



JAMES MARSHALL WARNACK

# *Soul Symphonies*

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EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:  
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

A TEXT-TECH PAPERS PROJECT

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# *Extremes and Moderations*

Early Southern California Poetry

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

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*Edited by Brian Kim Stefans*

The Text-Tech Papers | Los Angeles, 2026

# *Soul Symphonies*

James Marshall Warnack

*A Critical Reading Edition*

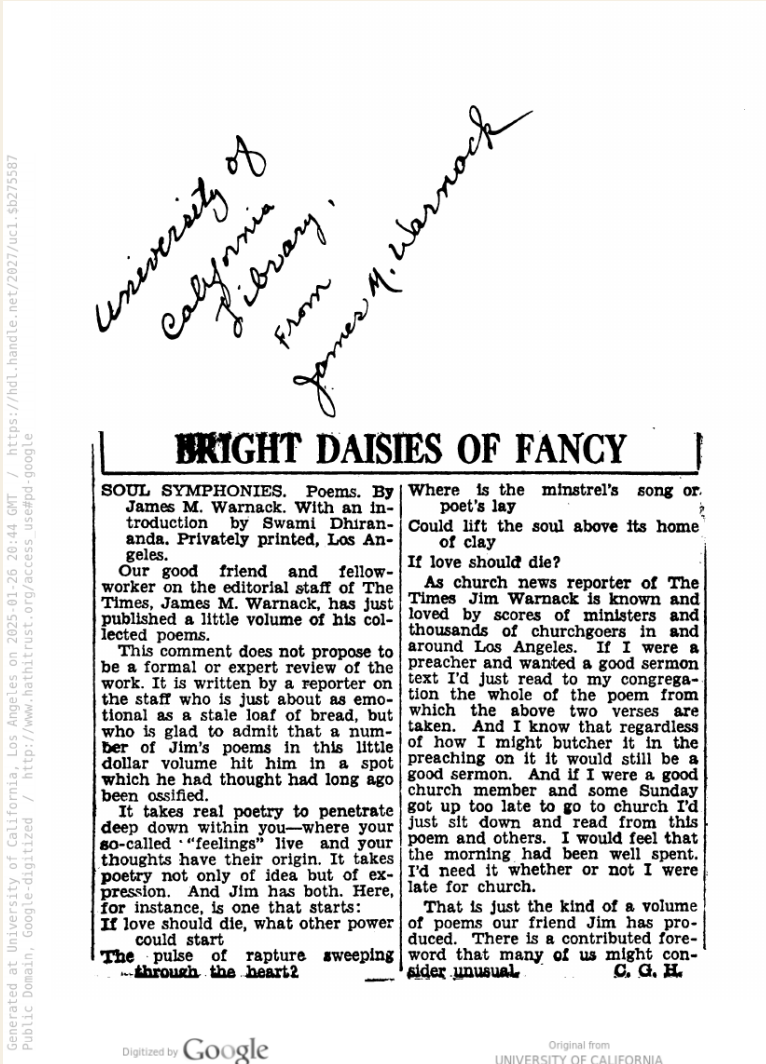
*Edited by Brian Kim Stefans*

*The Text-Tech Papers*

*Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry*

## Archival Images

*A short selection from the source record*



*Contemporary Los Angeles Times notice preserved in the source copy.*

## Editorial Note

This is a reset reading edition, not a facsimile. The text was transcribed from the source page images in the local archive and collated against available embedded text. Source-page wraps were rejoined only when the page image showed that they were typographic continuations; stanza breaks, meaningful indentation, epigraphs, subtitles, and section headings were retained. Obvious scanning debris was removed without silently modernizing diction, spelling, or punctuation. Each poem ends with a source note in the established Green-volume form.

# Contents

|                                        |    |
|----------------------------------------|----|
| Archival Images                        | I  |
| Editorial Note                         | 2  |
| Introduction                           | 5  |
| Swami Dhirananda's Introduction        | 7  |
| <i>Soul Symphonies</i>                 | 10 |
| <i>Trees at Night</i> . . . . .        | 11 |
| <i>Lovers</i> . . . . .                | 12 |
| <i>Voice of the Flame</i> . . . . .    | 13 |
| <i>The Valley of Dream</i> . . . . .   | 14 |
| <i>The Morning Watch</i> . . . . .     | 15 |
| <i>The Unexpressed</i> . . . . .       | 16 |
| <i>The Fool</i> . . . . .              | 18 |
| <i>In the Night Time</i> . . . . .     | 19 |
| <i>To You</i> . . . . .                | 20 |
| <i>The Singers</i> . . . . .           | 21 |
| <i>The Red Bird's Song</i> . . . . .   | 22 |
| <i>A Dream in the Desert</i> . . . . . | 23 |
| <i>Build Me an Altar</i> . . . . .     | 25 |
| <i>If Love Should Die</i> . . . . .    | 26 |
| <i>The Path</i> . . . . .              | 27 |
| <i>At Midnight</i> . . . . .           | 28 |
| <i>The New Morning</i> . . . . .       | 29 |
| <i>A Song in the Dark</i> . . . . .    | 30 |
| <i>The Ship</i> . . . . .              | 32 |
| <i>The Heart of Life</i> . . . . .     | 33 |
| <i>Unity</i> . . . . .                 | 34 |
| <i>Nirvana</i> . . . . .               | 35 |
| <i>White Birds</i> . . . . .           | 36 |
| <i>The Inseparable</i> . . . . .       | 37 |
| <i>The Inclusive</i> . . . . .         | 38 |

*Emancipation* . . . . . 39

*The Surrender* . . . . . 41

*The Undivided* . . . . . 42

*Doubt and Joy* . . . . . 44

*Night* . . . . . 45

*The Ideal* . . . . . 46

*The Failure* . . . . . 47

*A Dream of Freedom* . . . . . 48

*The Poet* . . . . . 49

*If I Could Sing* . . . . . 50

*The Day's Journey* . . . . . 51

*When Freedom Comes* . . . . . 52

*The Mocker* . . . . . 53

*The Fog* . . . . . 54

*Mother Answers* . . . . . 55

*The Vision Deific* . . . . . 56

Bibliography 58

Colophon 59

## Introduction

James Marshall Warnack lived several Los Angeles lives at once: silent-film actor, stage performer, *Times* religion editor, “Foothill Philosopher,” student of Yogananda, and poet whose work tried to hear one spirit moving through many faiths. *Soul Symphonies* begins with trees, lovers, flame, birds, desert, fog, and the sea, then keeps pressing toward unity, surrender, freedom, and the divine presence inside ordinary life. The poems can sound Christian, pantheist, or yogic without settling into a single creed—much like the journalist who covered churches while refusing membership in one. This edition resets the complete 1928 book, keeps its sequences intact, and restores continuations that the scan repeatedly detached from their poems.

## Biography

James Marshall Warnack came to Los Angeles after an early career in acting. Later accounts place him in D. W. Griffith films, in the *Mission Play* as a priest, and in the *Pilgrimage Play* as Judas. A secure birth date and full early chronology remain to be established.

At the *Los Angeles Times* he became a reporter, editorial writer, and long-serving religion editor. Colleagues nicknamed him “the Bishop” for his angular face and long white hair. He also wrote under the label “Foothill Philosopher.”

Warnack expanded the newspaper’s religious coverage beyond Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish institutions to Buddhism, Islam, Theosophy, yoga, and other movements then flourishing in Los Angeles. He described himself paradoxically as a theoretical Christian and practical pagan and did not belong to a church.

*Soul Symphonies* appeared privately in 1928 with an introduction by Swami Dhirananda. A contemporary *Times* notice emphasizes both the devotional force of the poems and Warnack’s popularity among ministers and churchgoers. The book was advertised through Yogananda’s *East-West* magazine.

Warnack was a devoted student of Paramahansa Yogananda and contributed poetry and prose to *East-West* for years. Research by Philip Deslippe reports eyewitness testimony that Warnack helped shape

*Autobiography of a Yogi* from Yogananda's notes and stories, giving the English narrative coherence and literary flow. That claim is significant and should be presented with its attribution rather than as uncontested authorship.

He continued publishing front-page Christmas and Easter poems in the *Times*. His broad religious reporting and private yogic commitment make him an important figure in the meeting of journalism, poetry, and Asian religious movements in Southern California.

Warnack died on December 31, 1957. His final poem, "Matchless Morn," appeared posthumously at Easter 1958. Further work should locate his obituary, personnel file, film credits, correspondence with Yogananda, and any manuscripts preserved by the *Times* or Self-Realization Fellowship.

## Swami Dhirananda's Introduction

*From Soul Symphonies (1928) | Mount Washington, November 23, 1927*

Poetry requires rhythm in expression and thought, not necessarily rhyme. But rhythmic fidelity to facts alone is not real poetry, nor is poetry merely a procession of fancies, though each has its place. When we are carried on the wings of expressions to the land of the unexpressed and elusive, and our heart sees the face of our own self in everything, we have real poetry. If a poem on a tree or river does not tell me something about my deep self, it is not a poem to me. If a poem on life's experiences does not make me live them with a relish—even the bitterest experiences—it is no poem, it is prose.

Poetry, like other arts, sweetly unmask our unobserved self and deepens our acquaintance with it, without trying to do so.

When the Soul is deeply stirred by somebody or something, then one realizes that he has a soul; otherwise he assumes it. Stirrings within establish our own individuality as separate from others' individuality.

Original footnote: 'Soul' is used here in the sense of individuality or Ego.

When the description of anything produces an effect on the mind, it is prose; when it calls forth a reaction from the heart, it is poetry. The head without the heart cannot make us individuals. Poetry is the baptism of concepts with the blood of the heart.

By making us individuals by way of the heart, poetry strikes the cord of the universal too, as nothing binds creation closer than the heart. 'The whole world is made kin' by it. To use another figure, the gift of the universal is the individual, and poetry hands us this gift.

And when the heart is moved more by soul-realization than by abstract concepts or concrete images of the world, the deeper depths of the universal are reached. Then we have mystic poems, which are a class by themselves.

If the attentive reader is not made a conscious poet while he is reading the poems, the poet has failed, as the responsibility devolves largely on the poet. The mission of the poet is to make the reader one. Mr. Warnack, my friend, has truly fulfilled this mission. He gently takes the reader by the hand into his 'Valley of Dreams' and leaves him there alone to see visions, the visions of

Being woven out of the fabric of human life and human hope. This is what philosophy is, and something more. Philosophy is the vision of Being granted by the angel of reason. Poetry is the vision of Being granted by the angel of joy. When the two angels mingle their smiles, the philosopher becomes a poet and the poet a philosopher. Mr. Warnack is both.

The Vedantic thought of India has put forth fragrant blossoms in his poetic Soul, and they are gathered in the following pages.

Some of his philosophic poems may savor of pantheism, but they are far from ordinary pantheism. They are of the type of idealistic pantheism, or, rather, idealistic monism. The pantheist buries God in nature, but the idealist of the monistic type revives and liberates Him. The latter says, with the pantheist, that God is nature, but says that God is something more, the unexpressed. And, as that ‘something more,’ He is everywhere and nowhere. He is in time and space, and beyond both, at the same time and in the same breath, as it were. Thus, speaking in logical terms, He contradicts the ‘law of contradiction.’ As ‘unexpressed,’ He is the life of the ‘expressed’—the invisible thread holding together the beads of relative existences.

Original footnote: God, in this introduction, refers sometimes to the personal God and sometimes to the impersonal, Absolute Spirit.

The dream of the relative universe, with its atoms and its Milky Way, is made out of the fabric of One Being, the Spirit, the Absolute. The Absolute has not lost its unity in the relative, in the universe of plurality. The world is an illusion, not in the sense that it does not exist empirically, but it has not the same measure of reality as has God, the transcendental Absolute, and what apparent reality it has, it owes to God. Our dream-life is not the same as our waking life; it is unreal, yet it has a measure of reality, but not independent reality, as without the dreamer the dream cannot exist.

These two points of view of the Vedanta philosophy, the empirical and the transcendental, have to be remembered for a proper understanding of Mr. Warnack’s poems. Sometimes he revels in the relative, in the joys, sorrows, the beauties of the relative, nature within and without; then, again, he sings of Eternity, the Absolute; but in both cases he suggests the Oneness of reality, if not always explicitly—as in his philosophical poems—at least implicitly, as in his non-philosophical ones, where he makes us dash into the ocean of elusive sweetness, which itself comes as one broad perception of Oneness.

Furthermore, when he is still in the realm of the relative, in his poem ‘Song in the Dark,’ he wants to ‘keep his dream of resurrection time,’ and, again, when he sings, in his poem ‘Unity,’ of the realm of the Absolute, the eternal and perfect Now, he says: ‘Resurrection is a trick to waken children’s wonder; a symbol, not a miracle of life.’ There is ‘no separation from God’ nor ‘returning’ to Him. These two poems give, apparently, two contradictory views, but both are true—depending upon what plane we are on, or what plane we may be speaking of, the relative or the Absolute. From the standpoint of the Absolute, there is no resurrection. But from our standpoint, the relative, where we are living, there is need for resurrection. The latter poem gives the absolute standpoint, the former gives the relative. Soaring high to the absolute standpoint, in thought and realization, is as much needed as to have both feet on the ground, the relative standpoint in practical life.

The Christ greeting Judas in the poem ‘The Undivided’ is the ultimate triumph of love. And as such, it suggests to my mind the triumph of Being. Personalities are merged into the principle of oneness of Being. The sweetness, simplicity, rhythm and sublimity of these poems will, I know, touch the hearts of all.

Swami Dhirananda

Mount Washington · November 23, 1927

# *Soul Symphonies*

*Stage 1 | 1928*

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The complete recoverable poetry text of the 1928 collection, reset from the source page images.

## *Trees at Night*

Peaceful and calm, like resurrected saints,  
Lifting their arms aloft to greet the stars,  
Softly they rise from earth and stand serene  
Wrapped in the silver draperies of night.  
Shadowy outlines on the walls of space,  
Beneath the moon in majesty they stand  
Silent companions of the darkling hours.  
That slumber gently on the breast of Time.  
Perhaps they stand to guard the destinies  
Of many noble souls, as yet unborn!  
Perhaps within their ghost-like forms abide  
The mystic ministers to future men.  
Perchance they dream the dreams of all mankind!  
Perchance they think the thoughts that all men think!  
And yet, like spirits old and wise they seem,  
Untouched by storms of joy, and dead to pain.  
Beautiful, uncomplaining, speaking not,  
They seem to challenge all the fevered world  
Peaceful and calm, like resurrected saints,  
Wrapped in the silver draperies of night.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 16.

## *Lovers*

The young rose dreamed of the morning time  
All through the long, dark night  
And then she woke and opened her heart  
To welcome the loving light.  
The birds and bees and the children came  
And drank of her fragrant breath  
But a sunbeam hid in her heart of flame  
And kissed her and kissed her to death!  
And the soul of the rose became like light  
For she and her lover were one  
And together they fled, with the coming of night,  
To their home in the heart of the sun.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 17.

## *Voice of the Flame*

I am the Presence in you;  
I have made you mine—.  
Blended myself with the human  
And made it divine.  
I am the sun of your day  
And the moon of your night;  
You are the illumined Way,  
And I am the Light.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 18.

## *The Valley of Dream*

There's a vale in the heart's blessed kingdom,  
Far away on the island of Dream,  
Where the flowers of life's early morning  
Bloom by memory's musical stream.  
And often I sail to that kingdom  
On the light swelling billows of sleep  
And often I pause in that valley,  
A tryst with my childhood to keep.  
For there are the lilies of gladness,  
And there are the roses of joy,  
And all the bright daisies of fancy  
I planted when I was a boy.  
The pansies of hope are still smiling,  
The moss of affection is green,  
And forget-me-nots whisper, "Remember,"  
As, weeping, I pass from the scene.  
I return from the valley of vision,  
  
But lo! in my hands I have brought  
Golden seeds from those blossoms of beauty  
  
To sow on the desert of thought.  
They shall spring into life for my longing;  
  
I shall water their roots with my tears,  
And their fragrance shall fill all the future  
  
With the sweetness of long-vanished years.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 19.

## *The Morning Watch*

Where does the breath of the lily go  
When the blossom dies?

Where may we find the vanished glow  
Of the sunset skies?

Where has the voice of music gone  
When the harp is hushed?

Where is the love that we had known,  
When the heart is crushed?

What becomes of the light of day  
When the sun has set?

What of the soul that has lost its way,  
Yet can't forget?

What becomes of the snowflakes white  
That the sunbeams take?

Where are the golden dreams of night  
When we awake?

The ocean wave expends its power  
Upon the shore;

The poet lives his little hour  
And sings no more.

Sweet summer's rainbow robe is rent  
By winter's breath,

And man, when his bright day is spent,  
Lies down in death.

But gentle Faith will still believe,  
With eyes all wet,

That friends, for whom the heart must grieve,  
Are living yet.

And wisdom, smiling through her tears,  
In patience waits

The glory of the endless years  
Beyond the Gates.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 21.

## *The Unexpressed*

An artist painted a landscape  
With a sunrise o'er the land  
And people praised the picture  
Wrought by the artist's hand;  
And yet the painter sighed to think  
That he had missed his goal  
For he had failed to make them see  
The sun-burst in his soul.  
Upon a lofty mountain  
A prophet sat and dreamed;  
He gazed into the future  
And beheld a race redeemed;  
Yet weariness came over him  
As he taught the great, good law  
For his disciples could not see  
The vision that he saw.  
Before a throng of thousands  
A great musician played,  
And the people cheered him loudly  
For the music that he made.  
He bowed and smiled in answer  
As their shouts fell on his ear  
Yet in his heart were melodies  
He knew they could not hear.  
In a well of inspiration  
Once a master dipped his pen  
Wrote a grand, celestial drama  
Flaming-pinioned gods and angels  
Passed the portals of his mind;  
None but he beheld that vision  
But its glory made him blind!  
Thus forever beyond telling  
Seems the fairest and the best  
And the heart of man keeps burning  
With a sadly-sweet unrest.

The silence seems to ache with joy  
When joy-bells cease to ring  
And the sweetest song the poet knows,  
He knows he cannot sing.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 23.

## *The Fool*

He sneered as he uttered the challenge:

Oh God (if a God there be),  
Come from the infinite spaces

And show thyself unto me!  
Above him the hills were ablossom,

The grass was aglow at his feet;  
The fair face of Nature was smiling

And the breath of the Summer was sweet.  
He heard the glad chirping and humming

Of flying and creeping things  
Of birds with lute-like voices

And crimson on their wings.  
And now from his home in the mountains,

His 'pinions preened for the flight,  
The king of the air circled upward

Until he was lost in the light.'  
The great Sun was spilling his glory  
Through the azure of endless skies,  
And kissing away the dewdrops  
From the gentle daisies' eyes.  
But the man stood there, unseeing;  
He laughed as he thought of his prayer;  
He smiled, in the pride of his folly  
Yet God didn't seem to care!

---

Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 25.

## *In the Night Time*

I lie on the breast of a hill that I love;  
I drink in the sweetness of earth and of sky;  
The world is asleep, but the planets above  
Are spilling their gold on the grass where I lie.  
Oh silvery stars in your ocean of blue!  
Oh, lily-white moon in your lavender sea  
My soul, through my eyes, is reflecting to you  
The light that you lavish so freely on me!  
This boon of thy bounteous silence I crave,  
Oh Death, when thou comest my soul to release:  
That my dust be bequeathed to the wind and the wave  
And my spirit find rest in the night's purple peace.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 27.

## *To You*

Long ago when in the darkness God was dreaming of  
the light,  
Ere the golden stars had sparkled on the bosom of the  
night,  
Long before the voice of Music trembled through the  
stellar space,  
O'er the mind of the Infinite flashed a vision of your  
face.  
Long before the ocean thundered of the things that  
were to be,  
Or the crystal pearl had glistened on the white breast  
of the sea;  
Ere the soft winds kissed the flowers, crowned with  
beads of shining dew,  
God made true his dream of beauty—then He made  
the world for you.

---

Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 28.

## *The Singers*

Out of the dawn the singer flew—  
To the top of a swaying tree,  
And sounded a dulcet note of love  
To a bird on the dew-drenched lea.  
She heard his call, but she answered not,  
For this was the singer's fate:  
To carol his heart away to one  
Who could never be his mate.

And she could not know his heart's desire  
As he carolled madly on,  
For she was a thing of the wind-swept night,  
While he was a bird of dawn.  
And the song that broke the singer's heart  
To her was a lullaby;  
So back in her nest she crept to rest,  
As he flew back to the sky.

But a poet sat beneath the tree  
And heard the songster's prayer,  
And saw the sun on his golden wing  
As he sailed through the amber air.  
And the poet wept, for he understood,  
And he knelt on the sod to pray;  
Then rose with a poem in his heart  
Which he gave to the world that day.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 29.

## *The Red Bird's Song*

There's a song in my throat and a light in my eyes  
And a red rose at my breast

But there is a thorn in my throbbing heart  
That will not let me rest.

And I know my heart must bleed and burn  
So long as I choose to stay

But the rose at my breast shall fade and die  
Ere ever I fly away.

For you are the rose and you are the song  
And you are the light in my eyes;

Aye, you are the gladness of all the earth,  
And the glow of the morning skies!

Oh, you are the thing that makes me sing,  
And never we two shall part

For you are the rose aflame at my breast,  
And the thorn in my bleeding heart.

---

Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 31.

## *A Dream in the Desert*

Afar in the wilderness dreary,  
    As the sun lowered red in the west,  
A traveler, footsore and weary,  
    Sank down on the desert to rest.  
All day he had walked, without compass,  
    Yet holding sweet Hope by the hand;  
And she sang of a city of beauty,  
    Afar o'er the glistening sand.

Then Faith came, and colored the picture  
    That Hope had but traced on his mind,  
Till at last, in the far gleaming distance,  
    He saw the fair city outlined.  
Yet ever it seemed to elude him,  
    This city that shone like the day,  
And, ever receding before him,  
    To mock him each step of the way.

But now, just before him, the city  
    Rose, grand and inviting, to view;  
Yet he knew he must wait for the morrow  
    To start on his journey anew.  
The gathering shadows grew longer;  
    A mist hid the face of the sun;  
The man closed his eyes on the vision—  
    The dream and the dreamer were one.

Alone, in the silence of twilight  
    (For all of his hope and his trust),  
On the sand lay the dust of the dreamer,  
    At one with the dream of the dust.  
Yet who shall declare, in his wisdom,  
    That the vision that breaks on the sight  
To gladden the heart at the dawning,  
    Shall fade with the falling of night?

Yea, who shall declare that the vision  
    Must lose all its glory and glow?  
Surely Death is a phantom we dream of,  
    But Life is an angel we know.

Yet, if all be but fancy and shadow,  
And nothing be aught that it seem,  
We may light the dark way with our smiling,  
And sing for the joy of the dream.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 32.

## *Build Me an Altar*

Build me an altar, Love,  
Low at thy feet  
For all my shining tears  
Are thine, my Sweet.  
Build me a temple, Love,  
To hold my shrine,  
And let my eyes behold  
No face but thine.  
Build me a marble wall  
This temple round;  
Shut from our paradise  
All earthly sound.  
Build me a home, O Love,  
Where e'er thou art;  
Draw me, draw me close  
Into thy heart.

---

Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 35.

## *If Love Should Die*

If Love should die what other power could start  
The pulse of rapture sweeping through the heart?  
Where is the minstrel's song or poet's lay  
Could lift the soul above its home of clay,  
If Love should die?

If Love should die, our hopes of future years  
Would all dissolve in Sorrow's burning tears.  
Sweet mem'ry could not wing the spirit back  
Where rosy childhood walks its shining track,  
If Love should die.

If Love should die, all beauty would be lost;  
The dews of summer nights would turn to frost;  
In fields where zephyrs fan the sun-kissed rose,  
Cold, cruel winds would shriek o'er wintry snows,  
If Love should die.

But Love will live and o'er the heart hold sway  
When other things, held dear, have passed away;  
'Twill bid God's image raise the drooping head,  
Though wealth and fame, and even friends have fled.  
Love cannot die.

---

Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 36.

## *The Path*

Anther hard trial to master,  
Another great danger to dare;  
Another temptation to lift me,  
Another sweet sorrow to bear.  
An ocean of turbulent billows,  
White-crested with madness and strife,  
Whose waves I may tread without trembling,  
While trusting the Infinite Life.  
A night in whose mist I am wand'ring,  
A stranger to sense and to sight  
Where silence grows sweeter than music  
And darkness is dearer than light.  
A path on the desert of ages,  
A way I must travel alone,  
That leads to the perfect Forever  
When I shall come into my own.

---

Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 37.

## *At Midnight*

For then I rest within that light divine  
That falls upon me from the Central Sun  
And shows me all the glories that are mine.  
Then is a temporary truce declared  
Within the warring kingdom of the heart;  
The crimson battlers lie them down to rest;  
The warriors of the mind retire, apart.  
Then, in the blissful silence of the night,  
The snow-white messengers fly down to me  
And whisper: Lo! Too long you have been blind;  
The Kingdom is at hand! Look up and see!  
With each new dawn I wake to death in life  
Yet, feeling still the radiance of the night,  
I know that Life dwells in the house of Death  
And that “when evening comes, it shall be light.”

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 38.

## *The New Morning*

There shall come a grand revival to this sleeping world one day;  
It is coming, O my brothers! It is swiftly on the way;  
Liberty shall walk with justice, wisdom shall with freedom stand,  
And the peoples of all nations shall go walking hand in hand.

All the dead shall be awakened in that wondrous by-and-by,  
When the sons of men discover that the soul can never die.  
Resurrection lies in learning that the truth has made us free—  
That today is just as perfect as the future days shall be.

Man shall see God in his glory when he dares to look within;  
He shall find eternal goodness in himself and in his kin;  
He shall know life is forever, never dying, never born—  
And this knowledge shall be witness of the resurrection morn.

Man has feared for countless ages that which could not, cannot be—  
But his eyes shall yet be opened to the light, and he shall see.  
Death is but a soothing shadow and the grave a cooling bed  
Where the child of life may slumber when the evening prayer is said.

In that everlasting present, where the past and future meet,  
All the lilies of Elysium bloom about Love's shining feet;  
And the Kingdom that was promised is already holding sway  
In the hearts of all the faithful, walking up the radiant way.

Man shall yet delight in service; it shall please him to be kind,  
And the bird of joy shall carol in the meadow of his mind;  
Then his thoughts will all be angels that shall minister to men  
And return, with kindly greetings, to the sender's heart again.

Man shall read the sacred message on the universal scroll  
And shall hear the prayer bells ringing in the temple of his soul.  
Sweet, new perfume shall the roses of the earth to him impart,  
While the amaranth of heaven sheds its fragrance in his heart.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 39.

## *A Song in the Dark*

Yes, I am deeply buried, I know

But I am singing in my grave,

For I dream of resurrection.

Sweet and cool is my soft, white shroud,

Wrapping me like a midnight mist;

Folding me, holding me here where I lie

Deep in the vault of my own idea,

Under the barren hills of thought.

Dark wings hover over me.

Specters grim and spirits bright

Glide about me, whispering

Pause and twine their arms around me,

Smile and vanish, mockingly.

Forms and faces, half divine,

Bend above me, beckoning,

Beckoning with snow-white hands,

Knowing that I may not follow

Stoop to burn me with their breath

And the false glory in their eyes.

Oh dragon, with your face of gold!

Oh serpent, with your shining scales

Why do you come to haunt me now?

I worked and fought for your tarnished gold,

But I gave it back for the bread of death

And I followed the serpent's glistening trail

Down to the depths of vanity's hell.

What is that rumbling under the world?

What is that thunder over my head?

Are angels coming to set me free?

Is it time to rise and greet the dawn?

The thunder ceases, and silence reigns!

The angels come not! My tomb is dark!

Even the specters of night are gone

And I am alone, alone, alone! ‘

Oh now if I dare to stop my song  
The angels may pity and set me free!  
But I must sing! Oh, let me keep  
My dream of resurrection-time!

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 42.

## *The Ship*

I am a ship on the sea—  
And my course I must run,  
And many a port I must touch  
Ere my voyage is done.  
With sails unfurled to the breeze,  
I shall drift, I shall glide—  
And the God of the ocean shall be  
My captain and guide.

But oh, the hot sun on my head,  
With its blistering heat!  
And oh, the cold waves at my side  
And under my feet!  
Weary am I of the wind  
And the sea-bird's song—  
And oh, I am aching for rest  
As I'm sailing along!

And the thing that shall bring me peace  
Is the pitiless storm;  
It shall toss me aloft on its waves,  
It shall shatter my form;  
It shall mock me with laughter wild;  
It shall rave, it shall roar—  
But ah, when it sinks me at last  
It shall touch me no more.

I am a phantom ship,  
And was fashioned to be  
A symbol to those who are sailing  
Life's turbulent sea.  
The feverish day I shall spend  
In preparing for sleep—  
For no ship is ever at rest  
Till it sinks in the deep.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 44.

## *The Heart of Life*

Above all, yet of all and in all, majestic I stand,  
The essence of ether, the tone of all form and all sound.  
I am the uncreated, yet never creating am I;  
With myself and none else do I deal—united, alone;  
Looking afar over all that has breath and that dies,  
Yet knowing that unto myself is no death or revival;  
Watching the dawn in the east and the sun-down smile;  
Mad in the moonshine, drunk with the light of the day;  
Glad with the blooming flowers, at home in the clouds;  
Loving the thunder and riding the reckless winds;  
Swooning and sick from the song of the whirling  
worlds;  
Drowsing with insects down on the steaming earth;  
Feeling the life in the seed of the thing that is sown;  
Seeing the light in the slime and the lily as one;  
In me the mountains and forests, the deserts and seas  
In me the actions of men and the thoughts that are still.

---

Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 46.

## Unity

When they tell you I am dead, do not believe them.  
If they say that I am gone, then ask them “Whither?”  
I can never go away nor change toward you  
Until your heart shall change its thought of me;  
For I am he for whom you long had waited,  
And I am he who watched so long for you!  
Knowing me now, you know me evermore;  
Seeing me now, you see what I have been  
And all I shall be till the end of time.  
Yea, if you know me now, what needs my staying?  
My going or my staying is the same  
And you will smile to hear men call me “dead.”  
For I must live as long as God must live,  
And I will love as long as He can love.  
If God knows not Himself in every man,  
And man knows not himself for very God,  
Then God and man are but the flickering shades  
Upon the screen of darkling destiny.  
But God and man and destiny are one,  
And time and space and substance are the same;  
The clay is just as conscious as the soul;  
And resurrection, wondrous though it seems,  
Is but a trick to waken children’s wonder  
A symbol, not a miracle of life.  
There is no separation nor returning,  
Nor can I lose you in eternity.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 47.

## *Nirvana*

Sweeter, O my comrade, than your mountain brooklet  
singing  
Sweeter than the flowers springing in your upward  
way,  
Sweeter than voices of birds in your treetops swaying,  
Sweeter than star-beams falling when your day sleeps  
in the West,  
Is my peace in the vale below you.  
No music is here where the silken silence, descending,  
Spreadeth her sable pinions over my spirit;  
No green-budding thing, no light, no murmur of  
waters,.  
Not even a star-gleam comes where I rest, calmly know-  
ing  
The Soul's deep peace, forever.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 49.

## *White Birds*

One time as I sat silent  
In my closet, in the darkness,  
A snow-white bird, with eyes that smiled,  
Flew into the temple of my soul  
And nested there.  
And lo! when I had slept,  
I felt the flutter of her wing  
And saw a brood of birdlings  
(Fair as their mother and with eyes ashine)  
Flying about and singing  
In the temple of my soul.  
And that day I walked out  
Into the world of sorrows;  
And when I looked into the weary eyes  
Of one who never hoped to smile again,  
I sent forth one of my own white birds  
To find a resting place upon the altar  
Within the darkened temple of his soul.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 50.

## *The Inseparable*

I am the power creative,  
You are my goddess of dreams;  
I am the star of the morning,  
You are its golden beams.

I am the lord of the planets,  
You are the crown that I wear;  
Cold I would grow in my heaven,  
Could you my glory not share.

I am the towering mountain,  
You are my burning heart;  
I am the great white desert,  
You are the joy I impart.

I am the wildwood blossom,  
You are its color and breath;  
I am the madness of living,  
You are the sweetness of death.

I am the great musician,  
Master of lute and of lyre;  
But you are the spirit of music,  
And you are the thoughts I inspire.

I am the harp of gladness,  
You are its vibrant strings;  
I am the lark in the meadow,  
You are the song that he sings.

I am the waves of your ocean;  
You are the springs of my sea;  
I am the flesh of your body,  
And you are the soul in me.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 51.

## *The Inclusive*

I am the great Forever—  
No man has seen my face.  
I am the now and the never;  
I am the boundless space.

I am the thunder of heaven,  
I am the song of the sea;  
I am the storm of the mountains,  
I am the breath of the lea.

I am the silence of midnight,  
I am the gladness of day;  
I am the madness of moonlight,  
I am the sun on its way.

I am the life that surrounds me,  
I am the sweet, inner breath;  
I am the darkness about me—  
I am the shadow of death.

The dreamer am I—and his dreaming;  
I am the knower and known;  
I am the real and the seeming  
In form and color and tone.

I am the crucified Master;  
Judas am I, who betrays;  
Order am I, and disaster—  
I am the Ancient of Days.

I am the end of duty—  
I am the budding rod;  
I am the heart of beauty—  
I am the love of God!

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 53.

## *Emancipation*

Give me my dreams and I am well content;  
My visions grant me—you may keep the world.  
The wealth of gold you garner from your mines,  
I do not want. The factories you build,  
The work you plan, the everlasting strife  
I do not enter—I am satisfied.

Go, seek that shadow which is all your light;  
Grasp seeming-substance, hold you fast to form;  
I do not envy you the path you tread.  
I stand upon the lofty height where bloom  
The flowers that still beckon unto you.  
The brightness of my day you have not known  
(Though you shall know it in the by-and-by);  
The glory of my skies you have not seen  
(Although that glory you shall one day share.)

Oft-times between your earth and sky I stand,  
Laved by the roseate mist which softly falls  
Over the ocean like a silken veil.  
At twilight, when the stars dance through the blue,  
Throwing their gleaming kisses to the flowers,  
I sit beneath my beautiful old trees,  
List'ning to music floating o'er the waves  
Of darkness—making night so dear to me!

At dawn I stand upon the silver shore  
Where wash the restless breakers of the sea,  
Dreaming of ships that sail to sun-bright lands;  
And I am sure that in those far-off isles  
Are hearts that beat with joy at every breath,  
Are faces that are bright with happiness,  
And hands that labor for Love's sake alone.

I walk into the forest of the past  
And pluck the fruit from richly-laden boughs.  
Forward I look, to where in grandeur loom  
Those mystic mountains that I yet shall reach,  
And where, at last, my soul shall rest in God.

Come, sell me into bondage, if you will;

Cast me in prison, bind me down with chains;  
Beat me with stripes, smile when the red blood flows—  
And I shall not condemn, but pity you.  
Crown me with thorns; 'twill bring no shame to me,  
Nor rob me of one ray of heaven's light;  
For on my brow that crown shall blossom fair—  
And I will dream your kindness placed it there.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 55.

## *The Surrender*

Once I wandered, in my dreaming,  
Through a blossom-scented land  
But each flower, when I plucked it,  
Withered quickly in my hand.  
Through the vale of time I traveled,  
Drank the sweet, red wine of youth  
But my soul was faint with hunger  
For the blessed bread of truth.  
Then the peaks of promise beckoned,  
And I wandered far and high  
But the mountain top was barren,  
Looking on an empty sky.  
I was weary of the struggle;  
Hopeless seemed the spirit's quest  
So I smiled at all my folly  
And I lay me down to rest.  
Gone are now the fond illusions  
That once chained my spirit here  
Flown the angels and the phantoms,  
Joy and sorrow, hope and fear.  
Now for life no more I'm longing;  
Death I have no cause to dread.  
Dead am I among the living  
Yet I live with all the dead!

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 57.

## *The Undivided*

At dead of night a vision came to me,  
And, as it faded from my spirit's eye,  
An angel came, commanding: Write it down,  
For 'tis a symbol of eternal truth.

Methought I stood within the shining gates  
Of paradise, with all the angels hosts  
And all the saints whom mercy had redeemed.  
And He whose glory filled the holy place  
And lighted every face with joy divine,  
Spake thus to those assembled: Children mine,  
In that great Plan, whose secret is my own,  
I deemed it well to send a saddened world  
Two of my favored sons. The one was poor,  
Despised of men, forsaken—yet He knew  
The reason for his advent to the world.  
My will became his own, my love was his—  
And all that love He gave unto our world.  
My other son ye knew, yet knew him not—  
And, for a time, he did not know himself,  
For out of kindness did I hide his Godhood;  
And yet he, too, fulfilled my perfect will  
And sacrificed himself for all mankind.

Ye knew him as the faithless, the deceiver;  
Ye thought he sold himself and your dear Lord  
For gold and fame. To justify yourselves,  
Ye hated the betrayer—and by this  
Ye learned at last to love the One betrayed.  
And thus, through many steps, I led you on  
To love and pity all the weak and lowly,  
The poor, the hungry, the oppressed of earth.  
But in your love for all, ye yet forgot  
To pity him who suffered with your Lord.  
Now is my glory in them both fulfilled—  
And now ye shall be perfected in love.  
Now shall the scales be lifted from your eyes  
And ye shall know how blind ye were to think  
That any of my children could be lost.

Behold you, now! Love cannot be betrayed.

Then, slowly rising from his radiant throne,  
The Father drew a pearly curtain back—  
And there, beneath an amaranthine bower,  
Hand clasped in hand, heart answering unto heart,  
Stood Christ and Judas, smiling on the throng!

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 58.

## *Doubt and Joy*

Up from the tomb of time the ghost of doubt  
Rose like the specter of an evil thought  
And wandered, lonely, through the world of man  
Until, at last, beholding radiant Joy,  
He crept into her heart-and spoke of death.  
Hope not for heaven afterwhile, he said.  
Your future in the darkness lies entombed  
And yesterday, however dear, is dead.  
Why trust the present which must also die?  
Truth tells me otherwise, sweet Joy replied.  
Truth tells me I have lived eternally  
That I was never born and shall not die.  
All lies are shadows and all shadows lies.  
I live in light, and light alone endures.  
All bright tomorrows and glad yesterdays  
Are mine today, within this blessed hour.

---

Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 60.

## *Night*

Oh, Night!  
Oh, dark-eyed daughter  
Of the Universe!  
Sweet sister of the Day!  
Tutor of Time!  
Queen of serenity,  
Bride of the Silence!  
Lover of living things,  
Mother of dreams!  
Breather of blessings;  
Pillow of Sorrow;  
Voice of the speechless  
And sight of the blind!  
Keeper of mysteries—  
(Yet ever whispering  
Secrets of glory  
To those you love best)  
Lift me up tenderly,  
Sing to me softly  
And bear me to slumberland—  
White-breasted, star-girdled,  
Moon-crested Night!

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 61.

## *The Ideal*

She drew aside the curtain of the night  
And stood before me, beautiful as heaven.  
No word she uttered, but my listening Soul  
Caught the soft music of her virgin heart.  
Her presence wakened memory to song  
And in her tender eyes I found again  
The blessed dreams of all my yearning years.  
From ecstasy I wept, and through my tears  
I watched the smile that melted into dawn  
And left me aching with a nameless joy.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 62.

## *The Failure*

In vain he sought for joy  
Through fevered years  
That brought but sad despair  
And bitter tears;  
And now, with weary heart,  
He bowed his head  
And, lifting up his voice  
To God, he said:  
Count me a failure, Lord;  
I've missed the goal  
I sought so eagerly  
With restless soul.  
The path to happiness  
I could not find  
Though in my search I have  
Grown old and blind.  
But ere my spirit shall  
Return to Thee,  
Oh, grant me this, dear Lord:  
That I may see  
The path that leads to peace,  
And let me show  
  
The way to other souls  
That long to know.  
  
The stone of self, which hides  
The Blessed Way,  
  
Was from his darkened life  
Removed that day;  
  
For, rising from his knees,  
In glad release,  
  
He looked upon the calm,  
Sweet face of peace.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 63.

## *A Dream of Freedom*

I dreamed that I was free from every chain  
That binds the body and the soul of man  
Free from all custom, circumstance and time,  
Free from the laws of gods as well as men,  
Free from the thought of fear and pain of love  
Yet free to love or not, as I should choose.  
In freedom, I created and destroyed  
A million planets in a single day  
Or sat in darkness sweet, above the stars,  
Without a peer, serene, companionless,  
As breathless as the babe before its birth  
Robed in the thought of my Infinity.  
Then suddenly from slumber I awoke  
To feel myself a creature of the One  
Whose throne I had ascended in my sleep.  
And yet with every dawn returns to me  
The memory of that eternity  
In which I dwelt when midnight held me fast.  
And through each darkling day I walk as one  
Who, in a sudden vision of himself,  
Is blinded by the glory he beholds  
Yet stumbles onward, singing in the dark,  
Waiting the coming of his radiant soul  
To gently lift the shadow from his eyes.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 65.

## *The Poet*

He wrote soft, silken verses,  
That tinkled like meadow-brooks  
And sparkled like dew in the sun.  
And his poems were pleasing to many  
Who dwelt in the Valley of Dreams—  
But they left his spirit hungry for the heights.

So he prayed to God to reveal to him  
More of his own wondrous Self,  
That he might sing a song worthy of an immortal.  
And his prayer was answered—  
And he beheld within himself  
A universe of glory infinite.

And again he sat down to write—  
But this time the jeweled stanzas  
Leaped from his mind like giant cataracts  
And made mad music like the storm among the hills.  
His lines were ruggedly beautiful as the mountains  
And his thoughts thundered like the sea.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 66.

## *If I Could Sing*

If I could radiate the joy I know,  
If I could but express the love I feel;  
If I could understand how to bestow  
The raptures that through all my senses steal;  
If I could sing the songs my spirit hears,  
If I could paint the pictures that I see  
Excess of joy would move the world to tears,  
And pain and sorrow would no longer be.  
Dear Father, we are babes! We have not learned  
To rightly speak the words that Thou hast taught  
Although our hearts have long within us burned  
To sing of all the wonders Thou hast wrought.  
Oh, grant us, when from earth we shall depart,  
To go and visit heaven's golden halls,  
That we may voice the music of the heart  
And hear it echoed from those shining walls.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 67.

## *The Day's Journey*

Dear Lord of Light, how wondrous are thy ways!  
By miracle Thou bringest us to earth  
As babes that sleep within the arms of love  
The love that welcomes pain to share its joy.  
Thy law and power keeps us through the years;  
Thy bounty feeds, thy beauty blesses us.  
Thy spirit quickens us to consciousness,  
Making the house of clay in which we dwell  
Thrill with the knowledge of the guest within.  
So gently dost Thou lead us up the path  
To sunny peaks of fair maturity  
Then down the slope, where sunlight lingers long,  
Our faces set toward the reddening west;  
Our shadows growing taller as we go,  
Yet vainly challenging our forward steps.  
So softly comes the purple evening on!  
So tenderly the eyes of heaven glow!  
So welcome is thy whispered word of peace,  
As down upon the flowered earth we lie  
To fall asleep, a-dreaming of the Morn.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 68.

## *When Freedom Comes*

When evening comes, and we shall launch our barks  
Upon the ocean of Infinity,—  
And set our sails for that Empyrean—  
That lies somewhere beyond the Milky Way,  
I think we shall look back upon this world  
And smile to think that when we sojourned here  
We were so loth to leave our prison walls.  
Oh, then at last I think that we shall know  
The meaning and the joy of liberty!  
And yet, I think, that as we wander on,  
With songs of freedom on our spirit's lips,  
We shall give praise to Him who kept us blind  
To many glories of His universe,  
The while He deemed it best for us to walk  
These darkened ways which vanish into dawn.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 69.

## *The Mocker*

He sang—and all the world looked up and listened;  
The gift of song was granted him at birth  
For angels filled his heart with hymns of heaven,  
And taught him to interpret them on earth.  
He sang to herald dawn and welcome twilight;  
His was the very voice of ecstasy;  
He seldom sang without a throng about him  
And freely given was his minstrelsy.  
The children paused to hearken to his music;  
Young men and maidens smiled to hear him sing;  
The songsters of the wild drew near to listen,  
And vainly sought to match his caroling.  
Yet when on earth his farewell note resounded,  
Unseen he lay upon the crimsoned sod;  
For he was but a mockingbird of springtime  
His slayer was “the image of his God.”

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 70.

## *The Fog*

Oh, daughter of ocean and earth! Virgin spirit of night!  
How shall I sing of you, knowing not even your name?  
Forgetting the body I wear as I walk in your whiteness,  
Still I must search for the mystery you conceal.  
Are you the silvery mist from the river of Life?  
Are you the soft, wordless whispers of loved ones in  
Heaven?  
Breath of lilies that died with a smile on Beauty's  
breast?  
Souls of dead ships, come to gaze again on the moon?  
Peaceful as white roses falling asleep at the twilight!  
Gentle as snowflakes caressing the brow of a saint!  
The blossoms of memory spring from the dust at your  
coming,  
And the lips of Eternity kiss the dreaming world.  
Enfolding creation, including me in your embrace,  
Whatever you are, you have hushed my rebellion to  
silence,  
And I rest in your presence, the while I commune with  
the blest.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 71.

## *Mother Answers*

“Who is God?” asked a little child  
In thoughtful mood, one day.  
Where does He live? What does He do  
This God to whom I pray.  
The mother laid her gentle hand  
Upon her darling’s head,  
And her voice was like an angel’s song  
As, with a smile, she said:  
My precious boy, God lives on earth  
As well as high above  
And His good will is being done  
By every child of love.  
God is the light of the morning sun  
And the shine of the stars by night;  
He brings you sleep at evening time,  
And wakens you with light.  
Tis God who looks through your dear eyes  
When you at the sunset gaze;  
‘Tis God who hears your bedtime prayer  
Tis God in you that prays.  
God is the love in your mother’s heart,  
And the answering love in you;  
God is in every thought you think,  
In every act you do.  
Go where you will, my precious child,  
In earth or sea or air,  
Remembering that God is near  
And He will bless you there.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 72.

## *The Vision Deific*

Far over the fields of Forever,  
The Eternal, Shining One wandered.  
“There is naught but Myself,” He reflected;  
“There can never be aught but Myself.  
Therefore will I dream I am many—  
And my dream shall be true as Myself.”

Then He dreamed of a tender Companion,  
Whose love even He could not fathom.  
Her soft arms encircled his glory  
And her eyes were like midnight with longing  
As close in the silence she held Him,  
Her heart beating time to his own.

Then children came to the lovers—  
And bright were their faces with beauty,  
Reflecting the face of their Father  
Whose Spirit had given them life.  
And the Shining One lived in his children  
And knew that their life was in Him.

But sad was the heart of the Mother—  
Whose love her own Lord could not fathom,  
Until from her heart came the whisper:  
Your dream is not ended, Beloved,  
Until you have given our loved ones  
The joy that shall equal your own.

Behold, they shall know! spake the Father.  
Evermore shall they be as ourselves!  
Henceforth, as we know them in us,  
And find our love perfect in them,  
They shall know that in us they are dwelling,  
And within them our glory shall see.

Then the Mother forgot all her sorrow,  
And the heart of the Father was gladdened;

And the children of Light came singing,  
Their faces all shining with joy.  
And he that has dreamed is still dreaming—  
And his dream is as true as Himself.

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Publication. First published in *Soul Symphonies*. Los Angeles: Quill and Press, 1928, p. 74.

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# Colophon

## *Publication and production notes*

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This critical reading edition was edited by Brian Kim Stefans for The Text-Tech Papers, Los Angeles, in 2026, as part of *Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry*. The poems were reset from the source pages identified in the publication notes and datasheet. The book was composed in EB Garamond on a cream field at 6 × 9 inches. The cover uses original digital collage prepared with OpenAI image generation under the editor's direction.