



GEORGE HUGH BANNING

Found in a Derelict

A BOOK OF VERSE, PERIODICAL WITNESSES, AND ARCHIVAL RECORD

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

A TEXT-TECH PAPERS PROJECT

Extremes and Moderations

Early Southern California Poetry

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.

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

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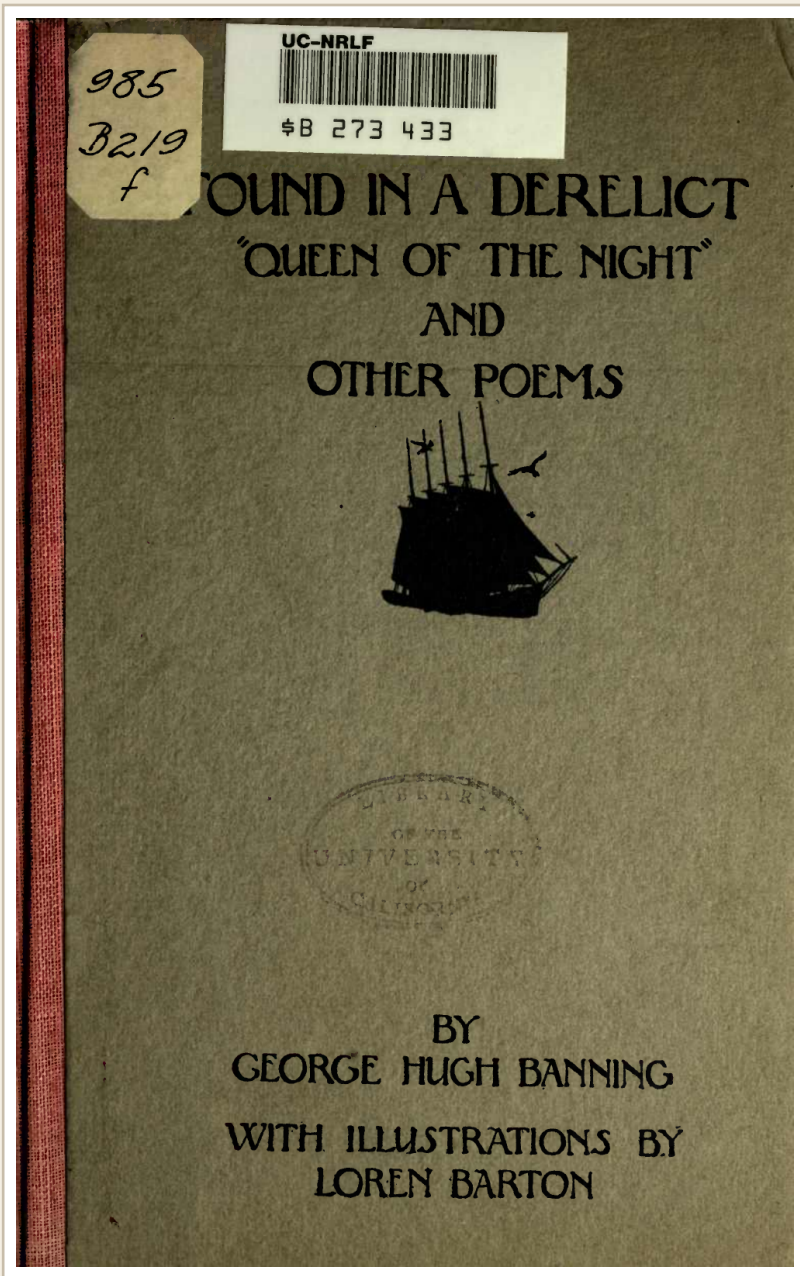
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ARCHIVAL IMAGES AND ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS

The 1919 book, Loren Roberta Barton's designs, and early periodical witnesses



Cover of the 1919 first edition of Found in a Derelict, University of California copy.



We beheld an island dim.

Loren Roberta Barton, 'We beheld an island dim,' illustration for the title poem, 1919.



'Here's number three!'

Loren Roberta Barton, 'Here's number three,' illustration for the title poem, 1919.



DESPAIR
By PERHAM NAHL

Plate No. 70

Perham Wilhelm Nahl, Despair, the painting to which Banning's poem responds.

withstanding stray American newspaper opinions to the contrary, "taxation without representation" does not exist in the United Kingdom, which has borrowed many leaves from our "American book," and has added new and original radical leaves to its own.

Lloyd George's frank utterance makes it positively certain that the old conditions never will be renewed in the British empire. Whether the long-voteless king and the powerless peers will be "continued," even in legal fiction, might be open to question if it were not for the baronial "elevation" of expatriate Astor. This indicates that the circus department of the British social system will be preserved "for auld lang syne;" but henceforth it will be merely a harmless side-show.

D. G. B.

MARINES

[George Hugh Banning is of the second generation of native-born Bannings in Los Angeles. His father, Hancock Banning, a musical genius, was born in Wilmington (Los Angeles), and his younger son, George, now a law student at the University of California, will celebrate his twenty-first birthday St. Patrick's Day of this year. His accomplished mother is the daughter of the late Colonel George Hugh Smith, a lawyer of brilliant mind and fine scholarship, whose literary talents seem to have centered in his grandson and namesake. It is natural that the younger Banning should sing of the sea. He has been literally reared on the Pacific ocean, within sight and sound of which he has lived from his earliest recollections. His poetry reveals color and imagery to an unusual degree in one so young. We shall watch his development with great interest.—Editor The Graphic.]

My Song

The sea turns the pages of darkness
For the jewels of her temple to see;
The wind puts the stanzas to music,
And my soul sings the music to me.
O, God, could I sing as my soul does
I'd sing to the world-wide throng,
And the world, as the wind, would be singing
With me to the soul of my song.

Off the Reef

Have you ever heard the splash, splash, splashing as I
go,
And the foaming, combing ruffle on my pearly, curly
crest?
Have you heard the swish and splashing on the rocks
where I am dashing
As I roll from out the rainbow arch of triumph in the
west?
I greet the merry babble of the rushing rivers' rabble
As they turn their troubled torrents to the forces of
my foam.
Then athwart the sea I dash to the music of my splash;
And I'm laughing at the lightning darts that cross
the stellar dome.
I'm the god of force and motion; I'm the monarch of
the ocean.
The ever-changing, ever-moving mass of water, I,
Though I splash, and roll, and change, to myself, I'm
never strange,
For the blue that heaven gave me is the light that
can not die.

The Flying Merman

When the crystal sea, in the dead of night,
Is awed by the tranquil sky;
And the world is wrapped in a purple light
As the queen of the stars sails by;
I swim from the depths of a silent dream
In search of the distant light;
Like a streak of gold I glide on the beam
That paves the path of night.
Then I fall and am lost in the blue chiffon
All spangled in gold and white;
Again, and again, I appear but am gone
Like the flash from a beacon light;
Then I fly to the lure of the sapphire dome,
To frighten the moon and Mars;
Then fall to scatter the spangled foam
That shines like a million stars.
Like will-o-the-wisp or a lightning dart;
Like a goblin or silver sprite;
Or the arrow that pierces a lonely heart
Adrift on the waves at night,
I know the world, yet none knows me,
As silently I roam
From the stars of the sky to the purple sea,
Where I vanish in snow-white foam.

—GEORGE HUGH BANNING

Banning's first Los Angeles Graphic poetry feature, January 22, 1916: profile, 'My Song,' 'Off the Reef,' and 'The Flying Merman.'

The bat, swift-flying to deceive
The foeman, winging forth at eve
Long tarries and is loath to leave
This sweet-toned ancient mission bell.

The spider spins its silken line
Unhindered, 'til the weavings fine
With silvery festoons half entwine
This sweet-toned ancient mission bell.
Ah! if the silent tongue could tell
How oft it cast melodious spell,
In cherished memory would dwell
This sweet-toned ancient mission bell.
—ARTHUR MACDONALD DOLE

The Calm

Capella rises to her throne
And wears a wintry crown;
While the scepter of Orion
To the wilted sails points down.
The clouds, like drifting hulks of ice,
Have quenched the frozen moon;
The sea, a sheet of icy steel
Has ceased her fettered tune.
The seagull, like a ghost of dawn,
Appears, but fades away,
As the scarlet geni of the west
Has swallowed up the day.
The white sails seem to tremble, for
They see the phantom pass
That glides away with all the world
Except a sea of glass.
And now there's only silent sleep
On quilts of mist that fall;
But while Thy mirror sleeps, O God,
It dreams, and echoes All.
—GEORGE HUGH BANNING

The Unseen Singer

Hearken! A jubilant spirit haunts this noon,
A happy soul that bubbles o'er with mirth,
A nymph invisible, decreed to earth
To voice the highborn ecstasies of June.
Listening beneath these fragrant boughs, in tune
With life, more than a Midas am I worth,
Such nectar mine as leaves the heart no dearth
Of throbbings eloquent—a kingly boon.
Adieu! A soaring music wafts me far
Beyond old Sorrow's realm, unto a shore
Of loveliness, and peace without alloy.
And now, remembering still her native star,
That spirit yet a sweeter strain doth pour—
Either I'm Joy, or kiss the lips of Joy!
—CHARLES G. BLANDEN

Spring

Hyacinths and daffodils

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'The Calm' in the Los Angeles Graphic, March 18, 1916; revised as 'Becalmed' in the 1919 book.

INTRODUCTION

A maritime poet between family history, war, journalism, and Pacific travel

A Pacific childhood and a literary inheritance

George Hugh Banning was born in Los Angeles on March 17, 1895, the son of Hancock Banning and Anne Ophelia Smith Banning. He was a grandson of Phineas Banning, whose shipping, wharf, railroad, and stage enterprises helped shape Wilmington, Los Angeles Harbor, and Santa Catalina Island, and a namesake of his maternal grandfather, the lawyer and Confederate veteran Colonel George Hugh Smith. A 1916 profile in the *Los Angeles Graphic* called Hancock Banning a musical talent and traced the younger Banning's literary gift to the Smith side of the family. The same notice emphasized something more immediate: he had been reared within sight and sound of the Pacific.

Berkeley, the sea, and first publication

By 1915 Banning was a student at the University of California, Berkeley. The *Graphic* introduced him to Los Angeles readers in January 1916 as a law student about to turn twenty-one, printing 'My Song,' 'Off the Reef,' and 'The Flying Merman.' In March it printed 'The Calm,' later revised as 'Becalmed.' These witnesses show that the marine lyrics of his first book were already circulating before American entry into the First World War. Banning's later foreword describes a more radical education: shipping out before the mast of a windjammer, encountering storms, fire, mutiny, unfamiliar coasts, and the disciplinary life of a working vessel.

War, illness, and a Red Cross book

During the First World War Banning served as a lieutenant in the United States aviation corps at Fort Worth, Texas. Newspaper reports preserved in the local research record describe a grave illness in early 1918 and three operations before his return to camp that June. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* appeared in Los Angeles in 1919. Banning wrote that the title poem drew on experiences and fragments recorded in the part of the world it describes. The book was also a wartime benefit: the Murrell Printing Company produced it at cost, the Aristo Engraving Company assisted, Loren Roberta Barton supervised its art, and every cent of the sale price was directed to the Red Cross through the Red Cross Shop.

Artists, writers, and an international horizon

The acknowledgments locate Banning in a vivid Southern California network. Barton, an important California artist and book illustrator, was not simply commissioned to decorate the volume; Banning credited her with supervising the whole production from an artistic standpoint. He also thanked Wayland Smith and Dhan Gopal Mukerji for suggestions on the manuscripts. 'Despair' responds to a painting by Perham Wilhelm Nahl. Together these names place the young poet among Bay Area and Los Angeles circles in which maritime travel, visual art, literary modernity, and wartime service overlapped.

Journalism, marriage, and *In Mexican Waters*

On May 1, 1920, Banning married Gladys Armstrong in Berkeley; a contemporary notice identified him as working for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. His maritime career then widened from lyric and narrative poetry into travel writing. He served as second mate on G. Allan Hancock's yacht *Velero II* and visited the Channel Islands, Guadalupe, Alijos Rocks, Clarion, Clipperton, Socorro, the Tres Marías, and ports and inland routes along Mexico's Pacific coast. *In Mexican Waters* (1925), illustrated with expedition photographs, records these voyages and acknowledges his wife as shipmate, collaborator, and practical editorial partner.

History, public service, and later life

Banning later collaborated with Captain William Banning on *Six Horses* (1930), a substantial history of western stagecoaching whose documentary reach extended from family memory into archival research. He also published maritime articles in popular magazines and work connected with the Zoological Society of San Diego. Census, directory, and family records place him successively in Carmel, Pasadena and South Pasadena, and La Jolla. He worked as a journalist and author and later served as postmaster of South Pasadena. His marriages were to Gladys Armstrong, Helen Christianne Shoff, and, in 1967, Rowena Ruth Lockett. He had a son, Douglas, and a daughter, Marianne, and was also survived by a stepdaughter, Susan Crutchfield.

Death and literary position

Banning died in La Jolla on October 15, 1989, aged ninety-four. His obituary described him as the last surviving grandchild of Phineas Banning, but his own record is more than a family footnote. The 1919 poems convert maritime labor, Pacific color, wartime crisis, romantic allegory, and inherited privilege into an uneasy first-person poetics. The early periodical variants show revision in motion; the later prose books show the same impulse redirected toward exploration and western history. This edition restores the whole poetry book, its foreword and visual collaborators, and the periodical states that can now be read beside it.

EDITORIAL NOTE AND SOURCES

Textual policy, authority, scope, and research limits

This reading edition follows the original 1919 University of California scan as its textual authority. The incomplete earlier project PDF and OCR were used only as finding aids. Every printed poetry page was rendered at high resolution and reread; narrow-source wraps were rejoined, real stanza divisions were retained, dialect spellings and nautical vocabulary were preserved, and obvious recognition debris was removed. The complete foreword, dedication, epigraph, book sequence, section divisions, original illustration record, and final acknowledgment are restored. Periodical states are transcribed from complete California Revealed issue scans. Publication information follows each poem. The edition does not claim that the four recovered *Graphic* witnesses exhaust Banning's periodical poetry: the 1919 acknowledgment also names *Occident*, *Air Currents*, other local publications, and an anthology edited by Henry T. Schnittkind, witnesses that remain to be fully collated.

1. George Hugh Banning, *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems*. Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919. Complete University of California scan.
2. *Los Angeles Graphic*, January 22, 1916, p. 4, California Revealed institutional scan.
3. *Los Angeles Graphic*, March 18, 1916, p. 4, California Revealed institutional scan.
4. George Hugh Banning, *In Mexican Waters*. Boston: Charles E. Lauriat; London: Martin Hopkinson, 1925.
5. Captain William Banning and George Hugh Banning, *Six Horses*. New York: Century, 1930.
6. 'George Hugh Banning - Facts,' local census, directory, military, marriage, and death-index compilation.
7. 'George Hugh Banning, 94; Grandson of the Developer of Catalina Island,' *Los Angeles Times*, October 18, 1989; preserved in the local author file and transcribed by Islapedia.

8. Hancock Banning Jr., *The Banning Family in Southern California*. UCLA Oral History Program, 1971.
9. Huntington Library, Banning family papers and catalog description.
10. *Extremes and Moderations* series production handoff and Julia Boynton Green critical-edition reference PDF, August 2026.

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

The 1919 account of experience, collaboration, and Red Cross publication

To learn from the experiences of others is an art few can sincerely boast of. The things we are taught while bouncing over the rough spots here and there are perhaps the very things Grandfather could have told us had we shown a willingness to listen. Still it is this impetus, this innate and mute initiative, that not only dominates but becomes intricate and pervasive in youth. It was not until late introspection that I was impelled to realize that the motives of my venture—the venture that frames the setting of this book—were not the motives that I had laid down before my inquisitors. Had I told them the true reasons, I should have admitted that about myself which perhaps they had outgrown, that which they could have no sympathy with, but that which constructs the elemental substance and soul of youth. And so I subconsciously fashioned an ultramotive and refused to admit, even to myself, that it was not intrinsic. Thus disguised, I passed the censors and stepped into a new world.

I was a sailor!—a long-haired, tar-dobbed, hickory-clad, sun-blackened, ‘sea-dog’! I was destined to cross the ocean before the mast of a “wind-jammer,” to visit strange lands, strange seas, and strange people; to encounter destructive winds, fires, and mutiny; in short, I was to become acquainted with the real life of the sea. Here I learned that the stories we read of such an existence are not the mere pages of a book, nor the creative genius of Stevenson, Conrad, and Masfield; nay, the romance of the sea is immortal, its powers—unconquerable, and its story is never told.

In the following pages I have taken much from the life as I have found it. “QUEEN OF THE NIGHT” was roughly outlined and many fragmentary sections were written in just that part of the globe the verses describe. In fact, the greater part of the experiences are true! Of course such a tragedy in the first person would never have left the author to write this foreword since the entire poem was presumably FOUND IN A DERELICT; nevertheless the reader must not fail to detect an allegory rather than an impossibility.

Although few of the subsequent verses pertain to the present time, still it was conceived that they may yet do their bit, and it is thru this media that the present edition has found its way to the printers. Miss Barton has again allowed herself to be drafted, as she has done so many times before, in giving her time and best efforts to the Red Cross with all the enthusiasm and purpose of the men ‘over there.’ During the process of publication, when we encountered all the evolutions and concomitant mysteries of many printing presses, she was not only the illustrator but she was the supervisor of the entire book from an artistic standpoint limited as she was by the “business management”. Picture yourself asking a printer to put out a publication at cost in these times. But because it is “these times,” because the Red Cross “NEEDS THE MONEY,” and because every cent paid down for this book is FOR the Red Cross, The Murrell Printing Co. has fallen in line and has done just that thing. Next to follow was the Aristo Engraving Company of Los Angeles, and it is needless to say that their generosity is appreciated. *In hoc signo vincemus!*

In conclusion I wish to thank Mr. Wayland Smith, Mr. Dhan Gopal Mukerji, and my dear mother for the interest they have taken and the valuable suggestions they have offered in the reconstruction of the original manuscripts. We leave the rest—perhaps not the easiest task—to the saleswomen of THE RED CROSS SHOP.

—George Hugh Banning.

To my mother

*Love is not the maiden,
But the heart that finds her fair;
Nor happiness the harbor,
But the wind that blows us there.*

FOUND IN A DERELICT

The complete title poem, 1919

Found in a Derelict: “Queen of the Night”

“And this old schooner bears that hoodoo name!”
The old sailmaker paused. ‘It seems a shame!’
Said *he*, measuring off a stitch, ‘Here’s number two!’
He was sewing a seaman’s coffin, ‘But it’s true
The name, ‘Queen o’ the Night,’ belongs to a plant—
Why they named this old hulk that I can’t
Quite understand. A pretty name, no doubt;
And a pretty flower too—hey there, lookout!
You’re steppin’ on it,—see!—no matter how
Black and smutted up he was, somehow
We want the clothes he’ll sleep in sort o’ clean
To hide ’im like. But as I was sayin’, I seen
That flower grow on islands not so far
From where we waller now. ‘The Southern Star,’
She called there once. How fond they was of me—
Them native girls: there’s one especially!—
Well sir, ’twas a happy, happy hour!—
I sort o’ see her there. She picked a flower
And told me how it faded in the light
Of early morning, so, ‘Queen o’ the Night’
She calls it, or in French (they spoke it there
Sometimes), ‘La Reine de la Nuit,’ so that is where
This helpless, hell-bound jammer gets the name.
‘May be all right enough, but all the same
That name and this here sleepin’-bag remind me
Of all the hell I thought I’d left behind me.
And here we are, half calmed, the old hulk drinkin’
Enough salt water—well—I call it *sinkin’*!
Damn this needle!—*rusted*!—yep, I’ll say

All the bloody gears 'as seen their day!

"He paused and went to humming some quaint lay.
I left him there. Slowly turning away
Half dreamingly, I sought the jolly-boat
To be alone; then, half asleep, I wrote,
Or emptied from my soul each mystic thought
That the old sailmaker's babblings had brought."

The Schooner

*"At Capricorn near Tuomotu's seas,
Where all the world is summer and the breeze
Blows warm with salty fragrance; where the sun
Sets glossy clouds to steaming as they run
And disappear like sylphs into the sky;
Where two-arched rainbows live, and love, and die;
Where cannonading meteors, at night,
Like star-shells, flood the glossy world with light
While tumbling shadows stagger o'er the brine
In drunk stupidity. Where sparkling wine
From phosphorescent waves keeps glowing—blinking—
Till man nor ghost of man can hold from drinking
Wine the cloud-men feed their flocks of sheep on,
Wine that ship and crew fall fast asleep on:
Here a spell-bound schooner slept and snored
With four-and-twenty seamen there aboard.
She waved her chafing sails about each mast
As one by one the oily grounders passed;
She swayed, and in her dreams she moaned a song,
Or jerked her booms impatiently, 'How long!'
She cried, for all her blocks and shackles,
Brales, braces, halliards, sheets, down-hauls and tackles,—
All were worn. God, what monotony
Of weeks and weeks and weeks! The agony
Of days that, like the world, went round and round
Seemed dull and endless. All the world was bound
In beauty unobtainable. But she
Kept drinking, drinking, drinking, hopefully
That wonders of the world would be her lot—
BUT SHE WAS SINKING, AND SHE KNEW IT NOT!"*

“Thus the verses ended. Innocent
Was I of words or what the phrases meant;
The occult warning faded with the light,
And dreams of magic islands, through the night,
Bore me to the ‘vex’d Bermoothes’ where dwells
The dwarfish Caliban; then brassy bells,
Bells, bells, bells!—that sickening clang
Was drowning everything; they rang, and rang!
Something—wrong! Indeed I waked to know
That those upon the ‘Dog’ had turned below;
My watch turned to. Half numbed with stiffened neck
I blundered from the jolly-boat to deck.”

II

“Two months—two long and weary months at sea
We grumbled through our toils. Impatiently
We dreamed of all but that which spread its charms
Broadcast about us. Nay, our aching arms
Reached for that which we, two months ago,
Had cursed and left. But now we suffered. Oh,
What folly! What childishness! What involution
The hungry wanderlust—that mad solution
Of *Finding*—leads us to! What were we seeking?
Why were we here upon this rolling, leaking
Schooner? Lo, the fuse of mutiny
Was burning through the focsle, while silently,
Watch and watch, the pump shifts toiled away,
Watch and watch she *leaked* until one day
The tired crew rebelled: they’d pump no more!
Triumphant in revolt we turned for shore.

“A day, another day, till, through the clouds
Clustering like dark and dingy shrouds
About the shade of some long sought oasis, we
Beheld an island dim. In ecstasy
The wave-worn hearts leaped up, the tiding spread.
Then, like a sudden shock to wake the dead,
The great ship trembled, listed hard a-lea,
A fresh breeze off the quarter waked the sea,

The tiny white caps, through the glassy waves,
Like ghosts of Hallowe'en came from their graves.
Along the salt-white rails with straining eyes,
Our gaze anticipating Paradise,
We stood, all silent lest our voices break
The wondrous spell. We feared that we should wake.
"How oft' have such anticipations led
Where nude Reality entombs her dead;
How oft' have drunken dreams been torn away
To crypts where ghouls of fact consume their prey.
But thou, Anticipation, make us brave;
And Humor, lead us smiling to the grave.

"This in one fleet trice imbued my mind
To see those anxious faces in the wind
With tousled locks and beards men grow at sea
Only to postpone the monotony
Of seeing each same face without a change
Day after day. Oh God! for something strange!
Something dreamed about but never seen!
Thus every gaze was fixed upon the sheen
Of fire clouds that hung above the crown
Of one small isle—perhaps a little town—
Where waving, dreamy palm-trees grew and made
A place of rest, pouring down their shade
To thirsting souls. Scarce God could understand
Two months at sea—then *land!* Oh peaceful land!

"Land! and such as this!—Oh magic isle,
Be thou as we see thee 'neath a file
Of gold-rimmed clouds, and thou thyself a part:
A sky-grown dream; a heart within a heart.
On sang my soul, and, ere the song was done,
The cloud men, through their fire looms, had spun
A blue and crimson tapestry bedight
With clustered stars descending with the night.

"And there the Book was read—the only part
That through those long, dark months we'd learned by heart.
The old sail-maker bowed his head in prayer;
He was the only one who seemed to care;

To have his careful work thrown overboard
Was worth a thought, and so he thanked the Lord
That the mate was gone and never coming back,
Carefully tucked and sewed within the sack
That his own hands had made. But all the rest
Were thinking of the island for the blest:
To-morrow's port. Ye were the chosen few
To walk in Paradise. What cared our crew
For one thus damned?—With these our prayers expended,
The plank was tilted up. A long day ended.”

III

“Early dawn. A lonely lookout—I,
Listening to the bubbles splashing by,
The restless sheet-blocks jerking at their bales,
The lazy down-hauls slapping at their sails,
The clatter, clatter ‘neath the focsle-head
Of fire buckets idle in their bed,
Listening to the breeze against the leech
Of trembling jibs, or wondering at the reach
Of two spread arms above the other spars
Embracing one vast universe of stars,
Or watching gold-green phosphorous mites that play
Along the water line to fade away
And die in whirling masses as they break
The liquid fire film along the wake.
“But lo! from purple springs a tinted gray!
One by one the star-lamps burn away;
One by one the clouds, like ghosts reborn,
Blush at their own splendor till the morn
Has made the world an opal set in gold.
Lo! the vapor curtains rise!—Behold!
A dream incarnate! *God!* before my eyes,
The isle, the sea, the world is Paradise!

“As times of plenty presage future dearth,
Dream bubbles burst and tumble back to earth:
There at anchor ‘neath the white-hot sun
Boxes, drums, and barrels; one by one
We hauled aboard. How like small children—we,

On Christmas-eve when blind anxiety
Anticipates tomorrow's ample store;
Thus all our hearts had drifted to the shore
Where, through the trees, along the cool highway,
Shadow children joined in shadow play;
Shadow men—dark men—with naked feet,
Tripped noiselessly along the shadow street;
Red, yellow, blue and purple, here and there,
Like drunken Autumn leaves without a care,—
This way and that. What difference to a band
Of happy shadow-folk in Shadowland?

“But still in passive greed we drudged away
Until the bell was sounded and the day
Was carefully cashed within the money drawer,
While we, with empty pockets, pulled ashore.
Empty pockets? Nay—deeper curses:
Our hearts were empty—empty as our purses.
Fools!—blind fools!—We grumbled as we walked,
Cursing, vowing vengeance, as we talked.
The breeze had turned its song to mockery,
The dusk was pouring money in the sea!
The shadow children fled, the beauties all
Crumbled with the Shadow-city wall.
Yet there we were 'midst all the things we'd sought:
We walked in Paradise, and knew it not.”

IV

“The crowd dispersed. Alone, forlorn, I went
Along the shabby pathway. Discontent
Walled in my soul with purpose to preclude
That art of panning gold from solitude.
But lo! before the mural blind was made
There came a voice! a song! My soul obeyed!
Half dead, it stirred. It rose. It cried aloud!
In modulation shook the mountain cloud!
The echoes crashed. They thundered 'twixt the stars.
The moon dropped out, then Jupiter and Mars!
My breath was gone, and ere my wits returned,
Darkness in celestial pyres burned.

“Upon the moon-paved waters of the bay,
Hours, years, nay ages, sailed away.
Behold the dancing shadows ’round the trees!
What happy dryads own more grace than these?
I watched until beside me smiling there
Stood a maid with flowers in her hair,—
White flowers—white like lilies—with such grace
They seemed to drink sweet nectar from her face
And shine with sparkling dew the silvered skies
Had drunk when drinking tear-drops from her eyes.
Beneath the pillared foliage, half entranced,
We rested while the other shadows danced.
She spoke. I spoke—or whispered lest I wake
The emerald dream that drifted from the lake.
She closed her eyes; perhaps the dazzling light
From her own soul had closed them. Ah, how bright
Even to me that midnight darkness seemed!
Perhaps I closed my eyes! Perhaps I dreamed!

“For, as I gazed upon that form so rare,
She moved, she picked a flower from her hair!

“Take this,’ she said, ‘this blossom, pure and white—
‘La Reine de la Nuit’ *pour vous*, ‘Queen of the Night’!
It is my soul blossoming when the mist
Of night has fallen down on earth and kist
The folded petals. Lo! as if from dreams,
It moves, it turns its head, it seems
To wake, to see, to drink the harmony
That echoes from the lyres of sky and sea;
It catches every trembling light that cleaves
Its blinky pathway through the waving leaves;
It sings of starland; bathes in fragrant bliss—
Take it—my flower—here is Happiness.’

“I seized the trembling plant. My passions grew.
I bore it to my breast as if I knew
Its life was mine; as if I could devour
That beauty from the soul that made the flower.
I clutched it! kissed it! called its name aloud!
Oh God, it seemed its petals were endowed
With all my senses, yet some sense divine—
I knew not what—but swore it should be mine!

“I gazed upon the maiden lying there.
I gazed upon the flower to compare:
They looked the same; ah me, I hardly knew
Which blossom was the brighter of the two.
As the water images the bower,
Her being was inscribed upon the flower.
It was her soul, so bright—so bright that she
Was *All*, *Perfect*, *Pure* as soul could be.

“But envy comes to conquer, envy burns
What little virtue man’s poor being earns.
I clutched her, kissed her—God could not have stayed me!
She, like the flower, trembled and obeyed me.
I drank the wine that she alone could offer!
I crammed her love like gold into my coffer!
I gouged the moon and stars from out their sockets
And crumpled clouds to fit my empty pockets.
The world—the universe—was in my power!
Drunk with delight I gripped the glowing flower
And with it staggered to the open sea:
A conqueror with spoils of victory.”



“Early dawn. A lonely lookout—I,
Listening to the bubbles splashing by,
The restless sheet-blocks jerking at their bales,
The lazy down-hauls slapping at their sails.
There behind me fades the coral bay,
The jagged mountains slowly blur away;
The dark mist falls, and now the black clouds take
The liquid turquoise from our bubbling wake.

‘Come back!’ I cried, ‘Come back!’—there came a dull
 And mocking laughter from a passing gull.
 ‘Come back! Come back!’ again, again I cried!—
 Thus with a *hiss* the sea and sails replied.
 I stretched my aching fingers in despair.
 I reached, I grasped—I grasped the vapid air!
 Half mad I fell. (Still dimmer lay the strand.)
God! What is this? The flower in my hand!
 Wilted, drooping, tarnished and forlorn,
 With bleeding stem and streaked petals torn,
 It lay, a helpless victim of my hand,
 Dying like the hills of Shadow-land;
 Dying like my soul, oh flower white,
 Farewell forever! Love, ‘Queen of the Night’!

“Eight bells! The watch was done. Each seaman slunk
 From wheel, deck watch, or locker to his bunk.
 The Starboard men, half dazed from sleep, like ghosts,
 Relieved the wheel and filled their sailing posts.

“‘Turn in!’ the lookout said, ‘Eight bells!—I swear
 You look most like the Devil standin’ there—
 A-standin’ there before the Starboard light
 All green and pale-like . . . Lordy, what a night!’
 I turned away but stood behind the mast
 And leaned against the pin-rail. All aghast
 I watched the silhouettes in shabby rout
 Move here and there. I heard the ‘Second’ shout
 ‘Hey, lend a hand!—you there!—to brace the yard.
Once more! And again! Make fast! don’t loose ’er pard.
All right: the sheet!—good!—Together sing!
Wait! get ‘Handy Bill’!—there—the ring!
Yo-bee, oh-ho! Well done! Take up that slack!
Lean on it! break it! once more! bring ’er back!
Haul taught! Make fast! Now Spanker-sheet, and Main:
 She’s haulin’ off the quarter now again.
 You, Scottie, lay aloft and clear that brale,
 She’s foul near the goose-neck. See the sail?
 You’d think a crew of farmers put to sea—
 God damn this breeze! Get aft, Andrew, fer me!
 Tell him t’ haul ’er east-nor’-east about.

Oh Gus! up there. I say! keep a sharp lookout!
'For lights or rocks?' replied the focsle-head.
'For everything—and reefs!' the 'Second' said.
'Makin' leeway! wind abaft the beam!
I've never seen the likes—I'd never dream
A bloody man could have the crust t' build
A log so helpless. Now, with oil tanks filled,
And gas-pumps suckin' bilge t' God, and store
And water-tanks all full—Good Lord! what more
Would any proper sailin' vessel need?
But here we are t' sea again. Indeed
As helpless as before! Just see that wake!
Four points t' windward! Lord, I bet we make
The rocky coast of Hell before we see
Old Diamond Head again. . . . Take it from me!

"And so they talked and grumbled, spat and swore;
It seemed that all our efforts to restore
The voyage to hopefulness were drowned in gloom;
For what is man beneath the hand of Doom?
What is mortal will when Destiny
Controls the winds and currents of the sea?
And so I stood imprisoned in my own
Dark cell of circumstance;—I, alone,
Unfixed for sleep or toil, unable, too,
To listen to the chanties of the crew,
Felt the helpless, heated coals of yearning
Deep in unfrequented soul-pits burning.
Regret is Wisdom, but alas, how late
Such knowledge comes to tangle with our fate!
Man thinks and acts only as he will;
But, like the river winding through the hills,
There's but one way to go: the way it went,
Though like some mountain torrent purpose bent
To wash away time-planted rocks and flow.
To realms where none but it had dared to go,
It's all the same; even as the day
Must presage night, there is no other way.
All is like a map to Destiny;
All that ever has been *had to be*;

All that is can be no other way;
Circumstance commands! We must obey
Although we follow through the depths of scum
And eat the dregs that worms are bred from,
Or though, like earthly Gods, we fill the age
And feel the joy of Christ's own heritage,
It's one with Destiny, whose mate is Cause;
They paint life's masterpiece and shape the laws.
Yet there is that in man, deep and rebelling,
That cries aloud, sans reason, but compelling
Him to think, though God must shape the whole
He himself is master of his soul.

"Then off I went again to the jolly-boat
With purpose to forget, and glibly wrote
Whatever seeped from out the overflow
That swelled some vault within. How could I know
The meaning of those hurried words—not them—
But what relief to watch my trickling pen."

The Flower

*"In Papeete, Tahiti's sunny shore,
Where men and women wear, well, little more
Than nature has provided. Where one sees
Mangos and bananas grow on trees,
And cocoa-palms, like forests, even to
The emerald ocean side. Where all the blue
Beyond the coral reef reflects the glow
Of the giant moon. Where ocean breezes blow
From the Island of Moorea dreamingly,
Upon a mossy stream-bank, lonesomely
Beside the little cocoa-jungle, there
Sat a sun-browned maid, and in her hair
White flowers were entwined. How they resembled
The purity of moonbeams as they trembled
Glowingly upon her face and breast
And on the maiden ferns that lined her nest.*

*'She sighed, and from the wreath upon her head
She plucked a flower. 'To be like thee,' she said.*

*'Just to be like thee, oh magic flower,
To love and be loved for this one dark hour,
When at dawn the great sun climbs the sky
Gladly would I fade with thee, and die!'
As she spoke the great moon's silver beams
Weighed heavily, and from a sea of dreams
Her lover came in raptures to her charms,
For she was beautiful. There in his arms
She drank the wine that he alone could offer.
She crammed his love like gold into her coffer,
She gouged the moon and stars from out their sockets,
And crumpled clouds to fit her empty pockets.
The world—the universe—was in her power,
Drunk with delight she watched the fading flower,
For now the sun was rising white and hot. . . .
SHE WAS DYING AND SHE KNEW IT NOT.'*

"Thus the verse concluded; then it seems
I drifted off—far off—to sleep and dreams;
I saw the old sailmaker busily
Sewing on a bag. 'Here's number three!'
He said, and eyed me as he drew
The needle out again and palmed it through.
He measured me once more from heel to head—
'I guess it's plenty long enough!' he said. . . .
But now the great ship shivered, twitched, and twisted!
A rumble from the cargo hatch! she listed!
Timbers cracked and crashed! I heard a roar
Like breakers thundering upon the shore.
White foam swept the decks! The cries of men,
Like waves of life on cliffs of doom, again
And again were mocked by echoes. I
Was conscious of my dreaming, but to try
To force my mind to wakefulness would be
To find another dream more true; to see
The wretched sailors grovelling in waves
That were to swallow them and seal their graves.
So on I slept—how long? I never knew
Till tides of horror ebbed and bore me to
A haunted stillness—stillness so like death

The beating of my heart, my surging breath
Awoke me! . . .

“Oh, thou, if ever there should be
Some one to find what’s left of mine and me,
Ask me not how came this bitter end
Nor these few inky splutterings I’ve penned;
I am the end! I, exiled, outcast
From life and death. Even to the last
Behold me now! The luckless ship is gone;
God knows when or where, perhaps the dawn
Shall find her wreck on some unchartered shoal—
‘Queen of the Night’ tattered as the soul
That’s wasting here adrift in the jolly-boat!
Adrift! and all alone! My burning throat
Is caked with salt, my lips, my tongue shall burst
Even as my heart! This gnawing thirst,
This Hell of hunger, world of appetite,
Has found a willing victim, reaped delight
In devastation, joy in ruthless plunder,
Torn me down to darkness, dragged me under!
Oh let these lines, however crude they be,
If found, be all the world has left of me;
For lo! the sea grows pale; its hungry eyes
Are red with blood reflection. All the skies
Have hoarded up life’s treasures as their own
And left me dying—dying and alone.
Oh dawn of day, thou art the soul’s twilight;
Life—the flower of dreams—Queen of the Night.”

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: ‘Queen of the Night’ and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), pp. 3–18.

SONGS OF NATURE

The marine and visionary lyrics of the 1919 collection

Singing

The sea turns the pages of darkness
For the jewels of her temple to see;
The winds put the stanzas to music,
And my soul sings the music to me.
O God, could I sing as my soul does,
I'd sing to the world-wide throng,
And the world, as the wind, would be singing
With me to the soul of my song.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 19.

The Flying Merman

When the crystal sea, in the dead of night,
 Is awed by the tranquil sky,
And the world is wrapped in a purple light
 As the moon and the stars sail by,
I swim from the depth of a silent dream
 In search of the distant light;
Like a streak of gold I glide on the beam
 That paves the path of night.
Then I fall and am lost in the blue chiffon
 All spangled in gold and white;
Again and again I appear, but am gone
 Like the flash from a beacon light.
Then I fly to the lure of the sapphire dome
 To frighten the moon and Mars,
Then fall to scatter the spangled foam
 That shines like a million stars.
Like a will-o'-the-wisp or a lightning dart,
 Like a goblin or silver sprite,
Or the arrow that pierces a lonely heart
 Adrift on the waves at night;
I know the world, yet none know me,
 As silently I roam
From the stars of the sky to the purple sea
 Where I vanish in snow-white foam.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 20.

To John Masefield

After reading Dauber

You came as an ocean billow,
And burst on the sands of time
Till the crust of its surface rippled
To the pulse of an ocean rhyme:
The rhyme of the wind and the water,
The rhyme of each tiny star
That follows the wake of a vessel
And silvers the frost on the spar.
Hear the creak of the blocks, and the humming
Of wind on a trembling shroud,
Like the ghost of a tempest drumming
On the soul of a vanishing cloud.
Hear the song of a man that lived it,
And knew what it was to sail
Through life with the sheet strands cracking
'Fore the breath of the Master Gale.
It was never the dream of summer
When the wind and sails agree,
But the battle with Fate when thunder
Wakens the rage of the sea.
But you've painted your God as you found him
When the soul of your song began,
And you've taken the beauty that crowned him
To color the hearts of man.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 21.

Off the Reef

Have you ever heard the splash, splash, splashing as I go,
And the foaming, combing ruffle on my pearly, curly crest?
Have you heard the swish and splashing on the rocks where I am dashing
As I roll from out the rainbow arch of triumph in the west?

I greet the merry babble of the rushing rivers' rabble
As they turn their troubled torrents to the forces of my foam,
Then athwart the sea I dash to the music of my splash,
And I'm laughing at the lightning darts that cross the stellar dome.

I'm the god of force and motion; I'm the monarch of the ocean!
The ever-changing, ever-moving mass of water, I.
Though I splash, and roll, and change, to myself I'm never strange,
For the blue that Heaven gave me is the light that cannot die.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 22.

Premonition

From cro'jicks to the skysail-yards
 There comes a restless groan;
The sheet-blocks, swinging to and fro,
 Complain with fretful moan;
The port and starboard running-lights,
 From out the mist, half lost,
Are blinking—frozen half asleep—
 Thru green and crimson frost.

Beside a bit I take the caulk
 Before the blinking red;
But thru the lashes of my eyes—
 There on the topsail-head—
Above the kites—the futtock shrouds
 Where sky-top yard-arms cross,
I see a white, a something white!—
 It is an albatross!

I listen, lo, it speaks to me!
 The words are faint and far:
“The salty soul of a seaman, I;
 The tragic tale of a tar.
You sleep tonight where I once slept
 On the deck of a luckless whaler,
Sleep well my lad, for soon you'll be
 The salty soul of a sailor.”

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 23.

A Contrast

While the waves were sighing
 A voice came from afar
Like spirit-echoes flying
 From a sunken star.
Inky seas around me
 Shattered at the prow;
A twinkling pageant found me
 Where dreams would find me now.

But now the sea's in laughter,
 The wind enjoins with cheers,
And my soul drifts after
 In the sea's forgotten tears.
The echoes change to thunder
 And die upon the shoal;
The stars flare out from under
 The crypt that binds my soul.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 24.

Sunrise on the Ocean

Rays, like colored ribbons streaming
 From the castle walls of night,
Awaken emerald-bubbled, dreaming
 Waves to golden rifts of light.
Billows catch the rainbow shaded
 Fairies at their May-pole play
To weave the web of cloud-yarn braided
 Thru the golden loom of Day.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 25.

The Muse

A Tribute to a Contemporary Poet

She flies as an opal dream to thee
Over a topaz sea
That chimes with the bells of planets and the moon.
She drifts as the silken harmony
That rings in a dream
And carries the voice of stars in silver tune.

She flies as a snowy albatross
From the mist across
The vision of an exiled, lonely soul,
And wakes the voice for waves to toss
Carelessly
Until they beat with thunder on the shoal.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 26.

Little Things

Can you think of a time when memory's wings
Shall drift to a world of little things

On years that follow away?

Can you think of a smirk, or a frown, and yet
Smile at it all, and almost forget

That years have borne you away?

Can you think of a time when the hours pass
Thru the amber light of an upturned glass?—

Can you ever forget those hours when
You are only a man in a world of men,

And years are rolling away?—

Think if you can of the smallest thing:

A tree, a beast, or a man;

Think, if you will, of a little place

In the pine-tree shade,—or a little face—

A stump, a grove,

A kitchen stove,

Or a three-legged stool, if you can.

It's the little things that wind their way

In silence to the heart,

And we hardly know, and hardly care;

We hardly look—just find them there

With little things—

Real little things

That years have borne apart.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 27.

Ukulele

Her dusky head upon my breast,
Her song, with snow-white wings,
Sails on night-veiled seas to rest
Born from love's heart strings.
She sings the purple waves to sleep
While each star blinks his eye;
The crescent moon sinks in the deep
On white quilts from the sky.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 28.

Becalmed

Capella rises to her throne
And wears a wintry crown;
While the scepter of Orion
To the wilted sails points down.
The clouds, like drifting hulks of ice,
Have quenched the frozen moon;
The sea—a sheet of icy steel—
Has ceased her fettered tune.
The seagull, like a ghost of dawn,
Appears, but fades away,
As the scarlet genii of the west
Has swallowed up the day.
The white sails seem to tremble, for
They see the phantom pass
That glides away with all the world,
Except a sea of glass.
And now there's only silent sleep
On quilts of mist that fall;
But while Thy mirror sleeps, O God,
It dreams, and echoes all.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 29.

The Dream Song

I

Peace sailed down on the moon-path
 With wings for the soul of sleep
That bore me away where the planet-bells
 Were chiming the songs of the deep.
And the nymphs of the wind were singing
 New songs to the ocean's lyre,
Till my soul, like a sun-glazed sabre,
 Cut free from my body's fire.
And lo! I could sing with the phantoms
 That danced to our magic lay
Of the sea when the stars are shining,
 And the moon-path fires play.

II

But I woke! The sails, against a cloud,
Hissed at the wind; the bowsprit ploughed
Into a wave whose snowy shroud
 Spread over as it died.
Gaunt, grizzled clouds, as black as coal,
Revealed no stars, but still the roll
Throbbled with my heart, and in my soul
 The stars dropped out again.
Thoughts of my dream, like echoes, burst
Into my heart—a scorching thirst;
I strove to sing the song that first
 Broke through the wall of dreams.
Somewhere the words, like leeches, hung
Behind my lips—they bit my tongue!
But lo! the song my dream had sung
 Sank back into my soul.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 30.

The Mariner's Accordion

Still the night, and all the world around
Was wrapped in crystal star-light, while the sea
Wore garnet chains upon her pulsing breast
That linked my soul to Heaven's harmony.

The pipe starred faces of each phantom man
Waxed and waned as billows rose and fell;
The smoke curled up and vanished like a dream
Or wilting fancies winged with rapture's spell.

My heart soared up in fire till it shone
On memory of days and faces gone;
My soul, white heated, burned the world away!—
The Mariner's accordion played on!

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 31.

SONGS OF LIFE

Mortality, perception, labor, and spiritual trial

Echoes

Saturn's golden ring is far away,
And Mercury that flies with sun-bathed wings;
My heart is tossed amain with wind and spray,
And yet how faint and far such beauty sings.

I've never heard the breaker sound the shoal
Lest other waves resound as from afar;
I've never heard the song-bird air his soul
Unless the carol echoes from a star.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 32.

Sad Waves

Sad waves, sad waves, rolling by;
Rolling still away, while I
 Give heart and soul to thee.
From out the opal sunset's burning
I see thy goal, but no returning
 Waves across the sea.

Farewell, oh waves that lift my bark
And bear my love to seas of dark
 When twilight veils her beams;
If, God, all love and life must part,
Break, sad waves, my wasting heart
 On sunset's shore of dreams.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 33.

Despair

As painted by Perham Nahl

An island gray, surrounded by a sea
Of boundlessness—unfathomable, and cold;
On rocks more gray and gaunt than all the waves
Kneels the outcast—toy of Destiny—
With drooping head and wind-blown, withered locks
Blinding him to all but hopelessness.
Hark the ghost-waves moaning at the cliff
At whose brink he, kneeling, hesitates!

Cold the night—more cold than all the rocks,
And colder too than the steel-blue, icy waves;
Much colder, yea, than even Death itself;
One precipice, one final step is all!
The isle transcended, where now can he turn?
Go back?—Turn back?—Nay, this can never be!
The mighty crag behind from which he fell
Precludes it all—God! what is that?

A light!—A golden light upon the waves!
A ship!—A ship?—See, see how dim it shines;
But still it lends its glimmer to the sea.
Yet how the breakers beat against the cliff!
They call! They call! beckoning him to come!
The light has left the sea! It climbs the sky!
And lo, 'tis nothing but the morning star:
The messenger of dawn to light the way
To Death's immortal darkness in the sea.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 34.

Souls on the Sea of Time

Like crystals of the ocean
Comes each day.
Some spark of light—a flash!—
That fades away.

They come! They go!—and yet
They're never gone.
Each lives to die, and calls
The next one on.

One by one the twinkling
Echoes die,
As flowers, birds and beasts—
As you and I.

Each light—a life, but, watching
From afar,
Behold their Maker shining
As a star.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 35.

Drift Wood

Helpless sticks, decayed and rotten,
 Born like puppets of a child;
Tossed, and shattered, then forgotten,
 Where the ranks of the dead are filed;
Had you eyes like mine to see with,
 Could you find your rocky doom?
With lips to speak, then could you plead with
 God to lay aside your tomb?

On your way, poor helpless splinters,
 Ask no senses, for they find
That summers are to pilot winters
 Through the labyrinth of mind.
And what is mind? What is it made of?
 Can we trust it when we know
We fear what “Faith” is unafraid of;
 Live, lament the seed we sow?

Oh men (poor wave-tossed hypocrites),
 We too are doomed to drift alee
And share the morgue with trashy bits
 Of useless timber, lost at sea.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: ‘Queen of the Night’ and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 36.

Gone!

The breaker sadly moans
Resounding from the stones;
The echoes fade in canyons far beyond the reach of ears:
It's gone—what e'er it be!
Sad day, or jollity!
Gone forever to the hungry genii of the years.
Reminiscence—vague recall—
Echoes coldly from the wall
Where seconds are the mouldy stones turned green from senseless tears.
But still my being calls for dawn!—
Yet sullen shadows answer, "Gone!"

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 37.

Wine

And is this life?—

 A hopeless fight to know

The soul and source

 Of dreams that come, and go;

A restless struggle

 For the ever-far;

A helpless worship

 Of a fancied star?

The flowers nod

 Before they fade away;

The winds sigh “Yes”

 Before the death of day;

The billows rise,

 But crash upon the stones.

Life offers laurels

 To our wasting bones.

My soul, confess!

 This, then, to death be thine:

As joy breeds sorrow,

 Happiness is wine.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: ‘Queen of the Night’ and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 38.

Every Man

The dark clouds see the silver sun above.

I see it not.

The saffron maiden of the west is love.

I find her not. . . .

The clouds blow by! the sky is clear!

I see! I see!—but still I hear

The moaning of the western breeze

Softly sighing thru the trees,

“I prayed, I longed,

I toiled, I fought,

I strove to grasp!—

But found it not.”

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 39.

Lines in Loneliness

Ne'er returning—summers spent—

 Glad songs of only yesterday,

How listlessly your blossoms fade

 As dying echoes, far away!

What blissful spells those fairy wings

 Of cloudfleece wafted over me!—

Oh God, how many million stars

 Have sunk, unnoticed, in the sea!

But when they're gone, how blank the stare

 When realized darkness drops her veil!—

I curse the calm, but rarely think

 To thank the breeze that fills my sail.

Oh beauties braided in each dream,

 Let me embrace thee ere we part

Lest tears that seek each sinking star

 Shall drown their image in my heart.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 40.

Pilot of the Night Watch

In silence sleeps the crystal sphere:

 The noiseless echo of my star

Where moves my bark with prow austere

 To see, O God, the things that are.

The golden dipper of the skies

 Dips down into a sea of sorrow

And bears the tears that blind my eyes

 To the dim bourne of tomorrow.

And lo, I see! though dark the night.

 I hear! though mute each sheet and spar.

I grasp the helm. I see the light!

 That shines upon the things that are.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 41.

The Blind Beggar

“That I have never seen that called the light;
That I can only feel the chill of night
But sense no darkness; wherefore pity me?
Whence comes this fetish—this verb men use: ‘to see?’”
Two kindly eyes looked down with pitying stare;
Two eyes from one—a stranger—by him there.
Quoth he, “What God forbids no code can spell—
I only pity thee, but cannot tell.
What joy to see the drunken flakes of snow
Fall from darkness to the light below.
Through semilucid mist and sleeky gleam
Dim shadows weave their ways as in a dream;
Kaleidoscopic lights along the street
Like pulsing phantom passions; glossy sleet
In multicolored torrents bear the glow
With blush of coral to the trampled snow.
All this my eyes have given me to see,
But thou art blind, wherefore I pity thee,—
Wert thou not blind thou also couldst behold.”
The beggar but replied, “The night is cold.”
“Then come with me, and—may the good be blessed—
Faith, I shall give thee clothing, food and rest.”
On shuffled groups of women in a throng
Of cackling men that, laughing, tracked along;
Full blown maw—rapacious, wanton, lewd,—
On oozed the maudlin mass, God’s bloated brood.
The stranger saw and shuddered—ah, full well
He knew his feet had made their tracks in hell,
But now his chance had come before too late;
A kindly deed his sins to expiate!
Down fell the snow—on trooped the mawkish men,
The blinded beggar rose—and then—and then—
“Behold!—I see the Light!—the Light!” he cried;
There, in the stranger’s arms, the beggar died.
The street was hushed—the great crowd stood at bay—
Two policemen came and hurried him away.
Home went the stranger. Meditations deep
Grew vague and tangled in a web of sleep,

But lo! the sound of footsteps on the floor
Brought him from his slumbers to the door.
There stood the beggar—surd felicity
Played upon his lips. Lo, he could see!
“Whence comest thou?” amazed the stranger said.
“From far beyond the grave—from realms of dead.”
“Pray where is this? Speak, brother, speak again!
Thou hast been there? Describe it to me then!”
The phantom eyes grew bright. “Friend, search and find,
But now I pity thee, for thou art blind.
What God forbids no mortal code can spell;
I only pity thee, but cannot tell.”

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 42–43.

SONGS OF LOVE

Desire, distance, memory, and allegory

Tanka To

I tossed a stone, my love,
 Into the mirror sea.
Each soft silver ripple shone
 My soul's spent threnody
 Seeking, my love, for thee.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 44.

You

Your hands have painted the sunset screen;
The ocean finds its blue
From skies whose star-bright eyes reflect
The eyes they gave to you.

Golden ripples hear your song
As day gives his heart to the sea;
When the sea gives her heart to the day, the dawn
Shall follow your soul to me.

The crescent moon descends to hear
Your echoed siren-call—
Nay, 'tis not all I find in you,
But you I find in all.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 45.

Woodland Stars

Strawberry blossoms, and columbine—
Stars of a lonely wood—
Blossom as hope for the fallen pine
That reached for the sun, the moon, and the stars,
When King of his forest he stood.

Sweet maiden of love in life's lonely wood,
The shadow of God is thine.
Shine on as bright hope for a Love that stood
As the pine of the forest that fell, but found
The echo of stars divine.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 46.

A Promise

I offered thee a heart, my love,
 But thou didst choose a stone:
A promise, and its heart was cold—
 As cold as was thine own.
But it shall hold though lightning sabers
 Cleave the skies apart;
But when the wild wind's passions wake;
When white-crest billows rise and shake,
Behold! they fall! they beat!—and break!—
 Remember, then, my heart.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 47.

Sun-Flower

I slept thru golden dreams on quilts of green
 That spread in ample fold
 A vision green and gold,
And crowned a golden plant my flower queen.

I woke. Her eyes revealed no faded spray.
 But lo, the mystic flower
 Had closed within the hour
And closing bore my happy dream away.

A day—no more—God! how I feared to rise!—
 To wake—to find the light
 Had turned my day to night!
Oh sun-god, thou hadst closed within her eyes!

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 48.

The Lost Song

The words were graven on my heart—
 The words I wrote for you.
They wove the verses of a song
 And sang the music too.
The letters—written one by one
 With pain that numbed my heart;
Each verse was guided on by love
 And all it could impart.
The music, sweet as Hope's lost star,
 Pulsed in my heart to free
Perfection of some distant dream
 Of your soul's harmony.
Yet I could never speak the words
 My broken heart could say,
For you have found its hiding place
 And stolen it away.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 49.

Forget-Me-Not

As many miles as minutes worn

By fallen sands of years

Precludes a shady plot of turf

From this—a sea of tears.

As many tears as longing thoughts;

And many thoughts—forgot,

Save one small flower dreams recall

That said “Forget-me-not.”

She turned her face toward the sun,

But ere I passed her by,

I saw her petals, blue as all

The flowers of the sky.

Though hours bear me leagues away,

Dreams light the woodland plot,

And one small star, still shining there,

Calls back, “Forget-me-not.”

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: ‘Queen of the Night’ and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 50.

The Pathfinder

“I go no farther.” Thus spake Reason coldly.
Vain argument my sober guide refuted—
“No farther!” With this repetition boldly
He departed, leaving, all uprooted,
Blossomed hope there in my grasp to fade—
The flower I had nursed—the flower God had made.

I—alone. The palsied moon, half hidden,
Trembled faintly on the ivied thicket;
Troubled silence gnawed the dull unbidden
Rattle of the locust and the cricket.
A mazed delirium, a world awry—
A foundered dream, a dying hope, a curse, and I.

Chaotic nothingness—cold—depressing,
Tangled roots and cactus underbrushes.
Desperate wonderment and mottled guessing
Overwhelmed me like the flood that rushes
Past its bounds to some well-ordered town,
To flood the busy streets and wash the houses down.

On I stumbled—frenzied—weary—panting,
Till lo, there came a wine to quench my thirsting;
There came a distant voice—soft—enchancing—
Artesian fountains on a desert bursting—
“Follow me,” it said. “From realms above
I come. I am the pathfinder of Hope—
I am Love.”

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: ‘Queen of the Night’ and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 51.

SONGS OF THE WAR

The 1919 collection's wartime sequence

Mothers

Thy heart—a spring, thy love—a flowing river,
Singing as it goes of no returning.
Thou hast to give, and thou shalt know thy giving
In the sunset where all Love is burning.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 52.

Redemption

He sought it in the flowers when a child;
He sought through countless pages as he grew;
He said he found it when a maiden smiled,
 But it was not there—
 Nor anywhere,
 He knew.

And then he gave it up and went about
Chasing Jack-o'-lanterns here and there.
He lost himself in labyrinths without
 A thought of debt,
 A slight regret,
 Or prayer.

But lo, there came a far off thunder sound!
The sea grew red and bloody to the brim,
Despair, destruction, death was all he found,
 But it had brought
 That which he sought
 To him.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 53.

To Walt Whitman

You break from the wake of a roaring dream,
 And pound on a far-flung shoal;
Like the hail in a gale or a lightning beam,
 You strike at the worth of soul.
You fly from the sky as a meteor stone,
 To plunge thru the sandy crust;
You pound and pound on blood and bone,
 Till you turn to a sledge and rust.
But the clamoring, hammering, drum-tap sound
 That rolls from your pile-drive pen,
Roars from the shores of the sea to resound
 In the hearts of a million men.
I know your blow when the anvil rings,
 I see your heart-forged coals,
While gold sparks fly from earth to sky
 And burn thru our metal souls.
With bonds of steel you bind us all
 To a soil whose bend is one,
And we all must kneel when the trumpets call,
 Even as you have done.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 54.

Carry On!

Touch it not!—'tis the flower of beauty!—
In thy grasp shall it wither away,
 Like stars of the night
 In the realm of our sight
 Must vanish with light
 Of the day.

Drink it not!—'tis the nectar of gladness!
At thy lips shall it change unto gall,
 Like love unto lust,
 Like steel unto rust,
 Like rain to the dust
 Shall it fall.

Take it up!—'tis the sabre of living!—
Fight! ere its lustre is gone,
 For man to the core
 Of his conscience is war!—
 As thy fathers before,
 Carry on!

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 55.

A Soldier's Will to One Unborn

Little pilgrim of a World's debut,
Soul elect, heir to a brighter age,
This generation sows a seed for you
We water with our blood! Your heritage
We now prepare: a ponderous world estate!
We draw the will, and seal it with our plight!
For you, nor yours, we shall not arbitrate
Till peace is born as day is born from night;
As you shall spring from love, the world shall spring
From all that love creates in life and power.
This we leave, may God your only King,
Protect the seed that you may pick the flower.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 56.

Dry Docked

She has splashed the hearts of a happy crew
In the salt of a spicy main,
And tumbled them out to a great unknown
And carried them home again.
Hers—the freedom of all the seas;
Their joy was to feel her roll
And plunge and leap from the foaming waves
Like a song as it springs from the soul.

But she was the Ship of Peace, and now
Her crew are the men of war,
Scattered all over the earth, and great
Is the cause they are fighting for.
For now she lies helpless: shackled and chained
To the dock, till her sailor men
Will have swept the world of its monsters.—*God!*
When will she sail again?

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 57.

The Legacy of Death

Ye, that put aside frivolity
For this grim struggle with a frenzied foe;
Ye, led by the shades of chivalry,
Who more for love than life, would strike the blow
Of death; march on! and, with thy radiant spirits,
Lead the way and every soul inspire
With sinewed love to battle down the hate
And carry on through shrapnel storm and fire
The torch our Master gave. Then from the graves
Of the fallen, lo! the peace that reigns the while
Above each tired heap that gave a life—
 Nay, more!
 A love—
 A dying smile.

Publication. *Found in a Derelict: 'Queen of the Night' and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: The Murrell Printing Company, 1919), p. 58.

EARLY PERIODICAL WITNESSES

Los Angeles Graphic states, 1916

These four witnesses precede the book and reveal revision in titles, diction, punctuation, and lineation. They are printed after the 1919 sequence so that the collection remains intact.

My Song

The sea turns the pages of darkness
For the jewels of her temple to see;
The wind puts the stanzas to music,
And my soul sings the music to me.

O, God, could I sing as my soul does
I'd sing to the world-wide throng,
And the world, as the wind, would be singing
With me to the soul of my song.

Publication. *Los Angeles Graphic*, January 22, 1916, p. 4.

Textual note. Transcribed from the complete institutional issue scan. The later 1919 book state is printed in the main sequence.

Off the Reef (1916 periodical state)

Have you ever heard the splash, splash, splashing as I go,
And the foaming, combing ruffle on my pearly, curly crest?
Have you heard the swish and splashing on the rocks where I am dashing
As I roll from out the rainbow arch of triumph in the west?

I greet the merry babble of the rushing rivers' rabble
As they turn their troubled torrents to the forces of my foam.
Then athwart the sea I dash to the music of my splash;
And I'm laughing at the lightning darts that cross the stellar dome.

I'm the god of force and motion; I'm the monarch of the ocean.
The ever-changing, ever-moving mass of water, I.
Though I splash, and roll, and change, to myself, I'm never strange,
For the blue that heaven gave me is the light that can not die.

Publication. *Los Angeles Graphic*, January 22, 1916, p. 4.

Textual note. Transcribed from the complete institutional issue scan. The later 1919 book state is printed in the main sequence.

The Flying Merman (1916 periodical state)

When the crystal sea, in the dead of night,
Is awed by the tranquil sky;
And the world is wrapped in a purple light
As the queen of the stars sails by;

I swim from the depths of a silent dream
In search of the distant light;
Like a streak of gold I glide on the beam
That paves the path of night.

Then I fall and am lost in the blue chiffon
All spangled in gold and white;
Again, and again, I appear but am gone
Like the flash from a beacon light;

Then I fly to the lure of the sapphire dome,
To frighten the moon and Mars;
Then fall to scatter the spangled foam
That shines like a million stars.

Like will-o'-the-wisp or a lightning dart;
Like a goblin or silver sprite;
Or the arrow that pierces a lonely heart
Adrift on the waves at night,

I know the world, yet none knows me,
As silently I roam
From the stars of the sky to the purple sea,
Where I vanish in snow-white foam.

Publication. *Los Angeles Graphic*, January 22, 1916, p. 4.

Textual note. Transcribed from the complete institutional issue scan. The later 1919 book state is printed in the main sequence.

The Calm

Capella rises to her throne
And wears a wintry crown;
While the scepter of Orion
To the wilted sails points down.

The clouds, like drifting hulks of ice,
Have quenched the frozen moon;
The sea, a sheet of icy steel
Has ceased her fettered tune.

The seagull, like a ghost of dawn,
Appears, but fades away,
As the scarlet genii of the west
Has swallowed up the day.

The white sails seem to tremble, for
They see the phantom pass
That glides away with all the world
Except a sea of glass.

And now there's only silent sleep
On quilts of mist that fall;
But while Thy mirror sleeps, O God,
It dreams, and echoes All.

Publication. *Los Angeles Graphic*, March 18, 1916, p. 4.

Textual note. The poem was revised and retitled 'Becalmed' for the 1919 collection.

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6. Banning, George Hugh. Work associated with the Zoological Society of San Diego, Bulletin no. 10 (1933); exact contribution should be checked against a physical or institutional copy.
7. Banning family papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, California. The broader collection documents family business, Catalina Island, Los Angeles Harbor, correspondence, and literary networks.
8. Louis Strahlmann collection, San Diego historical repositories. Later scholarship cites Banning's 1928 research notes and correspondence concerning stage routes.
9. Known but not yet fully recovered poetry witnesses: *Occident*, *Air Currents*, other local publications, and an *Anthology of College Verse* edited by Henry T. Schnittkind.

Research limit. The surviving evidence establishes one poetry book and four currently inspectable early periodical states. It does not establish that Banning ceased writing poetry after 1919; additional periodical, manuscript, and family-archive searches may enlarge the record.

ORIGINAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Publication record supplied at the end of the 1919 volume

Certain of these verses have already appeared in the *Los Angeles Graphic*, *Occident*, *Air Currents*, and other local publications, and also in one of Henry T. Schnittkind's *Anthology of College Verse*.

Colophon

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans for *Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry*. Prepared from the original 1919 scan and complete 1916 *Los Angeles Graphic* issue scans, with local biographical and archival sources, August 2026. Designed at six by nine inches in EB Garamond 12. Cover artwork comes from the author's retained unlettered flying-merman image and is lettered live in the production builder. This edition is intended to remain extensible as further verified witnesses are recovered.