



ETHELEAN TYSON GAW

# *Drums of El Dorado*

AND OTHER POEMS · THE COMPLETE 1951 COLLECTION

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EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:  
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

A TEXT-TECH PAPERS PROJECT

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# *Extremes and Moderations*

Early Southern California Poetry

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Extremes and Moderations is a Text-Tech Papers project devoted to recovering poetry written, published, and circulated in Los Angeles and Southern California. Each volume brings neglected books and poems back into view through carefully prepared texts, archival images, biographical context, and a clear record of the surviving sources.

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*Edited by Brian Kim Stefans*

The Text-Tech Papers | Los Angeles, 2026

ETHELEAN TYSON GAW

*Drums of El Dorado and Other  
Poems*

*A CRITICAL READING EDITION*

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

The Text-Tech Papers

*Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry*

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# ARCHIVAL IMAGES

*Portrait, editorial work, dramatic production, and obituary*

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*Ethelean Tyson Gaw in Who's Who Among the Women of California (1922).*



**STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF  
AUGUST 24, 1912,**

Of The Lyric West: a Magazine of American Verse, published monthly, (except July and August), at Los Angeles, California, for October 1, 1925.  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA, } ss.  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES. }

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Allison Gaw, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he and his wife are the editors and owners of the Lyric West, a Magazine of American Verse and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to-wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

Publisher: Allison Gaw and Ethelean Tyson Gaw, 1915 Cordova St., Los Angeles.

Editor: Allison Gaw and Ethelean Tyson Gaw, 1915 Cordova St., Los Angeles.

Managing Editor: Allison Gaw and Ethelean Tyson Gaw, 1915 Cordova St., Los Angeles.

Business Managers: Allison Gaw and Ethelean Tyson Gaw, 1915 Cordova St., Los Angeles.

2. That the owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a firm, company, or other unincorporated concern, its name and address, as well as those of each individual member, must be given.)

Allison Gaw and Ethelean Tyson Gaw, 1915 Cordova St., Los Angeles.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.)

None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstance and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

5. That the average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the six months preceding the date shown above is .....

(This information is required from daily publications only.)

ALLISON GAW

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1st day of October, 1925.

CURTIS F. HUSE

Notary Public in and for the County of Los Angeles, State of California. My commission expires January 12, 1926.

Note.—This statement must be made in duplicate and both copies delivered by the publisher to the postmaster, who shall send one copy to the Third Assistant Postmaster General (Division of Classification), Washington, D. C., and retain the other in the files of the post office. The publisher must publish a copy of this statement in the second issue printed next after its filing.

*The 1925 ownership statement naming Allison and Ethelean Gaw equally as publishers, editors, managing editors, business managers, and owners of The Lyric West.*



## **Mrs. Ethelean T. Gaw**

Funeral services for Mrs. Ethelean Tyson Gaw, 85, writer, lecturer and Los Angeles resident for 60 years, will be conducted by Forest Lawn Mortuary at 1:30 p.m. Friday in the Wee Kirk o' the Heather. Dr. Frank Baxter will deliver the eulogy. Mrs. Gaw, of 3178 V 7th St., was born in Philadelphia. She was a past president of the Browning Society; member of the Los Angeles Women's Press Club, Town & Gowanus Club, and the widow of the late Dr. Allison Gaw, for 33 years professor at USC. She died Monday, leaving seven nieces. Interment will be in Forest

*The Los Angeles Times obituary of February 1, 1962.*

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# INTRODUCTION

*A complete collection restored*

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Ethelean Tyson Gaw built a literary life out of forms meant to be shared: a class poem in Philadelphia, a prize-winning war song, pageants, lectures, musical settings, a biblical drama written with her husband Allison Gaw, and two years of joint ownership and editing at *The Lyric West*. Her 1951 collection *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* gathers love lyrics, California history and landscape, poems of war and international order, addresses to other poets, travel poems, comedy, religion, technology, aging, and death. Its California sequence celebrates Cabrillo, Drake, Serra, oil, dams, and westward settlement in language that also reveals the exclusions of booster-era regional myth. This edition resets all fifty-nine poems—not the fifty-one counted in an earlier dossier—and restores the full book from its ninety-six-page source scan. It also resets all six Gaw poems preserved in the complete local excerpt from the 1923 *Second Anthology of Verse*, retaining repeated poems as chronological witnesses and recovering “Le Jour D’Amour,” which was not collected in 1951. The original order, divisions, lineation, dates, dedications, and notes are retained while scan noise and unmistakable transcription errors are removed.

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# BIOGRAPHY

Poet, playwright, editor, lecturer, and organizer

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## Birth, family, and the unresolved birthplace

Ethelean Tyson Gaw was born on January 23, 1877, in Pennsylvania. The date is consistent across the strongest late records; the place is not. *Who's Who Among the Women of California* (1922) says Lancaster County, while *Women of the West* prints “Cold Rain Township,” almost certainly a typesetter’s form of Colerain Township. Her 1962 *Los Angeles Times* obituary says Philadelphia. Her father had lived in Colerain Township in 1860 and East Nottingham in 1870, and by the 1880 census the family was in Philadelphia. Until a birth or baptismal record is found, the responsible account is that she was born in Pennsylvania—probably Lancaster County or Philadelphia—and raised in Philadelphia.

Her parents were Israel Isaac Tyson (1827–1896) and Julia Ann Reynolds Tyson (1836–1913), who married in 1855 at Oxford, Chester County. Israel had previously married Hannah R. Smith. Ethelean grew up in a large blended household whose documented children include John Israel, Henry Benjamin, Hannah Janet, Barbara Ann, Harriet Amy, Amanda Jane, Jesse James, and Mary A.; family-tree spellings and totals vary, and some children may have died young. A dance held for Ethelean at the family home, 4018 Market Street, in 1895 places her in a socially connected Philadelphia circle. A guest named Andrew Gaw suggests that the Tyson and Gaw networks may have overlapped before her marriage, though the relationship is not yet proven.

No child appears with Ethelean and Allison Gaw in the census summaries reviewed. Her obituary names seven nieces and no descendants. That evidence strongly suggests, but does not prove, that the marriage was childless. The nieces and their descendants remain the best prospective route to private family papers.

## Philadelphia Normal School and an early public voice

Tyson entered the Philadelphia Normal School for Girls in 1892. The school at Thirteenth and Spring Garden was the city's professional training institution for women teachers, later the Philadelphia Teachers College; its curriculum joined academic study, pedagogy, public speaking, and practice teaching. At the class exercises reported on June 30, 1897, she read the class poem. That notice is the earliest located evidence of her literary work and shows that, at twenty, she was already recognized as a writer and public reader.

No teaching appointment has yet been verified. A derivative of the 1900 census places her unmarried in her mother's Philadelphia household but does not preserve her occupation. The school's alumni register, city teacher-appointment books, commencement programs, and the original 1900 census line should be checked before describing her as a teacher. The class poem itself has not been recovered.

## Marriage, Pullman, and Los Angeles

In late June 1909 she married Allison Gaw, an English scholar born in Philadelphia in 1877. A marriage-license list printed June 29 names "Gaw, Allison" and "Tyson, Ethelean R."; derivative records give June 30 and July 1, so the exact day awaits the certificate. Her middle initial may stand for Reynolds, her mother's surname, but that remains conjectural. Allison held B.S. and M.A. degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and completed doctoral work on Sir Samuel Tuke's *Adventures of Five Hours*.

The 1910 census places the couple in Pullman, Washington, where Allison served as assistant professor of English at Washington State College from 1909 to 1912. The association lasted: the college paper celebrated Ethelean's war-poem prize in 1918, and an alumni notice discussed the Gaws' play in 1922. They moved to Los Angeles in 1911 or 1912 when Allison joined the University of Southern California. He later headed English and chaired a large division spanning literature, speech, journalism, and comparative literature.

Ethelean has no verified USC faculty appointment, but she led university-adjacent organizations including Trojan Women and moved through a much wider network: the Los Angeles Browning Society, Verse Writers Club, Ebell, Artland Club, Press Club, Drama League, Council of

Defense, Council of International Relations, Phi Mu, Women's Club of USC, and Town & Gown. Their long-term address was 1915 Cordova Street, printed in sworn *Lyric West* ownership statements; 5027 Louise Drive in La Cañada also appears in directories. At her death she lived at 3178 West Seventh Street. A June 1924 passenger record shows her traveling from Southampton to New York, confirming at least one transatlantic journey.

## War poetry, civic service, and internationalism

Gaw's first national distinction came in 1917, when "Battle Song of Democracy" won a \$500 Patriots' League prize and appeared in the December issue of *The Clubwoman*. The 1951 collection retitled it "Battle Song—1917" and credited Dr. Hague Kinsey with a musical setting. From 1917 through 1920 Gaw served as secretary of the Los Angeles Council of Defense. Because the term extended beyond the armistice, her work may have included demobilization or civic reconstruction, but the council minutes and reports have not yet been examined.

Her war writing did not remain triumphalist. "Robbed," published in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1920, speaks through a dead soldier who accuses the Senate of betraying the League of Nations and reducing him to "cannon fodder." *Selected Poems on Woodrow Wilson* (1926) included "Robbed" and "Woodrow Wilson Returns from Versailles." The complete 1951 scan resolves a prior census error: the Wilson poem is not an uncollected title but the poem printed in *Drums of El Dorado* as "Vox Populi," where "Woodrow Wilson Returns From Versailles" appears as its subtitle and the first line matches the anthology locator. The line continues through her 1925 pageant for the Council of International Relations, her January 1944 lecture "The Poets' Message to a War-torn World," and "Though Chaos Calls," dated to the opening of the United Nations Conference at San Francisco on April 25, 1945. Across nearly thirty years, civic verse became her way of thinking through democratic mobilization, failed international order, another world war, and renewed institutional hope.



## Club leadership, music, and public performance

Gaw served as president of the Los Angeles Browning Society, the Verse Writers Club, and Trojan Women; as secretary of the Council of Defense; and, in 1934, as chair of Phi Mu's Secret Works Board. A later Phi Mu history credits her with adding the concluding phrases to the first two stanzas of the sorority's Creed: "Thus being true to the womanhood of love" and "Thus being true to the womanhood of honor." She also belonged to Ebells, the Artland Club, the Drama League, the Women's Press Club or its predecessor, American College Quill, the Women's Club of USC, and Town & Gown. In her career clubs were not peripheral social ornaments but the infrastructure for prizes, commissions, audiences, editorial work, and leadership.

Her poems also circulated as music. Purdon Robinson's setting of "A Barneget Love-Song" was published by Theodore Presser in 1923, and Walter Spry made another setting for Carl Fischer. Hague Kinsey set "Battle Song—1917." Allison Gaw set "Song of the Nile Maidens," "Song for a Golden Wedding," "Bethlehem Cradle Song," and "Homeland." A Library of Congress finding aid places an undated Ethelean Gaw letter in the Elinor Remick Warren Papers granting permission to use "The Plowboy," almost certainly related to "Norse Plowboy of the Middle West." A Baylor catalog records a manuscript poem, "I See Thee Like a Beacon Light," not collected in the 1951 book. Neither manuscript has yet been reproduced.

## *The Lyric West*: contributor, critic, and proprietor

Grace Atherton Dennen founded *The Lyric West* in April 1921. Contrary to an older project biography, the Gaws did not found it. Ethelean first appears as a contributor: "Alice Meynell, an Appreciation" in July–August 1923, "The Desert" in October 1923, "Summer Storm in Los Angeles," and "The Voice of Francis Drake" in November 1925. By October 1925 a sworn statement named Allison and Ethelean jointly as publishers, editors, managing editors, business managers, and owners at 1915 Cordova Street. Repeated statements and copyright records confirm their shared control through 1927; new editors succeeded them late that year.

The correction matters twice. Calling the Gaws founders erases Dennen, while calling Ethelean merely an editor's wife erases her equal legal and operational role. She occupied three positions literary history often separates:



poet, critic of another woman writer, and proprietor responsible for selecting and circulating other writers. The complete local reconstruction of the magazine—sixty-seven numbers across seven volumes, 1921–1927—is therefore a major archive of her labor and network.

### *Pharaoh's Daughter* and dramatic collaboration

A Washington State alumni notice dates the composition of *Pharaoh's Daughter* to the summer of 1921 and reports that Margaret Anglin was considering it. A later trade notice claimed that Anglin or the Shuberts optioned it three times, but no New York production is verified. The Pasadena Community Players premiered the three-act biblical drama October 15–24, 1925, for eleven performances. Gilmore Brown directed; Helen Jerome Eddy played Queen Merrhis and Arthur Lubin played Moses; Robert R. Sharpe designed the settings; Walter Plunkett designed the costumes; and more than two hundred women reportedly helped make them. Contemporary accounts called the production both an artistic and financial success.

The play imagines Moses's youth in the Egyptian court and the conflict between royal succession and the enslaved Hebrews. Its foreword combined scripture, Jewish legend, Josephus, Eusebius, Manetho, contemporary Egyptology, and a sensational 1925 newspaper report about an alleged proto-Hebrew inscription. It won the 1927 Drama League–Longmans, Green biblical play contest and was published in 1928, both independently and with the other contest plays. The complete 169-page public-domain scan survives locally. Sources name both Allison Gaw and Ethelean Tyson Gaw; without manuscripts distinguishing their contributions, dialogue, plot, and research cannot responsibly be assigned to one collaborator.

## California poetry and the 1951 collection

Gaw published *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* with Exposition Press in 1951, when she was seventy-four. The ninety-six-page book, Library of Congress card 51-12333, is dedicated to Allison and acknowledges sixteen periodicals or publishing venues. Its six divisions move from love poems through California history and landscape, war and world order, literary vocation, travel, family, religion, technology, aging, and death. The printed contents and page-by-page scan establish fifty-nine poems—eight more than the prior dossier’s mistaken count of fifty-one.

The title sequence turns California into a procession of Cabrillo, Drake, Serra, miners, oil, dams, aviation, and modern settlement answering the “drums” of El Dorado. “Oil Fields in California” and “Boulder Dam” convert the gold myth into industrial extraction and hydraulic modernity. This regional confidence must be read with its exclusions: the mission system and conquest are romanticized, Indigenous people are largely absent, and “Summer Storm in Los Angeles” builds social comedy from racialized, national, gendered, and class types. Gaw’s California is made from sunsets and deserts, but also from empires, institutions, extraction, infrastructure, and civic myth.

Her formal range is wider than the label “civic verse” suggests. She wrote rhymed quatrains, hymnic refrains, sonnets, dramatic monologues, chant-like songs, long-lined free verse, and comic narratives. Speakers include a dead soldier, Francis Drake, biblical maidens, a Norse-descended plowboy, California, mythic figures, and aging observers. The closing poems turn from public confidence toward inheritance, stillness, mortality, and return.

## Maps, pageants, and organizational texts

*Women of the West* says Gaw “superintended the making” of the Literary Map of California for the California Federation of Women’s Clubs in 1925; another catalog assigns 1926. The exact division among author, compiler, supervisor, and project chair remains to be checked on the map itself. She wrote “The Torch” for the Council of International Relations, produced in Los Angeles November 1–10, 1925. A later bibliography calls a 1926 work *The Lifted Torch*; these may be variants of the same pageant, but no script is located.

The 1951 book advertises *Festival of All Nations*, a pageant-drama, and *Chinaman's Chance*, a one-act play whose racialized historical title requires context if the text is recovered. Catalog leads also mention *Pegasus and the Mule* with Allison Gaw (1924) and *Mixed Carrots* (1930), but neither format nor text has been verified. Map supervision, editorial ownership, pageant production, creed revision, club presidency, and public lecturing were all forms of textual work, though they should not be confused with sole-authored books.

## Widowhood, final years, and death

Allison Gaw died May 17, 1954. Ethelean continued to appear in poetry-circle notices and was named as a sponsor-judge in *The Archer*. An old project file lists a late book, *Misty Sundown* (Camas Press, 1959). Camas Press was an active North Hollywood small press run by Wilfred and Elinor Brown, so the claim is plausible, but no copy, WorldCat or Open Library record, Google Books record, or entry in either half of the 1959 U.S. copyright register has been found. It must remain a reported, unverified title rather than an established book.

Gaw died at her Los Angeles home on Monday, January 29, 1962, aged eighty-five. Services were held February 2 at the Wee Kirk o' the Heather, Forest Lawn, with a eulogy by Dr. Frank Baxter. She was buried at Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Glendale, Inspiration Slope, Lot 478, Space 4. Her obituary remembered a writer and lecturer with fifty years in Los Angeles and named seven nieces. No personal memoir, oral history, complete correspondence file, probate file, or text of Baxter's eulogy has yet been located.

## Open research paths

The highest-priority searches are USC Special Collections for Allison Gaw's faculty and departmental files, Trojan Women and Town & Gown records, and Baxter's eulogy; Pasadena Playhouse Archives for manuscripts, programs, prompt books, photographs, and correspondence; Phi Mu archives for Creed drafts and minutes; California Federation of Women's Clubs records for the literary map; and Philadelphia school archives for the 1897 poem and any teaching record.

Named manuscript leads include the Elinor Remick Warren Papers at the Library of Congress, Box 76, Folder 28, and Baylor's Browningiana manuscript "I See Thee Like a Beacon Light." Civil searches should target a Pennsylvania birth or baptismal record, the original marriage certificate, full census pages, Los Angeles death and probate records, Forest Lawn files, and descendants of the seven nieces. Periodicals still requiring title-by-title searches include *Literary Digest*, *Los Angeles Saturday Night*, *Southwest Magazine*, *Silhouettes*, *Horizons*, *Artland Magazine*, *Ebell Magazine*, *The Lantern*, *The Lariat*, *Tierra de Oro*, *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, *Woman Poets Today*, *Verse Writers' Folio*, and *The Clubwoman*.

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## EDITORIAL NOTE AND SOURCES

*Corpus, witnesses, and reading-text policy*

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This edition resets all six Gaw poems in the locally retained excerpt from the 1923 *Second Anthology of Verse*, followed by all fifty-nine poems in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (1951), in the printed order and six named divisions. The two primary scans—not the inherited partial reset—are the base witnesses.

Verse lineation, dates, dedications, subtitles, dramatic directions, and printed notes are retained. Page-induced word breaks are rejoined; running heads, folios, scan marks, and OCR debris are removed. Unmistakable transcription errors are corrected against the page photographs. Every poem opens on a new edition page and may continue naturally across pages.

The printed contents resolve two corpus problems in the earlier dossier. The 1951 book contains fifty-nine poems, not fifty-one. “Woodrow Wilson Returns from Versailles” is the subtitle/anthology title of the collected “Vox Populi,” while “The Desert” is an earlier title and version of “Dawn on the Desert.” Repeated poems in the 1923 anthology remain in place as chronological textual witnesses; “Le Jour D’Amour” is the one distinct anthology poem not collected in 1951.

Gaw’s colonial, missionary, imperial, racial, national, religious, and gendered vocabulary is preserved as historical text. The biographical essay identifies how the California sequence romanticizes conquest and the mission system, largely omits Indigenous people, and uses cultural types in its social comedy. Preservation is not endorsement.

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# POEMS

*The 1923 anthology group and complete 1951 collection*

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## SECOND ANTHOLOGY OF VERSE (1923)

*Complete early anthology group*

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## *The Desert*

From the swirling dust of long dead worlds,  
Lusterless, dun,  
Dully folding,  
With never a glint of allurements,  
I have fashioned a vesture austere to hide my fair  
stretching limbs  
When He comes wooing—my lusty, red-eyed, importunate lover,  
Then Noon-day Sun.

But when comes the Other,  
My Beloved, the wide-eyed, wonder-voiced Dawn,  
Then stand I forth in a garment of excellent beauty  
A shimmering web I have hidden away  
From the eons old when I held in my arms  
The inconstant, tumultuous ocean.  
Over my straight white ivory limbs it falls,  
This sea-shell's dream of a garland—  
Roses, with hearts of silver,  
Enmeshed in the gossamer wings of a swarm of little  
ghost violets.

So, arrayed for my Love,  
My deep white breast athrob with the golden joy  
of his nearness,  
I await, in the silence that sings,  
My Lord of the Dawning.

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**Publication.** Printed in the Verse Writers' Club of Southern California's *Second Anthology of Verse* (H. Wagner, 1923), pages 86–87; an earlier witness related to the collected "Dawn on the Desert."



## *The Minor Poet*

I climbed a holy hill  
Sheathed in gold flame.  
Down from that glory height  
Winged I came.

I saw the smile of God  
Born of Love's eyes—  
Caught in my web of song  
Love fainting lies.

I heard the morning stars  
Croon to the sea—  
Could I but snare in words  
That mystery!

Oh, Psyche kissed my heart,  
Phoebus my eyes,  
But on my eager lips  
Dumb magic lies!

---

**Publication.** Printed in the Verse Writers' Club of Southern California's *Second Anthology of Verse* (H. Wagner, 1923), page 87; an early witness of the poem collected in 1951 as "Minor Poet."

## *Le Jour D'Amour*

Life sat sleeping beside the dewy highway  
(Silver-misted curtains o'er the brooding silence drawn);  
Caroling his mating song, across the rosy meadows  
Love came riding out of the dawn.  
Tender as the dawn-shine,  
True as stars above,  
Stronger than the North Sea storm—  
Radiant Love!

Life trod bravely along the stormy highway  
(Black the crashing tempest where the lurking shadows swarm);  
Lifting his battle song, across the cloudy upland  
Love came riding out of the storm.  
Tender as the dawn-shine,  
True as stars above,  
Stronger than the North Sea storm—  
Conquering Love!

Life walked proudly along the sunny highway  
(Golden radiance flaming through the ruddy sunset bars);  
Chanting his glory-song, across the purple hill-crest  
Love came riding out of the stars.  
Tender as the dawn-shine,  
True as stars above,  
Stronger than the North Sea storm—  
Triumphant Love!

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**Publication.** Printed in the Verse Writers' Club of Southern California's *Second Anthology of Verse* (H. Wagner, 1923), page 88; not collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems*.

## *Robbed*

“The United States Senate refuses to ratify the League of Nations Covenant.”—News Dispatch

I rode at dawn a chevalier of God,  
Lifting the blazon of a glad new day.  
At golden dusk all proudly down I lay  
On Flanders' plains, beneath the trampled sod,  
My winding sheet a starry web of dreams,  
Its woof, a world made safe from war's red ban,  
Its warp, a deathless brotherhood of man,  
Its purpled fringe, of high hope's rainbowed gleams.

But knaves have stolen that knightly winding sheet,  
Twisting its strands to make a trap of lies.  
Scorned is the splendid Quest, the Dream forgot.  
Shroudless I sink in ultimate defeat,  
No chevalier of God on high emprise,  
But—so much cannon fodder left to rot.

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**Publication.** Printed in the Verse Writers' Club of Southern California's *Second Anthology of Verse* (H. Wagner, 1923), page 89; retained as an early witness of the poem collected in 1951.

## *Song of the Nile Maidens*

*(From the Drama "Pharaoh's Daughter")*

Dawn-flames on thy waters quiver,  
Oh my Nile, my golden river!  
Tipt with fire thy billows leap  
To kiss old ocean dark and deep.  
Through sun-drenched sands down to the sea,  
Roll on, roll on eternally!

Rainbow lances break and shiver  
On thy breast, my golden river.  
Lotus buds in beauty lift  
Where thy sky-kissed billows drift.  
Past ageless temples to the sea  
Roll on, roll on eternally!

Life ye bring—a gracious giver  
Flows the Nile, my golden river.  
Deserts blossom at thy smile,  
Heart of the world's heart, the Nile!  
From topless mountains to the sea  
Roll on, roll on, eternally!

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**Publication.** Printed in the Verse Writers' Club of Southern California's *Second Anthology of Verse* (H. Wagner, 1923), page 90; retained as an early dramatic-song witness of the poem collected in 1951.

## *A Dryad's Lament*

*(Apropos of the Eighteenth Amendment)*

There's a misere throbbing through the vales of Thessaly.  
Like the immemorial crooning of the ageless weary sea  
Beats its bitter lamentation on the wings of melody.

"Weep! For laughing Dionysus,  
Madly dancing Dionysus,  
Rosy, vine-crowned Dionysus  
Reigns no more!"

There are shadows falling chilly where the amber clusters twine,  
For the cold white powers have triumphed o'er the rosy god of wine,  
And they drive him from his vineyards, from his gold and purple shrine.

"Weep for uncrowned Dionysus,  
Wan and broken Dionysus,  
Fallen, conquered Dionysus  
Evermore!"

Sadly moves a long procession through Ionian valleys fair,  
Dryads, oreads, fair bacchantes, nymphs with flower-wreathed hair;—  
Swells the moaning chant of sorrow on the honey-laden air.

"Weep! For laughing Dionysus,  
Madly dancing Dionysus,  
Rosy, vine-crowned Dionysus  
Reigns no more!"

And they follow where he journeys toward that cloud-wrapped holy height,  
Where the conquered gods are sitting in the misted starry light  
Of their lost immortal glory through the long unending night.

"Weep for uncrowned Dionysus,  
Wan and broken Dionysus,  
Fallen, conquered Dionysus  
Evermore!"

Now across the sun-drenched pathway, silver-fringed the shadows fall,  
As the gates of high Olympus yawn to greet him last of all  
Where the silent gods are throned in their glory-haunted hall.

“Weep! For cold and white Olympus,  
Starry-bosomed, chaste Olympus,  
Holds the golden Dionysus  
Evermore!”

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**Publication.** Printed in the Verse Writers’ Club of Southern California’s *Second Anthology of Verse* (H. Wagner, 1923), pages 96–97; retained as an early witness of “Dryad’s Lament” in the 1951 collection.

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# LE JOUR D'AMOUR

*Original division of the 1951 collection*

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## *Barnegat Love Song*

I never race the sunrise  
To stand beside the sea,  
But that the dawn-lit glow of it,  
The rosy dimpled flow of it,  
Is telling, love, of thee.  
A smiling sea, a dimpling sea,  
That flushes mile on mile—  
And oh, the flower-sweet gleam of it,  
The thrill and mystic dream of it!  
It's your own lips I'm thinking of—  
Your rosy, dimpled smile!

I never stand at noon-day  
Beside the summer sea,  
But that the crystal blue of it,  
The radiant, sky-kissed hue of it,  
Is telling, love, of thee.  
A changeless sea, a tender sea,  
So wide and deep and true  
And oh, the healing balm of it,  
The magic, jeweled calm of it!  
It's your own eyes I'm thinking of—  
Your own dear eyes of blue!

I never stand at evening  
Beside the sunset sea,  
But that the flaming leap of it,  
The purple-misted sweep of it,  
Is telling, love, of thee.  
A royal sea, a flaming sea,  
And rainbow fires above!  
And oh, the glory light of it,  
The far-flung, deathless might of it!  
It's your own heart I'm thinking of—  
Your golden heart of love!

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 11.



## *Song for a Golden Wedding*

Life sat sleeping beside the dewy highway  
*(Silver-misted curtains o'er the brooding silence drawn)*  
Caroling his mating song, across the rosy meadows  
Love came riding out of the dawn.  
Tender as the dawn-shine,  
True as stars above,  
Stronger than the North Sea storm—  
Radiant Love!

Life trod bravely along the stormy highway,  
*(Black the crashing tempest where the lurking shadows swarm)*  
Lifting his battle song, across the cloudy upland  
Love came riding out of the storm.  
Tender as the dawn-shine,  
True as stars above, ;  
Stronger than the North Sea storm—  
Conquering Love!

Life walked proudly along the sunny highway  
*(Golden radiance flaming through the ruddy sunset bars)*  
Chanting his glory-song, across the purple hill-crest  
Love came riding out of the stars.  
Tender as the dawn-shine,  
True as stars above,  
Stronger than the North Sea storm—  
Triumphant Love!

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 12.

## *Song of Eve's Daughters*

Once I roamed the jungle ways,  
A lovely stalking death,  
Ere ever man could walk upright—  
Or so the story saith.

Once in towered Babylon  
Legions marched to death  
And conquering Sargon won my smile—  
Or so the story saith.

Once I launched a thousand ships  
Bearing men to death,  
For my loveliness was doom—  
Or so the story saith.

Battering the Infidel  
Roland went to death  
With my favor on his lance—  
Or so the story saith.

Jungle trails are city streets,  
Babylon is dust,  
Helen's loveliness a dream  
Roland's sword is rust—  
But the weapon forged by fate  
In my beauty's fire  
Cleaves man's soul through endless days—  
The flame sword of desire.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 13.

## *La Rose d'Amour*

“My love is rare as a golden rose,”  
In notes as rarely golden  
To Phaon burning Sappho sang  
On that far day sweet and olden.

In Brittain pale Ysolde mourned  
Her lover distant roving.  
“Ysolde’s hands are roses white,”  
Sang Tristram swiftly homing.

“Margot, my Rose of la belle France,  
Is sweet beyond comparing,”  
Bold Villon caroled to the stars,  
Toward Paris town a-faring.

“My love is like the red, red rose,”  
Across the fields of Ayrshire  
Braw Bobby Burns sang lustily  
Behind his loamy plowshare.

Let lovers all extol the rose—  
They’ll never know as I know  
How you excel all loveliness—  
My Rose of El Dorado!

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 14.

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# CALIFORNIA TIERRA DE ORO

*Original division of the 1951 collection*

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## *Drums of El Dorado*

*To John Steven McGroarty  
Poet Laureate of California*

From the battlements of sunset  
Sound far drums of El Dorado,  
Mystic drums  
That throb and summon—  
Juan Rodriquez Cabrillo,  
Almirante de la mar,  
heard the drums of El Dorado  
as he looked upon his galleons  
Victoria and San Salvador  
tugging at their holding anchors  
in a frenzy to be gone.  
From Navidad Cabrillo lifted anchor,  
turned his venturous prows to  
northward, cleaving strange  
tumultuous billows beneath cloud  
battlements of dawn.  
Northward still he sailed  
where wonder beckoned  
through the isles of California,  
saw their beauty with amazement,  
gave them haunting Spanish names—  
Isla Desiertas, 1542  
San Miguel, the Archangel,  
Islas Santa Catalina, sleeping gems  
in cobalt sea.  
Bahía de los Fumos, de los Pinos,  
Santa Monica, Ensenada,  
Isla de la Posesión.  
Touched, unknowing, the fabled mainland.  
Called it Point Concepción.

So rode Juan Rodriquez Cabrillo  
down sea-lanes of history to his  
rendezvous with fame—  
The first white man to touch and hold  
Alta California for the world.  
Down four centuries following after

Came stout-hearted men of Spain,  
seeking gold and high adventure.  
Peon or conquistador,  
Still they heard, as once Cabrillo,  
The far drums of El Dorado throb  
and summon—  
Tierra de Oro,  
Gold! gold! and glory  
And the majesty of Spain!

*FRANCIS DRAKE*

In “tidy little Plymouth”  
Francis Drake in childhood played  
with ships,  
Dreaming, starry-eyed, of far horizons.  
Heard the drums of El Dorado throb  
and summon—  
“Come, come, fellow-traveller of the sunne!” 1572  
And Drake answered—ploughed  
the seven seas of wonder,  
For Saint George and Gloriana:  
On a fateful hour stood silent on  
a peak in Darien.  
Saw in reverent amazement what no English eye had seen—  
Boundless waters heaving westward  
to the last rim of the world!  
“God give me life and leave,” he prayed  
“to sail an English galleon  
on yonder unknown sea.”

Magellan’s doom-dark straits  
were passed  
And where no English keel had 1578  
ventured rode the intrepid  
Golden Hind.  
Louder now the mystic drum-beats—  
El Dorado! for Saint George and  
Merrie England!  
Northward-west, the isles of California,  
east, the shoreward mountains towered—  
Through the Golden Gate reached harbor of  
“fair and goodly land.”

High Drake set the English standard of  
her majesty, Queen Bess—  
Called the gracious land “New Albion.”  
And the Golden Hind rode onward,  
thrust the sunset fires behind her,  
Crested every barrier waiting,  
Till once more he faced the sunrise  
Where lay “tidy little Plymouth” 1580  
With the silver mists around her  
Of a sweet, new English dawn.  
Down the centuries following after  
voyagers from Merrie England  
Sought out Drake’s New Albion.  
Still the luring drums were calling  
Englishmen both high and low—  
California! El Dorado!  
And Drake’s drum in Buckland Abbey  
echoes softly,  
Saint George and Gloriana  
and the circling of the globe!

*FRAY JUNIPERO SERRA*

In Petra, Mallorca, in the church  
of San Bernardino  
Knelt Miguel José Serra wrapped 1726  
in holy ecstasy.  
High enthroned, the praying Virgin  
with her twelve-starred aureola  
Circled by her angelic chorus, seemed  
to sway in benediction  
Toward her suppliant worshipper,  
touching his closed eyes with vision  
Of a harvest of immortal souls awaiting  
In Our Lady’s mystic vineyard  
On a strange and distant shore.  
In his reverent heart the stripling  
heard the heavenly mandate saying  
“Go, reap that harvest, Serra,  
For Madre de Dios and the glory of the Lord.”  
Obedient to the heavenly vision 1749  
Fray Junipero journeyed, preaching—

Petra, Palma, Cadiz,—  
Across the wide Atlantic—  
Vera Cruz and San Fernando in strange  
Nova Mexico,  
Treading thorny paths undaunted,  
through the wild Sierra Gordo,  
Bringing stubborn pagans kneeling  
to the fold of Mother Church.  
Onward, northward—into Alta California—  
There one day he raised an altar,  
Holy incense floating over silver cross  
and golden poppy,  
Where the gloaming breakers thundered  
underneath the evening star.

So Fray Serra consecrated Mission  
San Diego de Alcalá—  
The first jewel of his mission rosary.  
Onward, northward, on El Camino Real.  
With lips touched with live coals from off God's altar  
He preached his burning message, added jewels to  
his mission rosary.  
Through the years, he labored, tireless, reaping,  
in his mystic vineyard  
Garnering heathen souls in safety to the fold  
of Mother Church.  
In the Mission of San Carlos, in serene 1784  
Carmelo Valley,  
Serra reached the appointed hour  
and his fruitful journey ended.

*"REQUIESCAT IN PACE"*

While you rest in quiet slumber  
Thousands tread your sandalled foot-steps  
Down El Camino Real bearing gifts of crafts and  
learning and the deeper spirit light.  
Men of Spain still hear the throbbing  
of the drum-beats  
As you heard them, Father Serra,  
Calling, calling,  
California! El Dorado! for  
Madre de Dios and the glory



of the Lord!

*SEVEN FLAGS*

Seven flags have floated bravely  
over Alta California.  
Down the centuries since Cabrillo

Many races, many peoples have sent  
questing voyagers  
Bearing gifts while seeking  
treasure  
Fusing new and ancient cultures,  
California, in your golden crucible.

*SAN FRANCISCO*

From every clime and kindred and  
nations from afar  
To the city of Saint Francis a mighty  
concourse thronged. 1945  
They had come with standards  
lifted surging through dawn-winds of hope  
That were blowing sure and steady from far  
templed hills of Peace.  
Steadfast purpose held men's hearts—  
There was hope and quiet courage  
kindling many a war-dulled eye  
And the goal their mind's eye visioned  
never dimmed.  
Dedicated men wrought, tireless, through long days  
with patient daring  
To lay down a sure foundation of a wide  
untrammelled highway  
Through the jungles of man's warring:  
To establish for all time, for every people  
That broad thoroughfare that through the ages  
Pioneering souls in thought have trod  
toward the spirit's El Dorado where abide

The Parliament of Reason,  
The Brotherhood of Nations,  
and  
The Fatherhood of God.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 17.

## *Exile*

The white stars cast their silver nets across eternal snows  
Where ice-lashed billows thunder on crests of emerald foam  
In that dim majestic splendor the Arctic twilight knows—  
But the bells of old San Gabriel call me home.

I climb the glory-haunted hills that wandering Homer knew,  
Past ivory columns lifting against a sapphire dome,  
While ghostly Argive trumpets thrill across the burning blue—  
But the bells of old San Gabriel call me home.

I follow Ponce de León where enchanted headlands rise  
And rainbow fire-lights quiver on coral reefs afoam,  
Where the Southern Cross rains glory from the purple-shrouded skies—  
But the bells of old San Gabriel call me home.

Though my soul in reverent wonder greets new dawns on alien heights,  
Though earth's remotest spaces my questing footsteps roam,  
Though my dazzled senses gather a thousand strange delights—  
Still the bells of old San Gabriel call me home.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 23.

## *Whence Cometh My Help*

I must go up to the mountains,  
To that star-drenched silent place,  
To the primal balm of their wise old calm  
And the freedom of wind-swept space.

Oh the valley is golden and throbbing  
With the turbulent clamor of life!  
There is virile power in each crowded hour  
And the stinging joy of strife.

But I must go up where the mountains  
In blue-green surges roll,  
Sweeping to me from infinity  
The quiet that heals the soul.

I learn new faith in my brother;  
Alone on the mountain height  
I catch the gleam of his age-old dream  
As he struggles from clod to the light.

I know in the hush of the mountains  
The shelter of shadowing wings,  
While shy thoughts creep through the silence deep  
Into the word that sings.

Oh the valley is vibrant and golden,  
But the mountains are still and fair,  
There is sovereign balm in their infinite calm  
And I meet God walking there.

---

**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 24.

## *Oil Fields in California*

Like a too fruitful woman lies the earth,  
Her beauty ravaged as her teeming breast,  
Suckling the titan brood she brought to birth  
Feels strong dark lips in lusty hunger pressed.

Her garlands wither—veils of misty lace,  
Old Ocean's gift, in dingy tatters sway,  
But bounteous, splendid, in her tarnished grace,  
She feeds importunate hunger night and day.

Fruition gilds with light the mother soul,  
As her dark milk feeds wonder progeny—  
Wheels manifold to speed man toward his goal,  
The armadas' power, the winged sky argosy.

So though her virgin loveliness is spent,  
This Science-ravished Beauty smiles, content.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 25.

## *Sunset at Coronado*

A trireme of El Dorado is plunging down the blue—  
Misty oars of silver flame, hull of burnished gold,  
Shrouds of lordlier purple than Tyrian ever knew,  
Over spars of amethyst rainbow clouds uprolled—  
A trireme of El Dorado through seas of faery light  
To the clash of magic cymbals is plunging toward the night.

Her burnished hold bears treasure freight down the shining blue—  
Stout Balboa's dauntless Hope, Cabrillo's golden Dream,  
Holy Serra's flaming Faith conquering anew,  
Questing feet of Argonauts following the Gleam—  
High Adventure's treasure-trove crowded in her hold,  
The transmuted glory-fires of California gold.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 26.

## *Dawn on the Desert*

From the swirling dust of long-dead worlds,  
Lustreless, dun,  
Dully folding,  
With never a glint of allurement,  
I have fashioned a vesture austere to hide my fair stretching limbs  
When he comes wooing—my lusty, red-eyed, importunate lover,  
The Noon-Day Sun.

But when comes the other,  
My Beloved, the wide-eyed, wonder-voiced Dawn!  
Then stand I forth in a garment of excellent beauty,  
A shimmering web I have hidden away  
From the aeons old when I held in my arms  
The inconstant tumultuous ocean.  
Over my smooth, round ivory limbs it falls,  
This sea-shell's dream of a garland—  
Roses, with hearts of silver,  
Enmeshed in the gossamer wings of a swarm of little ghost violets.

So, arrayed for my Love,  
My deep white breast athrob with the golden joy of his nearness,  
I await, in the silence that sings,  
My Lord of the Dawning.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 27.

## *From Point Concepción*

I saw the new day like a flower blossoming,  
When by the sea-edge my footsteps were stayed;  
Dawn was a daffodil spreading golden petals  
In a green bowl, a wide bowl of mandarin jade.  
(Shy songs come winging  
Beckoning me on  
I would be a minstrel  
In the lyric dawn.)

I saw the warm noon lifting from the ocean  
Steeped in rarer pigment than painter ever knew;  
Noon was a gentian flower trailing silken fringes  
In a deep bowl, a wide bowl of old delft blue.  
(Duties throng about me,  
Night comes soon.  
I would be a worker  
In the virile moon.)

Might, majesty and power herald day's departing,  
Beauty, keen and fire-edged as a poet's dream,  
Sunset flames are tulip blooms, crimson, rose and golden,  
Flaunting in a crystal bowl that flings back their gleam.  
(Songs, duties, ecstasy,  
Every good I know.  
I am a monarch crowned  
In the sunset glow.)

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 28.



## *Carmen From the Gallery*

*In Los Angeles*

Dark eyes flashing and blue-black curls,  
Reek of garlic and spearmint gum,  
Swarthy gallants and red-cheeked girls,  
From foot-hill and mesa and town they come—  
Tawdry world in a garish light—  
When the gallery lamps are bright.

Purple headlands of lordly Spain,  
Joy of youth and love's wild desire,  
Music and madness and passionate pain,  
Sway in a mist of rainbow fire—  
Old Romance in a golden glow—  
When the gallery lamps are low.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 29.

## *Summer Storm in Los Angeles*

When a July storm sweeps down from the blue-black Sierras  
The trees in the park murmur together,  
Surprised  
And a little abashed.  
They stand looking away from the mountains,  
Murmuring to each other,  
Like well-bred people at an afternoon tea  
Who talk at random, politely oblivious  
When an awkward maid upsets the tea-wagon.

The pepper tree,  
A luscious Spanish dowager,  
Trailing oriental perfume,  
Vivid in green satin,  
With many antique rubies sewn in her bodice,  
Rustles her fair rotundity aggrievedly.

The royal palm,  
A slender, silver-gowned princess debutante,  
Bashfully digs tiny silver-shod feet into the moist grass,  
And droops shyly  
With a delicious beckoning motion of her graceful limbs.

There is no nonsense about the English oak.  
The cloudless skies of his adopted home bore him at times,  
When memories of gray Atlantic combers,  
Thunderously climbing the white cliffs of Albion,  
Stir in his subconsciousness.  
So he lifts his head challengingly to meet the rushing wind.  
He chuckles in his deep voice,  
Glorying in combat.

As two surprised savage chieftains,  
The sentinel palms  
Stand stiffly at the gate  
In their slender dark nakedness,  
Shaking their tufted headdresses in bewilderment.

The flower-like foreigner,  
The Japanese maple,  
Crouches low, blushing a shy, bright red,

When the importunate wind woos her too roughly.  
She looks toward the blue-black Sierras,  
Thinking in her heart of white Fujiyama.

The date palm,  
Swaggering like a corpulent brigand,  
A bag of gold nuggets clasped closely to his breast,  
Rattles his daggers threateningly.  
Yet he throws his golden nuggets all about him,  
As if offering his treasures to appease  
This sudden wrath of the storm gods of the mountains.

But when the July storm is over  
And the trees in the park look again on the familiar blue skies of California,  
They preen themselves complacently  
As—not daring to look each other in the eye  
They murmur politely, “It was nothing—an awkward contretemps—but diverting.”

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 30.

## *Boulder Dam*

The tawny bastions lean against the sky  
Where stubborn mountains, grudging, stand aside  
As young-eyed science breaks the enchanter's spell  
And wakes the desert with his clean-limbed stride.

Now puny man, grown god-like with a dream,  
Answers that primal word, "Let there be light."  
Arcturus pales as man-made beacons flame,  
Conquering man's immemorial foe, the night.

Broad streams of power that once were wastrel floods,  
Baptize the sterile barrens till they sing  
Glad songs of resurrection and from pale brows  
The veils of ancient desolation fling.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 32.

## *Westward the Course of Empire...*

A smiling sibyl, by her vassal sea,  
Sits California, of the golden sands  
A loom of fate is in her strong young hands  
Through which she draws, with ancient wizardry,  
The fashioning threads of human destiny. . . .  
Bright threads—red trails across untrodden lands. . . .  
The padre's mystic purple. . . . luring strands  
Of virgin gold. . . . jade threads of husbandry.

Impassioned priests of westward pointing stars  
Her votaries come, treading the mountains down,  
Hearing far bells of El Dorado chime—  
Smiling, she weaves—strong warp and patterned bars—  
Then sets the pulsing fabric as a crown,  
A banner, on the temple towers of time.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 33.

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# ARMAGEDDON

*Original division of the 1951 collection*

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## *Robbed*

*"The Senate Repudiates the League of Nations"*

I rode at dawn a chevalier of God  
Lifting the blazon of a glad new day  
At golden dusk all proudly down I lay  
On Flanders' Fields, beneath the trampled sod,  
My winding sheet a starry web of dreams—  
Its woof a world made safe from war's red ban,  
Its warp a far-flung brotherhood of man,  
Its purpled fringe of high hope's rainbowed gleams.

But knaves have stolen that knightly winding sheet,  
Twisting its strands to make a trap of lies.  
Scorned is the splendid Quest, the Dream forgot.  
Shroudless I sink in ultimate defeat,  
No chevalier of God on high emprise,  
But—so much cannon fodder left to rot.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 37.

## *The Voice of Francis Drake*

*From Nombre de Dios Bay*

1917

Where rainbow fires are flashing on the crests of silver foam,  
And strange flowers fling their cloying sweets over a tropic sea,  
And tall palms sway on coral reefs a thousand leagues from home.  
Oh, England, England, England,

I set your empire's bound.  
When, my shadowy sails a-crowding,  
Through the star-strewn billows plunging,  
I sailed the world around.  
Oh, England, Mother England, I faced the might of Spain—

In their shrouds of writhing sea-mist their huge black galleons  
But the God of Storms fought for us and we beat them back again  
And the scepter of the waters from the Castilian Philip wrung.  
In their shrouds of writhing sea-mist their huge black galleons hung;

Oh, England, England, England,  
Hold fast the gift I won,  
When, the wild gray waters ploughing,  
To an unknown splendor hasting,  
I outstripped the setting sun.

Oh, England, Mother England, the foe is at your door,  
And I cannot lie a-sleeping in this sun-drenched foreign grave.  
I hear your navies thunder and the North Sea billows roar,  
Shattering the twilight silence where the deep-sea grasses wave.

Oh, England, England, England,  
I see your white cliffs stand  
With the gray fogs round them wreathing,  
Though three hundred years I'm sleeping  
In this painted sunset land.

Oh, England, Mother England, I rise to meet your foe,  
And my Devon lads come thronging from a thousand English graves.  
As we launch our ghostly galleons in the stormy sunset glow,  
Clear we send our challenge ringing o'er the wild exultant waves.

Oh, England, England, England,  
We break death's leaden thrall



From flower-sweet turf awakening,  
Or from ocean caverns rising,  
We are answering your call.

For the scales of fate are wavering as the cannon thunders roar,  
And the lightnings flash and quiver where the battle billows swell,  
While the waves of living valor break on death's eternal shore  
And men's souls, undaunted, grapple with the unchained powers of hell.

So England, Mother England,  
As of old my place must be  
With the sons of Britain, battling  
Through the jaws of hell and crashing  
Down to death and victory.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 38.

## *The Monk of Wittenberg*

*In the Year of Our Lord 1918*

He stood on the ivory battlements  
Of King Immanuel's town.  
His face in that starry light showed wan;  
His robe, like chill gray mist at dawn  
In sombre folds hung down.

His eyes were dark as troubled pools  
Where gold-gray shadows trail.  
They searched the gleaming rainbow stair,  
For a ghostly cavalcade was there  
Who had followed a flaming Grail.

Beside the lily-tressed gates  
Above the rainbowed stair  
Saint George who braved the dragon's might,  
Beside the Maid in silver white,  
Gave royal welcome there.

Singing, the cavalcade advanced  
Toward King Immanuel's town.  
Like carillons when daylight dies,  
Across the purple-misted skies  
The golden notes rained down.

From far they came, through war's black storm  
By a Grail's white beacon led;  
But in the maze of that song-swept train  
The watcher sought for his own in vain.  
"They've missed the way," he said.

Toward the high white throne a-blossoming  
With Lady Mary's grace,  
The warrior Saint and the martyred Maid  
Led in that ghostly cavalcade  
To stand before her face.

A lily bending toward the sun,  
The Maid bowed at the throne,  
The mailed Saint beside her came—  
Like a still shaft of holy flame

His radiant figure shone.

“These died that other men might live,  
As did thine own fair Son,  
Sweet Mother,” softly spoke the Maid.  
And like a royal accolade  
Queen Mary’s smile was won.

Then there was holy revelry  
In King Immanuel’s town.  
Triumphant hallelujahs rang  
And flower-like bands of virgins sang—  
Each wore a starry crown.

But while down ivory corridors  
The glad procession swept,  
Still one beside the rainbowed stair  
In shadowed sorrow waited there—  
“They’ve lost the way,” he wept.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 40.

## *Battle Song—1917*

Where the balsam towers in fragrance on the rocky shores of Maine,  
Where the orange blossoms smile in Dixie Land,  
Where the purple heights of mountains lift beside the Golden Gate  
Rise the nation's flower of manhood, sword in hand.

### *CHORUS*

Lift the starry banner high!  
Set its bars against the sky!  
Let the torch of freedom flame in glory's van!  
Not for land or gold we come,  
But to guard the weaker one,  
And uphold the far-flung brotherhood of man!

La Belle France, the wide world's sweetheart, stands with dauntless bleeding breast,  
Through the cloud-wrack fair Italia's spirit gleams  
And from far-flung borders England calls her children to avenge  
Martyred Belgium, red Verdun and shattered Rheims.

As the crimson leaves of autumn melt upon the angry flood  
So the lives of men are tossed on death's black tide  
But the glory of their passing, like an organ roll sublime  
Stirs humanity's torn heart with solemn pride.

Till the mailed fist is dust, till the hymn of hate is stilled,  
Till forevermore the battle flags are furled  
We will storm the gates of hell with sword of righteous wrath,  
Till we fling a rainbowed Peace around the world.

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*Author's note.* \$500 prize-winning song. Copyright, 1917, by the Practical Patriot's League.

*Publication.* Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 42.

## *Vox Populi*

*Woodrow Wilson Returns From Versailles*

“Give us the calf of gold,” the people say,  
Shrilling with one accord the coward cry.  
“Set up our ancient gods of yesterday,  
We fear this unknown Voice of far Sinai.”

A Brotherhood of Man is phantom light  
To earth-bound souls who grub in stagnant mire  
But still to men whose eyes are blessed with sight  
Toward God’s white Peace move on the Cloud and Fire.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 43.

## Query

*News Headlines, March 12, 1939:*

*"Pope Pius Enthroned"*

*"Jews Driven Out of Italy"*

Where are you, Carpenter of Nazareth,  
This Sabbath morn, while reverent throngs bow down  
As silver trumpets call God's Vicar forth  
To bear the sacred weight of Peter's crown?

This selfsame dawning sees another throng—  
Your kinsmen Jews, O Christus! desolate,  
Staggering on storm-lashed mountains, driven forth  
As tyrant lust spawns black insensate hate.

Where are you, Carpenter of Nazareth?  
Within the thronged basilica of Rome,  
Where stands God's Vicar in the holy place?  
Or with the wanderers riven from hearth and home?

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 44.

## *New Worlds for Old*

Within the awful hollow of God's hand  
a poet-soul, newly earth-dead,  
stood facing dread Omnipotence.  
Circling the Presence, choring cherubim  
made moving radiance with their flame-tipped wings  
and all the holy place was softly jubilant with song.  
The poet spoke:  
"That earth-ball You set spinning, God,  
I found a worthless thing—  
a ghastly whirl of devastation endlessly repeating,  
swarming with unprized life spawned but to be  
twisted, tortured, flung aside.  
From amoeba to mankind,  
with tentacle or fang, with sophistry or science,  
they batter each other down.  
I struggled to find order in the chaos, but futilely—and so—  
Lord God, I flung your world away.  
Then in a desolating void from insubstantial dream bits  
I built a brave new city for my soul.  
There Reason walks with Beauty at his side,  
and free souls, tuned truly with the Infinite  
lay reverent hands on every spirit joy.  
There winds of thought that sweep the concourse  
of untrammelled minds bring healing on their wings.  
Look on your warring earth, Lord God, then on my lovely city.  
Have I not builded better?"  
Stilled were the golden harmonies that throbbed around the throne,  
the radiancy quivered to dimness,  
and cherubim veiled startled eyes with wings,  
waiting for God  
to shrivel the impious earth-atom  
with annihilating vengeance swift and terrible.

But light ineffable grew from the Presence, and God said,  
"I love my troubled little earth;  
it struggles on and at the appointed hour  
will reach the table-land of truth and light—  
but you have builded well, earth-child, your shining  
Homeland of the Soul."  
God set the poet-soul down gently on the golden pavement:

“See over there,” He said, “that one beside the ivory  
battlement?  
I think you’d like to talk with him—he was a builder  
too, one John of Patmos.  
He built the New Jerusalem.”

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 45.



## *Though Chaos Calls*

The world is brittle and unreal tonight;  
The etched escarpment of the sunset hill—  
Slow slumbrous pulsing of the cobalt sea  
And one new-minted star all golden still.

Inside—a gracious room, the driftwood fire  
Splashing with rainbows tiers of well-loved books,  
Young Hermes poised upon the chimney shelf,  
And at the door a dog that seaward looks—

Nothing is changed—and yet his going  
Drew away the inner substance—made it seem,  
To one who stayed, only a brittle shell,  
The insubstantial fragment of a dream.

He stood a man in uniform, and yet—  
That gamin grin curving the boyish lips!  
But destiny was on him and he moved  
With visioned eyes down to the waiting ships.

“There shall be no more sea!” . . . I understand  
The prophet’s ancient cry, now mine in truth  
My loved and friendly sea grown strangely monstrous—  
Poseidon’s Minotaur devouring youth!

But may he fold this beauty in his thought:  
Though chaos calls below the horizon’s rim  
May this small corner of God’s earth still hold  
All life’s eternal verities for him.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 47.

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# SLOPES OF PARNASSUS

*Original division of the 1951 collection*

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## *Minor Poet*

I climbed a holy hill  
Sheathed in gold flame.  
Down from that glory height  
Winged I came.

I saw the smile of God  
Born of Love's eyes—  
Caught in my web of song  
Love fainting lies.

I heard the morning stars  
Croon to the sea—  
Could I but snare in words  
That mystery!

Oh, Psyche kissed my heart,  
Phoebus my eyes,  
But on my eager lips  
Dumb magic lies!

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 51.

## *Sketches*

### *YOUNG POET*

Winged ecstasy encompassed him  
As diligently he wrought  
To weave a net of magic words  
To snare a shining thought.

### *AGE CANNOT WITHER*

The topless towers of Troy town  
Are dust on Argive plain—  
But down the lengthening ages  
Blind Homer's songs remain.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 52.

## *All Saints' Eve in the Poets' Corner*

The spires of old Westminster  
Pricked through the white moonlight,  
When the blessed dead in the crypt below  
Woke for their hallowed night.

From his canopied tomb Dan Chaucer came,  
The first of that company,  
And his brother bards rose up at his word  
To join in the revelry.

In the throng moved rare Ben Jonson,  
With Milton, grave, austere  
Lord Alfred and hale Browning stood  
Like two fair brothers there.

At Master Chaucer's beckoning  
The minstrels gathered round,  
While tuneful Spenser led the chant,  
A sweet and goodly sound.

All the fair night hours the minster aisles  
Echoed with melody  
Kings, princes, warriors thrilled to hear  
Such gracious harmony.

When a herald breath of the coming dawn  
Crept in at the minster door,  
Dan Chaucer silenced his singing men  
And called for a servitor.

A little page from his station there  
At holy Edward's feet  
Stepped down to do his bidding  
In willing service meet.

"Now bring us flame-bright beakers, boy,  
Brimming with silvered dew,"  
Spoke Master Chaucer to the page,  
"That our faith we may pledge anew."

The lad bore round the brimming cups;  
The bards stood straight and still—  
"Now drink we all, fair gentlemen,

To our Master, singing Will,

“To Will, who bides at Stratford,  
Where no clamor his dreaming mars.  
He walks apart, as the Master should,  
Alone with his Avon stars.”

He raised again the brimming cup,  
And he looked toward Browning then,  
“Now drink we to a lady fair,  
Drink, gallant gentlemen,

“To a singer chaste and glowing  
As the high white stars above.”  
(And her husband flushed, as a lover will,  
When they praised his lyric love!)

“She tarries tonight in Florence,  
This northern English flower,  
Walking apart, as a lady will,  
Alone in her southern bower.

“Now one last cup before the dawn  
Shall hush All Hallows’ singing!  
O mighty mother of all minstrels,  
To you our love goes winging,

“Breaking through laureate marbles,  
Silencing death with laughter.  
I give you, gentlemen, “England,  
To the end of the world—and after!”

Then down those hallowed corridors,  
Sweeping from crypt to rafter,  
Came the ghostly answer “England,  
To the end of the world—and after.”

The spires of old Westminster  
Pricked through the dawning glow,  
As shattering the pregnant silence  
Came the sound of a cock’s shrill crow.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 53.

## *From California*

*To Edwin Markham on his 86th Birthday*

Hail, master-craftsman of our singing guild!  
Glad hearts are lifted in a proud salute.  
Your clarion tones, that down the years have thrilled,  
Age cannot dull nor distance render mute.  
“Send me a rose that you have kissed,” you said:  
A tribute fit for poet ecstasy!  
The rose is beauty’s symbol, and the kiss  
Our seal of reverent love and fealty.

Now distant from our sunset shores you bide  
Where Gotham’s man-made mountains crowd around,  
Walking the bridge of years with gallant stride,  
The people’s bard, with laureate honors crowned.  
In your stout heart is ever-living spring,  
Walk now our golden hills, remembering.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 55.

## *In the Poet's Garden*

*On Edwin Markham's 91st Birthday*

Be with us, master of our singing guild,  
Here in this garden plot, where once you stood  
Lifting our souls to your own prophet height  
With songs of "Beauty, Bread, and Brotherhood."

Beauty, the soul's bright talisman of truth;  
Bread, bounteous gift to all from Mother Earth;  
And Brotherhood, the true accord of minds  
That strive to bring a brave new world to birth.

On all the seven seas, in every land,  
Today man fronts the ancient enemy.  
A tyrant's brutish lust would hold free men  
Body and mind and soul in slavery.

This shall not be! A mightier breed of men—  
Poet and artisan and sage—shall rise,  
The torch of freedom in uplifted hand,  
The light of wisdom in far-visioned eyes.

So, bard we love, your spirit lingers on  
Among these flowering trees where once you stood.  
You walk the upper path while still we sing  
Your songs of "Beauty, Bread, and Brotherhood."

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 56.



## *To John Masefield*

On Britain's laureate hills your confreres stand  
Companioned by bright glory and the sound  
Of mystic drums that throb across the land,  
Timing an empire's march the world around.  
From Chaucer, carolling in a golden hour  
Down through the years they sang of England's fame,  
Splendor of beauty, majesty and power—  
These were rich stuff of songs! And then you came,  
Sounding a sombre chord of souls that break  
Beneath too weighty burdens. Songs bright with tears,  
Or tragic rhythms that stab the world awake,  
The epic chant of men hemmed in with spears.  
Yours is the greatest theme since time began—  
The unconquered struggling soul of common man.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 57.

## *To a Thumbed Volume of “Idylls of the King”*

Thou art of fancy the enchanted home,  
A castle reared of faery masonry;  
Deep-vaulted halls resound with melody  
Keen and onrushing as the wind-swept foam.  
Sword blades of living sunlight ring thy dome,  
And magic casements opening on the sea  
Look where there comes a royal argosy  
Laden with gems from Greece, red-gold from Rome.

Beneath wide portals through the enchanted hours,  
Young mailed warriors ride in armor bright  
Back from fair combat waged with couchant wrong,  
While heralds on thy heavenward-reaching towers  
Lift silver-throated trumpets to the height,  
Flinging on echoing winds Life’s triumph song.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 58.

## *To Robert Browning*

I see you towering like a beacon light,  
Massive and fine, unmoved by wind or wave.  
Though round your granite walls the tempests rave,  
The quenchless lamp burns on, serene and bright.  
Pale choking mists of fear that fill the night,  
Dim ghosts of sorrow rising from the grave,  
All adverse currents ever weakness gave,  
Lose their black menace in that radiance white.

The towering beacon gleams abroad for all.  
The proud leviathan of steel and flame,  
Tall, silver-masted galleons out at sea  
Dip colors to thy light. But glories fall  
Not only on the great. You shine the same  
To guide the little harbor craft like me.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 59.

## *Poet on the Dole*

I cannot sing the old songs now, my friend.  
My magic casements opening on the foam  
Are empty of the argosies that roam  
Down beauty's sea-lanes to the rainbow's end.  
No apples of Hesperides may lend  
Enchantment now, nor many-colored dome  
Of Kubla Khan fling glory, nor heady foam  
On poesy's bright flagon make amend.  
For I have looked on life without her veils,  
And grappled fate without illusion's sword,  
I've watched faith's ivory walls go crashing down.  
Yet, prisoner of hope, I front the gales  
Of untoward circumstance and stoutly hoard  
My soul's inviolate spark and being's crown.

Not all the valor of Thermopylae  
Moves me as shuffling picket lines, where men,  
Dogged, bewildered, strive to turn again  
Onrushing spears of savage penury.  
Once I could bow unthinking reverent knee  
To Mary-Mother, angel-bowered—and then  
I wept my son, still-born in slum-gray den,  
And felt his blight dim Mary's radiancy.  
Brave wings I love of golden Samothrace,  
The wings of Pegasus—of Mercury—  
Poor splendid wings! Fallen now in evil plight  
Turned birds of prey to devastate the race.  
Bitter my wine of song, friend . . . yet still I see  
Man's staggering feet set toward the hills of light.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 60.

## *Beggars*

They torture me, these malformed lyric things,  
With wistful pleadings. One begs a gift of wings  
To lift his luminous body from earth bars —  
And set him on sun highways through the stars.  
Why do you haunt me so, poor lyric sprite?  
Go to some poet God has dowered with might  
And beg of him your wings. Look not to me,  
Weeping your prisoned plight so dolorously.

I am a simple woman made to love  
Familiar, homely things—the blue above,  
The singing green beneath, the dawn uprolled  
Above low friendly hills in misty gold,  
The baby's dimpled knees—his father there,  
That dear contrary cowlick in his hair—  
A neighbor's gossip on a summer's day  
Across a hedge of hollyhocks—I say  
You must not beg of me your wings,  
Wings glory-tipped and strong,  
That you may mount on pinions,  
Full-souled into a song.

Oh, go away!  
Now is the beggar gone and I am free.  
I catch each homely little joy to me  
And fondle its dear face and pray at last  
All poet travail pains are done and past.  
You are so comfortable, little joys!  
Why should I lose your voices in the noise  
Of cymbals clanging on Parnassus road,  
Exchange your gentle soothings for the goad  
That only poets know?—Oh, woe is me!  
My little joys are gone again! I see  
That selfsame beggar lyric dolorously  
A-weeping for his wings,

Wings, glory-tipped and strong,  
That he may mount on pinions  
Full-souled into a song.  
Now cease your plaint, you willful malformed sprite.  
I will go up unto that mountain height  
Where sit the Powers that hold your wings in fee.

I'll barter my soul treasure cunningly  
Until their greed is satisfied, and then  
Spent, but exulting, I'll come down again,  
Daring Apollyon and all evil things  
To ravish me of joy while I hold fast your wings.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 61.

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# THE PILGRIM'S SCRIPT

*Original division of the 1951 collection*

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## *The First Time I Saw Paris*

*June 10, 1940—Paris Falls*

The first time I saw Paris  
A mist like faery lace  
Veiled with intriguing witchery  
Her loveliness and grace.

The trees down misty boulevards  
Stood guardian vestals there  
With milk-white candles in their hands  
And pearl wreaths in their hair.

Through mist old Notre Dame loomed more  
Than miracle in stone  
It towered, the soul's white ecstasy,  
Toward God's eternal throne.

The statues round about the Louvre  
Advanced in cloudy state,  
A glamorous cavalcade who kept  
A rendezvous with fate.

The first time I saw Paris  
In every church there shone  
A many-candled luminance  
In honor of Saint Joan.

But now the altar lamps are dim  
As foolish evil men  
Betray the living soul of France  
As the blond beast prowls again.

Now may another Joan arise  
From Rouen's fiery stake  
To sound the drums of Orleans  
And stab men's souls awake.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 65.



## *Norse Plowboy of the Middle West*

Brown earth, teeming earth—in my heart the thrall of it—  
Endless miring furrows for feet that would be free!  
Storm-lash, wave-crash—I hear the luring call of it—  
Five hundred leagues toward sunrise is the salt blue sea!

Norse men, Saga men—in their hearts delight of it—  
Battling thunderous billows when the wind blows free—  
Corsairs, sea-lords glorying in the might of it—  
Viking sires call through me to the salt blue sea.

Seed-time, harvest-time, all the ordered calm of it,  
Level fields all fenced and trim are prison bars to me!  
Heart-tired, soul-worn, with the earthy balm of it—  
Oh, I am sick with longing for the salt blue sea!

Sometime at dawning I'll heed the luring call of it,  
Leave my dragging plowshare in the furrow and go free.  
Norse men, Saga men, shall guide me from the thrall of it  
Five hundred leagues toward sunrise and the salt blue sea!

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 66.

## Sunrise Chant

*From Pharaoh's Daughter*

### Act I

The Court of the Temple of Isis at Karnak.

A priest is standing on the topmost of the Temple steps, facing toward the Nile.  
Music of the shaken sistrum, followed by a light tap on the cymbal.

### *PRIEST*

God of the Dawn, with thy rose-flame pinions, Horus, awake!  
Rise from thy slumber in cloudy pavilions far from the world!  
From the dark web of Typhon that holds them enmeshed thy people are calling!  
Deep-flaming breath of august Osiris, scatter the shadows!  
Fair golden smile of Isis all-glorious, lighten our darkness!

*(Music of the shaken sistrum. A faint light of dawn appears, spreading in the sky at the right.)*

Unfold, ye sombre portals! The god awakes from his  
slumbers!

*(Music of the shaken sistrum.)*

Desert sands, the Nile's dark billows,  
Brooding meadows big with harvests,  
Sleeping hamlets of the lowly,  
Pharaoh's many-towered cities  
Wait thy coming, golden Horus.  
Lord of the rose-red flame, awake!

*(Music of the shaken sistrum. The sky grows faintly pink in the east, the color rapidly deepening.)*

He comes in flaming apparel!

His chariot of glory rides over the brim of the world!

*(A blow on the cymbal.)*

Dread Typhon folds his shadowy wings. Hail, Horus,  
Rejoice, children of the Nile, rejoice, for thy Lord is come!

*(Music of the shaken sistrum, followed by three blows on the cymbal.)*

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 67.

## *Song of the Nile Maidens*

*From Pharaoh's Daughter*

Dawn-flames on thy waters quiver,  
Oh my Nile, my golden river!  
Tipt with fire thy billows leap  
To kiss old ocean dark and deep.  
Through sun-drenched sands down to the sea,  
Roll on, roll on eternally!

Rainbow lances break and shiver  
On thy breast, my golden river.  
Lotus buds in beauty lift  
Where thy sky-kissed billows drift.  
Past ageless temples to the sea  
Roll on, roll on eternally!

Life ye bring—a gracious giver  
Flows the Nile, my golden river. :  
Deserts blossom at thy smile.  
Heart of the world's heart, the Nile!  
From topless mountains to the sea.  
Roll on, roll on eternally!

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 69.

## *Homeland*

My heart's in Pennsylvania this morning!  
I count her fadeless glories o'er and o'er.  
Verdant hill and flowery glen where the honored name of Penn  
Falls in gentle benediction evermore.

All the rich historic splendor of the quaint old Quaker town  
With the bell that sounded freedom round the earth,  
Valley Forge in sombre glory blazoned in the nation's story,  
And Gettysburg, the Union's red rebirth.

There is old romance in golden California  
And a fragrant crown of balm is Maine's adorning;  
There is beauty evermore by the sweet Potomac's shore—  
But my heart's in Pennsylvania this morning.

There are Pittsburgh's forges flaming in the dawning  
And the Juniata's flow o'er silver bars.  
There the hills of living green fold the nestling vales between  
And the fire-flies dance their magic 'neath the stars.

There October hills flaunt gaily all their sheen of ruddy gold  
To a hushed and tender sky that broods above—  
Oh, a loveliness undying in the mists of memory lying  
Like a garment wraps the gracious land I love!

There is old romance in golden California  
And a fragrant crown of balm is Maine's adorning;  
There is beauty evermore by the sweet Potomac's shore—  
But my heart's in Pennsylvania this morning.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 70.

## *Laurel Leaves From Fagots Bloom*

*Fête Jeanne d'Arc, Paris, May 11, 1924*

Etched on the dreaming blue of Gallic sky  
In bronze, above the teeming Rivoli,  
Today the armored Maid of Orleans  
Still rides with banner lifted valorously.  
The throbbing heart of Paris holds her there  
Deathless in valiant youth, forever fair.

Five centuries since that far morn in May,  
Today Le Tigre, Foch, the President,  
Leading the hosts of France in reverence  
Come bearing wreaths, the knee in homage bent.  
At her young feet they pile in fragrant sheaves  
Blue flowers of Our Lady—laurel leaves.

Once, long ago, to Rouen's market place  
Came mighty men of France. They piled on high  
About her feet fagot and flaming torch. . . .  
Dread flowers of hate the searing clusters lie—  
The sky's soft virgin blue of morn in May  
Is dimmed by smoke wreaths, wavering, evil, gray.

Five centuries—and round your feet, Jeanne d'Arc,  
The fagots of the Rouen market place  
Are blossoming with burnished laurel leaves  
All living green, a miracle of grace.  
What magic holds the years, the fiery doom  
Transfiguring, so leaves from fagots bloom?

The Voice that breathed o'er flocks at Domremy  
Laid in your heart a Dream that pregnant hour  
Flame cannot wither what the soul has borne  
Conquering, it thralls the years with living power.  
The fagot blooms—fadeless the laurels gleam  
By the white alchemy of that undying Dream.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 71.

## *Burial*

Rameses wrapped his crowned dead

*(Bitter his tears)*

In priestly ceremonies to last

Ten thousand years.

In Taj Mahal an empress knew

Death's bleak caress.

Her lord in mocking marble locked

Her loveliness.

In Florence's churchyard, consecrate

To Christian God,

Lone Browning hid his "lyric love"

Under the sod.

But now my love is dead and cold

(My heart the same),

This dear white wonder of her flesh

I give to flame.

Corruption shall not ravish her,

But sweet and whole

Her beauty shall faint out in ash—

White, like her soul.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 72.

## *Mermaid of Capri*

My groves of emerald silence,  
The rose of my coral home,  
My blue sea-meadows, lovely  
With flowers of wind-curled foam.

My turquoise-lacquered kinsmen—  
Lords of the untamed sea—  
All things that once were my delight  
Have lost their joy for me.

For once I saw at Capri—  
So white beneath the moon—  
A bather poised for diving  
Into the still lagoon.

His arms were living silver,  
Pale gold his curling hair,  
And his limbs, twin towers of ivory,  
Were most exceeding fair.

My heart went out to his beauty—  
I called by a charm I know,  
And he came, a silver arrow  
Cutting the blue below.

But for love of the chase I lured him  
Over the star-strewn space  
Till an amorous cloud leaned downward  
To kiss the moon's bright face

Oh, that shadow was my undoing  
When my beauty he could not see  
With a muttered prayer he turned him  
From such perilous ecstasy.

For I was a midnight madness,  
A sweetness of wild desire,  
And he fled my strange enthralling  
Though his veins were throbbing fire.

He climbed the crags to the minster  
And sped through the vaulted door—  
And then my fair man lover

Was lost to me evermore.

For a priest came out with cross and bell  
To the shore of blue Capri  
And he laid a charm on the moon-bright wave  
And a double charm on me:

That no human lover might see again  
The mermaid with amber hair  
Agleam in the curve of a turquoise wave

□

Or hear her singing there.

I have wed the sea-lord of Capri  
And I share his sapphire throne  
But my still heart guards that night of nights  
And the hour that was mine alone.

Oh, sweet are the seas of Capri—  
And I am content to be  
A mermaid queen when the sun rains gold  
And the billows in majesty

Turn to a jewelled glory  
Intolerably bright—  
But oh, his thralling whiteness!  
It haunts me day and night!

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 73.



## *Brother Sandpiper*

Hail, piper by the vasty deep!  
Wee citizen of sand,  
Unawed you flit where Neptune's herd  
Goes thundering down the strand.

A valiant feather-fluff of life,  
A speck of energy,  
You snatch your food beneath the threat  
Of towering swirls of sea.

The fearsome avalanche of jade  
May crash around your toes  
You snatch a tid-bit, scurry safe,  
And thumb your spirit nose.

Against old ocean Doomsday  
Surging toward the night,  
I match my wits, with valorous greed,  
For tid-bits of delight.

Gray billows of oblivion  
Near and nearer roll  
While I scurry, snatch and hold  
Joys to feed my soul.

So you and I mock, piper,  
Life's insensate dare.  
We snatch at joy, defying doom—  
A most irreverent pair.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 75.

## *Sic Transit Gloria*

*At the Tomb of Sir Christopher Wren*

“If you demand a monument, look around”—  
So runs the legend ringed with laurel wreath.  
Uplifting braggart towers, the insentient stone  
Mocks that poor heap of coffined dust beneath.  
A stab of poignant wonder as I read  
Cut through the heart like flash of naked blade:  
For man, a moment only—centuries  
For inert marvels that his hands have made!

When Phidias stood in Athens long ago  
By that white wonder of the Parthenon,  
When conquering Sargon by Euphrates’ tide  
Looked on the sun-red walls of Babylon,  
When Rameses, brooding by the wine-dark Nile,  
Saw Cheops lean against the burning blue,  
I wonder if they felt the self same chill  
And stab of bleak amazement that I knew.

Should heaped-up stones the centuries outlast  
Though hand and brain that builded mouldering lie?  
Dear God—if any sentient God there be—  
Why is man’s day so bitter-brief? . . . Why?

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 76.

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# BYWAYS OF LIFE

*Original division of the 1951 collection*

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## *Dim Heritage*

Priscilla seemed astray in that bleak house  
A captive vestal tending alien fire,  
She drudged an endless round, her asking eyes  
Misted with dreams unlived and young desire.

Throned in a wheel-chair, her grim mother ruled,  
Ordering their empty lives with sharp commands.  
“A right stout worker Prissy is,” she owned,  
Swift needles clacking in her restless hands.

But when Priscilla loitered with the flowers,  
Her beauty-hungered eyes grown mused and rapt,  
Cupping the first young crocus in her hands—  
“You look like something lost,” her mother snapped.

And often, while dim webs of golden dusk  
Wove gracious haloes round her listless head,  
She watched, with vague nostalgic ache, the stars:  
“You moon like a lost calf,” her mother said.

The time droned by. Then on an April day,  
Beneath the silvered daggers of the rain,  
An Italian peddler with his plaster casts,  
Came whistling gaily down the streamy lane.

Priscilla, offering shelter, dimly sensed  
A sparkling joy of life that mocked her lack.  
The gaunt hills smiled in rainbows as he left  
Tendering a small Winged Victory from his pack.

Her worn hands smoothed the cast caressingly,  
Her tired eyes, beauty-haunted, gazed ahead. . . .  
Her mother fumed, “That trash just gathers dust!”  
“It’s kind of pretty, though,” Priscilla said.

A captive vestal still—but sometimes now,  
Across dream billows laced with magic foam,  
With that white rushing joy of Samothrace  
Priscilla’s lost and hungered soul comes home.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 79.

## *Answer to a Pessimist*

You say "Creation's futile course is run  
From chaos dawn to night oblivion" . . .

I've seen new-minted stars on slumberous seas,  
The desert swooning in the sun's caress,  
Young April's mystic sacrament of flowers,  
And known heart's ease in earth's dear loveliness.

I've seen, across the mind's drab commonplace,  
Thought's shining scimitar leap, sudden, strong,  
Cleaving through swarms of witless, yokel words,  
And gain the royal citadel of song.

Respite I've known from shadows closing round  
That well of loneliness where each soul lies,  
When the abyss grew rimmed with sudden flame  
From love's aurora pulsing in the skies.

Beauty and song and love—these I have won,  
And life is good to live—though earth, stars, sun  
Whirl on their course toward black oblivion.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 80.

## *Contact*

The soul of man revolves in loneliness.  
Swung planet-wise in the abyss of time,  
He may not from his orbit prison climb—  
In futile round on round his days progress.

To reach some soul, stark lonely as his own,  
Moving in rhythms fixt from birth to doom,  
He weaves thought cables on a spirit loom  
And flings them out across the dim unknown.

But this soul-reach across the misty void  
Now falls too short, now over-spans the goal  
But still the ache to touch some other soul  
Survives defeat and will not be destroyed.

Contact at last! Though tenuous cables strain,  
He savors life's fulfillment through the stress—  
Love, Beauty, Truth win free from bleak duress,  
And even God is possible again.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 81.

## *Atavism*

How many centuries had moulded her  
In this exquisite blend of snow and fire  
Each line, tone, gesture told how great the height  
Her sires had climbed above primeval mire.  
And then her lover turned and smiled on me. . . .  
A million years of culture toppled straight!  
I felt the primal jungle heave and lash  
In that split second of her eyes' blue hate.  
The reeking slime steamed in arboreal gloom,  
The crusted female monster held secure  
Her mate against marauders. . . . aeons whirled back. . . .  
She turned to welcome me, gracious, genteel, demure.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 82.

## *Differential*

My soul's a roving clipper  
That in safe harbor frets,  
For her lilting keel is yearning  
Toward cobalt minarets  
That tower through golden cloud-banks  
On horizons dim and far  
Where immemorial billows call  
To many a low-hung star.

My brain's the worried tug-boat  
That must tow the clipper in  
To the port of truth and science  
Where realities begin.  
It works up steam of verities  
With fact-smoke, dull and dense,  
To nudge the clipper safely  
To the wharf of common sense.

But let the tug once bank her steam  
And sit in righteous ease,  
The vagrant clipper turns about,  
Makes for the open seas,  
Eludes the tug's safe nuzzling  
And clears the harbor bar—  
For an isle of dreams is waiting  
Beneath an unknown star.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 83.



## *Wings Over All*

Primeval night where slimy things spawn—  
Stir of a quickening breath—  
Wings in the dawn!

Strong men of Nineveh reach from the clod,  
Groping, to fashion  
A winged bull-god.

Ageless the wine-dark Nile billows roll.  
Where the winged scarabaeus  
Speaks of the soul.

Jerusalem desolate, bearing Cain's mark—  
Still the wings of the cherubim  
Shadow the ark.

Over glory-drenched Hellas the centuries long—  
From rainbowed Olympus  
Swift-winged gods throng.

Through Andean jungles, down the highway of kings  
Shattered stones blazon  
The serpent with wings.

Alone with his dreams, through wide startled skies  
Over lost Atlantis  
The Lone Eagle flies.

Up through the aeons, from primeval clod,  
Fashioning pinions,  
Man battles toward God.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 84.

## *An Aeroplane Writes on the Sky*

A thousand poets dreamed your silver wings,  
A thousand seers foretold your hurtling flight,  
A thousand men of science toiled and died  
To train your pinions on that sun-drenched height.

Conqueror and lord of gravitation's law,  
Treader of sun-roads through the uncharted air,  
Dream of the world come true—on azure steeps  
What word of magic do you blazon there?

Against the dome of burning deep turquoise—  
The letters leap in cloudy silhouettes  
Dazzled, the glad eye waits the enchanted word,  
When, lo—you name a brand of cigarettes!

The half-god Hercules stooped in trivial tasks,  
Prometheus chained on cloudy pinnacle,  
And blinded Samson grinding alien corn,  
Were kin to thee in shame, oh winged miracle!

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 85.

## *Dawn*

Pallid, the sea floor heaves sullen to cloud line,  
Hoarsely the burdened waves moan to the shore line—  
Soft stirs God's breath on the gray billows thronging—  
Light, like a sleeper's smile dimples the sky line—  
Flaming, a leaden world laughs with the dawning.

Vaguely the years of life stretch in a cloud world,  
Shadowy mists veil the flash of the real world—  
Folded in silence lie soul blossoms budding—  
Then shines God's smile on a slumbering dream world—  
Glowing, a maiden's heart wakens to loving.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 86.

## *To Ezra A. Healy, D.D.*

*On His Birthday*

There is a river like a faery dream  
Of living beauty in its silver flow  
Its crystal heart Heaven's warm blue kisses know  
Its shining sands like prisoned sun-rays seem.  
Wonder of April daffodils a gleam—  
The laughing daisy banks like sun-flecked snow—  
And towering pines that pierce the sunset glow—  
Gain their rich fragrance from the flowing stream.

So, friend we love, your influence reaches far  
God's love is mirrored in your sunny smile,  
And ever flows your gracious sympathy.  
Your clear heart holds, undimmed, Faith's radiant star,  
As like the river, blessing all the while,  
You move serenely toward God's rainbow sea.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 87.

## *Immortality*

I never saw your mother's face,  
I never clasped her hand,  
And yet we two are well acquaint  
In Psyche's spirit land.

For in the chalice of your love,  
Upheld so reverently  
Her soul's bright essence is distilled  
And overflows to me.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 88.

## *Stillness*

At the center of the maelstrom,  
Science tells us, there is calm:  
Man, through turmoil yearns to capture  
Stillness with its healing balm.

Can the strong of heart, the dauntless,  
By the lode-star of the will  
Reach within life's whirling chaos  
That dim core divinely still?

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 89.

## *Mother*

Your love was a net that drew my soul  
From the void of the cosmic sea  
To its resting place, where your singing heart  
Waited it reverently.

You wove for my soul a living web  
Of your own flesh, clean and white.  
You walked alone with shadowed death  
To bring me safe to the light.

You touched my lips with a winged song,  
You taught me Pity's grace,  
You attuned my ears to the lilt of the stars  
And showed me Beauty's face.

You laid in my heart the joy of the task,  
In my hands an untarnished name,  
You gave me God for my heritage,  
Your faith like a keen white flame.

These are your gifts, O mother of mine,  
You, to whom gifts belong!  
With a love that kisses your garment's hem  
I bring my gift of a song.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 90.

## *Dryad's Lament*

*Apropos of the Volstead Act*

There's a misereere throbbing through the vales of Thessaly.  
Like the immemorial crooning of the ageless weary sea  
Beats its bitter lamentation on the wings of melody.  
“Weep! For laughing Dionysus,  
Madly dancing Dionysus,  
Rosy, vine-crowned Dionysus  
Reigns no more!”

There are shadows falling chilly where the amber clusters twine,  
For the cold white powers have triumphed o’er the rosy god of wine,  
And they drive him from his vineyards, from his gold and purple shrine.  
“Weep for uncrowned Dionysus,  
Wan and broken Dionysus,  
Fallen, conquered Dionysus  
Evermore!”

Sadly moves a long procession through Ionian valleys fair,  
Dryads, oreads, fair bacchantes, nymphs with flower-wreathed hair:  
Swells the moaning chant of sorrow on the honey-laden air.  
“Weep! For laughing Dionysus,  
Madly dancing Dionysus,  
Rosy, vine-crowned Dionysus  
Reigns no more!”

And they follow where he journeys toward that cloud-wrapped holy height,  
Where the conquered gods are sitting in the misted starry light  
Of their lost immortal glory through the long, unending night.  
“Weep for uncrowned Dionysus,  
Wan and broken Dionysus,  
Fallen, conquered Dionysus  
Evermore!”

Now across the sun-drenched pathway, silver-fringed the shadows fall,  
As the gates of high Olympus yawn to greet him last of all  
Where the silent gods are throned in their glory-haunted hall.



“Weep! For cold and white Olympus,  
Starry-bosomed, chaste Olympus,  
Holds the golden Dionysus  
Evermore!”

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 91.

## *Bethlehem Cradle Song*

Dormi, Jesu! Angel pinions  
Shadow now Thy manger bed  
While the white stars through the darkness  
Swing like censers o'er Thy head.

Dormi, Jesu! Child of Wonder!  
Blessed shall they call my name,  
For from heaven's golden glory  
To my lowly arms Ye came.

Dormi, Jesu! Kings and shepherds  
To the Bethlehem stable throng,  
While the shining choirs of heaven  
Chant their alleluia song.

Dormi, Jesu! Distant ages  
Shall Thy conquering power know,  
But tonight, my little nestling,  
Hear thy mother singing low.

Dormi, Jesu! Angel pinions  
Shadow now Thy manger bed,  
While the white stars through the darkness  
Swing like censers o'er Thy head.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 93.

## *Return*

In the white dawning, when the brooding earth,  
Tossing aside her silver-misted veils,  
Bares all her rose-empearled loveliness,  
One walks beside me, as of old—the dear  
Remembered love note crooning in his voice  
Though round him trails the light of many stars.

There was a time when, stark as Arctic crags,  
A livid curtain drooped its sombre folds  
Between me and the spirit-world of death;  
But since that flaming hour when my fair knight  
And his crusader band, their souls ablaze  
With the white passion of their high emprise,  
Sped through that hideous veil and shriveled it,  
I meet him face to face; while loving friends,  
Unknowing, at the altar of my grief  
Like acolytes lift holy censers up,  
Shedding the perfume of their sympathy.

Now one loved mystic, with a seraph's eyes,  
Paints me the towers of a celestial city,  
Far away and very fair, with ivory halls  
And gates of gleaming pearl; another sings  
Of the dread surge of swelling Jordan passed;  
And one speaks softly of no beauty lost,  
Bidding me see the gold of my love's spirit  
Flame in the April wonder of the daffodils,  
Or feel the radiant white of his pure soul  
Call to me from each snowy battlement  
Of misty mountain-top; and one, in awe,  
Tells of a Piercé Hand to guide his steps  
Through looming shadows of the Great Divide.

They do not understand, these kindly hearts,  
That I, the priestess, serve no more with tears  
At the high altar of love's sacrifice,  
But, rather, with exultant reverence,  
Step boldly in beyond the riven veil  
That once, in shadows, hid the Holy Place.  
For nevermore I know a Great Divide,  
Nor Jordan's surge, nor broken arc of life,

Nor cosmic essence changed. For I have seen  
My own love since he passed. His brow is lit  
With hushed new majesty, but still there glows  
Each dear familiar beauty that I prized.  
Oft in the dawn, or in the cool of even,  
When wavering meshes of the golden dusk  
Are tangled in the starry hawthorn buds  
That twinkle on the wall, I walk with him  
And hear his voice, and know that God is good.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 94.

## *Time, the Black Stallion*

Time, the black stallion  
With relentless feet,  
Gallops down life's flowered fields  
Terrible and fleet.

Bruised by his flying hooves  
Lies many a flower—  
Roses of ecstasy—  
Blown from love's bower—

Asphodels of childhood faith  
Trampled and torn—  
Ambition's fragrant bays  
Plowed under thorn—

Green grass of common joys  
Bruised in the sod—  
Violets of serenity  
Trodden under clod—

In life's afternoon  
Bathed in amber glow,  
I mourn Time's trampling hooves,  
But still I know

Perfume of crushed flowers  
Rising from the ground  
Weaves a coronation robe  
To wrap me around.

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**Publication.** Collected in *Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* (Exposition Press, 1951), printed page 96.

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*Open scans, discovery routes, and saved research*

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### *Internet Archive search*

Searchable scans and metadata for books and periodicals associated with Gaw.

### *HathiTrust catalog*

Catalog route for *Pharaoh's Daughter* and related records.

### *Modernist Journals Project*

Complete public-domain *Scribner's Magazine* issues containing “A Barnegat Love-Song” and “The Minor Poet”; both issues are saved locally.

### *Library of Congress — Elinor Remick Warren Papers*

Finding aid locating Gaw's permission letter concerning “The Plowboy.”

### *Poetry Explorer — Gaw locator*

Source locator for “Woodrow Wilson Returns from Versailles”; the page supplies bibliographic identification and first line, not the full poem.

### *Phi Mu Creed Centennial*

Organizational history attributing two 1934 Creed additions to Gaw.

### *Golden Nugget Library — 1922 directory excerpt*

Online transcription of Gaw's contemporary biographical entry.



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The 1951 collection carries a copyright notice. A definitive U.S. renewal audit has not been completed, and this edition does not assert public-domain status for the collected text. The earlier U.S. periodical witnesses and the 1928 play are public domain by publication date; individual scans and modern web pages may have separate use conditions.

The 1922 portrait is a documented likeness of Ethelean Tyson Gaw. The cover uses inherited project artwork and is not presented as a historical scene or likeness. Archival captions distinguish original pages, derivative clippings, and modern documentary images.

The birthplace conflict, uncertain marriage day, unverified teaching history, absent family papers, reported *Misty Sundown*, and manuscript leads are stated as unresolved. Absence is recorded rather than repaired by invention.

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# COLOPHON

## *Production record*

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*Drums of El Dorado and Other Poems* was edited by Brian Kim Stefans for The Text-Tech Papers and the Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry series.

Set in EB Garamond on a six-by-nine-inch cream page with mirrored margins, linked contents, PDF bookmarks, one archival section, chronological source divisions, and one poem opening per page. Built from the complete locally retained 1923 excerpt and 1951 scan and verified by full-page rendering.

The edition contains 65 poem witnesses: all six Gaw poems in the 1923 anthology excerpt and all fifty-nine poems in the 1951 collection. The fifty-nine-poem collection census corrects the earlier dossier's count of fifty-one.