes the enchanted cadence,
So clear, so solemn-sweet.
How often I have hearkened
To that high pealing strain
Across wild cedar barrens,
Under the soft gray rain!
How often I have wondered,
And longed in vain to know
The source of that enchantment,
That touch of human woe!
O brother, who first taught thee
To haunt the teeming spring
With that sad mortal wisdom
Which only age can bring?

Bliss William Carman

The Redwing

I HEAR you, Brother, I hear you,
Down in the alder swamp,
Springing your woodland whistle
To herald the April pomp!
First of the moving vanguard,
In front of the spring you come,
Where flooded waters sparkle
And streams in the twilight hum.
You sound the note of the chorus
By meadow and woodland pond,
Till, one after one up-piping,
A myriad throats respond.
I see you, Brother, I see you,
With scarlet under your wing,
Flash through the ruddy maples,
Leading the pageant of spring.
Earth has put off her raiment
Wintry and worn and old,
For the robe of a fair young sibyl,
Dancing in green and gold.
I heed you, Brother. To-morrow
I, too, in the great employ,
Will shed my old coat of sorrow
For a brand-new garment of joy.

Bliss William Carman

The Sending Of The Magi

IN a far Eastern country
It happened long of yore,
Where a lone and level sunrise
Flushes the desert floor,
That three kings sat together
And a spearman kept the door.
Gaspar, whose wealth was counted
By city and caravan;
With Melchior, the seer
Who read the starry plan;
And Balthasar, the blameless,
Who loved his fellow man.
There while they talked, a sudden
Strange rushing sound arose,
And as with startled faces
They thought upon their foes,
Three figures stood before them
In imperial repose.
One in flame-gold and one in blue
And one in scarlet clear,
With the almighty portent
Of sunrise they drew near!
And the kings made obeisance
With hand on breast, in fear.
'Arise,' said they, 'we bring you
Good tidings of great peace!
To-day a power is wakened
Whose working must increase,
Till fear and greed and malice
And violence shall cease.'
The messengers were Michael,
By whom all things are wrought
To shape and hue; and Gabriel
Who is the lord of thought;
And Rafael without whose love
All toil must come to nought.
Then Rafael said to Balthasar,
'In a country west from here
A lord is born in lowliness,

In love without a peer.
Take grievances and gifts to him
And prove his kingship clear!
'By this sign ye shall know him;
Within his mother's arm
Among the sweet-breathed cattle
He slumbers without harm,
While wicked hearts are troubled
And tyrants take alarm.'
And Gabriel said to Melchior,
'My comrade, I will send
My star to go before you,
That ye may comprehend
Where leads your mystic learning
In a humaner trend.'
And Michael said to Gaspar,
'Thou royal builder, go
With tribute of thy riches!
Though time shall overthrow
Thy kingdom, no undoing
His gentle might shall know.'
Then while the kings' hearts greatened
And all the chamber shone,
As when the hills at sundown
Take a new glory on
And the air thrills with purple,
Their visitors were gone.
Then straightway up rose Gaspar,
Melchior and Balthasar,
And passed out through the murmur
Of palace and bazar,
To make without misgiving
The journey of the Star.

Bliss William Carman

The Ships Of Saint John

Where are the ships I used to know,
That came to port on the Fundy tide
Half a century ago,
In beauty and stately pride?
In they would come past the beacon light,
With the sun on gleaming sail and spar,
Folding their wings like birds in flight
From countries strange and far.
Schooner and brig and barkentine,
I watched them slow as the sails were furled,
And wondered what cities they must have seen
On the other side of the world.

Frenchman and Britisher and Dane,
Yankee, Spaniard and Portugee,
And many a home ship back again
With her stories of the sea.

Calm and victorious, at rest
From the relentless, rough sea-play,
The wild duck on the river's breast
Was not more sure than they.

The creatures of a passing race,
The dark spruce forests made them strong,
The sea's lore gave them magic grace,
The great winds taught them song.

And God endowed them each with life-
His blessing on the craftsman's skill-
To meet the blind unreasoned strife
And dare the risk of ill.

Not mere insensate wood and paint
Obedient to the helm's command,
But often restive as a saint
Beneath the Heavenly hand.

All the beauty and mystery

Of life were there, adventure bold,
Youth, and the glamour of the sea
And all its sorrows old.

And many a time I saw them go
Out on the flood at morning brave,
As the little tugs had them in tow,
And the sunlight danced on the wave.

There all day long you could hear the sound
Of the caulking iron, the ship's bronze bell,
And the clank of the capstan going round
As the great tides rose and fell.

The sailors' songs, the Captain's shout,
The boatswain's whistle piping shrill,
And the roar as the anchor chain runs out,-
I often hear them still.

I can see them still, the sun on their gear,
The shining streak as the hulls careen,
And the flag at the peak unfurling,- clear
As a picture on a screen.

The fog still hangs on the long tide-rips,
The gulls go wavering to and fro,
But where are all the beautiful ships
I knew so long ago?

Bliss William Carman

The Ships Of Yule

When I was just a little boy,
Before I went to school,
I had a fleet of forty sail
I called the Ships of Yule;
Of every rig, from rakish brig
And gallant barkentine,
To little Fundy fishing boats
With gunwales painted green.
They used to go on trading trips
Around the world for me,
For though I had to stay on shore
My heart was on the sea.

They stopped at every port to call
From Babylon to Rome,
To load with all the lovely things
We never had at home;

With elephants and ivory
Bought from the King of Tyre,
And shells and silks and sandal-wood
That sailor men admire;

With figs and dates from Samarcand,
And squatty ginger-jars,
And scented silver amulets
From Indian bazaars;

With sugar-cane from Port of Spain,
And monkeys from Ceylon,
And paper lanterns from Pekin
With painted dragons on;

With cocoanuts from Zanzibar,
And pines from Singapore;
And when they had unloaded these
They could go back for more.

And even after I was big

And had to go to school,
My mind was often far away
Aboard the Ships of Yule.

Bliss William Carman

The Sleepers

THE tall carnations crown the garden walks
Bowed on their stalks.

Said Jock-a-dreams to John-a-nods,
'What are the odds
That we shall wake up here within the sun,
When time is done,
And pick up all the treasures one by one
Our hands let fall in sleep?' 'You have begun
To mutter in your dreams,'
Said John-a-nods to Jock-a-dreams,
And they both slept again.

The tall carnations in the sunset glow
Burned row on row.

Said John-a-nods to Jock-a-dreams,
'To me it seems
A thousand years since last you stirred and spoke,
And I awoke.
Was that the wind then trying to provoke
His brothers in their blessed sleep?' 'They choke,
Who mutter in their nods,'
Said Jock-a-dreams to John-a-nods.
And they both slept again.

The tall carnations only heard a sigh
Of dusk go by.

Bliss William Carman

The Soul Of April

OVER the wintry threshold
Who comes with joy to-day,
So frail, yet so enduring,
To triumph o'er dismay?
Ah, quick her tears are springing,
And quickly they are dried,
For sorrow walks before her,
But gladness walks beside.
She comes with gusts of laughter,—
The music as of rills;
With tenderness-and sweetness, —
The wisdom of the hills.
Her hands are strong to comfort,
Her heart is quick to heed.
She knows the signs of sadness,
She knows the voice of need.
There is no living creature,
However poor or small,
But she will know its trouble,
And hasten to its call.
Oh, well they fare forever,
By mighty dreams possessed,
Whose hearts have lain a moment
On that eternal breast.

Bliss William Carman

The Unreturning

The old eternal spring once more
Comes back the sad eternal way,
With tender rosy light before
The going-out of day.

The great white moon across my door
A shadow in the twilight stirs;
But now forever comes no more
That wondrous look of Hers.

Bliss William Carman

The Vagabonds

We are the vagabonds of time,
And rove the yellow autumn days,
When all the roads are gray with rime
And all the valleys blue with haze.
We came unlooked for as the wind
Trooping across the April hills,
When the brown waking earth had dreams
Of summer in the Wander Kills.
How far afield we joyed to fare,
With June in every blade and tree!
Now with the sea-wind in our hair
We turn our faces to the sea.

We go unheeded as the stream
That wanders by the hill-wood side,
Till the great marshes take his hand
And lead him to the roving tide.

The roving tide, the sleeping hills,
These are the borders of that zone

Where they may fare as fancy wills

Whom wisdom smiles and calls her own.

It is a country of the sun,

Full of forgotten yesterdays,

When Time takes Summer in his care,

And fills the distance of her gaze.

It stretches from the open sea

To the blue mountains and beyond;

The world is Vagabondia

To him who is a vagabond.

In the beginning God made man

Out of the wandering dust, men say;

And in the end his life shall be

A wandering wind and blown away.

We are the vagabonds of time,

Willing to let the world go by,

With joy supreme, with heart sublime,

And valor in the kindling eye.

We have forgotten where we slept,

And guess not where we sleep to-night,

Whether among the lonely hills

In the pale streamers' ghostly light

We shall lie down and hear the frost

Walk in the dead leaves restlessly,

Or somewhere on the iron coast

Learn the oblivion of the sea.

It matters not. And yet I dream

Of dreams fulfilled and rest somewhere

Before this restless heart is stilled

And all its fancies blown to air.

Had I my will! . . . The sun burns down

And something plucks my garment's hem:

The robins in their faded brown

Would lure me to the south with them.

'Tis time for vagabonds to make

The nearest inn. Far on I hear

The voices of the Northern hills

Gather the vagrants of the year.

Brave heart, my soul! Let longings be!

We have another day to wend.

For dark or waylay what care we

Who have the lords of time to friend?

And if we tarry or make haste,

The wayside sleep can hold no fear.

Shall fate unpoise, or whim perturb,

The calm-begirt in dawn austere?

There is a tavern, I have heard,

Not far, and frugal, kept by One

Who knows the children of the Word,

And welcomes each when day is done.

Some say the house is lonely set
In Northern night, and snowdrifts keep
The silent door; the hearth is cold,
And all my fellows gone to sleep....

Had I my will! I hear the sea
Thunder a welcome on the shore;
I know where lies the hostelry
And who should open me the door.

Bliss William Carman

The Weed's Counsel

SAID a traveller by the way
Pausing, 'What hast thou to say,
Flower by the dusty road,
That would ease a mortal's load?'
Traveller, hearken unto me!
I will tell thee how to see
Beauties in the earth and sky
Hidden from the careless eye.
I will tell thee how to hear
Nature's music wild and clear,—
Songs of midday and of dark
Such as many never mark,
Lyrics of creation sung
Ever since the world was young.
And thereafter thou shalt know
Neither weariness nor woe.
Thou shalt see the dawn unfold
Artistries of rose and gold,
And the sunbeams on the sea
Dancing with the wind for glee.
The red lilies of the moors
Shall be torches on the floors,
Where the field-lark lifts his cry
To rejoice the passer-by,
In a wide world rimmed with blue
Lovely as when time was new.
And thereafter thou shalt fare
Light of foot and free from care.
I will teach thee how to find
Lost enchantments of the mind
All about thee, never guessed
By indifferent unrest.
Thy distracted thought shall learn
Patience from the roadside fern,
And a sweet philosophy
From the flowering locust tree, —
While thy heart shall not disdain
The consolation of the rain.
Not an acre but shall give

Of its strength to help thee live.
With the many-wintered sun
Shall thy hardy course be run.
And the bright new moon shall be
A lamp to thy felicity.
When green-mantled spring shall come
Past thy door with flute and drum,
And when over wood and swamp
Autumn trails her scarlet pomp,
No misgiving shalt thou know,
Passing glad to rise and go.
So thy days shall be unrolled
Like a wondrous cloth of gold.
When gray twilight with her star
Makes a heaven that is not far,
Touched with shadows and with dreams,
Thou shalt hear the woodland streams
Singing through the starry night
Holy anthems of delight.
So the ecstasy of earth
Shall refresh thee as at birth,
And thou shalt arise each morn
Radiant with a soul reborn.
And this wisdom of a day
None shall ever take away.
What the secret, what the clew
The wayfarer must pursue?
Only one thing he must have
Who would share these transports brave.
Love within his heart must dwell
Like a bubbling roadside well,
For a spring to quicken thought,
Else my counsel comes to naught.
For without that quickening trust
We are less than roadside dust.
This, O traveller, is my creed, —
All the wisdom of the weed!
Then the traveller set his pack
Once more on his dusty back,
And trudged on for many a mile
Fronting fortune with a smile.

The Winter Scene

I

The rutted roads are all like iron; skies
Are keen and brilliant; only the oak-leaves cling
In the bare woods, or the hardy bitter-sweet
;
Drivers have put their sheepskin jackets on;
And all the ponds are sealed with sheeted ice
That rings with stroke of skate and hockey-stick
,
Or in the twilight cracks with running whoop.
Bring in the logs of oak and hickory,
And make an ample blaze on the wide hearth.
Now is the time, with winter o'er the world,
For books and friends and yellow candle-light
,
And timeless lingering by the settling fire.

While all the shuddering stars are keen with cold.

II

Out from the silent portal of the hours,
When frosts are come and all the hosts put on.
Their burnished gear to march across the night
And o'er a darkened earth in splendor shine,
Slowly above the world Orion wheels
His glittering square, while on the shadowy hill
And throbbing like a sea-light through the dusk,
Great Sirius rises in his flashing blue.
Lord of the winter night, august and pure,
Returning year on year untouched by time,
To hearten faith with thine unfaltering fire,
There are no hurts that beauty cannot ease,
No ills that love cannot at last repair,
In the victorious progress of the soul.

III

Russet and white and gray is the oak wood
In the great snow. Still from the North it comes,
Whispering, settling, sifting through the trees,

O'erloading branch and twig. The road is lost.
Clearing and meadow, stream and ice-bound pond
Are made once more a trackless wilderness
In the white hush where not a creature stirs;
And the pale sun is blotted from the sky.
In that strange twilight the lone traveller halts
To listen to the stealthy snowflakes fall.
And then far off toward the Stamford shore,
Where through the storm the coastwise liners go,
Faint and recurrent on the muffled air,
A foghorn booming through the Smother-har
k!

IV

When the day changed and the mad wind died down,
The powdery drifts that all day long had blown
Across the meadows and the open fields,
Or whirled like diamond dust in the bright sun,
Settled to rest, and for a tranquil hour
The lengthening bluish shadows on the snow
Stole down the orchard slope, and a rose light
Flooded the earth with beauty and with peace.
Then in the west behind the cedars black
The sinking sun stained red the winter dusk
With sullen flare upon the snowy ridge,-
As in a masterpiece by Hokusai,
Where on a background gray, with flaming breath
A scarlet dragon dies in dusky gold.

Bliss William Carman

The World Voice

I HEARD the summer sea
Murmuring to the shore
Some endless story of a wrong
The whole world must deplore.
I heard the mountain wind
Conversing with the trees
Of an old sorrow of the hills,
Mysterious as the sea's.
And all that haunted day
It seemed that I could hear
The echo of an ancient speech
Ring in my listening ear.
And then it came to me,
That all that I had heard
Was my own heart in the sea's voice
And the wind's lonely word.

Bliss William Carman

Threnody For A Poet

Not in the ancient abbey,
Nor in the city ground,
Not in the lonely mountains,
Nor in the blue profound,
Lay him to rest when his time is come
And the smiling mortal lips are dumb;

But here in the decent quiet
Under the whispering pines,
Where the dogwood breaks in blossom
And the peaceful sunlight shines,
Where wild birds sing and ferns unfold,
When spring comes back in her green and gold.

And when that mortal likeness
Has been dissolved by fire,
Say not above the ashes,
'Here ends a man's desire.'
For every year when the bluebirds sing,
He shall be part of the lyric spring.

Then dreamful-hearted lovers
Shall hear in wind and rain
The cadence of his music,
The rhythm of his refrain,
For he was a blade of the April sod
That bowed and blew with the whisper of God.

Bliss William Carman

To Rudyard Kipling

What need have you of praising? Could I find
Some lonely poet no one praises yet,
Him rather would I choose, that he might know
A fellow-craftsman knew him, marked him, loved.
But you — the whole world praises you. What need
Have you of any speech I have to give?
Yet for the craft's sake I must give you praise;
And for the craft's sake you will pardon me.
But I would rather meet you face to face
And talk of other and indifferent things,
And say no word of all that I would say,
Praise and thanksgiving for your splendid song,
Praise and the pride of the empires of the Blood —
But leave you, silent, as we English do —
And you would know — and you would understand.

Bliss William Carman

Trees

IN the Garden of Eden, planted by God,
There were goodly trees in the springing sod,—
Trees of beauty and height and grace,
To stand in splendor before His face.
Apple and hickory, ash and pear,
Oak and beech and the tulip rare,
The trembling aspen, the noble pine,
The sweeping elm by the river line;
Trees for the birds to build and sing,
And the lilac tree for a joy in spring;
Trees to turn at the frosty call
And carpet the ground for their Lord's footfall;
Trees for fruitage and fire and shade,
Trees for the cunning builder's trade;
Wood for the bow, the spear, and the flail,
The keel and the mast of the daring sail;
He made them of every grain and girth
For the use of man in the Garden of Earth.
Then lest the soul should not lift her eyes
From the gift to the Giver of Paradise,
On the crown of a hill, for all to see,
God planted a scarlet maple tree.

Bliss William Carman

Under The April Moon

OH, well the world is dreaming
Under the April moon,
Her soul in love with beauty,
Her senses all a-swoon!
Pure hangs the silver crescent
Above the twilight wood,
And pure the silver music
Wakes from the marshy flood.
O Earth, with all thy transport,
How comes it life should seem
A shadow in the moonlight,
A murmur in a dream?

Bliss William Carman

Veni Creator

I

LORD of the grass and hill,
Lord of the rain,
White Overlord of will,
Master of pain,

I who am dust and air
Blown through the halls of death,
Like a pale ghost of prayer,—
I am thy breath.

Lord of the blade and leaf,
Lord of the bloom,
Sheer Overlord of grief,
Master of doom,

Lonely as wind or snow,
Through the vague world and dim,
Vagrant and glad I go;
I am thy whim.

Lord of the storm and lull,
Lord of the sea,
I am thy broken gull,
Blown far alee.

Lord of the harvest dew,
Lord of the dawn,
Star of the paling blue
Darkling and gone,

Lost on the mountain height
Where the first winds are stirred,
Out of the wells of night
I am thy word.

Lord of the haunted hush,
Where raptures throng,

I am thy hermit thrush,
Ending no song.

Lord of the frost and cold,
Lord of the North,
When the red sun grows old
And day goes forth,

I shall put off this girth,—
Go glad and free,
Earth to my mother earth,
Spirit to thee.

II

Lord of my heart's elation,
Spirit of things unseen,
Be thou my aspiration
Consuming and serene!

Bear up, bear out, bear onward
This mortal soul alone,
To selfhood or oblivion,
Incredibly thine own,—

As the foamheads are loosened
And blown along the sea,
Or sink and merge forever
In that which bids them be.

I, too, must climb in wonder,
Uplift at thy command,—
Be one with my frail fellows
Beneath the wind's strong hand,

A fleet and shadowy column
Of dust or mountain rain,
To walk the earth a moment
And be dissolved again.

Be thou my exaltation
Or fortitude of mien,

Lord of the world's elation
Thou breath of things unseen!

Bliss William Carman

Weather Of The Soul

THERE is a world of being
We range from pole to pole,
Through seasons of the spirit
And weather of the soul.
It has its new-born Aprils,
With gladness in the air,
Its golden Junes of rapture,
Its winters of despair.
And in its tranquil autumns
We halt to re-enforce
Our tattered scarlet pennons
With valor and resource.
From undiscovered regions
Only the angels know,
Great winds of aspiration
Perpetually blow,
To free the sap of impulse
From torpor of distrust,
And into flowers of joyance
Quicken the sentient dust.
From nowhere of a sudden
Loom sudden clouds of fault,
With thunders of oppression
And lightnings of revolt.
With hush of apprehension
And quaking of the heart,
There breed the storms of anger,
And floods of sorrow start.
And there shall fall,—how gently!—
To make them fertile yet,
The rain of absolution
On acres of regret.
Till snows of mercy cover
The dream that shall come true,
When time makes all things wondrous,
And life makes all things new.

Bliss William Carman

White Nassau

There is fog upon the river, there is mirk upon the town;
You can hear the groping ferries as they hoot each other down;
From the Battery to Harlem there's seven miles of slush,
Through looming granite canyons of glitter, noise, and rush.
Are you sick of phones and tickers and crazing cable gongs,
Of the theatres, the hansoms, and the breathless Broadway throngs,
Of Flouret's and the Waldorf and the chilly, drizzly Park,
When there's hardly any morning and five o'clock is dark?
I know where there's a city, whose streets are white and clean,
And sea-blue morning loiters by walls where roses lean,
And quiet dwells; that's Nassau, beside her creaming key,
The queen of the Lucayas in the blue Bahaman sea.

She's ringed with surf and coral, she's crowned with sun and palm;
She has the old-world leisure, the regal tropic calm;
The trade winds fan her forehead; in everlasting June
She reigns from deep verandas above her blue lagoon.

She has had many suitors,-Sp
aniard and Buccaneer,-

Who roistered for her beauty and spilt their blood for her;
But none has dared molest her, since the Loyalist Deveaux
Went down from Carolina a hundred years ago.

Unmodern, undistracted
, by grassy ramp and fort,
In decency and order she holds her modest court;
She seems to have forgotten rapine and greed and strife,
In that unaging gladness and dignity of life.

Through streets as smooth as asphalt and white as bleaching shell,
Where the slip-shod heel is happy and the naked foot goes well,
In their gaudy cotton kerchiefs, with swaying hips and free,
Go her black folk in the morning to the market of the sea.

Into her bright sea-gardens the flushing tide-gates lead,
Where fins of chrome and scarlet loll in the lifting weed;
With the long sea-draft behind them, through luring coral groves

The shiny water-people
go by in painted droves.

Under her old pink gateways, where Time a moment turns,
Where hang the orange lanterns and the red hibiscus burns,
Live the harmless merry lizards, quicksilver in the sun,
Or still as any image with their shadow on a stone.

Through the lemon-trees at leisure a tiny olive bird
Moves all day long and utters his wise assuring word;
While up in their blue chantry murmur the solemn palms.
At their litanies of joyance, their ancient ceaseless psalms.

There in the endless sunlight, within the surf's low sound,
Peace tarries for a lifetime at doorways unrenowned;
And a velvet air goes breathing across the sea-girt land,
Till the sense begins to waken and the soul to understand.

There's a pier in the East River, where a black Ward Liner lies,
With her wheezy donkey-engine
es taking cargo and supplies;
She will clear the Hook to-morrow for the Indies of the West,
For the lovely white girl city in the Islands of the Blest.

She'll front the riding winter on the gray Atlantic seas,
And thunder through the surf-heads till her funnels crust and freeze;
She'll grapple the Southeaster,
the Thing without a Mind,
Till she drops him, mad and monstrous, with the light ship far behind.

Then out into a morning all summer warmth and blue!
By the breathing of her pistons, by the purring of the screw,
By the springy dip and tremor as she rises, you can tell
Her heart is light and easy as she meets the lazy swell.

With the flying fish before her, and the white wake running aft,
Her smoke-wreath
hanging idle, without breeze enough for draft,
She will travel fair and steady, and in the afternoon
Run down the floating palm-tops where lift the Isles of June.

With the low boom of breakers for her only signal gun,

She will anchor off the harbor when her thousand miles are done,
And there's my love, white Nassau, girt with her foaming key,
The queen of the Lucayas in the blue Bahaman sea!

Bliss William Carman

Why

FOR a name unknown,
Whose fame unblown
Sleeps in the hills
For ever and aye;

For her who hears
The stir of the years
Go by on the wind
By night and day;

And heeds no thing
Of the needs of spring,
Of autumn's wonder
Or winter's chill;

For one who sees
The great sun freeze,
As he wanders a-cold
From hill to hill;

And all her heart
Is a woven part
Of the flurry and drift
Of whirling snow;

For the sake of two
Sad eyes and true,
And the old, old love
So long ago.

Bliss William Carman

Winter Streams

NOW the little rivers go
Muffled safely under snow,
And the winding meadow streams
Murmur in their wintry dreams,
While a tinkling music wells
Faintly from their icy bells,
Telling how their hearts are bold
Though the very sun be cold.
Ah, but wait until the rain
Comes a-sighing once again,
Sweeping softly from the Sound
Over ridge and meadow ground!
Then the little streams will hear
April calling far and near,—
Slip their snowy bands and run
Sparkling in the welcome sun.

Bliss William Carman

Winter Twilight

ALONG the wintry skyline,
Crowning the rocky crest,
Stands the bare screen of hardwood trees
Against the saffron west,—
Its gray and purple network
Of branching tracery
Outspread upon the lucent air,
Like weed within the sea.
The scarlet robe of autumn
Renounced and put away,
The mystic Earth is fairer still, —
A Puritan in gray.
The spirit of the winter,
How tender, how austere!
Yet all the ardor of the spring
And summer's dream are here.
Fear not, O timid lover,
The touch of frost and rime!
This is the virtue that sustained
The roses in their prime.
The anthem of the northwind
Shall hallow thy despair,
The benediction of the snow
Be answer to thy prayer.
And now the star of evening
That is the pilgrim's sign,
Is lighted in the primrose dusk, —
A lamp before a shrine.
Peace fills the mighty minster,
Tranquil and gray and old,
And all the chancel of the west
Is bright with paling gold.
A little wind goes sifting
Along the meadow floor,—
Like steps of lovely penitents
Who sighingly adore.
Then falls the twilight curtain,
And fades the eerie light,
And frost and silence turn the keys

In the great doors of night.

Bliss William Carman

Woodland Rain

SHINING, shining children
Of the summer rain,
Racing down the valley,
Sweeping o'er the plain!
Rushing through the forest,
Pelting on the leaves,
Drenching down the meadow
With its standing sheaves;
Robed in royal silver,
Girt with jewels gay,
With a gust of gladness
You pass upon your way.
Fresh, ah, fresh behind you,
Sunlit and impearled,
As it was in Eden,
Lies the lovely world!

Bliss William Carman