



HENRY BEDFORD-JONES

Collected Poems

THE PRIVATE-PRESS VERSE, 1914–1939

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

HENRY BEDFORD-JONES

Collected Poems

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

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EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

THE TEXT-TECH PAPERS

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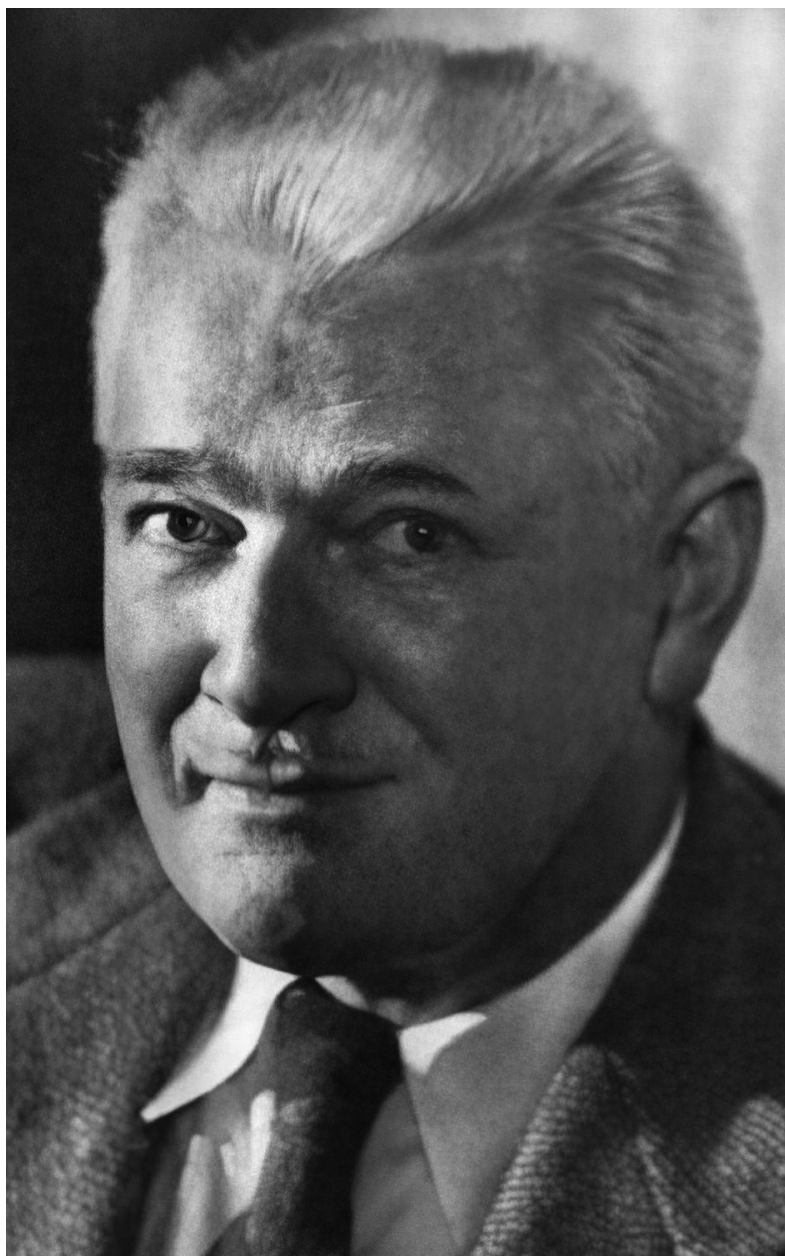
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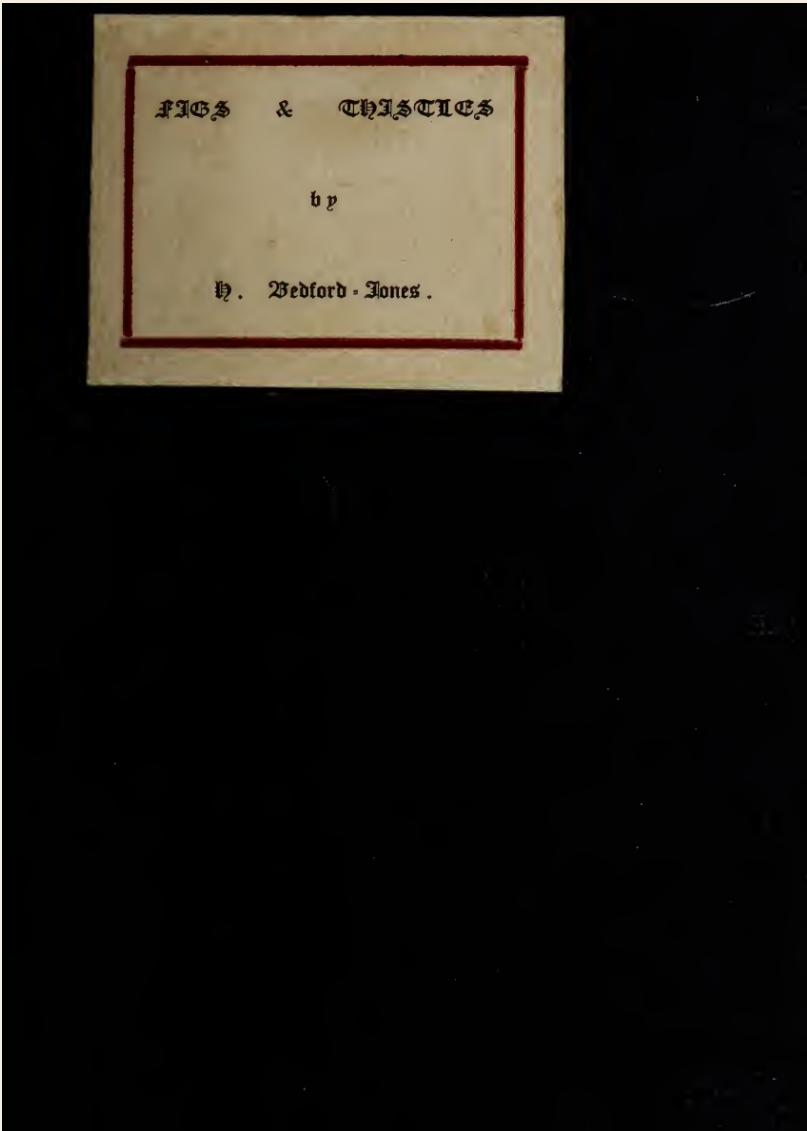
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ARCHIVAL IMAGES

Portraits and documentary witnesses



Henry Bedford-Jones in a studio portrait reproduced by The Pulp Super-Fan; source copy archived with the project research.



The hand-printed cover of Figs and Thistles (1914), one of fifty copies.

RUIT EFORE
UMMER

BY

H. BEDFORD-JONES

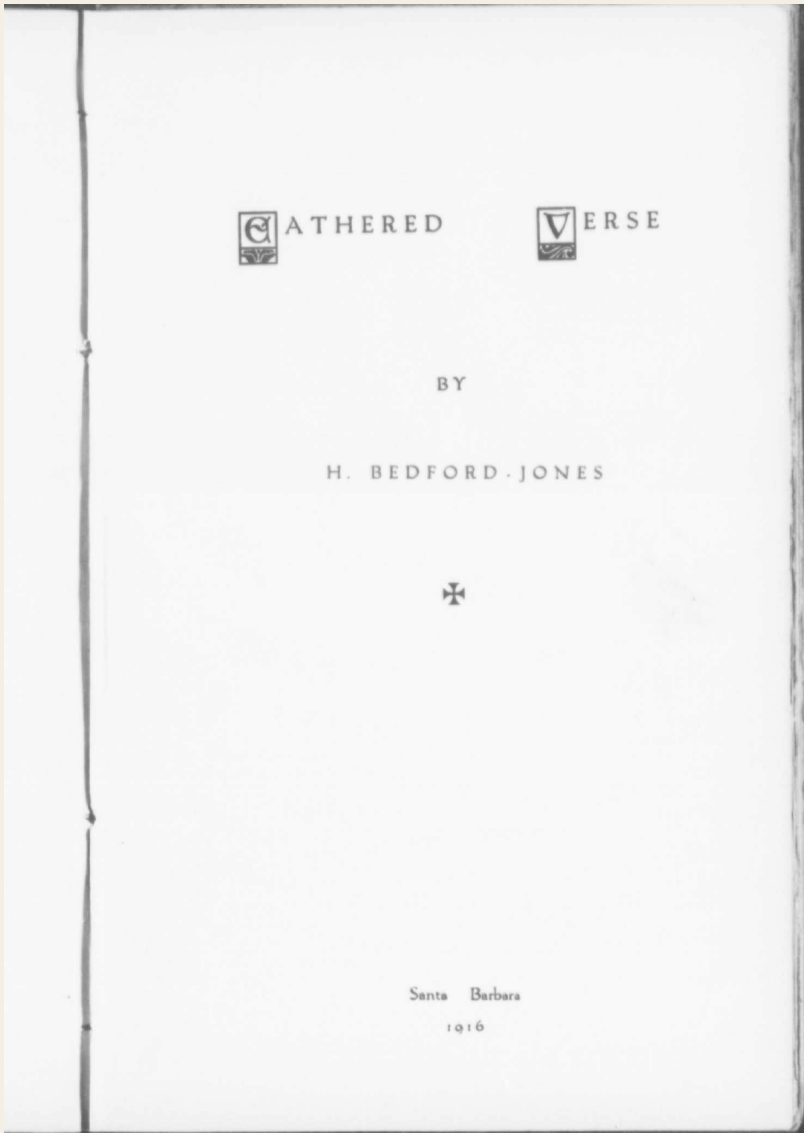


"As the hasty fruit before the summer."

--- Isaiah

Long Beach
California

*Title page of *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, 1915), handset and printed by Bedford-Jones.*



*Title page of *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, 1916), printed for private distribution.*

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INTRODUCTION

The private-press poet behind the King of the Pulps

The poet behind the King of the Pulps

Henry James O'Brien Bedford-Jones (April 29, 1887–May 6, 1949) is remembered as the “King of the Pulps,” a professional storyteller whose name filled *Blue Book*, *Argosy*, *Adventure*, and scores of other magazines. Before that reputation hardened, however, he made poetry central to his private life as a printer. Between 1914 and 1920 he handset a succession of tiny editions, often limiting them to thirty, forty, or fifty copies. Their poems move between northern forests and California missions, religious meditation and comic bravado, translations from French, war verse, lullabies, bookish satire, and songs lifted from his commercial fiction. These scarce books reveal that his astonishing pulp productivity grew beside a slower, tactile practice of choosing type, setting lines, and printing for friends.

From Ontario to the American magazine world

Bedford-Jones was born in Napanee, Ontario, to William John Wicliff Bedford-Jones and Henrietta Louise Roblin Bedford-Jones, a family of Anglo-Irish background. Accounts of his youth differ in details, but agree that the family moved to Michigan and that he left college before completing a degree. He worked as a stenographer and newspaper reporter, and in Michigan met the established story writer William Wallace Cook. Cook's practical example and publishing contacts helped direct him toward the pulp field. Bedford-Jones became a naturalized United States citizen in 1908; his first stories appeared in the Munsey magazines in 1909. He quickly developed the speed, organizational discipline, and historical imagination that made him one of the era's most dependable commercial writers.

Marriage, printing, and the early verse books

In 1914 Bedford-Jones married Helen Swing Williamson. Their three children—two daughters and a son—entered poems of infancy, parenthood, anxiety, and domestic faith. *Figs and Thistles* (1914) gathered work previously scattered through books, magazines, and newspapers. *Fruit Before Summer* (1915), dedicated to Cook, revised earlier pieces and added love poems, translations, and songs drawn from fiction. *Gathered Verse* (1916), dedicated to Helen Wallace Bedford-Jones, refined the record again and included translations from the Breton poet Théodore Botrel. While living in Santa Barbara he also printed *L'Arbre Croche Mission* (1917), whose verse prelude links his Michigan childhood landscape with Catholic mission history. His own 1920 press list names another forty-copy verse book, *Corn, Wine & Oil* (1918). No usable scan has been located for this project; its absence is acknowledged rather than concealed.

California, travel, and prose craft

Bedford-Jones's career was never confined to poetry. John Solomon, his shrewd Cockney adventurer, became a long-running series character, and historical novels ranging from Viking Europe to New France established his range. His association with *Blue Book* lasted for more than three decades and eventually encompassed hundreds of stories. He traveled widely and worked as a European correspondent for *The Boston Globe* in the late 1920s. *Bigfoot Joe and Others: Figments of Fancy* (1920) shows the private printer reflecting on the writing trade itself: its prose attacks vague “poeticism,” praises the clear word, remembers San Francisco bookselling, and surrounds these essays and sketches with five polished poems. His craft manuals, *The Fiction Business* (1922; revised as *This Fiction Business*, 1929) and *The Graduate Fictioneer* (1932), made explicit the professional discipline behind his output.

Later life and the mission sequence

Bedford-Jones's first marriage ended in divorce in 1925. He later married the writer Mary McNally Bernardin. Family conflict over the custody of his children became protracted, while his working life continued at extraordinary intensity. California mission history remained one of his durable subjects. The five verse preludes in *The Story of Misión San Juan Capistrano* (1918) were revised for *The Mission and the Man* (1939), where Adobe, Keystone, Bell, Coyote, and the restorer-priest speak as symbolic figures in the building and survival of the mission. In the 1940s, diabetes and repeated heart attacks slowed him. He died of heart disease in Beverly Hills on May 6, 1949. The Harry Ransom Center now preserves a substantial Bedford-Jones collection, while the New York Public Library's William Wallace Cook Papers preserve correspondence from the friendship that helped launch him. This edition restores the poetry to the same field of attention as the vast fiction career: not an apprentice curiosity, but a continuous workshop in form, memory, faith, and the material life of words.

ORIGINAL FOREWORD

Bedford-Jones on place, restoration, and the mission's guardian

From The Story of Misión San Juan Capistrano (1918)

The writer has endeavored herein to express more than bare facts; to express something of the inner Vision of this place—something of the spirituality yet lingering upon the rain-streaked walls and the crumbling arches.

This volume is but one man's viewpoint. Its only ambition is an interpretation of the strange individuality which clings to these ruins today.

The 'Man' of this book has no knowledge of this writing; nor would he perhaps approve the introduction of personal elements—but what matter? His labor has put beauty and utility in the stead of ruin and neglect; the world owes him a meed of appreciation. He desires it not, yet it will come to him as inevitably as will a Higher appreciation.

To him I owe thanks for assistance and information, nor could I find fitter dedication than to ascribe and inscribe this volume to St. John O'Sullivan, Genio Loci.

FIGS AND THISTLES

The first private collection, handset and printed in fifty copies at Christmas 1914.

[Fame Comes Cheaply, After All!]

Fame comes cheaply, after all!
Can you hear the throstle's call,
Catch the song thrilled from the sky?
Fame has lost her sanctity,
Lost it in the dollar mart;
Let yours be of soul and heart!
Fame comes cheaply, after all.
Sense to feel the hidden thrall
Of things virgin, primal things—
Squirrel chatter, eagles' wings;
Sense to feel and know and be
One with all—means fame to me!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

A Hymn of Mothers

We have suffered and anguished and sorrowed
 Drawing near to the Vale of the Shade;
We have writhed in our torture, and borrowed
 The strength and the power of God's aid;
We have watched and denied years unending,
 We have wept that our weeping was done,
But the courage and love of our lending
 Wrought the soul of a son.

We have builded all earth and its beauty,
 We are building what all things shall be,
For this is our perilous duty
 Whose fulfillment we never shall see.
Our sons and our daughters shall judge us,
 Yet their judgments are out of our ken;
Let no one our glory begrudge us,
 Us—the mothers of men!

Yet more than our deeds and our glory
 Or the world that we hold in our sway,
Is the Singer whose Song is our Story,
 The Helper whose hand is our stay.
The binding of sorrows allies us,
 His hand smooths the way we have trod;
He comforts, nor ever denies us,
 For our helper is—God!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Out of the Dust

There is dust in the city streets,
 There are feet on the sin-worn way:
The dust creeps up into weary eyes
While we, looking on from afar, despise
 The sin that is not our sin, and say
“Oh Rulers of these our city streets,
Come, cleanse them of sin! Are the laws then lies?
 Obey!”

There is dust in the city streets,
 There are harlots of sin-worn throat.
We lash them forth, and we bid them trust,
We offer them penitence, pity, lust;
 We fashion us laws, and we bid them note;
Yet when have we cleansed the city streets?
Lord Christ only stooped to the wayside dust
 And wrote.

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

A Little Song of Age

Now, what is the meed of a carven fane
Or the worth of a poet's dole,
To the winding road and the plash of rain
And song o' the cedar's soul?

We were three, and we were mad
With the very breath of youth;
Mad and bad and glad and sad,
Bartering what souls we had
In the search for truth.

John was clerkly, and became
Somewhat of a thoughtful drone;
Gave God praise and gave Him blame,
Garnered name and wealth and fame—
Well, he's carved in stone!

Richard, with the gift of health,
Chose a master-poet's lot;
Won him name and fame and wealth,
Paid God somewhere, died by stealth—
Now he's quite forgot.

I? Oh, I was ever mad
As the rolling stars above!
Lost me all the others had,
Lost me all that made them glad—
Bartered it for love!

Now what is the lure of a carven fane
Or the worth of a hard-bought dole,
To the bend in the road and the kiss of rain
And the song o' the cedar's soul!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

In Michigan

I

Across the night the ages-muted bell
Of Arbre Croche re-echoes, with the light
Sweet chime that once the good Marquette loved well
Across the night.
Far off, the city lies in garnered night
Of wealth; but deep within her shadow dwell
Wan multitudes, whose sleepless eyes gleam bright
In fever. Could but some swift wind impel
This fragrance of the northwoods to the slight
Hot cheeks—what thousand heartfelt prayers would swell
Across the night!

2

In lowly guise, concealed by fir and pine;
Arbutus buds are lost to curious eyes;
Yet under pine and fir they countless twine
In lowly guise.
Till all the northland greets the kiss that lies
So mystic-sweet on all things, fragrance fine
In lowly guise!
Lord, grant whate'er of help or cheer is mine
May thus steal forth to lighten darker skies
Unknown, perchance, to me; that ere it dies
My life may prove an instrument divine
In lowly guise.

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Adagio

Down from the heart of the gray cloud-rifting
 Pierces a blast of October breath,
Eddying over the wood, light-lifting,
Catching the brown leaves, swirling and sifting
 Hither and thither, dizzily drifting,
 Floating them, fluttering, down to death;
All the long winter sleepily shifting,
Dreaming of dawn in the spring, God's gifting—
 "Peace, and be patient," the good wind saith.

Far in the distance the call of a plover
 Quivers and thrills to the mist-gray skies;
And I hear, as I lie in the burnt brown clover,
The answering cadence, sung over and over,
That rises and falls from its leafy cover
 Faint and more faint, till the last note dies.
Ah, gay and light-hearted brown-speckled wing-rover,
How may thy song soothe the grief of a lover?
 "Peace, and be patient," the good wind sighs.

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Heart Hesitant

So bides her soul above me
 —Whisper, whisper, oh my spirit!
Did it stoop to prove me, love me,
 Should I seek it, hope or fear it?
So thrill her eyes my blindness,
 So chides her heart my sorrow—
Should I seek love thru her kindness,
 Win and keep, or only borrow?
 —Whispers soul, “Live for the morrow!”

She lives her life sincerely,
 Faces tears and fears and laughter;
Dare I bid God make her merely
 Love of mine for ever after?
For so bides her soul above me
 —Whisper, whisper, oh my spirit!
Did it stoop to prove me, love me,
 Could I help but scar it, sear it?
 —Whispers soul, “Ah, take nor fear it!”

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

The Four Masters

“Love is a thing,” said the first,
Who was ancient and hoary of head.

“Love is a thing at its worst,
No sooner living than dead.
Born out of passion, dead in its thirst,
Once wearied, its spirit is fled.”
—He was ancient, and hoary of head.

“Love is a vision,” said he
Whose eyes were deepset and dark.
“Love is sheer foam of the sea
Struck by a shattered fire-spark.
Vision intangible, dim mystery,
As vain as the song of the lark!”
—His strong eyes were deepset and dark.

“Love is a wraith,” said the third,
Who had tasted of life over-well.
“A wraith from the Pit upstirred
To garner men down into hell;
Ever bewraying God and His word,
Enweaving the world in its spell!”
—He had tasted of life over-well.

“Aye, thing and vision and wraith!”
Cried he whose young eyes were aflame.
“Full sooth is what each master saith;
For the three are but one and the same—
Since each of the three bides in faith,
And Faith is Love’s mystical name!”
—He was young, and his eyes were aflame.

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

The Wastrel Muse

Drifting through the rifted ages
 From the primal dawning-mist;
Lingering a space o'er pages
 Scarce in greeting-parting kissed,
She is ever fleeting—fleeting—
 Where the newer voices ring;
Waster of the breath of greeting,
 Vagrant and a-wandering!

Constancy has left her keeping;
 Dare she tarry, she forswears
All the gods' good gifts, but weeping—
 This in every hour she shares.
Yet through all her very madness
 Loveliness is hers to sing;
Squandering the moment's gladness,
 Vagrant and a-wandering.

Deep through all her touch is thrilling
 Somewhat more than men may feel;
Somewhat of the fear-instilling
 Glory that the gods reveal;
And her sole reward in giving
 Is this joy that she may bring,
Careless of the End of Living,
 Vagrant, and a-wandering!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

With Faith Abiding

Tomorrow sits not in Today's enthroning,
Nor Spring in Winter's. Ever drift we, fleeting
Across Life's wide expanse, and ever meeting
The Change we cannot stay yet must be moaning!
Friendship and custom, thought itself disowning
In some degree with each new day's completing,
Onward or back we move till Death's quick greeting
Leaves us with peace, and the dim pines' intoning
From youth to age, from birth to our maturing,
We grow and change to life's remotest deeps;
From youth to age we clasp the reassuring
Firm hand of Change, that all our future keeps;
And yet from youth to age we find enduring
The love that slumbers not nor ever sleeps!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

The Outriders

There's a shard of a shattered rifle-butt in the sands of the Kizil Kum;
There's a faded rag of an unknown flag in the depths of the Andes' gloom;
There's a crimson smudge on a camel-loop where an Afghan tent is spread—
And this is all that the winds recall of the Men Whose Blood Was Red.

It's "Smith was across the harbor mouth when a searchlight showed him clear;"
Or "When Brown was drilled and his last man killed they hoisted him on a
spear;"
Or "The sprawled-out chap that you potted last gave Billy his bit of lead—"
And this is all that their mates recall of the Men Whose Blood Was Red.

But soft in the surge of the German seas, or under the Sussex skies,
Or low in the drone of the northwoods' moan comes a whisper that never dies.
"There was pity and love in his heart for all—ah, God, let me hear his tread!"
For this is all their mothers recall of the Men Whose Blood Was Shed.

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

God's Way

“Oh for a draught from the spring
At the old village gate!” sighed the King.
And the Three stole down through the foe.
Filled a helm at the well—“blow for blow
Oh my king, blood for blood then we gave
Till we broke them, as ship’s prow the wave!
So drink; it is heart’s love we bring,
Oh my king!”

“Say rather, a blood-offering,
My children!” The weary-eyed King
Took the helm. “No gift worthy of me,
But only of God. Let it be
To His honor, my warriors—so!”
But a heat-withered thistle below
Caught the life-giving water. God’s way?
Who shall say?

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Adventurers All

“Battle!” sang one, and thundered
 A saga of land and sea;
“Love!” whispered one, and wondered
 If his soul held love in fee;
“Gold!” slavered one, and blundered
 With tongue that was over-free;
 But
“Freedom!” laughed one—and sundered
 The lies of the other three.

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

In the North

Pine-needles, mute on the sand,
 That once sang low in the breeze;
But the winds may never command
Pine-needles, mute on the sand.
And we, sitting here hand in hand,
 Shall lie, as the Deathless Ones please—
Pine-needles, mute on the sand,
 That once sang low in the breeze.

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

De Musset's Evensong

Star, perishing above the darkened hill,
 Sad tear-of silver on the stole of night,
 Where lies thy way, unseen of our faint sight,
Across the deeps? Dost thou, beside some rill
Of roses redolent, seek unrest to still?
 Is this the end, haply to quench thy flight
 Enwrap in silence, falling like some white
Clear pearl athwart the glinting wavelet-thrill?

If such thy thought, thus to repose and lay
 Thy fairness low in Lethe, and forget
 All thou hast been, between the wings of Death,—
Then, Star, bethink thee ere the skies cloud gray
 For though thy spirit bides in darkness, yet
 Ever upon the dawn will steal Love's breath

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

An Olden Rhyme

Fount of delight, whose crystal clearness merits

Rich wine and flowers, I vow to thee at dawn

A yearling kid, whose swelling brow inherits

Vain promise of a life so soon foregone—

Soon, when across thy diamond-sparkling whiteness

Shrined in its fairness of low-drooping leaves,

Shall dash the rubies of his life, their brightness

Fled on the shadows which the dawn-sword cleaves

Thee the dread season of yon dogstar blazing

May not affect, for to thy ripples cool

Wander the weary herds, too spent for grazing,

Lost in the lure of thy sweet-darkling pool. °

Fame shall be thine of fountains old in story;

While that gnarled oak, whose arms entwining strong

Protect the birth of all thy babbling glory,

Shall fear no death, long living in my song!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Old Memories

You make me heartsick, send'ng me this green
 Old bit of stucco! Here I work, exist,
 Gain nothing. Once again I feel the mist
Just etching the lagunes in opaline;
Wan tapers at the old shrine there, between
 The bridge and Balbi; gentle lap and list
 From the canal below; and then dawn-kissed
Salute's miracle. Ah, I have seen!

Look just one side the Molo landing, where
 That long black shivering shadow strains the eye:
That's Marco's gondola. Far over there
 Beneath cool San Lazzaro, we would lie
Half the day—broken dreams, far-gathered here!
 For thee, Venezia, age hath no sere!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Address of Oisín to Saint Patrick

When Fionn reclined on the crag's stony flank, and sang
 Brave songs to us there, till courage made all our blood leap,
And his sweet-fashioned words were lost in the weapons' clang,
And our shouting resounded till all dark Glen-miala rang;
When he chanted a soft pleasing lay, that fell to the heroes below
 Till their senses were lost in its charm, as gently they sank into sleep—
Ah, sweeter that song by far, than thy music's flow,
 Thou Singer of Hymns!

Sweet are the notes of the thrush, that quiver and rise
 And lade the fresh air of the morn with their dew-bedimmed pearls;
Sweet is the rush of the waves, as the evening air dies,
And the shaft of the moon o'er the breast of the swift billows flies;
Sweet were our clear-ringing harps, as we swept the far-swelling chord—so!
 While we watched the slow smoke-clouds ascend, and the flames in their
 glittering whirls;
And sweeter that song by far, than thy music's flow,
 Thou Singer of Hymns!

Loudly of old would we greet the great-echoing shout
 Resounding and flinging afar from each mountain and glen,
Ringing and gay would our horns send wild music about
Over baying of hounds and clatter of swift-sweeping rout!
And thou tellest me, Cleric, that I and all heroes of Fionn will know
 Deep pains in some Hell? It is good—I will see my companions again!
And sweeter their hunt-song by far, than thy music's flow,
 Thou Singer of Hymns!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

The Ways of the Gods

Lo!

Gaily the King, in feasting and riot, squandered the wasting hours of fate;
Far in the dim death-quiet forest flourished a Sapling, fair and straight;
And a Child was watching the bowmen shooting, hard by the Syrian palace
gate.

Lo!

Here was the King in common armor, garbed in the garb that his thousands
wore;
Loose in its quiver stood an Arrow, feathered and barbed as a dozen more;
While an Archer waited the signal, trembling, sick to the soul with the dust and
gore.

Lo!

Swiftly a space the King upraised his shield to the blow of a quick-flung spear;
Aimlessly snapped the Archer's bow, as he stood and watched in the battle-rear;
And the bolt flew home to the finger-breadth of space in the joint of the proud
King's gear!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

The Old Corycian

I recollect an old Corycian, who,
 Possessed of some poor acres near divine
 Oebalia,—land too sterile for the kine
To graze upon, too rough for ploughing,—knew
The art of gardening; there, peeping through
 His thorns were lilies, poppies seeded fine,
 And hyacinths: belied was every sign
Of winter, in his purple roses' hue!

First unto him would April bring reward
 Of blossom, his the fruit first August brings;
And home returning late, his humble board
 Was freely graced with earth's rich offerings.
Happy old man! Dame Nature's toil-won hoard
 Matched in thy heart's content the feast of kings!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Dromengro

Oh voices faint that lift to me, that drift to me & call me
From over the dim distances to bid me wander home,
What know you of the sweetness of the miracles that thrall me—
The bird athwart the white road & the snowy salt sea-foam!

So bide you in your happiness & smug content behind me,
Nor cry to me to join you in the peace I cannot know;
For when I seek to turn again, the shreds of sunlight blind me
And raindrops pelt me onward in the way that I must go.

Oh brethren of the olden days, the golden days far-dying,
We'll meet again to part again, for you are none of mine;
And while you're biding safe abed, there'll be a shadow flying
Across the dim-lit pathway where the stars make silver wine

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

[What Makes the World?]

What makes the world? Why, only this:
Two little dimpled cheeks to kiss,
Two little eyes to gaze into
Alight with Heaven's purest blue,
A little crib to bend above
In fullness of the mother-love—
This makes the world!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

The Hills

Upon the hills above the lonely plain
Stand wondering shepherds, while some Presence thrills
The restless sheep; then over vales and rills,
Sheepcots and crags, outbursts the heavenly strain:
“Peace! Peace on earth, goodwill to men!” Refrain
Upon refrain bears forth the word, and stills
The far-off echo; and as those rude wills
Bow to the will divine, ’tis night again
Upon the hills.

So on our night of sorrow or of pain
A glory streams that all our darkness fills;
A Word descends to lighten these our ills—
“Behold, I bring you tidings!” And we gain
Some measure of His peace, that falls as rain
Upon the hills.

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Labhair's Lullaby

A lone blackbird is singing down by the valley road
And the voice of the cedars murmurs low;
The ocean is agleam, while on the shore bestowed
The chonnail-sprouts are springing, by the four winds sowed,
And the apple-blossoms blow
But the waves are falling slow,
And they flame and flame again with the radiant sunset fire
That leaps from out the west, the dead day's funeral pyre.
So rest, my princeling, rest ye so!

The West Wind is wafting unto the hall of shells
Of her rest from the dim unknown deep;
While from the high-hung shields, like some wild hunter's belis,
The little breeze re-echoes ail the tale it tells;
Then the darker shadows creep
Till Ard-Cruagh's frowning steep
Is enwrap in purple shades, and across the evening sky
The pale sweet moonbeams sweep, and the long lights softly die.
So rest, my princeling, rest and sleep!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Evening on the Plains

Wan are the skies, their tarnished silver glowing
 As some old loving-cup held down from God
To the black earth beneath—the world-rim showing
Sharp on the sky, a grim black line forth-flowing
 Like God's huge chastening rod.

And, terrible against the silver drifting,
 Hang high black clouds, knife-edged and bleak and dark;
But, set between the rod and the cloud-rifting,
Over that heaven-chalice brave gleams sifting,
 The Evening Star—God's mark!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Gipsy Slumber-Song

Under the hedges the thin grey stinging
 Gnat-clouds murmur day's threnody;
Out of the gathering dusk comes flinging
A little brown bat, all weirdly winging
Over the fields, and fireflies are stringing
 Jewels 'of flame on the old yew-tree.
Eventide comes to thee, little one, bringing
Rest and strength in the song of her singing,
Strength and rest to the wanderers, clinging
 Ever and ever to ways that are free;
Sleep, little child of the Romany!

Silent and cold the forges are sleeping
 Under the old yew's canopy;
Darkness is come, and the dew is seeping
Down to the tired earth, weary with weeping,
Down from the dear stars, pallidly peeping—
 Dew, and dreams of night-mystery.
Rest, my babe, as the shadows come creeping
Over the hill, and slumber is steeping
Earth and sky in the peace of its keeping—
 Rest and strength to the earth and thee.
Sleep, little pal of the Romany!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

The Ottawa Mother

A silver-glinting mist-sheer pearls the softness of the night,
—Sing softly, little meadow-lark, sing low!—
And across the long swamp shadows gleam the lilies, tender white,
—Soft, my little songbird, low!—
While all the old ghost-warriors meet at the dead pine tree
To smoke the ghost-pipe once again; and, ere they leave, to thee
My sturdy voyageur, they bring the dreams that none may see
Save baby eyes—the dreams of long ago.
Oh darling little meadow-lark, sing low.

Thy father, in the old canoe, is flying down the shore
—Cry softly, little cedar-owl, cry low!—
With gleaming trout and sishcawet, to keep the winter's store;
—Soft, my little nightowl, low!—
So sleep thee soundly, while the tall firs whisper overhead
Their dim songs of the olden day before our race was dead;
And all the night long I am watching, close beside thy bed
In the cabin, by the faint star-glow.
Oh plaintive little cedar-owl, cry low!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

The Fisher-Wife

Out on the sea where the sad winds wail
—Sad and low, sad and low!—
catch the flash of thy father's sail
Dipping from sight in the sunset glow.
He comes no more till the dim stars die,
And the day gleams red in the eastern sky
Baby of mine,
Oh baby of mine, hush, hush thy cry,
For the deep sea-moan holds grief of its own—
Grieve not my heart with thine!

Out on the sea where' the slow gulls wheel
—Sad and slow, sad and slow!—
The writhing night-mists twine and steal,
Yelling the infinite ocean's woe;
Father will come when the nets are drawn,
With a kiss for thee as the night is gone!
Baby of mine,
Oh baby of mine, in the blushing dawn
He will come to me, with a kiss for thee,
On the crest of the tossing brine!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

An Ojibway Cradle-Song

Low, pines, sing low!

All day long the giant hemlocks hymned of war and strife;

Now as darkness gathers closer, slow lake-breezes drifting,

All the hidden forest life

“Murmurs through the lifting

Lilting light wind’s rifting,

Sifting songs of rest and slumber from the soft star-glow.

Low, pines, sing low!

Low, pines, sing low,

Breathing dreams from out the low moon hanging in the east

Dreams to a papoose, birch-cradled, underneath the sweeping

Cedar boughs, in moonlight fleeced.

Sing, while night o’er-creeping

Hovers close, and leaping

Weeping wavelets answer softly from the beach below;

Low, pines, sing low

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Oisín's Slumbering

O sweet pale star
 Of descending night!
Thy glittering crest
Casts fair and far
 A shaft of light
From the closing gates of the silvery west
As thy far-flung locks stream high.
The restless ocean in anger leaps;
 Ghosts of dead heroes ride on the blast;
Over the waters the long dawn creeps
 Faintly and silently—yet how fast!
Thy faint light falls, as the sad stars die,
Soft as a lover's sigh
 Over the darkling waves; but the sleep
Which covers the world cannot quench thy gleam
 So pure and calm and crystal-deep—
Sweet as the dawnflush, soft as a dream
Or the limpid pool of a mountain stream,—
While the snows of the tossing billows roll
 And the storm-winds swell.
O purest light of my soul,
 Farewell!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

A Gaelic Lullaby

Hush, little heart of me! The birds are dreaming,
The soft pale starlight through the treetops streaming:
 The close-laid chonnail-thatch is o'er thee,
 The long sweet night lies all before thee,
While far at sea thy father's sail is gleaming.
So hush, dear little love of mine—ah, hush thee!

The Little People through the fields are stealing.
The fairy chimes from Creagh's hill are pealing,
 And dreams of love, on silver wings,
 To thee alone sweet slumber brings,
All cares and troubles of the day concealing.
So rest, dear little love of mine—ah, hush thee!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Imploration

Dear Lord, the world is very great and strong
And turns its eyes from Thee; yet one true soul
May win men's faith, with-holding them from wrong,
And with his reverence pervade the whole.
Lord, make him such as this!

Hold him in peace, far from the busy mart
That blunts the spirit; or, if this must be,
So guard him that thy love within his heart
May keep him pure, and ever near to thee.
Lord, make him such as. this!

Give him, not world-hopes but the nobler need—
New life Thy hand brought from the Gates of Death;
That he may have no failing faith or creed,
But trust in Thy sure hand that quickeneth.
Lord, make him such as this

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

A Christmas Prayer

So long ago Thou gavest men a greeting
Of peace and kindliness, on that first day
When war was not, and all the wide earth lay
In quiet. Is remembrance then so fleeting.
Dear Lord—have men so soon forgotten Thee?
Ah, no! And yet the long tumultuous sea
Of life sweeps on, in waves of strife and danger,
And Love seems very old and weak and sere!
Lord, if thou wilt, give grief and many a tear;
But never in his life come, as a stranger,
To him who liest here

He is so little! Hold him in Thy keeping,
For Thou art Love, and let him know Thy face;
Cast over him the mantle of Thy grace,
Kind Shepherd, in his waking and his sleeping.
Let him seek Thy sure refuge when oppressed
By trouble, and he has no mother-breast
To flee to; guide him safe through joy and sorrow
In shadow of the Cross that Thou hast worn.
Hear this my prayer, dear Lord! Be near from morn
To eve; and bless him in Thy love tomorrow,
The day that Thou wast born!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

An Evening Song

Oh Sleep, who takest babes to thee,
 Take now my baby dear!
Thou findest him so frail and small;
Ah, bring him back all strong and tall—
As lofty as the cypress tree
 Upon the mountain here!
Be thou his keeper, fasten thou
The seal of slumber on his brow!

Oh Peace, who takest babes to thee.
 Take now this babe of mine!
Thou findest him so helpless-weak;
Ah, bring him back with soft-kissed cheek.
And let thy soothing gift abide
 Within his spirit-shrine
Be thou his warder, guard him sure,
And keep him ever strong and pure!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Morning Song

Waken, baby! Dreams come true,
 Stars have fled and night has ceased!
All the sky is rose and blue
 With the morning vapors fleeced!
See, the day has come for you
 From the threshold of the East!

Waken, for the birds anew
 Greet the sun-flame from the corn;
Buttercups, agleam with dew,
 Open to the touch of morn.
Waken, babe! It is for you
 That this dawn-delight is born!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

[Lovers Laugh the World Away]

Lovers laugh the world away,
Youth & life & love are gay!
 All too fleet,
 Tripping feet
Fail in death at close of day—
Amber leads the dance astray;
Never youth with wisdom lay!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

The Old Bronze

From Waters of Strife

See, where the steady hand has slipped, and marred
 The level line! Perchance the weary eyes
 Lifted to rest on the majestic rise
Of Fuji, far above; and so was scarred
A memory in the bronze. "Yet Heaven is starred
 Unevenly!" the patient worker sighs.
 "Perhaps He, too, grew weary of the skies
And glanced at Fuji. Was His art so hard?"

Poor simple graver by the temple gate!
 More beautiful a thousandfold in this
One errant line, the bronze accounted spoiled
Is perfect; be thy master-craft assoiled—
 God breathed upon thee softly with His kiss
Till in its flaw thy work is consecrate.

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Song of Jani

From The Border of Blades

A breeze crept up from the waves, and caressed the tree,
Breathing each leaf astir in the sun's pale gleam
And so in my love would I waft a caress to thee
That might fall to thy lips and melt, on the wings of a dream

A flame stole out of the west, as the dark sun waned,
That touched, ere it died, the locks of the evening star;
And so in my song would I reach to the unattained—
Touching thy spirit but lightly and once, from afar

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Awakening

From Fate Far-Wandering

Like some old urn, sea-hued and long immured,
 Tomb-wreathed with myrtle, rosemary and bays,
 And sung down to Eternity by lays
Sad-throated; whose dear prayers would have secured
Repose inviolate, but old Earth lured
 Sanctity forth to dream of younger days,
 And cast her to the irreligious gaze
Of all men—like this ancient bronze, insured
Of quietness forever, I was fain
 To dwell far from the drumming city's marts;
To dream away Eternity, to gain
 Surcease from that unrest within men's hearts—
Until I glimpsed a soul. Straightway again
Life's ministry was mine; the tomb was vain

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

From “Capistrano”

I

“Serve God and die,”
The Wise Man said;
His dust was dry
When he lay dead,
Men came and made
The dust to brick—
The Wise Man laid
In walls built thick.
Who serves God dies;
Who serves man, lives;
He was not wise,
Yet service gives...

2

Golden lies the sand road, the long road, the grand road,
Dusty gold a-sifting to the lifting of the breeze;
Weary are the footsteps traveling the land road,
But kings and fools go drifting to the shifting of the seas!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Undertones

From Blood Royal

We who have joyed in life's good,
We who have laughed at despair,
We who have sorrowed and stood
Side by side over our dead—

 Shall we care
For the things that will some day be said
When we are sped? Truth is where—
 Where bestead?

Here, for the life we shall live;
Here, for the trust we shall find;
Here, for the good we shall give
Careless of them that may come.

 For the wind
Bloweth free, with no thought to the hum
Of the cedars behind! Faith is dumb
 And is blind!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Jean le Longue

Oh, Jean le Longue hees arm be strong
And he's take hees whiskey clear;
He's buck de jam and he's fight de cam',
And hees arm be breke and he's skin hees han',
But he's drive de Irish from Michigan
He's roll de boss on de bar-room floor
Den Jean le Longue go look for more,
For he's take hees whiskey clear, by gar—
He's take hees whiskey clear!

Oh, Jean le Longue hees arm be strong
And he's take hees whiskey clear;
He's look for fight from dawn to night,
And he's put de calks to de Irishman!
He's bus' de jail! at Pierre le Gran',
He's lose one eye and hees ear's been tore,
But hees fis' she split dat big jail door
For he's take hees whiskey clear, by gar—
He's take hees whiskey clear!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Strang's Axe-Song

For work and ache and sweat, for weary strife
 By spear and peavey, oar and trap and net,
The northland gives men a wage of life—
 And sells it dear, for toll of work and sweat!
Yet men gain something more, A grave apart
 Where cedars whisper requiem to the stars;
A dwelling close to God, an honest heart,
 Hands gnarled from toil and rough with honor's scars;
Contempt from lesser men, perhaps; a strong
 Sure faith in all the things which are not seen;
A simple trust that Right is more than Wrong,
 Thanks unto God because the leaves are green!
And with it all, the deep respect of those
 Who labor at their side by wave or wood;
The surety that He who made them knows
 How, while the axe may slip, it still is good!
So, for hard labor and unceasing strife
 By axe and peavey, oar and saw and ret.
The north woods give a larger wage than life—
 And ask no price, save only work and sweat!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Jim's Song

I will weave on a warp of God's beauty
 A woof of the winds and star-dust;
I will fashion a fabric of duty
 And bind up its edges with trust;
I will forge me a sword of decision
 And hilt it with faith sprung anew;
And the world shall bow down to my vision,
 For my vision is—you!

I will take of the tears of the gloaming,
 Of the delicate laughter of dawn,
The splendor of sea-surges foaming,
 The sweetness of days that are gone;
I will fashion a song from my plunder,
 A song such as never man knew;
And the world shall bow down to my wonder,
 For my wonder is—you!

Till out on the lonely sand-reaches
 And out on the desolate hills,
And out on the palm-scattered beaches
 And out where the frost-terror kills—
Men shall hear my song ever re-ringing
 Till their heartache shall whisper them "True!"
And the world shall bow down to my singing,
 For my song is of you!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

Credo

When God's hand touches mine, in sure appeal,
 To call me forth among the greater things,
I would it came where slow waves fade and steal
 And cedars fill the night with whisperings.

It is not mine to dream afar, and seek
 The Grails of pomp and power where others throng;
Let it be mine to know how Might is weak,
 How Truth and Justice fare not with the strong!

Not mine to find the crown that greatness brings,
 The hymn of triumph and the flame of swords;
Still let my hand shrink from the deeper strings
 To touch the beauty of the minor chords.

No gift be mine of prophet's high insight,
 No fiery eloquence of faith assailed;
Mine not to lead, but follow after, Right—
 And if they will, let men deem I have failed.

Say this of me: He found peace after strife,
 And trust in Nature's wisdom held him true;
His steps were cast in humbler walks of life—
 Perchance God loved him, for his deeds were few!

Publication. *Figs and Thistles* (privately printed by the author, Christmas 1914).

FRUIT BEFORE SUMMER

The expanded Long Beach collection of 1915, with translations, family poems, and verse from the fiction.

[Let These My Songs Bring Back the Olden Age]

Let these my songs bring back the olden age,
The kings and shattered gods, the joys that smiled,
The wiser men who jeered me for a child—
The laughing nymphs who jeered me for a sage.

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

The Lone Pine

Dawn on the mist; above the trees
 A lonely pine uprears
His ghost-hung branches to the breeze,
 Scarred with the olden years.
The mist writhes upward, at the spell
 Of some far-hidden bird;
But clearer grows the sentinel,
 His brethren dim and blurred.
So stand, my soul, amid thy fears
 High over wind and wraith;
Across the darkling drift of years
 A sentinel to faith!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Variants. An earlier state appears in *Figs and Thistles* (1914).

To My Grandmother's Portrait

Dear little maid of long ago
 So wistful-eyed and tender-faced,
When the old artist caught you so
 What winsome thoughts were yours and chaste?

I wonder if you felt the years
 Your eyes would gaze on, from the wall;
The longing hopes, the clinging fears
 That found your heart, that find us all!

I wonder if you felt the trust,
 The simple truth of higher things
Which you, long crumbled into dust,
 Would leave in subtle whisperings
To stir our souls and bid us seek
 A childlike faith we lost long since—
So absolute, so pure and meek
 The trust your painted eyes evince!

If this was yours, as yours the task
 To stir our souls to life again
Across the years—ah, may we ask
 Some such memorial to attain?

Dear little maid of long ago,
 So tender-faced and wistful-eyed,
Give us this secret power to know;
 For see! You have not wholly died!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Variants. An earlier state appears in *Figs and Thistles* (1914).

The Builders

Pile the granite, steel, and stone,
Rear the walls that hide the sun;
Fashion streets of sombre tone—
Flowers grow there, when all is done.

Bring the timbers, iron, and glass,
Lay the stones that chill and burn,
Blight the trees and fence the grass—
One thing men can never spurn.

While they carve and build and hew
In open field or house or street,
In all they think and say and do—
Men and God must somewhere meet.

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Memorial Day

The flag they bore holds many a spot and stain
Here in the sunlight, as the feeble score
Of heroes march beneath—yet once again—
The flag they bore.

Away with all your mimic-martial roar!
What get ye from them, save a mild disdain,
Whose ears have shattered at the shriek of war?

They need no brave array or glittering train;
Theirs but the simple blue they suffered for.
Their sole reward, for strife and toil and pain—
The flag they bore.

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

A Gaelic Song

Behold! A flower on the mountain blew,
And I bent to its shimmer of beauty rare,
To place it between my lips;
When lo! Its fragrance heavy-sweet grew
Till I flung it away, and it swam on the air
As thistle-down lightly dips.

Behold! A flower in the valley I found
And I bent to its fairness, thinking the sky
Had dropped to my breast a star.
When lo! Its breath was in bitterness bound,
Its silvern witchery proved but a lie.
—And it left on my soul a scar.

Behold! A flower I saw by the road
Broken and crushed, yet diamond-dewed;
And a blossom I bent to remove.
When lo! From the stem a teardrop flowed
To the petals that lay all dust-bestrewed—
And I knew that the flower was Love!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Retrieved

Lost in the tireless, aimless city-roar,
 I searched, in passing, each poor wearied face
 To find some glint of higher things, some trace
Of nobly-seeking manhood, seeing more
In Life than life-and-death. Alas, full store
 I found of sin or poverty, or base
 Cruel touch of wealth; but of the truer grace
No sign. Where were the dreams of heretofore?
Then, as I turned away heartsick, a scene
Flashed to my mind. Low pines one side a hill,
 And, rugged in the pines, against the fire
A face—old Kijikon. Strong and serene
As the deep night beyond—I see it still;
 And turn me to the north of my desire!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Hand in Hand

What do they dream
Here in their youth?
Together they stand;
What does life seem—;
Hopings or fears,
Fable or truth,
Facing the years
Hand in hand?
Hers is the life
God gave her for.
His is the strife
And peace after war;
Hers is the hope
That the years may bring
Small hands to grope
Blind, at her breast;
Love that shall spring
To a babe's eyes;
And, for the rest,
Self-sacrifice.

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Resurgam

Here is the dawn!
Silence and gloom of death, a moment ago;
But now there's a life in the field,
A glimmer of light in the east,
 And a lilt in the sky.
Here in the dawn man is least;
Here is God, freely revealed;
Here in the dawn God is nigh,
In the stir and the glimmer of rose
 And the music on high!

Here is the spring!
Tendrils of tenderest vine-root can feel, as it flows
From earth and from air, the swing
Of life that is pulsing again,
Life in the sun and the rain,
 Life in the soul!
Dawn in the spring—come out!
Out to the thunder-roll
Of the flame in the east! Out, out
To the call of the thrush in the wood,
Out, out to the heart of the good
 Grey dawn in the spring!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

The Ojibway Potter

Art holds for him no subtle mockery;
 Impassively he sits within his rude
 Northwoods atelier, whose solitude
Breeds far-flung visions that we may not see
Or comprehend. What though his pottery
 Be simple, his materials all crude?
 Here where the forest casts her magic mood
His work is eloquent of mastery!

A lesson, this, for us who give our lives
 To Fame, intent on leaving but some trace
That we have lived. What use to haste and fret,
Pursuing that which men so soon forget?
The End is his who neither seeks nor strives
 But in his work finds his God-given place.

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Where Fathoms Be Not

On! Gain the seas unknown, the farther seas,
Where man is not; search earth in all her ways,
Finding, it may be, some great meed of praise—
And that is all. No peace will lie in these
Greater horizons; no upsurging flow
Of sweetness from the vaster depths to thee;
No beauty to unloose the bands of woe
When thou hast overthrown Infinity!
There is no mystery beyond the seas,
No glittering pageant of barbaric thrones;
Only in self lie hid the mysteries,
And in each hour the sweetness that atones
For all Life's travail, through a work well done.
Seek this, today—and all thy peace is won!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

A Loon Cries

Hark! On the night a cry is upborne;
Wild with affright, mocking the morn—

COOKY, beating his tin pan

Grubpile, boys! Up, ye lousy lazyheads,
Up an' git yer coffee an' yer cakes afore the dawn!
Grubpile, boys! Up an' douse yer dazy heads;
Loon's a-cryin' on the lake,
Tellin' ye to rise an' wake,
Tellin' lazy lumberjacks it's time that they was gone!

REGINALD VAN ASHTON, sitting bolt upright in vers libre

Guide—guide!
Did you hear that panther—
Or was it an escaped maniac?
Get your rifle, quick—
Guide! GUIDE!
Wake up, you damn' fool—
Where are the guns?
Wake up, wake up!
Oh Lord,
Get me back safe to Broadway!

JOHN MAKES-NO-SHADOW, standing by his canoe

Manitou!

I hear my brother calling me. "Rejoice,"

He says, "the sishcawet have come to spawn!

The Manitou has in his hand updrawn

Food for his children!" Thus my brother's voice

Calling across the lake. Speed my canoe,

Further my nets and send my spear-point true!

Great Spirit! Manitou!

Hark! From the trees dim echoes outfling—

Or is it the breeze in the pines a-swing?

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Heart's Content

Had God put forth a drum unto my hand,
I would have wakened the nations to sweep from their face
All that is evil and wrong; made men understand
Faith, and the giving of grace.

Had God put forth a sword unto my hand,
I would have swept all the earth with the flame of it bare,
So forcing peace on the sea and peace on the land;
Peace, and the quiet of prayer.

Had God put forth a lyre unto my hand,
I would have gripped all the world with the grip of my song;
Giving the gift of my gift to every demand,
Serving the weak and the strong.

But God put forth a hand unto my hand,
Showed me a pathway of thorns, and all joyous I went;
Gave me the love of a babe—ah, dreamropes of sand!
See, how my heart is content!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

From the Train

Years from her—how the wheels sing to me!
Miles from her—dearer and nearer!
Ever the whirling hours fling to me
Heart-cravings olden that cling to me
Soft through the dreams her eyes bring to me—
Dreams of her, nearer and dearer.

Wheels quiet, and the lights that shine
From all the quiet town—her town!
One light is hers, but gives no sign
To me; one, of the sparks that burn
For hundred other hearts than mine.
So near! Until the slow wheels turn
And down the night the light-sparks drown.

There! I knew my heart had need of fearing,
Need to shrink from thinking of her so!
Ghosts of olden days and dreams come leering
From the stars to fright me as I go;
Wreck and ruth of days and dreams heart-searing,
Pausing ... passing ... how was she to know?

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

From the South

Whispering wind of the south,
Bear me a kiss from her lips—
Waft me a breath from her mouth!
Lightly as humming-bird dips,
Softly as humming-bird sips,
In the thirst of my desolate drouth
 Ah, bear me a kiss from her lips!
Southwind, so weary and spent,
Breathe me the way she has gone!
With snatches of orange-bloom scent,
With fragrance of flower-bestarred lawn,
With sweetness that flushes at dawn—
All in thy whisperings blent,
 Ah, breathe me the way she has gone!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Awakening

How have I loved thee, thirsting
 Afar in desert ways,
And yearned to find adown the wind
 Some hint of silvern days,
When all thy soul was bending
 To touch my eager youth,
To soothe and heal the scars that steal
 Across the face of Truth!

How have I found thee, waiting
 So patiently and lone;
Till all unsought of word or thought
 Thy spirit was mine own!
Love has nor place nor portion;
 But mine is bitter ruth
For wasted years that hid with tears
 The desert ways of Truth!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

The Mother Patient

“Higashi wrought me”—that is all. Long dead
He lies beneath the cherry trees, with hands
Ceased from their patient labor, and his fled
Sweet spirit now at rest. From cunning bands
Of shapen bronze, close-wreathed with many a thread
In gold, he formed his masterpiece, that stands
So mutely eloquent of days far-spaced
And half-sensed fantasies of ancient lands.

This was Higashi’s child, and claimed his life.
Teach me, old worker of the long ago,
Your patient spirit, calm in petty strife,
Rising supreme o’er all vexation; so
My living child may prove as true and fair
In every soul-line, as your bronze-craft there!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

An Ithacan Lullaby

Sadly the golden evening is fading,
Dim is the wandering light in the west;
Valley and temple and sea overshadowing—
Artemis grant thee repose of the blest!
Oh, little mariner, sea-gulls are wheeling
Low at the cliffedge, and night-songs are stealing
Over the bay from the fishermen, reeling
Nets upon nets—so rest, baby, rest!

Far in the moonlight white oars are flashing,
Softly and sweetly the night-breezes croon;
Up from the valley the waterfall, splashing,
Wafts to thee peace and repose in its tune.
Rest, little wayfarer! Slumber is steeping
Ocean and land in the peace of its keeping;
Soon will be day, and the end of thy sleeping—
Rest, baby, rest, for the morn cometh soon!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Unforgotten

The rose that you gave
Is withered and dead;
Yet even in death
There lingers a breath
Of the sweetness we crave—
But the beauty is fled.

The love that you gave
Seems sweet to me yet.
You have perished, men say;
What knowledge have they?
I know that the grave
Cannot make you forget!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

The Romany Tent

Soft on the tent is the touch of rain—
Sleep, little chal, for the night is long!
The storm bears death to the farmer's grain,
But Gorgio's loss is Romany's gain;

 And the oak is bent to shelter the tent
At the edge of the plain—
Sleep, little pal, for the night is long!

Tall and strong are thy brethren nine,—
Sleep, little pal of the wandering tribe!
But more than theirs shall be strength of thine
Though thou sleepest here, little babe of mine,

 In a Romany tent by the old oak, bent
Where the four winds twine.
Sleep, little chal of the wandering tribe!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

The Sandman

When soft and slow the shadows fall,
And in the sky the pale sweet moon
Appears, then down the darkened hall
The Sandman's coming soon!

Why, every night it seems that when
The story mother tells gets to
Its very nicest part, just then
The oddest feeling touches you!
You simply have to rest your head
On mother's knee, and something queer
Gets in your eyes, and—"Off to bed,"
Says mother, "for the Sandman's here!"

He comes with sneaky stealthy tread,
You cannot hear him on the stair;
But somehow, when the day is fled
The Sandman's always there!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Hyla's Song

When I have felt the touch of years
That seem so light as yet;
When I have known the bitter tears
Of some still far regret;
I would not then turn to his page
That shrines my memory,
Nor murmur, while old days engage
My heart, "This man loved me!"

But when around me merriment
And laughter circle light,
I would some cedar-laden scent
Might drift across the night;
That so I could recall again
His clear serenity;
And think, for that I gave him pain,
"This man remembered me!"

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Nocturne

When sweet, sad stars smile down on closing day
And wraiths of olden memories steal and fade;
When past joys lighten all the folding shade,
Then—then my heart goes out to yours alway,
Dear love of mine!

When evening steals the dim day's life away
And fireflies string pale jewels adown the wind;
When the soft gloaming's power entralls the mind,
Then—then my heart is near to yours alway,
Dear love of mine!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

He and She

Ah, were it infidelity
 To love as doth the rose—
Each morn her dewy heart held free
 To any wind that blows?
“Yet morn is but a little space,
 And if the dew be sped
How lowly hangs the rose’s face
 Ere afternoon be fled!”

Ah, were it infidelity
 To love as doth the moon—
Her silvern lips held tenderly
 To streamlet and lagune?
“Yet hers is but a borrowed light,
 Left when the day is done;
How faint and wan her radiant sight
 Ere the long night be run!”

Ah, were it infidelity
 To love as poets bid—
Each hour to pay Love’s golden fee
 Lest youth too soon be hid?
“Yet, is the rose at eve not fair—
 The moon not sweet at dawn?
Nay, infidel! What love more rare
 Than that whose Love is gone!”

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

La Vision

Why sittest thou idle in the marketplace?
Am I not with thee in time of trouble—
Spectre of thy youth, fellow-pilgrim of thine age?
Neither evil destiny nor guardian angel am I,
Although so men name me.

Heaven hath granted thy soul unto me;
Where thou art, shall I be alway
As a brother inseparable,
Even unto the end of thy days
When I shall enthrone myself on thy gravestone!

In sadness, come unto me freely,
But in joy avoid me warily;
Ever must I follow thy path
Yet never may I touch thy hand—
For I am SOLITUDE.

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Tristesse

I have lost the joy of life,
Fled are friends and gaiety;
Gone is all the zest of strife
Which alone bids genius be!

When I found that Truth was mine
How I hailed her as a friend!
When for dregs I knew her wine
On her way I bade her wend.

Yet Truth knows nor bond nor thrall;
Those whom she denies her grail
Find that life has missed its all—
When God speaks, shall answer fail?

I have lost the best of life,
Joy and Truth afar have swept;
All that has escaped the strife
Is that sometimes I have wept.

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Quand Vous Serez

Spinning beside the winter's fire, your hair
A silvern crown beneath the candles dim,
The thought will come, as these my songs
You hymn—
“Ronsard enshrined me, when that I was fair!”
Then not a drowsy servant by you there
Half dozing, feigning work to suit your whim,
But shall awaken at the name of him
And bless you, for the love he held so rare.

Then I shall be at rest, while up above
The myrtle shadows weave my mystic pyre,
But you will croon across a dying fire
And mourn your old disdain and my lost love.
Ah, live and love, nor wait the morrow's dawn;
Cull Youth's fair rose, Hélène, ere it be gone!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Variants. An earlier state, “Ronsard to Hélène,” appears in *Figs and Thistles* (1914).

A Man's Prayer

Lord, give me grace that I may never reap
 Where mine own hands have failed to sow the seed;
Grace to hold dear what others scorn as cheap,
 Grace not to barter soul for body's greed!
Not mine the lure of aught that greatness brings,
 The hymn of triumph or the flame of swords;
Hold Thou my fingers from the deeper strings
 Unto the beauty of the minor chords.

Lord, give me grace that I may never ask
 Where I have naught to give, and may not lay
My couch with children's tears, or wear the mask
 Of comfort, woven by wan souls and grey
To give me ease! Let none hold me in hate
 As I would bear no muted lives in fee;
Lend me Thy love, to be my high estate;
 Is bronze, then, proof of immortality?

Lord, give me grace I may never seek
 The Grails of pomp and power, where others throng;
That I, as Thou, may see how Might is weak,
 How Truth and Justice fare not with the Strong.
Grant me no gift of prophet's high insight,
 No fiery eloquence of faith assailed;
Mine not to lead but follow, after Right—
 And if they will, let men deem I have failed!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Venezia Minore

Pale day, grey day in Venice—gondoliers
A-shiver—not the dream that I had dreamed!
Lonely and drear, the storied Lion seemed
More beautiful in mist. Silent the jeers
And jests of the candles—dull dreary years
Hung heavy in one day; only there gleamed
Some scarlet day-old pageantry, that streamed
Sullenly, clogged with dirt and misty tears.
The evening gun rang out its distanced “boom”;
A sandolo swept by, with careless list;
We passed Ca’ d’Oro, wreathed in living doom,
While soft rain wept her porticoes death-kissed;
Then Marco set his oar against the mist
And San Giorgio lowered through the gloom.

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Recompense

I have not gazed across the bare expanse
 Of heated desert-plain, to rest my sight
 On Philip's cloistered walls; nor in delight
Have I beheld the arabesques that dance
Across Alhambra's witchery; no chance
 Has led me through the shadow-haunted night
 Of rich Toledo's poverty; yet, bright
Or sad, I know old Spain's weird necromance!
For sometimes in the thrilling of a leaf
 Or wafted fairness of a far-hung cloud,
A vision sweeps before me through a brief
 Sweet breath, its transient figuring endowed
With all the wonders I have never seen.
Lord God, dost guerdon for what hath not been?

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Scott

Go down to death, stout heroes who would free
That secret which the snow encompasseth!
Whose is the Voice that bids you ceaselessly
Go down to death?
And is it wealth you dream, or empire
In some lone land where no man wandereth,
Or ringing trump of Fame's high heraldry?
Nay, not in strength the dark world glorieth;
None but defeat shall gain her utmost fee;
Ye only win who, in the soft-swept breath:
Of Azrael, by sea and farther sea
Go down to death.

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Three Men

Three men lay dying with the dying sun.

"I wonder why we were afraid?" says one.

"Why, death is only sleep, when all is done!"

"You lie!" gasps one, a-tremble. And "You lie!

Death is the end, and we are lost who die!

God! If I could but live again, and try—"

"Peace!" one laughs out. "See how the green trees sway

That but a week ago stood stark and grey!"

Three men lay dead upon an April day.

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Variants. An untitled earlier state appears in *Figs and Thistles* (1914).

J'ai Dit à Mon Cœur

I whispered to my heart, my errant heart,
 "Is it not enough to love sincerely?
 Dost not see that fickle love is merely
To lose youth's blessing in the worldly mart?"

Heart answered, "Nay, not thus is Fate bestead!
 It is not enough to love sincerely;
 Dost not see that fickle love is merely
To render sweet the pleasures that are dead?"

I whispered to my heart, my errant heart,
 "Does not Life buy of its grief too dearly?
 Dost not see that fickle love is merely
To seek each day new griefs within the mart?"

Heart answered, "Nay, not thus is Fate bestead!
 Life buys not its store of grief too dearly;
 Dost not see that fickle love is merely
To render sweet the anguish that is dead?"

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Variants. An earlier state, "De Musset's Chanson," appears in *Figs and Thistles* (1914).

Twilight in Algiers

The sun is gone below the hill
And purple night is on the bay;
Yet crimsoned fingers wander still
Upon the minaret so gay—
The minaret so square and tall
Whose lacquered tiles upleaping rise
Against the deep Algerian skies,
Like flames upon a vine-clad wall!
And near the garish minaret
Where Sidi Abderrahman lies,
A band is playing symphonies
To make lean tirailleurs forget
How passing Arabs scowl and glance—
A breath from Paris, sweetly set
Within this land of newer France!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Nous Marchions

We must seek love in divers things and ways
Ere we may learn what thing we love the best;
Few of our many loves will stand the test,
Few of our many deeds will have Time's praise!
We must knock often at the gate of tears,
We must pick often from the half-closed flowers
Before we find that slower-footed hours
Have passed our fleetness; and our age brings fears.
Then, with life's cup half drained, Truth bids us know
That best of all is some old tested friend!
Meeting by chance, hand reaches unto hand,
Heart unto heart; what then if words come slow?
We march together toward the unseen land
Where souls die not, where is no day's dark end.

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Out of Tuscany

Threshed out is the straw
 And against the closed door
The sturdy flails stand;
 White is the floor
Chaff-strewn, with the raw
 Rich scent of the grain
Over all; while the band
 Rests, weary and fain.

And thus, ere the length
 Of the day is foredone,
Comes a moment for rest;
 Ah, seize it, nor shun
That instant of strength!
 Lay from thee the flail,
Seek God in thy breast—
 And He will not fail.

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

The Canada Shore

How fresh are they, and yet how sere,
 These towns along the northern shore!
And were our fathers thus—austere,
Clamped down like those about us here
 To tales and ways of yore?

Or were they happy here to dwell
 In towns along the northern shore—
Content with bread that buttered well,
Content with heaven and with hell,
 With tales and ways of yore?

Yet, were our newer customs brought
 To towns along the northern shore,
Perhaps too dear were freedom bought;
For always has the freed world sought
 The tales and ways of yore!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

One I Knew

I had a friend.
God gave him gifts of the best,
All the world lay at his feet;
But there was no rest
In his soul. His road held no end—
And beauty of spirit is fleet!
Half the world found in his face
Strength and glory and power,
These, and his genius; but I,
Nearer and closer by,
Saw with each thievish hour
Loss from his soul of the grace
Given by God. And today he stands
Reft of the best,
Clay, all crumbled between God's hands
Under the test.
And the end
Seems to me sad; despite all the rest
I was his friend.

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Captions

From Trails Chivalrous

- 1 When men from north and south come close
 Look well to words—beware of blows!
- 2 Were Love than Death less strong
 It could not last so long.
- 3 When smitten foe laughs back
 Don quickly helm and jack!
- 4 Warm in the spring is the pine-sweet air,
 But the pine-roots twine ‘round the gray wolves’ lair!
- 5 Mark well the rede:
 Much talk makes need.
- 6 “Bide hidden; then with tooth and claw
 Take payment runs the forest law.
- 7 Who best controls his hate
 Holds firmest grip on Fate.
- 8 Though ye conquer twice and thrice
 Ye must pay the gods their price.
- 9 If the wolf be brave and his heart be stout
 When the lips draw back from his fangs— look out!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Bedford's Song

From King Strang

King Strang he wears a golden crown
And a red robe on his back;
But give him a tree acrost from me
An' see who'd quit when the saw cut free!
Catch hold—

I'm king myself in the lumber-shack,
An' that's king enough for me,
By whack!
There ain't a king in the world can whirl
A peavy's haft, or laugh an' birl
With a Michigan jack!

King Strang eats off a golden plate
An' cold grub makes him cross;
But shove him through with my river-crew
An' I bet he'd eat enough for two!
Work, mate—
Or I'll bust ye one, ye lazy hoss—
An' that's king enough for you!

By goss,
There ain't a king in the world can put
The calks to me, or can shake his foot
With a Michigan boss!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Chant of the Axe

From Blood Royal

For work and ache and sweat, for weary strife
 By oar and trap, by peavy, spear and net,
The northland offers men a wage of life—
 And sells it dear, for toll of work and sweat!

Yet men gain something more. A grave apart
 Where cedars whisper requiem to the stars;
A dwelling close to God; an honest heart;
 Hands gnarled with toil, and rough with honor's scars;
Contempt from lesser men, perhaps; a strong
 Sure faith in all the things which are not seen;
A simple trust that Right is more than Wrong,
 Thanks unto God because the trees are green!

And with it all, the deep respect of those
 Who labor at their side by wave or wood;
And surety that He who made them knows
 How, while the axe may slip, it still is good!

So, for hard labor and unceasing strife
 By axe and oar, by peavy, saw and net,
The northland offers larger wage than life—
 Asking no price, save only work and sweat!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Piobaireachd of Feagh

From The Last O'Donnell

Clear and white in the fresh dawn-light
Is the steep boreen we follow;
Blue our glittering spearpoints gleam
Like the flying spray of the Culdagh's stream;
Loud and long rings the wild sword-song
On edge of the shield-rims hollow,
For the fire of life is the joy of strife
And the battle won!

Keen and bright is the arrow-flight
As we glimpse the foe before us;
Fire and slaughter among the hills,
Slaughter and fire the death-lust stills;
Harps clang high to the bards' fierce cry
While the pibroch rises o'er us,
Till the day is ours as evening lowers
And the fight is done!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Tippecanoe

From A Son of the Cincinnati

Up flint and out horn—
 Dun hangs the scalp-feather;
Wrath comes on the morn
 And smoke of the burning!
Out bullet and rod—
 Black Sand is the omen;
The anger of God
 Shall waken ye, foemen!
Arouse ye and wake
 To the war-eagle's screaming;
God shall shatter and break
 The dream of your dreaming;
Up flint and out horn—
 Your greatness is broken!
Death rides on the morn
 And Black Sand has spoken.

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Dwight's Ditty

From Marsden's Money

When a feller's feelin' happy
 An' the sun's begun to climb,
When the birds are all a-singin'
 An' the church-bells start to chime,
Then it's pow'ful easy, brother,
 To fergit your restless soul
And amble to'rds the river
 With your ol' bent fishin'-pole!

You hear the elder preachin'
 And a-steerin' of you right
But somehow you get thinkin'
 'Bout them worms you dug las' night;
An' when the choir gets singin'
 How the Jordan's goin' to roll,
You wisht you was on Jordan
 With your ol' bent fishin'-pole!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Captions

From A Son of the Cincinnati

- 1 Where is the trail that did not begin
 With laughter of youth and a heartsick sin?
- 2 If they that find may see,
 Roads bring good company.
- 3 Give tongue to a friend and teeth to a foe:
 This is the creed that the wolfings know!
- 4 Who knoweth not his trail
 Shall find somewhere a Grail.
- 5 Simpler than tricksters, stronger than foes,
 Humble to God the great man goes.
- 6 The ale-word is an ill-word ever;
 Men who know this, heed it never.
- 7 When bides a snake within the nest,
 Who smiteth soonest smiteth best.
- 8 Powder and Bullet and Flint and Fire—
 Who shall naysay ye from Hell's desire?
- 9 Who flees from God shall feel God's goad
 Bestirring him upon God's road.

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Litany of the Knights

From The Seal of Solomon

I

God of old, who rules the sounding years,
Alike our God of battle and of tears,
Hear us, O Lord!
The darkness falls; deep doom is on the land,
Thy people perish; where is now Thy hand?
Hear us, O Lord!

2

O Death! Death! Death! Thou hast come to us here.
Help us, O God! Our alleys are stricken and sere;
Gone are the bravest, our best-born and noblest and dear;
Our strongest lie low in the dust. Lord God, be Thou near!
Hark to us sorrowing, list to us desolate, hear!
God of aforetime, God of the after-time, rear
Bulwarks to cover us! Put forth Thy sheltering spear,
For death and destruction have come to the hearts of us here.

3

Unto us whose dawn is grey
In the east a light is spread;
Hearts of us, be strong today—
Fear and failure both be fled!
With the fast our past is sped;
Up and at the foe who wait!
Gone be our despair and dread,
God and Courage keep the gate!

Lances gleam in brave array;
Christmen, Crossmen, look ahead!
Smite the infidel and slay—
Drown his crescent moon in red!
Knights are we and knightly bred!
What have we to do with fate?
Up and strike! Mahound is dead—
God and Courage keep the gate!

4

God heareth, God heareth! The shadows upsteal;
Ride, ride to the call of His trumpet-peal,
To the snarl and the swirl and the sheen of steel!
Up and strike! Up and strike!
Christ rides with our Vanguard, Death thunders behind,
Spur, spur, for our Crossflame hath smitten them blind!
Spur, spur! Strike their ranks like a flame on the wind—
Up and strike! Up and strike!
There's a flame on the wind and a flame in the sedge
And the flame of our faith flares from windrow and hedge;
Swordflame and Crossflame! Up, up—with the edge—
Up and strike! Up and strike!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

El Camino Real

From Afoul of Destiny

Golden lies the sand road, the long road, the grand road,
Dusty gold a-sifting to the lifting of the breeze;
Weary are the footsteps traveling the land road,
But kings and fools go drifting to the shifting of the seas!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Song of Black Sand

The dun deer dies by lick and spring;
The eagle cries, death high a-wing;
And in wait God lies for everything.

By many a gate Death's house is won;
Scalplocks hang straight when life is done;
And God lies in wait for everyone.

The sorriest clod may understand
How Death's dark rod cowers all the land;
But in wait lies God to guard Black Sand!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

Voorlopers

From A Son of the Cincinnati

The road is long across the waste
And they who made the road are sped;
Yet their strong spirit knew no haste—
Their children wrought when they lay dead.

Lord God, give us that we may know
The surety our fathers felt;
Faith, that the forest winds will blow
The dust of towns where we have knelt!

Publication. *Fruit Before Summer* (Long Beach, California: privately printed by the author, 1915).

GATHERED VERSE

The Santa Barbara collection of 1916, printed for private distribution and used here for its later readings.

Evensong

Dear baby of the star-bright eyes
 That now in slumber softly close,
What place was yours beyond the sky,
 Whence came the soul that in you grows
And gains in strength from day to day?
 What was the life you left behind?
When you were sent to share our way
 And lift our hearts to love enshrined?

Dear baby of the pool-deep eyes
 Where azure shadows fade and glance;
Grant us to know what visions rise
 Beyond their depths, what splendors dance
Athwart their shades! Give us to share
 What hidden things your spirit sees,
The wonder-pageantries that bear
 Life's truths to you, Faith's mysteries!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Variants. An earlier state appears in *Fruit Before Summer* (1915).

Rondeau

Far in the north I know an east incline;
Rich in old cedar logs and stunted pine,
 Whose umber warp is studded with the fair
 Fresh pink of petals, and whose balmy air
Is perfumed from a censer all divine,
 Far in the north.
There only, under log or trailing vine,
Drunk in its richness, veers the slender line
 Of the arbutus, rarest of the rare!
But here, amid the dragon-city's blare
Where men tread all their days in paths of care,
 Where face and form are gross with
 Mammon's sign—
What wonder if my spirit lingers there,
 Far in the north?

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Klydones

The old blind singer, whose deep-throated surge
 Of war-waves cresting o'er the Windy Plain
Rings down the ages, knew the wild refrain
Of shores agroan beneath eternal scourge;
And he who sang the hollow-noted dirge
 Of Atreus' house, and that ill-destined twain
Whose seven-gated city wrought their bane—
His words, too, fall with sweep of waves that urge
The hollow ships to doom. So were they all,
 Loud in their ears. Fair ring the words and free!
Those hearts that sang with booming ocean-roar
 Of far wide misty depths, and breakers' call;
And, while the billows crash forevermore,
Their chants come sounding from the old gray sea!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

The Humbler Fates

There are none worthier than “unworthy” things;
 These little, poor, ignoble deeds we do
Change to pure beauty, and the doing flings
 Across their umber warp a warmer hue.

That shall not fade. Harp of a thousand strings
 Is this our life, whose greater actions sound
The deep rich chords; yet thru the whole outrings
 The subtle minor harmonies that round

All to perfection. If rewards be few,
 What matter? Deep within the heart is found
Nobility, that each day springs anew
 To cope with tasks, of humbler Fates unwound!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Night in Autumn

Sleep, little babe in your crib so white,
Like the first thin snow on the fields outside;
Mother is near through the long dark night
—Oh love of my love, lie still!—
And her heart all your sorrows and tears will hide.
So sleep, while over the fields and town,
Over the streets and the stubble brown,
The breeze will whisper its wafted air:
“Oh babe so tender, babe so rare,
Goodnight!”

Far overhead through the frost-clear sky
The wild geese wing to the south again;
Rustling and shivering leaves hang dry
—Oh heart of my heart, lie still!—
On the vines that are brushing against the pane.
But sleep, for after the snow comes spring!
And after the night, the dawning will bring
A breeze to whisper you, sweetly sure,
“Oh babe so tender, babe so pure,
Good-day!”

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Variants. An earlier state, “The Autumn Night,” appears in *Figs and Thistles* (1914).

Merry Rimes of Calvados

I

The road is very good to see
And very full of minstrelsy,
For all the little piñon trees are harpists in the wind;
And if you have nowhere to go
You'll find it very fair, below—
Below the snowy mountains, with the good north wind behind!

2

Oh, a lad and a lass were lovers gay,
And all in the springtime blithesome!
But skies grew gray and the lad fled away,
And when he'll return again who can say?
Oh, not in the springtime blithesome!

3

Lonely is the high road, underneath the aspens,
Lonely is the valley road and dusty in the breeze;
Brethren wander all ways, sun and rain together,
And oh the little singing birds that twitter from the trees!

4

Life is a fey thing, a happy thing, a gay thing,
And death puts a very sorry end to it all!
But life is full o' questing
And death is full o' jesting—
So when Fate's wave is cresting
We'll laugh it to its fall!

5

The road it is a good road, the road was made to wander on,
And all the little mountain trails are white amid the trees;

But where the road finds ending, only fools would ponder on—
So hey for the dusty road, the sunlight and the breeze!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Reciprocity

Would you have men play square with you,
 Play fair with you, and bear with you
In all the little weaknesses so easy to condemn?
 Then simply try to do the same—
 Hold up your head and play the game,
 And when the others are to blame
Be sure to bear with them!

Would you have men, when new to you,
 Be true to you and do to you
The things that faith and brother-love and nothing else impel?
 Then give them faith and brother-love
 And set sincerity above
 All other things—and it will prove
That you have builded well!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Oisín to His Harp

Here on this soul-sad cypress do I hang
Thy muted wraith, oh friend in weal or woe!
How often hast thy silvern-tongued flow
Answered, in olden days, the weapons' clang;
How often, as through Finn's wide hall outrang
The joy of feasting and the heroes' shout,
Thy melody, and that of him who sang,
Silenced the noise and hushed the clamorous rout!
Alas, those days are fled away, and I,
Alone, amid this puny folk that dwell
Where fought my heroes, come at last to die.
So take herewith, my Harp, a last farewell!
Hang here; the wind of evening, roaming by
May draw from thee a sigh—my only knell.

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Theokritos

An hour! She was just there, sir, and I here;
And so we talked, while, as in very scorn
Of that unwearied hour, fate's gossamer
Whipped my lean cheek and passed. She put new fear
Into my soul, told of her gods and faith
That shamed with very godliness and love
Our own—and so departed. High above
The temple, glinting amber-crystal there
In the warm sunset, loud with song and hymn,
Savored with sacrifice, seemed not so fair;
Its olden meed of reverence waned dim.
And thus the old gods passed, and slowly died
In that one hour.

Long since? Well, I am old
Who then was young, yet here each day I keep
Unspoken tryst, here in the eventide,
Dreaming her face, and the strange faith she told.
So men have named me names that fretted deep,
Blasphemer, idler, cynic; and their power
Hath stripped me; yet I come, content to leave
Their curses while I dream—and haply grieve
For that one little silver-glinting hour
Of old time.

She? They murdered her next eve.

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Thanks

Thanks unto God because the trees are bare,
For well we know they shall be green again;
Because our lives have each its load of care
And surcease comes the sweeter after pain;
Because the winter's breath is on the air
In token that spring cometh with her kiss;
For our tomorrow, not for days that were—
Thanks unto God for this!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Intra Muros

Love, be thou with me always, night and day,
For I am very weak and need to rest
Within thy spirit. Give me of thy best,
Of thy heart-strength, hold me within thy sway,
Spur on my soul with faith! Oh heart, today
I am but as a child that seeks the breast
Of utter love, and in that love confessed
Makes him a refuge from the grim array
Of Goblinry. Aye, very real they crawl,
These my own phantoms, in the way I've trod—
Fear, Illness, Poverty; and, backing all,
The grim old World, its talons outstretched wide.
Oh heart, ward this the goblin-king aside;
Beyond his power lie only Love—and God!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Crucifié

From Théodore Botrel

A wounded French-Canadian lay beside
A slow canal of Flanders, brow and breast
Ensanguined. So they found him at life's crest,
Death rattling in his throat, his eyes fixed wide.
Death rattled! And to silence Death's behest
They crucified him there above the tide,
Saying that thus upon a merry jest
England and France in one were crucified!
France! Love alone shall save thee! For behold
Thy children of past years return to thee,
Proffering love, aye, even to the cross!
While thy great Task endures to make thee bold,
Thy Canada, from piteous Calvary,
Holds to thee bleeding arms—death is not loss!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Roger Casement

A dream was his; though vagrant and forlorn
It spurred him forth upon the way he trod.
Be theirs the shame, whose promises forsworn
Blasphemed his honor in the name of God!

Not his the tears that tided Emmet's doom,
Not his the fame that shrouded Owen Ruadh;
His poor worn body fills a traitor's tomb,
The princes whom he trusted laid him low.

Say not he failed! Despite a sullied name
For Ireland went he to the gallows-tree;
For her he died, and death assoiled his shame—
This was his dream, and this his Victory!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Easter

Oft-times an hour despondent sweeps our hearts
 When all life's darkness looms along the sky;
The wastrel years long perished in the marts
 Of sin; the love that blossomed but to die;
The earthen ashes in the hand of fate;
 Till all we sowed, and all we failed to glean,
Dims our stout faith, and hope is desolate.
 Lord, where is guerdon for what hath not been?

Then through the veiling cloud a light is sent
 And we bethink us of the Master—how
His duty's path seemed ashen, how He bent
 Beneath despair, till angels touched His brow;
How faith and hope seemed broken in His hand
 And how, the promised kingdom still unseen,
There wailed from all the faithful little band
 “Lord, where is guerdon for what hath not been?”

Though faith be dim, faith cannot die the death,
 Though hope be desolate, hope hath no sere;
For these are bound in charity—the breath
 Of strength beyond all strength we reckon here.
Though we have failed our deep desires, we find
 That still with Eastertide earth burgeons green
And still above the grave is love enshrined—
 Lord, is this guerdon for what hath not been?

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

The Story Hour

'Most every night, just as the first stars glisten,
And all the sky is dim and far and grand,
We sit around the kitchen fire and listen
While mother reads us tales from fairyland.

And though we know they're only fairy stories,
We always see them, truly, in the fire!
Kings and glass mountains, gold and silver glories,
A dragon, and the princess Heart's Desire!

There always is, you know, a prince unfearing,
And there always is a fairy with her crook;
Yet somehow we are never tired of hearing
The stories from the magic fairy book!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

The Gift of Thanks

With some there dwells the thought, and only this:
 The God-sent inspiration of the day;
A space their souls can sense some angel's kiss,
 To give, mayhap, a prayer. It is their way.

With some the thought gives utterance to the word,
 Nor fears, half-shamed, to bid a brother pray;
So are their souls beneath the world-grip stirred
 A space to gratitude. It is their way.

With some the soul halts not at word or thought,
 Nor may the bounden time its impulse stay;
And these, who do not as they must but ought,
 Translate God's breath to deeds. It is their way.

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

The Earth

From Jules Jouy

Nurse and mother
 Is the earth,
Flower and wheat sleep
 Under the earth;
Bird and man
 Are on the earth,
Each sings his song
 Of the earth!

The sun gives a kiss
 To the earth;
He burns, a flame divine,
 Over the earth,
For he is the ardent husband
 Of the earth!

The peasant lives and dies
 For the earth.
The miner is one damned
 By the earth.
Like others, he is born
 On the earth,
Yet lives as in a prison
 Under the earth;
His horizon and sky
 Is the earth!

All begins and ends
 By the earth.
The child who coos
 At the earth,
The old man who dies and descends
 Into the earth—
All this remakes blood
 For the earth!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Io Pean

Thus I would die... not with the timbrel's blare
 And blazonry of splendor on the sky,
 Nor with the hymn of triumph swelling high,
The victor's crown, the flame of swords in air;
Not with a proud magnificence to flare
 My spirit forth in conquest, nor with sly
 Wild gropings after life, with tear and sigh
And mutterings of sadness and despair...
 Thus, I would die!

But might I lie beneath some cedar bare
 Where ghostly sedge and water whisper by,
I think the stars would sing me welcome there;
Till, with the dawn-mist veiling earth in prayer,
 God's hand would steal to mine, bid me forthfare—
 Thus I would die.

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Variants. An earlier state, "Victory," appears in *Figs and Thistles* (1914).

The Chieftains

Agamemnon

Shepherd of the ships! As glimmer of the dawn strikes Ida gold,
As the waning stars grow dimmer, in Aurora's veil uprolled;
In a darkling ruin shrouded lie uncited Ilion's shores,
Up the wine-dark seas unclouded oar we with home-driving oars.
Grant, oh Consummator, kindness to thy children battle-brunted
Ten long years, who now in blindness turn the hollow ships, dark-fronted,
To Argolis. Grant a meeting to the dear ones long denied;
Grant a father children's greeting by the joyful mother's side!
Father, lead us in thy pity, all the warring overpast
To our homeland fair and city, and our dear ones, safe at last!

Chorus. Strophe 1

Hail, night-star, the cloudy realms adorning!
What sayest thou to heroes war-tossed,
Weary of Troy and yearning for home?
Bright thy hope-ray cheers their souls,
Comforting their deep-tired hearts!

Strophe 2

Mind with war, not foresight, fraught;
King of Vanities, called men—
Dost not know that woman's faith
Is a fleeting, changing wraith?
This, King Pride, will be thy thought
When thou comest home, and when
Bane by woman's hand is brought!

Antistrophe 1

See! Alas, a sweeping cloud-drift hides thee!
Dark are the waves, for thy light is gone,
Black on the sea hang the low clouds;
In vain, Atrides, dost thou search,
Tossing guideless on the deep!

Antistrophe 2

Heedless, thou! No thought of ill
 Clouds thy mind whilst far away!
Bluff and bold thy heart, and true;
Straight and strong thy love outflew,
Strong and straight thy love flies still—
 Flies to her who on that day
Shall the royal life-blood spill!

Ajax Oileus

Come followers, faithful ones, now is our meed
Of rest from the war, our god-striven war!
Rejoice ye! Rejoice, and nevermore heed
The might of the winds, or the breakers' roar;
For the gods are dead—their power has passed
Like a withered leaf on the autumn blast!
Nay, banish that frown, my heroes! We
Ourselves must hew out our destiny;
We who have warred with the heavens' might
On Troy-plain by day, in trenches by night,
We know that the gods are dead—we know!
They died in that last great night of blood
When we on the strife-won citadel stood;
And they perished with Ilion's overthrow,
In the fire and tears, in the slaughter and woe.
“Dead are the gods!” The wild seas say it!
The will of the gods—let fools obey it!
Up, comrades, up! To homes and wives
And the hearths that shall glow in our war-chilled lives!

Strophe

Man of conceit, puffed up with vain pride,
Dost cry, forsooth, that the gods are sped?
When thine oaken planks are sea-riven wide,
When thy friends have perished at thy side
And the light of the day is fled;
When thou sittest the god-given rock astride
And Athene's bolt crashes down overhead;
Then, then wilt thou think on the fool who cried
"The vain gods are dead!"

Antistrophe

Yet ever thine arm was first in the field;
Never struck fear to thy hero's breast!
Swift was the sting of thy shafts as thou kneeled
And fought from the rim of Telamon's shield
And swift is thy heart confessed!
Open and free is thy thought revealed,
Never the weight of hypocrisy pressed
On thy mind; to the gods of the heart wilt thou yield,
And call Fate but a jest!

Odysseus

Well, Argon, old friend, at last we are bound
 To our rock-riven isle, up the bowl of the sea!
 Hast forgotten thy trade in the clarion's blare,
 And din of the war, and arms' brazen sound;
 Or still can ye guide to the haven, where
 All rugged and bare
 The cliffs uprise in their majesty?
 Ah, it gladdens my heart to vision the scene!
 The towering crags with their caps of green,
 And the glint of sun that just catches a sail
 And turns it to silver against the blue,
 While the breakers ceaselessly roar and wail—
 Ah, this is home! Come, ye war-weary few
 Who remain of my band, here into the stern;
 Let us sing the songs that the fisher-folk sing
 As they come in the gloaming home, for I yearn
 To hear them ring!
 Out over the sea as of old! When we come
 Within sight of home,
 Let us sing those songs to the beat of the oars;
 The folk will hear, and the women will speed
 And crowd all the boats and wharves and shores
 To welcome us home, and will give us our meed
 Of praise and love. The shepherds who tend
 Their wandering goats on the hills, will hear
 Our ancient songs rising loud and clear;
 And the herd-boys will send
 To the farmhouse, and hastily, merrily, all
 The people will run to the great sea-wall—
 Ah, my children, happy our journey's end!

Strophe

Man art thou, Ithacan, yet must thou battle
 With more than the toils of a man;
 Deep will be sorrow, sharp will be anguish,
 Weary the way!

Strophe 2

Poor fools! Do ye think that your toils are o'er
Because war is done?
Home shall ye come no more;
So the Fates have spun.
Men have yielded when ye assailed,
But the gods succeed where men have failed;
None of ye e'er will see Ithaca's shore
Save only one!

Antistrophe 1

Strength of the grey-eyed one be thy protector!
Sweet joy will thy sorrows bring forth;
Happy thy home will be, mighty thy son,
Peaceful thine end.

Antistrophe 2

True hearts, loving only the things of home,
Let your songs ring free!
Soon will your sorrows come
And the joy-tear flee.
Your thoughts shall fly to the loved ones dear,
True hearts that never knew feel of fear!
Many a year shall ye weary roam,
Many a sea!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

On the Train's End

What lies beyond the tail-lamps, in the void
 That circles out around, above, below?
All the day's things, the trees, clouds, hills, destroyed;
Out of them all, the dun sky and the stars
Above the black horizon; two lean bars
 Monotonous beneath the tail-lamps' glow—
Whither outfled? What lies there in the night
 Lurching behind us ever? None may know.
Yet often I have thought that two things might
Follow us steadfastly for weal or woe;
Merciless, smiting if perchance we nod,
 Full swift to punish, to reward full slow,
 Yet loved by us. And what are these that go
Behind the tail-lamps? Duty Done—and God.

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Wisdom of Iran

Give ear to three things!

The advice of an old man,
The murmur of thy slaves,
The silence of strangers.

Give eye to three things!

The hump of thy camel,
The door of thy harem,
The edge of thy knife.

Give tongue to three things!

The question of a child,
The sadness of thy friend,
The call to prayer.

Give hand to three things!

The broken rein,
The word of insult,
The one who asketh thine aid.

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Pards

It isn't the times when we've tasted
 The sting of a back-to-back strife;
It isn't the time that we've wasted
 In learning the utmost of life;
It isn't the hour that we've squandered
 Which binds us together today—
It's the hour when we've worried and wandered
 With never a lone word to say.

It isn't the beers we have slathered,
 The pipes we have smoked by the hour;
It isn't rewards we have gathered
 Or losses that turned the day sour;
It's the watching of each other's sorrow
 In the silence that sympathy lends—
It's the waiting for dawn of the morrow
 That bids us be sure we are friends!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Stratford Streets

Full many an age hath Margaret been sped,
 Whose mother-love no Yorkish steel could kill,
 And that Volumnia whose son sent thrill
On thrill of war thru Rome, and terror dread;
Yet still the roses burgeon white and red
 In many an English garden-close, and still
The grey walls on the seven-crested hill
 Stand grimly, sentinel unto their dead!

These twain the poet left us, and today
 Their characters live on; the stern emprise
 That never knows defeat, and sacrifice
Of the same high ambition. Who shall say
Where learned the bard a mother's twin heartbeats?
Perchance he found them both in Stratford streets!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

The Indian Mother

Her face is graven with the weight of years
 And seamed with all her nation's hopelessness;
Yet in her smile are hid the mother-fears
 And in her fears is motherhood's caress.

What though her child be heir to all the doom
 That flung his people on misfortune's strand?
Fate wove in warp of umber on her loom
 But sealed the weaving with a mother's hand!

Earth is at one in this, the recompense
 God grants a mother for her toil and pain;
The touch of lips to lips, of sense to sense,
 The soul that blesses and is blessed again!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Variants. An earlier state, "The Last Papoose," appears in *Fruit Before Summer* (1915).

Heart-Hold

Dear little cottage by the shore
 Where roses twine at roof and eaves,
 And the cool winds caressingly
 Droop ever on you from the sea—
Would that I dwelt with you once more
 Afar from all the citied roar
And all the pain the city leaves!
 The circling years shall wax and wane
 Upon the yellow cliff, where come
 The darting swallows with the spring
 To wheel on ever-wandering wing—
 And never shall I see again
 Your windows shining in the rain
From off the sea; but you are home!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

God's Way

A handshake, and instant I knew it,
Felt the thrill as her eyes met mine;
A moment—needs God to undo it—
Left my spirit divine.

God whispered; what could I but hearken?
I found me His faith in her grasp;
And shall live, till the years die and darken,
In a moment's handclasp!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Iago's Credo

I believe in a cruel god, who wrought
 Me as himself; and I name him mine!
Life is an atom, a slime, a thought
In its self-hood Vile; all things defile
 Me, being a man; and at Evil's shrine
I loosen the threads that Fate has caught!

Netted and snared in Honor's name
 Are kisses, tears and the faith of men;
Into the Lie of Life we came
To find that its germ but breeds the worm
 Of Death. Comes Death, and then—and then
Is nothing—or Heaven, an ancient shame!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

L'Arbre Croche Mission

God made a little crooked tree
And set it on the shore,
A thing of wondrous sanctity
To paynim folk! But presently
Came men who hailed the mystery
And preached a faith of charity
All up and down the shore.

They built a church upon the shore
Beside the crooked tree,
And taught the paynim to abhor
The gods by which his fathers swore;
It was a task full easy, for
The cross they gathered to adore
Was but a crooked Tree!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Variants. Reprinted as the verse prelude to *L'Arbre Croche Mission* (1917).

The Searcher

I craved a friend, and sought him long
 By many a path and lane,
Till all the white road lost its song
 And all the search seemed vain.
I turned me home at close of day
 And in the eventide,
Close-dwelling just across the way,
 I found him at my side!

I craved for music, and I sought
 Afar the minstrel's art;
Full cunning-sweet it was, and fraught
 With soothing to the heart.
But false rang song and roundelay
 Upon the eventide,
Until a bird across the way
 Thrilled music at my side!

I craved for love, and searching went
 Through all the world adrift;
Nor friend nor music could content
 Nor any heart held gift.
Then all the world seemed wan and grey,
 Until with eventide
I found that love, the whole long way,
 Had wandered at my side!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Song of Calvados

Gleams that we lost in the long ago
Under the dust of a drifted star,
Sweet were our tears when we loved you so...
Where were our hearts when you fared so far?

Lost was the gleam, so swift, so slow
That scarce we knew it was fading out;
Winds of the world that so blindly blow,
Why did ye cover the sky with doubt?

And, if our souls have failed to glow
Anew with gleams and the sad-sweet tears,
This is the loss that we all must know...
Faith that is fled on the flame of years!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

The Children's God

At Jizo's shrine the blossoms fling
 Cloud-rose against each mellowed line;
 Both age and sadness lose their sting
At Jizo's shrine.
 What tho' wee hands have ceased to twine
About a mother's neck, but cling
 To Death? See, how the mountain-pine
Spells faith unto the sorrowing!
 And see, how grief is made divine
And hopeless winter turns to spring
 At Jizo's shrine!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Love of My Love

I asked of the full-blushing rose,
 “Does my Love love me?”
But the flower whispered back “God knows!
For the love of a woman blows
 Like my petals. See!”
Then the rose gave herself a shake;
 But my laugh rang free,
For each “petal refused to break!
And joyfully then I spake:
 “So my Love loves me!”

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

He Reminisces

I would that you could think of me
 As I remember you—all pure
 And sweetly fragrant as the morn
Itself! But not again shall we
 Come face to face, for the world's lure
Has parted us, in love and scorn.

Yet sometimes when the day is done
 And I awake to loneliness,
 I think of you, and how you said:
“Go forth to fight! From sun to sun
 Bear with you all my heart, no less—
 But come not back with honor dead.”

I went; I fought; I won the strife;
And winning, lost the best in life.

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Plum Blossoms

“When troublous winds are hushed,” the poet sang,
“And rain has cleansed the mountain air, how clear
Seem then the far plum blossoms, to us here
Beneath the tea-house roof!” Oh ancient Chang,
Afar you were from all the harsh world’s clang,
To you Nirvana’s peace was very near;
Not yours the gleam of knightly helm and spear,
Not yours the clarion’s lordly wild harangue!

Now in a later age, an alien land,
 Upon the wall your pictured Verses hang
 Untouched by time, undimmed by age’s slur;
Remote from all our scheme of things you stand,
Yet here bequeathing us a wistful tang
 Of sweetness and repose. God rest you, sir!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Heart's Desire

Slow are the years, and slowly have we wended
 The path of patience, for the way was dim;
And long it seemed that hope lay broken, rent
From out our souls, where only grief attended,
And that our heart's desire was ever ended,
 Ended within the silent depths and grim;
Yet still across the darkness faith descended
 And still we waited patiently for Him.

What goal is thine? What flame is in thee burning
 Until Accomplishment seems living fire?
And does it guide, of right or wrong unlearning,
Far from the path; or does it chide thee, turning
Thy steps aright? Seek from thy soul discerning
 The worth of that to which thou dost aspire;
Seek if it urge thee to Him, faint with yearning
 That He should render thee thy heart's desire!

Ah, rest in Him whose hand is very tender
 To heal thy wounds and give thy pain surcease!
Trust in the power that only may engender
Hope in the desolate; think not the Sender
Forgetteth thee—He is thy strong defender,
 And only He may bind thee or release;
Wait patiently for Him, until He render
 The sum of all thy heart's desire—His peace.

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Lost Legion

Some of us lay in the long lush grasses,
Some of us fell in the green field-corn,
And some of us died in the high hill passes
Cold to the laughing lure of morn.

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Hakon Jarl

Out through the islets into the bay
Whistled the wind.

Hakon Jarl was wont to say
That the wind should whistle his life away

Out through the islets into the bay
If the gods were kind,
Giving him death in the keen sword-play.

Out through the islets into the bay
Scatter the ships.

Hakon Jarl swoops on his prey
Till the smitten rovers flee from the fray,

Out through the islets into the bay;
But his sword-grip slips
And a woman wails at the close of day.

Out through the islets into the bay
Hakon is sped.

Raven sail adrip with spray,
Red flames lighting the faces grey,

Out through the islets into the bay
Sweeps Hakon, dead;
Faring forth on the Valhalla way!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

At Marquevillers

From Théodore Botrel

Against the ancient wall the dear Christ lay
Upon His rood; when sudden came a shell
Bursting the vault away, and it befell
That all the Cross was shattered. There today
Hangs the freed God, high-poised as in some great
Stayed moment of ascension far above;
The Crucified, delivered by men's hate,
Becomes the Resurrected, lord of love!

Oh France! Thine arms are, too, held wide in sorrow,
Thy nailed arms from Flanders to Alsace,
And Christ His lot shall be thy lot tomorrow
When the vain Hatred of the Horde shall pass.
Its fury will but resurrect thy might,
Giving thee, as to Christ, immortal flight!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Two Boys

They kissed their brother as he came,
Two little boys. They lingered there
Beside the train; and then a flame
Of red—a collie, swift to dance
About and on them. Thus alone,
Arms locked, the three were quickly gone.

Somewhere their father slept in France,
Perhaps; but why was it they met
With tender lip and hand and glance,
These three, no more? What unseen debt
Of grief was paid among them then?
What mystery of fame or name
Was theirs—what tragic necromance
Lay hid within their greetings, when
They kissed their brother as he came?

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

The Northern Trail

When naked foot and moccasin alone
Left a faint imprint traced among the trees;
When no taint thrilled along the forest breeze
From a new race that claimed the land their own,
Then all thy hidden ways were wondrous grown
And filled with beauty of thy guardians, these
Great cedars, haunted by old memories
And requiems the towering pines intone.

Today no beaded foot stirs thy faint dust
Trodden of old by brave and Voyageur;
The trees, with ancient secrets held in trust,
Still guard thine age-old path, and still the sure
Sweet requiem ascends. God grant that we
May somewhere find the peace enshrined in thee!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Lullaby

Sleep, my babe, sleep!
Far in the cedars the north wind is howling,
Far in the forest the gray wolf is prowling,
And snowdrifts are deep;
Here in the cabin, dear heart, do not fear thee,
Mother's close by and the sandman is near thee
So sleep, my babe, sleep!

Sleep, my babe, sleep!
Over the forest the pine-choirs are singing,
Over the lone trail snowshoes are swinging,
For white drifts are deep;
Here in the cabin the hearth-fire is gleaming,
Under thee, over thee, dim shadows streaming—
So sleep, my babe, sleep!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

Variants. An earlier state, "The Northland Mother," appears in *Figs and Thistles* (1914).

A Christmas Verse

Christmas joy and Christmas cheer,
 Trust in worth of higher things;
 Gifts that only Christmas brings—
These be with you all the year!

Hope in sorrow, faith in fear,
 Love that leavens work and play;
 Gifts we hold from God today—
These be with you all the year!

Publication. *Gathered Verse* (Santa Barbara, California: privately printed by the author, 1916).

VERSE FROM THE SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO BOOKS

Five revised preludes, 1918–1939

Bedford-Jones first printed these five personified preludes in *The Story of Misión San Juan Capistrano* (1918). The readings below follow their final lifetime states in *The Mission and the Man* (1939); the earlier witnesses are recorded after each poem rather than repeated.

The Adobe

From the dust they made me
A gray adobe slab,
 By my fellows laid me
 Sunbaked, ugly, drab:
From the earth they called me
 Underneath the sod,
Plastered me and walled me—
 Set me to serve God.

Publication. *The Mission and the Man* (Pasadena: San Pasqual Press, 1939). **Variants.** Earlier states appear in *Fruit Before Summer* (1915) and *The Story of Misión San Juan Capistrano* (1918).

The Keystone

Out of the quarry cut and laid
Brown hands wrought me, unafraid;
Carved me with symbols that had no name,
Set me to hold a high arch-frame.
Vanished are they with all their race
Yet here I sit in my given place,
Washed of the rain, burnt of the sun,
Waiting with God till the years be done.

Publication. *The Mission and the Man* (Pasadena: San Pasqual Press, 1939). **Variants.** Earlier states appear in *Fruit Before Summer* (1915) and *The Story of Misión San Juan Capistrano* (1918).

The High Bells

Afar and afar
By earth and sky
From the bell-tower high
We call men nigh—
Nigh unto prayer.
Over the worn
Desert-land's glare
With night and morn
Our call is upborne
To sundrift and star:
“Come ye to prayer!”
Ever we cry,
Never we cease—
“Come ye to prayer,
Here is God's peace.”

Publication. *The Mission and the Man* (Pasadena: San Pasqual Press, 1939). **Variants.** An earlier state appears in *The Story of Misión San Juan Capistrano* (1918).

The Coyote

All the night is deep and still;
 (Coyote, do you hear the thunder growling?)
Stars fling silver over the hill
Where the wandering beast is howling,
Under the night-sky endlessly prowling,
While men wrap warm and sleep their fill,
 Oyé, oyé!
When the dawn comes gray
Coyote—do you hear the thunder growling?

Publication. *The Mission and the Man* (Pasadena: San Pasqual Press, 1939). **Variants.** An earlier state appears in *The Story of Misión San Juan Capistrano* (1918).

The Man

He heard an echoed anthem swim
Upon the swallows' twittering cries;
The bare brown hills became to him
A shimmer of sun-symphonies;
Athwart the crumbling cloister shade
An angel's wing limned lanes of light,
And from the graves, forgotten, strayed
Low whisperings upon the night.
With axe and plane and rugged beam
He fell to hewing out his dream.

Publication. *The Mission and the Man* (Pasadena: San Pasqual Press, 1939). **Variants.** An earlier state appears in *The Story of Misión San Juan Capistrano* (1918).

BIGFOOT JOE AND OTHERS: FIGMENTS OF FANCY

Poems dispersed through the private-press prose collection of 1920

Five poems are embedded among the essays, sketches, and stories of *Bigfoot Joe and Others: Figments of Fancy*. They are gathered here in their order of appearance. Four are translations or adaptations from French; the closing sonnet addresses the reader in Bedford-Jones's own voice.

From the 'Sonnet' of Felix Arvers

Within my soul there lies a secret, thieved
Eternally from Love, that knows no sleep.
All innocent is she whose name lies deep
Enshrined upon my heart, nor has she grieved
With love's kind sorrow; naught have I achieved
Though alway at her side. Thus shall I keep
My secret, while I live. How might I reap
Rewards unsought, when none can be received?

For she, to whom God gave a soul so tender,
Goes calmly on her way, and will not hear
The murmured homage Love would gladly render;
So pure is she, so quiet and austere!
Scanning my lines, "Who can this angel be?"
She smiling asks—and fails herself to see.

Publication. *Bigfoot Joe and Others: Figments of Fancy* (Lakeport, California: privately printed by the author, 1920). **Variants.** Earlier states appear in *Figs and Thistles* (1914) and *Fruit Before Summer* (1915).

La Cathédrale Engloutie

Bells far and fine
Lost evermore
To the blue sky,
Yet still implore
And bid us fly
The citted roar,
To seek God's shrine
And hold divine
The rich, deep things
That men decry.
A bell that rings
And echoes o'er
On angels' wings;
Sweetly it sings—
"All life is thine!
Give God an hour
And feel His power
Steal far and fine
Like bells across
The city's dross—"

Publication. *Bigfoot Joe and Others: Figments of Fancy* (Lakeport, California: privately printed by the author, 1920).

Les Deux Cortèges

Within the church two companies are met.
The one is sad and bears an infant's bier,
A woman following; slow steals the tear
On her pale cheek, where grief his mark has set.
The other, a baptism. Protecting arm
Held close, a nurse upbears the precious mite;
Comes the young mother, whose proud looks invite
Praise and allegiance to her baby's charm.
They christen, they absolve; the chapels clear.
Then the two women, crossing in the aisle,
Exchange a single glance at joining there;
And—wondrous mystery to inspire a prayer—
The young wife weeps in gazing on the bier,
The mourner throws the newborn child a smile!

Publication. *Bigfoot Joe and Others: Figments of Fancy* (Lakeport, California: privately printed by the author, 1920).

With a Branch of Semper-Virens

Unto the end that age to age shall know
The perfect love which Ronsard gave in fee,
How your warm beauty laid cold reason low
And held in fetters all his liberty;
Unto the end that age to age shall see
How your sweet face shrined in his life was lying,
How in his heart you dwelt eternally—
I bring to you this flowered branch, undying,
Which knows no frost to sere its radiant spring!
When you are dead I shall revive you, chaste
And lovely; such the tribute that I bring,
Who in your service find all bliss embraced!
Like Laura, loved of Petrarch, you will live—
At least, while books immortal life can give!

Publication. *Bigfoot Joe and Others: Figments of Fancy* (Lakeport, California: privately printed by the author, 1920).

Sonnet au Lecteur

I hailed you, reader, after ancient wont,
 Crying “Bonjour!” upon my first fair page;
Closes my book in type of gloomier font—
 For we are come into a perilous age.
Gone are the golden days of merry wage,
Of nymphs and laughing gods, of kings who smiled,
Of sober men who jeered me for a child,
 Of merry fools who jeered me for a sage.
In factioned strife our troubled time is veiled,
 Our poets sing, with politics inflamed;
Yet shall I not be counted to have failed
 If you, who read me, read me once again!
And if two words my wisdom may contain,
Let them be Joy and Folly, unashamed!

Publication. *Bigfoot Joe and Others: Figments of Fancy* (Lakeport, California: privately printed by the author, 1920).

EDITORIAL NOTE

Texts, variants, and scope

This edition was newly transcribed from the page images of Bedford-Jones's private books, not copied from their damaged embedded OCR. Two independent scans of each principal collection were consulted, and the readings were checked again against high-resolution page renderings. Decorative type, worn sorts, and initial letters account for many false readings in automated transcriptions; scan furniture, broken characters, and narrow-page wraps have been removed.

Each poetry book has its own chronological section. Poems repeated with ordinary punctuation, spelling, or presentation changes are printed once in the latest substantive lifetime reading and their earlier witnesses are identified in variant notes. The five mission preludes follow the revised 1939 text. Lineation, stanza structure, intentional inset lines, subtitles, and italics follow the originals; hanging indents created only by the old page width are not reproduced.

Bedford-Jones's 1920 press list records *Corn, Wine & Oil*, privately printed at Santa Barbara in 1918 in forty copies. Four institutional copies have been reported, but no complete usable scan was located. The title is documented here rather than silently represented by conjectural text. Manuscript poems and still-unlocated periodical verse may enlarge the record in a future revision.

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COLOPHON

Production record

Henry Bedford-Jones: Collected Poems was edited by Brian Kim Stefans for *Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry* and published by The Text-Tech Papers, Los Angeles, in 2026. The edition was set in EB Garamond at six by nine inches, with cream pages and the Green/Extremes color and typographic system. The unlettered cover artwork was generated for this edition and completed with live series typography.

The poetry was newly transcribed from original page witnesses, checked against independent scans, and reset for reading. Source scans, research downloads, OCR working files, cover art, build code, and verification materials are preserved in the project folder.