



Best friends for  
Nancy Price and  
a little fellow  
right hand  
← a series

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3rd shot  
taken in 7 square

London

Nancy Price

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I MAKE no pretension to write lyric or sonnet but a simple form of rhyme expression with a beat that is suggested to me by the throb of the train—the spade at work in the earth—heart-beats at night—the jingle of chatter—the jangle of things awry—the uneven floundering of the tortured, confused, restless, groping mind—hurdy-gurdy. These unmusical, uneven sounds have always haunted me. The handle stops, the sound ceases, the man grumbling and reluctant passes on but the sounds remain, unfinished yet lingering in the mind, hanging in the air like smoke. The jangle of sound has stamped itself into the brain. I can remember it from my earliest days, in the country, in the town, outside the quiet room, breaking a silence crowded with quiet ghosts. Then comes Hurdy-gurdy and I am back again, my feet on the earth, harassed, irritated perhaps, but back to that accepted normality which the world calls sanity.

Dr. Temple, the late Archbishop of Canterbury, said in the lecture which he delivered to the National Book Council: "That quality in the human soul which leads primitive man to be content sitting for hours under a tree beating a tomtom rhythmically exists somewhere deep in the sub-

consciousness of all of us, and there are some whose appreciation is strongest at that point. . . . And I think that the reason why poets resort to rhythm and rhyme is that in that way they hold the attention fast upon the object; and the rhythms and rhymes will be more elaborate as a rule when the subject is not qualified of itself to hold the attention very fast."

I have used the medium of rhyme for the value of its repetitive beat. There is something about rhyming that suggests to me the turning of a hurdy-gurdy, the continual beating of a drum, or the relentless ticking of a clock, sometimes a little toy drum and a cheap clock, but even so I find in the beat a certain force. I note with interest the Poet Laureate's use of rhyme for his latest poem, "The Land Workers." It seems to me this medium may strike the brain of the man in the street more forcibly than other methods.

The modern world is accustomed to jingle-jangle, though it finds time now and then to listen to a trumpet call, the clang of a bell, and still more occasionally it will pause to marvel with the poet at the wonder of a bird's wing, the birth of a flower, or listen to the murmur of the trees or the waters.

I believe my friends regard me as a cheerful optimist, but though I myself regard it as part

of man's duty to be of a cheerful countenance, that it is wiser to wear the motley than to drape oneself with crape, better to ride in the coach than the hearse. Yet who can dictate that thoughts shall be always garlanded with flowers? Rather they often crowd and jostle each other in strife and resentment: the poison of the asp of life bites deep.

## *HURDY-GURDY*

You will never forget  
My music, I bet!

Ha, ha, ha,

Ho, ho, ho!

I shall play as you go.

When you walk in the street  
To the rhythmical beat  
Of a myriad feet,

Ha, ha, ha,

Ho, ho, ho!

I shall play as you go.

A violet is sweet  
In its hidden retreat,  
A bluebell is good  
In the green quiet wood.  
But under a tree  
You'll be sure to find me.

Ha, ha, ha,

Ho, ho, ho!

I shall play as you go.

"The war drags along.  
Well, we're righting the wrong,  
But it's lasting so long!"

That's what you say,  
Day after day,

Ha, ha, ha,

Ho, ho, ho!

I know what I know.



Up and down, to and fro,  
Now it's your time to go;  
Though the room is so quiet  
Your heart beats a riot.  
And look at your nurse,  
She is driving a hearse.  
I'll be round the next corner  
To be your chief mourner.  
    Ha, ha, ha,  
    Ho, ho, ho!  
I shall play as you go.

And aloft I'll be there,  
Play a sweet, gentle air,  
What a pair,  
We'll be there!  
    Ha, ha, ha,  
    Ho, ho, ho!  
I shall play as you know.

\* \* \* \*

Well, wheeze on, old man,  
You have done all you can,  
Wheeze on while you wind  
And spasmodically grind.  
Turn, twist this way and that  
For the casual pence  
That won't send you hence.  
You have stayed on too late—  
You are now out of date!  
We have music to-day.  
Get away!

## TICK TACK

I HATE the clock,  
Tick tack tock.  
Time flies, you see,  
With you and me.  
It dins in my ear  
That the grave is near,  
Tick tack, tick tack.

Mabel and Lily, William and Jack,  
Shovel them in  
With virtues and sin,  
Tick tack, tick tack.  
Fly away, Jill,  
Come along, Jock.  
One comes, another goes,  
Tick tack tock.

Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor,  
Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief,  
Tick tack, tick tack.  
Every one of us into the sack,  
Tick tack, tick tack.  
It doesn't matter what you have got,  
Time goes on he takes the lot,  
Tick tack tock.

I'm alone with the clock.  
I may stop you or smash you,  
Tick tack tock.

But still I shall hear you,  
Tick tack tock.  
Days, months and years,  
Tick tack tock.  
Until I'm counted out,  
Tick tack tock.  
But no difference to you,  
Tick tack tock.

### TAKE A GUN

JOHNNY, take a gun—take a gun—take a gun,  
Killing's to be done—to be done—to be done,  
Never want to run—want to run—want to  
run,  
Finish with your fun—with your fun—with  
your fun.

Handle steel,—love the feel—death you'll deal,  
Pity, mercy crush.  
Remember they are mush.  
Thousands dead,  
Keep your head.  
Then you may  
Besides your pay  
Have a medal pinned—  
Hooray!

### DOLDRUMS

*Written in the train going to Liverpool on a wet day*

LONG snakes glide over the window pane,  
With little white heads all made by rain,  
While along we rush in the crowded train,  
Most of us mad or just barely sane.  
Why do you come and why do we go?  
That's the question we ask but none of us know.  
Some build a fine dug-out and others a spire,  
Some ride the high seas, some stay by the fire,  
Some shiver with nothing, some pant and  
perspire,  
They nestle in cushions, eat, sleep and desire.  
They wobble and gobble,  
They nobble and cobble.  
Others fuddle and huddle,  
Cuddle and muddle,  
And splash in a puddle.  
Some full of sobs,  
Others messing with jobs,  
Till full of their fears  
They are cut by life's shears.  
What does it matter, for better, for worse,  
Before very long we all ride in a hearse.  
We question, we puzzle, but what do we learn  
There is little or nothing we'll ever discern  
More than you little snakes.  
Still we love and we hate, we pull down and  
set up;

We think quite a lot;  
We eat, sleep and rot.  
You rush down the pane, we rush to the town,  
You dissolve as you must,  
We go back to the dust.  
Little vaporish nothings, how quickly you go.  
We fret about trifles and pass to and fro,  
While life's juice is oozing swiftly away  
We press to the end of our futile day.  
Over the windows of life we run,  
With plenty of tears and not very much fun.  
There's nothing so different in what we do,  
Poor mutts like us and snakes like you.

## THE HARVEST MOON

*"Don't disturb her, Nurse. It won't be long now.  
The Harvest Moon will about see the end."*

THE Harvest Moon  
So soon?

The years rush by  
And soon I'll die,  
And then I'll lie  
Remembering no beauty.  
Why?

Under the sod  
Shall I know God,  
When cold and still  
The worm I'll fill?  
The glory of earth,  
The sound of the surf,  
The sun, the moon,  
May, April, June  
Will pass o'er my head;  
I shall be dead.

The Harvest Moon!  
Too soon. Too soon.



## RÉVEILLE

SHE is rolling up her knitting—  
The fire is dying down.  
There's one more dose in the medicine bottle.  
"No more need be ordered"—  
That's what the doctor said.  
They thought I was asleep—  
"No more need be ordered".  
I won't die, I won't die, I won't die.  
See! I am out of bed—standing.  
I am walking out of the room—I am well—no pain.  
Out of the house again.  
They are calling,  
I won't answer,  
I won't look back.  
It has been raining, I can smell the earth—  
All the growing things,  
The birds are just waking up,  
I can walk again—  
Anywhere—  
Everywhere—  
I am in the Sussex woods in spring—primroses;  
I am in the lane where the white violets grow.  
There is a nest in the hedge.  
I am power,  
Achievement,  
Happiness,  
Goodness,  
I shall never tire,  
I shall live—live—live.  
*At the telephone: "Yes, she died early this morning".*

## HE RAN AHEAD

THEY: What a marvellous picture of your little  
dog; looks as if he were alive.  
What expectancy, how alert! . . .  
What intelligence! What a lovely coat!  
His eyes seem to speak!

HE: Tell your plan  
If I can  
In my span  
That I'll do  
For you.

Over the hills and far away  
Wonderful things we'll do to-day.  
Wonderful things if you say I may.  
You that I worship all my stay  
In this grand world you order and sway.  
None but must bend to your "yea" and  
"nay".  
Whatever you wish, wherever you send—  
That is also my will, oh! wonderful  
friend.

THEY: We should so like to see the little dog's  
grave: do show it to us.

MYSELF: Here's the mound.  
With no sound  
I can't weep  
Or find sleep.  
He is dead  
As I've said.  
Deep below  
Under snow.  
I am here  
With the pain—  
Who's to blame?

Fifteen years!  
It appears  
But a day.  
They all say  
I must pay.

And you lie  
Where no sigh  
Can come nigh.  
You are dead  
As they said.  
You can't paw  
Your way out.  
You are dead  
Without doubt.

No more your gay shout  
Or your feet flying by.

You lie still in your place,  
You have finished your race,  
My gay little friend,  
You have come to the end.

You ran on,  
Sun has gone.  
Valiant heart,  
You've the start  
For the land that none know  
And fear as they go.  
Shall we meet,  
Can you beat  
A fine gallant retreat  
And corruption yet cheat?

No; you're dead don't you see,  
And that cannot be!  
I shall grieve  
And receive  
The world's stare  
With an air  
That men call debonair:  
"She don't care!"

They can't know  
How I go  
To and fro  
With a heart

That's all smart.  
Little friend,  
I shall grieve  
To the end.

If I thought  
His soul caught  
By the sun  
For some fun;  
That the moon's  
Silver shoon  
Led him on . . .  
If I felt  
That he'd gone  
To a land  
That was grand;  
Then I'd go  
To my end  
Without comrade or friend,  
Without fear or a tear,  
To the hive  
Where men strive  
For their place  
In the race,  
Knowing he  
To be  
Free!

THEY: But he's dead—  
As you said.

## *I LIE AWAKE*

O YE images of mind,  
Why unkind—  
Why shock—  
Why mock!  
They say I was fair,  
Debonair—  
Let my mind yet ensnare  
Things that are fair.

This black night of December  
I would but remember  
The bliss—  
Not hiss—  
Of the world.

Please, Mind,  
Be kind—  
Give me—  
To see—  
To-night—  
Bright lights—  
Brave sights.

The ripening of rye,  
Not the swatting a fly,  
A bird's breast,  
A dog's eye,  
Swallows fly,

Horse's flank,  
Primrose bank,  
Running brook,  
Caw of rook,  
Foxgloves dell,  
Roses' smell,  
Webs on grass,  
Shadows pass,  
Ripe crops,  
Dewdrops,  
Daffodils growing,  
White violets blowing,  
Woods in May,  
Scent of hay,  
Turned earth,  
Lambs' mirth,  
England's green,  
Feathers' sheen,  
Bloom on plum,  
Setting sun,  
Lap of sea,  
Humming bee,  
Song of birds,  
Poets' words,  
Distant bells,  
Walks on Fells,  
Trap and snare  
Never there.  
These thoughts, I would find,  
Keep beauty in mind.

I'd forget  
All my set,  
For they bring  
In their swing  
Irritation,  
Dissipation,  
Wasted hours,  
Love that sours.  
Not these,  
Oh, please!

But my mind  
Is unkind,  
Says I'll rend  
To the end.  
In the past you forsook  
The sequestered quiet nook.  
Roads to cities you took.  
Now you reap.  
Try to sleep,  
Silly man,  
If you can.

## OLD CLOTHES

I WORE you once.  
I pressed, I smoothed, I pulled you into place.  
You helped me face the world, old clothes of mine.  
You knew me well;  
Strange you should have no voice to tell of me.  
You helped to hide my frightened soul,  
The sag, the spread, the ugliness of age.  
Kind old clothes, how still and stiff you lie.  
I wore you into bulge and crease,  
I shaped you to my servitude.

I loved, exalted,  
Suffered, wept and knew the ecstasy of life  
With you companioned.  
You now lie empty and forlorn—  
A memory of me.  
But yesterday you flaunted in the market-place,  
And now you sprawl, unwanted, impotent,  
grotesque.  
To-morrow, perhaps, tidily you'll lie,  
Folded, pressed and brushed,  
And then maybe you'll serve to shield  
The spinster or the whore.

No reason now to cover me; the body which you  
knew.  
Is cast away for ever.  
The dustman called. He took me and left you,

You that I held my servant.  
Is it fair that you should still have durance  
While I who shaped you thus am dead?  
Yet I'll not die while you remain,  
There's something of me still about you.  
To-day you hold my shape, my badge of servitude,  
To-morrow's iron may press this out of you;  
Till then you'll still be called  
Old clothes of mine.

And one day, too, you'll find the dustman and  
the furnace:  
All things must pass when they have served their  
turn.  
I've found a better tailor,  
I am now fitted with God's justice.  
The garment's hard and lasting,  
But the sharp edge is eased with mercy.  
Old clothes of mine—poor stuff!  
I have the laugh of you,  
I am now fitted for Eternity.



## STARLINGS

STARLINGS at sunset,  
Circling high.  
The whirr of your wings  
Us no knowledge brings  
Of your business and pleasure,  
Your work and your leisure.  
Now on the hedge you rest,  
Gathering a further zest  
For other circlings  
Hither and thither,  
Darting and whirling,  
Screeching and swirling,  
On endless roundabout.

Over the woods and far away  
Wonderful things have happened to-day.  
Round and round,  
To and fro,  
Nobody knows  
Where you go,  
Your life is ordered,  
You live, you die,  
Yet none of us knows where you lie,  
We who watch gaping,  
Know nothing at all,  
Yet God knows should one of you fall.

## LITTLE GARDENS

THERE's nothing better that I know  
Than to dig the ground and then to sow  
Your seeds and bulbs and watch them grow.  
Your paths to weed, your grass to mow.  
To work a bit, to plant a bit,  
To watch a bit, to weed a bit,  
To sweat a bit, to swear a bit.  
Oh, life is very good, I think,  
If you have a little garden.

Things to smell, things to eat,  
Things to watch, things to beat.  
And problems to solve.  
You can dig them in and dig them out,  
Burn, sift and scatter them about.  
Oh, you'll be fit and light of heart  
If you have a little garden.

Whether you be young or old,  
Whether it's hot or whether it's cold,  
Whether it rains or whether it's dry  
If you're down in the dumps  
There's no time to sigh.  
For the creatures all plunder,  
But you learn of life's wonder  
That Spring tears shrouds asunder.  
Oh, you'll be happier than most  
If you have a little garden.

## THE WHITE CITY

HERE are quiet little houses where nobody knocks,  
Here no guest can enter, no keys fit the locks.  
A silent white city of slab and of cross,  
Here grass grows and nettles with sometimes the  
moss.

Each house has the name of its occupant writ,  
It's easy to find young White or old Pitt.  
There are no streets or terraces, crescents or  
squares,  
But flowers that don't wither in glass globes are  
theirs.

Here is a city where all are at peace,  
No jest and no revel, all laughter must cease.  
The white city's inmates for ever lie still,  
Their doors sealed securely with bolts and with  
bars;  
Their windows are shuttered. Eternity guards.

## LAZY DAISY

TURALOO! Turaloo!  
I've nothing to do.  
So said the woman with gay jewelled shoe.  
Turaloo! Turaloo!

Turaloo! Turaloo!  
I've nothing to do  
But just bill and coo.  
I lie here and read,  
Or sit down and feed,  
Never work, I don't need.  
Turaloo! Turaloo!

I buy.  
I sigh.  
I cry.  
Oh my!

I've nothing to do.  
Turaloo! Turaloo!  
My father and mother  
And sister and brother,  
My husband and lover,  
They've plenty of work.  
I might, but I shirk.  
I'm dear little Daisy,  
I've always been lazy.  
Turaloo! Turaloo!

Turaloo! Turaloo!  
I've nothing to do.  
I have cocktails galore,  
Rich pile on the floor.  
I can laze evermore  
Till Death opens the door,  
Then my spirit will soar,  
And at last I may find  
That to work I've a mind  
Both early and late  
In that holy estate.

But I'm now in the pink,  
And I don't mean to think.  
I'm dear little Daisy,  
I *enjoy* being lazy.  
I *want* nothing to do.  
Turaloo! Turaloo! Turaloo!

## CLOY

SHE: I LOVE you dear,  
For you I fear  
The day and night,  
The dark, the light;  
I sit and brood,  
I dread your mood,  
I love you, dear.

HE: Love is a curse,  
Nothing much worse.  
Try not to dither  
Stop all this blither.  
Never mind what you fear,  
Be useful, my dear.  
If you only would learn  
To give a hand's turn.

SHE: I love you, dear.  
What can I do  
To help you through?  
I pray and pray,  
Both night and day,  
It's my little way  
To love you, dear.  
You say I shirk  
To help your work,  
But tell me how,  
I'll do it now.  
What can I do.

To prove to you  
I love you, dear?  
I sit at your feet,  
And tell you you're "sweet",  
Day after day,  
Nothing keeps me away.  
Yet you tell me I bore  
And leave my heart sore,  
But I come back for more.  
Then you stamp and you roar,  
And that I adore.  
I love you, dear.

HE: You are loving and soft,  
You'll be better aloft.  
You're ever so good  
And misunderstood.  
I'm bad!  
Always had  
To fight all the day  
Every step of my way,  
So no time  
For your line.

SHE: Ah! What will you say  
When I've finished my day?

HE: Your epitaph runs:  
"Here lies a bore  
Who lived to adore.  
Just that and no more."

*FOR THESE AND ALL THY MERCIES . . .*

ALL primrose starred the mossy dell,  
Sweet thoughts like summer flowers fell.  
The birds sing gaily overhead,  
And fragrance rises as I tread.  
This lovely track, all primrose edged,  
Runs through a quiet, verdant wood  
Thick carpeted with mystic blue.  
I find a clearing, splashed with sun,  
No better work has nature done.  
Beauty encompasses me about;  
Evil is banished—crowded out.  
I bid all foolish questions cease,  
All torturing thoughts to rest at peace.  
The hurrying world of noisy strife,  
The blare, the blast, the rush of life  
Are far removed. It is a place  
To worship God—I see His face.  
I'll pray and praise,  
My voice in thankfulness I'll raise.  
I stretch myself at ease and watch a bird;  
On magnificent wing he rises, feathers agleam,  
His golden eyes hold the sunlight,  
He calls aloud his joy of glorious life,  
High he flies, then back once more  
To the secret place that was his.

\* \* \* \*

The months have passed, I come again . . .  
A sound of shouting!

A snapping of twigs, a beating of branches.  
 The bird's surprised,  
 He rises startled,  
 Over the valley of the shadow he flies.  
 Crack!  
 Flutter! Flutter! Flutter!  
 Thud!  
 Life is quivering out at my feet,  
 Eyes that shone with golden beauty glaze  
 And dumbly question man.  
 Death is everywhere.  
 The Devil laughs and rubs his stomach.  
 "A great creation this  
 And worth the mass production.  
 Through its installing in all living things  
 My servants havoc, torture, death are well  
 employed.  
 No matter how vast a chorus cry for mercy  
 The stomach never will cry 'Hold! Enough!'  
 But rather 'Slaughter,' ever 'Slaughter'.  
 The gentle mother and the god-like priest  
 Alike will swell the chorus."

\* \* \* \*

For Sunday's lunch within Cathedral close  
 The bird is roast.  
 "A tender bird. Do you take breast, leg or  
 wing?" . . .  
 The Bishop rose: an excellent repast.  
 "For these and all other mercies we thank Thee,  
 O Merciful Father."

## THE EMPTY ROOM

### *To My Mother*

My room—my dear old room—how still and cold  
 you feel!  
 No fire to-day—that's strange!  
 I love a fire and so do you;  
 What talks we've had in the warm glow of it.  
 My little table with its books and bowl of flowers  
 All gone—my little table's gone!  
 I cannot smell my mignonette,  
 There's only one geranium left of all my six—  
 Where are they?  
 I like to touch their soft, sweet leaves.  
 The set of shelves on which my papers lay  
 They've been moved too. Oh, why?  
 Rubbish to most, I know, but not to me—  
 Treasures to me—  
 Your letters, cards—  
 Odd scraps and paper cuttings,  
 Where are they gone?  
 Who's been moving my things?  
 I like them to my hand.  
 I see you smile.  
 You don't like sentiment, I know—  
 It's better so.  
  
 Why don't you come?  
 I miss your cheery voice.



"Hallo, Mother—you old warrior—how are you?  
Lots of news for you to-day.  
What have you been up to?  
I see my old coat's mended—  
Six of my letters done—  
And lovely writing, too.  
More books! What's this—giving Euripides a  
turn?  
Your Greek's progressing—Hebrew next, perhaps.  
What a woman! Call yourself old!  
What's eighty-seven?  
You darling splendid gay young fraud. . . ."

Where are the little ornaments that stood upon  
the mantelpiece?  
You always say not quite the thing to place beside  
the bronzes;  
You're right, I know—and yet I love them most—  
My little things, my little things—where are they?  
Don't move them yet—don't throw away because  
their legs or arms are broken.  
I take them up and then remember  
All that they brought of love and laughter;  
Each means some thought you gave me—  
I love them all.  
Birthdays, Easter, Christmas—  
Happy days. . . .

We must be getting busy—there's holly and  
mistletoe to buy—  
December's here!  
I'm old, I know, but still I like to wander round  
and try to help,  
Perhaps I do—you say I do.  
Don't think I'll ever spoil your fun—I love it too.  
  
Ah! There's my chair!—That's good.  
Its comfortable back—what's wrong?  
I always grip the arms just so—it helps the pain—  
but now  
I feel nothing—nothing at all.  
What's *wrong*?  
Where is the softness of the velvet?  
Here's my old footstool—  
I'll press it with my feet—  
Still I feel nothing—nothing!  
My spectacles were here, just by my chair.  
Why can't I find them?  
I read so much.  
Somebody's been tidying. My Bible's gone—and  
Plato—  
Some of your baby pictures are inside—  
Perhaps one gets foolish with the years—  
And little things I value most—  
Let them stay as yet.  
  
Everything looks neat—unfriendly. My clothes are  
folded.

How still it is . . .

Why do my feet make no sound as I potter about  
my room?

I long to hear your voice—you'll tell me all is  
well and set my room aright.

I will sit quiet and wait—wait for you, dear,  
As I have done so often.

The room is cold—

You'll come and make the fire burn bright and  
put my things to right again.

Is it a busy day to-day? Can't you get home?

Don't worry—I shall wait up—you know I always  
wait.

We'll have our tea and talk and then goodnight—

You'll leave my light

And I will read my Shelley for a change.

My old shoes are gone;

And the rug that tucked my legs in from the  
draught.

What have you done with all my things?

The sun creeps round the window's edge.

Why is the window closed?

I always loved the sun and air, and so do you.

Why is the room so shut, so lonely and so still?

What does it mean?

I call and no one answers!

No one to say a word. . . I'm getting frightened!

I must rest quiet—that's what you always say—  
Rest quiet.

I cannot hold myself upon the ground—it is as  
though I drifted!

Is it—that—I—am—dead?

Not dead!

Not out of reach of hand and voice and warmth  
and light.

Not dead!

Let me stay here with things I know—with you  
I love.

I cannot stay—something there is which draws  
me—through—away—

To *what*?

I am drawn out and on—merged—changed.

I go—I pass—on—ever—without end—

*Where*?

## SOLACE

STRANGE we should shirk  
Work,  
Yet it dispels  
Remorse, regret and grief,  
These hells.

Given work  
The evils that lurk  
Always there,  
Everywhere,  
In daylight that stare  
Or in grisly nightmare  
Vanish in work.

The drive,  
The strive,  
The action,  
Satisfaction,  
The swing of it,  
The force of it,  
The hell of it,  
The smell of it,  
All these are fine  
And mine  
When I work.

## LET ME NOT LIVE AGAIN!

"THY new life must begin, my child;  
What wouldst thou of Me?"  
"Two things, O Lord, if I must live again.  
First let me not know love."  
"Not love, My greatest gift to man!"  
"That may be true, but, Lord,  
With it comes the anguish of the fire,  
The torture of the rack.  
I would have some peace if I must live again.  
And I beseech Thee, Lord, that Thou shouldst  
also  
Take from my heart pity  
Which clouds the sun  
Every hour.  
Pity that fogs all beauty;  
Pity that gives me sight.  
Oh rather leave me blind  
If suffering must be  
Till all creation changes and departs,  
If cruelty, injustice must endure  
Like a rank growth  
Which twists, distorts and shrivels  
The fair flowers of beauty.  
"Then let not my heart  
Open my eyes and ears.  
Let me remain both deaf and blind—yes, deaf  
and blind.

Coward I may be,  
But impotent I watched,  
Bound by iron circumstance,  
Hampered by weak capacity,  
I saw, I heard, I felt.  
Not again, O Lord, oh not again.  
Let me see the beauty of the world,  
Not its suffering and death.  
The glory of autumn leaf  
But not its fall.  
The brightness of creation's eye  
But not its dimming.  
Let me know nothing of the slaughter-house  
And so enjoy the feast.  
Laugh at the antics of the clown  
But never see his tortured heart.  
Let me no longer care that man  
Fills his leisure with a pleasure  
That seems cowardly and savage.  
I would accept, take, live, eat and work,  
Live, eat and work,  
Then lie in the sun  
And at last, tired and content,  
Await Thy consent  
To be done with it all.  
Let me feel that man is better and wiser than the  
beast,  
The mountainous dust of humanity for some purpose.  
Let me feel that all is wise and good and right.

Take from my heart the doubt, the question and  
the rage  
That come to me from those unwanted qualities,  
love and pity.  
Then indeed  
I care not how long and how often I may live.  
If this may not be,  
Grant me, O Lord, an endless sleep.  
Let me rest undisturbed by memory.  
Let me not again see the pathos in the effort of  
life's failures;  
Let me not see the wicked prosper,  
The unworthy fill high places,  
Nor see fine courage reaping death.  
Oh, let me not know these things."

"So be it, my child—coward soul,  
You shall die indeed."

## WATER LAPPING

THE wind's in the sail—salt spray, white foam—  
seagulls flying!

Who cares for fate—who longs for state?

Not me!

You see

I'm at the wheel—my nerve I steel

To guide

As, astride,

I ride

The sea—the wonderful sea.

In the gloaming

I'll be roaming.

With my mind

I shall find

Naught unkind.

Here life has a zest

And death's but a jest.

When I take my rest

On the sea's painted breast

My weary eye

Will espy

The marshes—the seabirds,

Water lapping

While I'm napping.

O Lord, let me stare

And know you are there

As never before

When I was ashore.

## SNOW

EVERY flake a miracle of beauty, soft, caressing,  
pure,

A shroud sent from Heaven to the stricken earth,  
But a shroud that will quicken to fresh life.

"What fun, the snow," say the children,

"Where shall we go?" say the birds,

"Dress us in bridal white to await our lover," say  
all the growing things.

"Bring your magic and transform with your fairy  
fingers

Every twig, bush, hedge and tree

And the grim town with its slum and factory.

Cover them all with your fairy feathers

And sprinkle the earth with your diamond dust."

"Cover me," says the earth, "my children are  
feeding at my breast,

They are stretching out for life.

Cover me with your soft cloak."

\* \* \* \*

From sight,

From light,

I go,

But not

From your cot,

Little seed.

What you need

I will bring,

Then you'll sing

In the Spring.