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The LYRIC WEST

A Magazine of American Verse



IN THIS ISSUE

Neeta Marquis | Zona Gale

John R. Moreland | Genevieve Taggard

John Richard Moreland and others

RED POPPIES IN THE WHEAT

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The Lyric West

No. 8

A Magazine Of Verse

December, 1921

Edited by Grace Atherton Dennen

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Neeta Marquis

On Christmas Eve

BENEATH my brilliant Western skies
The ancient Christmas songs I croon,
While watching with enchanted eyes
Palm-crests graved black against the moon.

So may the Syrian trees have stood
That night of holy mystery,
‘When heaven’s seraphic multitude
Proclaimed the Lord’s nativity.

Still dreaming of a golden sun,
The purple bougainvilleas rest,
Like Tyrian fabrics richly spun
To wrap the little King-child’s breast.

Lapped in the night’s blue radiancy,
Beside the garden’s southern bars
Poinsettia-blooms bend over me
In huge and quiet crimson stars.

As tall as torches held in hand,
Each flower flames on its lifted stem,
As if to light the shepherd-band
Across the fields of Bethlehem.

As those awed shepherd-hearts in tune

Beat high to hear the angels sing,
So with these palms against the moon
I hail the birth-night of the King!

Neeta Marquis

A Redwood Forest in Winter

Dusk of the redwoods! Gloaming of the gods!
Shadows of silver and gray-green mystery!
Silence, with mighty finger laid on lips,
And rhythm, as of far-off heaving tides!

Where is the sunshine? Quenched in plummy boughs—
Drowned in cavernous deeps of glaucous shade.
Down by the creek a semblance of it gleams
In yonder cañon-maple's mellow gold.

O sadness of these ancient presences!
Each redwood droops with its primeval load
Of somber loveliness, as if it bore
A secret grief from unrecorded times.

The footfall dies on terra-cotta plush
Dropped in old showers from every mournful branch.
Swordferns like fountains leap out from the mold,
Among them violets and anemones.

But violet, huckleberry, nor wild rose
Can cheer the hush of these vast twilight forms.
A white beam sifting through them from the snows
Of winter's moon is not more coldly still.

Gaunt, spectral redwoods, dreaming from of old

Of some unspoken beauty long since dead!
Cathedral-majesty informs their mien;
Unending sorrow pulses at their hearts.

Clark Ashton Smith

Rosa Mystica

THE secret rose we vainly dream to find
Was blown in gray Atlantis long ago;
Or in old summers of the realms of snow,
Its attar lulled the pole-arisen wind;
Or once its broad and breathless petals pined
In gardens of Persepolis, aglow
With desert sunlight, and the fiery, slow
Red waves of sand, invincible and blind.

On Orient isles, or isles Hesperian,
Through mythic days, ere mortal time began,
It flowered above the ever-flowering foam
Or, legendless, in lands of yesteryear,
It flamed among the violets—near, how near,
To unenchanted fields and hills of home!

Joseph Andrew Galahad

Long White Roads

THE long white roads of California
That lie like crystal ribbon in the sun—
The peaceful roads of California
Are calling—calling—calling—every one.

I have watched them through the branches of the
redwoods,
Winding thin and silent far below:
Watched them with the mist of gladness brimming in
my eyes.
And they're calling—but I cannot go.

I have stood, too, at the foot of high, steep hills
And seen them end abruptly at the sky.
And the long, white roads of California
Will haunt my waking dreams until I die.

They lure my feet—my will that longs to wander:
My eyes ache for their beauty white and still:
I am hungry for the glory of the open—
But pass that way again I never will.

Not patient is my heart, fast in its bondage:
Not dimmer do the poignant memories grow.
The long white roads are calling—calling—calling—
And I hear them . . . but I cannot go!

Joseph Andrew Galahad

No Roses

THERE are no roses growing in the valley,
But there are marigolds and marguerites
That a little maiden gathers every morning
And peddles up and down the city streets.

I have seen men pause there in the rush, and waver
As if at hint of forest, field, and brook
Where grew the flowers; and then pass on, uncertain:
And puzzle and regret were in their look.

I have wondered what they'd do if she sold roses—
Wild roses, pink and white and pale and sweet.
But there are no roses growing in the valley—
Men pause and smile, and pass her on the street.

Emeline Margaret Brady

The Portrait

To Lola

I cannot recall the song I sang you yesterday;
Of what stuff your sombre gown was woven,
But always there'll return to me your deep purple eyes,
And the half-sad smile that troubled your red lips.

I cannot now recall if there were other singers;
Who the guests were in the dimly lighted room,
But always I will remember how your hands lay in
Your lap like rose petals, holding each other.

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Lucile Taylor

The Phantom

How proudly I flung at you the challenge—
Love is dead!
Could I have known the first shaft of the new moon
Would silhouette his shadow
Across my heart?

FOOTPRINTS

Perhaps the snows of time will quietly cover,
One by one,
The tracks where love has passed.

Zona Gale

Half Thought

When all the leaves of Spring turn gold
And the wind has no song,
To whom then does the changeling green
Belong?
And who on what far waveless shore
Harps as Spring wind shall harp no more
In Winter's beat and roll?
O you, who such forgotten beauties hold,
Find some faint loveliness unseen
And save it in a soul.

Zona Gale

Beloved, It Is Daybreak on the Hills

Beloved, it is daybreak on the hills.
Dark glimmers and goes out in cloudy light,
Faint on the marge of night the watchet dawn
Lifts like a lily from a quiet water.
And that within me which is consonant
Is at its door to meet God's infinite.

O Love, what banner shall we lift? And what
Timbrel and incense bear? How shall we greet
God's day, his hills, his fire, and join their beauty?
Voices reply that are no voice but breath:
"Like beauty be thou nothing save his vesture."

Zona Gale

Half Thought

I close my eyes and on the night
A face looks in at me.
It speaks a word like burning light,
I answer joyfully.
It dims away. The word is sped.
I know not what we two have said.

The old dark sparkles like a star.
7 And when shall we be touched with sight
To find the things that are?e

Ernest Dexter

Sidney Lanier

Sweet singer of the balmy southern land,
Trilling thy flute-notes with the breath of pain.
What time have Nature's voices called in vain
In bee's low reverie, in zephyrs fanned,
In angry sea-flames wasting all the strand
With seething ashes? How thine art could pour
All into subtle melody of thought
Reaching the soul of things and gaining more,
Richer with each new figure by thee wrought,
Essaying harmonies unheard before,
Long hidden heartstrings thrilling o'er and o'er,
Found in what victories with what anguish bought!

Thou chastened one! My heart goes out to thee!
All Nature stands indicted of thy wrong.
And yet what I have seemed to feel may be
But plaintive undertones of thy brave song.
Nature, sole mistress of desires so fair
As thine, yet miserly of one small boon,
The right to lave thee in her wealth of air,
Grudging the stuff to prove thou'dst guessed her
tune,
That common element whereby each bird
Sustains its flight and makes its music heard.
Thy flight too short, thy music hushed too soon!

Yet, when the weird marsh wantons with the tide
As when thy spirit clothed her with delight,
Decking her lonesome with the gems of night,
And fickle ocean takes himself a bride,
The rising currents, moving far and wide,
Twine round unnumbered islands, never long
Assured of equilibrium. So thy song
Finds the bared levels of our nights and days,
Enfolds us in the mystery of its maze,
Ebbs with our pain, floods with our floods of praise.

The Walls of St. Francis

The women are very tired,
They lean forward, they rest on their own knees,
Concha with her babe under her breast.
The women are very tired,
Their narrow eyes are fixed,
They stare at the crucifix,
Their heavy lips move:
“Heart of Jesus, pierced with a spear,
Have mercy on us.”

The women are very tired,
Their little brown hands are worn and tired,
Their little brown hands are tanned and rough,
Their lips move:
“Hail, Mary, have mercy upon us,
The walls of St. Francis are always new,
The walls of St. Francis are always white
Other walls may crumble and fall
Even as a woman’s happiness
The walls of St. Francis are built of right clay,
They are steeped in the sun;
Our hands are trained.”

The women are very tired,
Their brown hands are stiff and hard.

They lean forward, their black shawls trail on the mud
floor,

Their lips move:

“O merciful God, is the Blessed Mother blind?

Not so, there are candles lighted to her name,

Flowers blossom by her feet

Is the Blessed Mother deaf?

No, the whole world is whispering prayers.

O Most Holy One, then the Blessed Mother

Has seen the worn hands,

She has seen the patient toil,

She has seen the naked hands,

The naked hands that darken in the wet,

That do not pause in the keen wind;

The naked hands sweeping the whitewash,

Smoothing the rough bricks,

Mixing the sharp sand.”

There are the walls of St. Francis

White under the blue sky.

There are the walls of St. Francis

White above the brown earth.

The women lean forward,

They rest on their knees,

Their lips move:

“Mother of God, have mercy on the mothers of poor
people,

On the mothers of wandering men,

Shepherds in the far hills
Mother of God, for the labor of our hands,
For the good walls of St. Francis, hear us.”

Eunice T. Gray

The Agitator

A soap-box and a crowd,
Restless, shabby, hungry-eyed.
Cross streets, clanging bell and honking horns.
A surly policeman, watchful, menacing.
Women who draw their skirts aside,
Comfortable men, smoking cigars,
Idlers, busy ones and others,
A few curious, some derisive.
Placid Orientals who pass unseeing.
And in the center, fearless, triumphant,
The Agitator, head thrown back, eyes aglow,
Hurling invectives, broadsides to be hoarded
By the rebellious crowd.

Across the way,
A group in banded bonnets and blue coats,
Kneeling in the dust, a voice raised in prayer,
And in the center the symbol of brotherhood.
The crowd laughs, some jeer,
As a high, sweet hymn rises with the flag.

The silence falls on the soul-hungry groups,
And each receives according to its need,
Sparks fall in the weed-choked minds
And set tiny fires in the dead grass there.
Some jump aside, fearing disaster,

Others stamp out the fire, proud of their courage;
But one, ardent, loving, seizes the torch,
And runs to light a fire of Truth around the globe.

Constance Lindsay Skinner

Creed

What creed has Song but faith in the sun?
O Light, pure Light,
Kiss my lips with the dawn;
And the self-entombed night shall vanish—
Leaving of its dark
Only the memory of some star.

Sun in the heavens and sun in my soul!
Sun that leaps from the infinite heart of All-Father,
And smites one awake, revealing
A world for my loving!
O Light, pure light,
Thou showest me all my Kindred:—
Earth, clouds and water, rocks, pine-trees and men,
Little wind-gossipping grass—
And I believe! I believe!

Oh! what creed has Song but faith in the sun?

John R. Moreland

Rich Man, Poor Man

I was a beggar and you gave

Me wine and bread to make me strong,
You touched my hands; you made me brave;
You sent me forth with hope and song.

I traveled west, I traveled east,

And bartered till my wealth is great. . . .
Unless you bid me to love's feast
I am as Lazarus at life's gate.

John R. Moreland

Sand Dunes

What is your age, O dunes,
And what ancient secrets
Are thrust deep in your yellow bosom?
The wind knows. . . .
I have seen him
Whisper to you
And caress you,
And in his great anger
Smite you. . . .

At noon your breath
Is hot as amber blaze,
And your topaz glow
Is brighter than the flash
Of a golden scimitar.

But at night
When the moon
Pours upon you
A sea of light,
You are luminous, alluring,
And beautiful. . . .

A Cleopatra in gold and black
Drawing me to your
Rounded breasts.

John R. Moreland

Sea Sadness

The shadow of a great storm
Is on the sea,
And the wind has blown ragged clouds
Over the face of the moon.
The great waves
Lift themselves to the night,
Waving their white arms.
Listen—
The surf sobs and cries
Like a child
Lost in a great darkness.

Harold Vinal

Dryad

Outside the garden ways the trees
 Bend softly in the rain,
Touched by the passing of the breeze,
 They shudder as in pain.

But when the dusk comes, rapt and still,
 And fairy moonlight wakes,
They are as quiet as a hill
 Where music never breaks.

I should so like to be a tree,
 Though often shadow blown;
The night would kiss me tenderly—
 And I could weep alone.

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Eda Lu Walton

Truth Absolute

When the last veil was removed,
The last veil being torn,
I came upon my mirrored self
And wept.

Eda Lu Walton

In Silence

I.

IS IT NOTHING?

OF, my Beloved, is it nothing, then,
That I have built
 Upon your broken promises
 A house of love?
 That there we two together,
 Giving and receiving,
 Have forgotten?
 That when our hands had touched
 And lips had lingered,
 Our dream-child
 Lay upon my quiet breast?
Oh, my Beloved, is it nothing, then?
Must I go forward
In cool and chaste aloofness
Husbanded by pain,
A virgin hating my virginity,
A virgin who has known the change
Of loving,
A virgin who has borne a child
Of dreams?

II

MY HOME?

My home,
These long and quiet draperies,
The view of lit darkness
Edging the water,
My home?
Oh, no.
Down there
Is a chimney,
The chimney of the fireplace
He sits before,
Reading an engineering journal
And listening to her footsteps
In the room above,
To her little cries
Over their drowsy son.
He is content,
And I, a little way above him
On the hill,
Pick at the weave
Of long and quiet draperies,
Stare at lit darkness
Edging the water.

III

IN THE TELEPHONE BOOK

Running down the long, black list
Of little letters
And numbers of telephones,
My finger pauses and trembles
Over your name and address—
(My name and address
That is another's).
What does it matter
That I have promised
To accept a new address?
The throb of your name,
The curve and compactness
Of the little letters,
The singing numbers
Which, if I called,
Would answer with your voice,
Smite me more bitterly
Than any sweetness
Of stern living,
Name me more surely
Than any signature
Beneath the oath
Of Love.

Wright Field

The Vision

Your heart,
Since you love me,
Is the burning bush
By the wayside.

I stand, uncovered,
Before it,
For out of it
God speaks to me!

Wright Field

Dreams

Dreams are the roseate paper on bare walls,
The light that looks into darkened rooms,
The sheen of moonlight in deep canyons,
The first faint colors curling at the edge of Dawn,
The smell of fresh-cut hay in cattle-stalls,
The woof and warp in Nature's many looms
Where she weaves against the sky her lacy patterns,
Like threads of tender green on pale blue lawn:
The bubbles children toss upon the air,
The whiff of scent that rises like a prayer
When old ladies brew old herbs—and on the breeze
Lingers with subtle hint of faded memories:
Dreams are the green and tender vines that creep
Over the hard face of the barren wall of Fact,
Which stares man in the face and bruises him:
The veil through which Reality grows dim
And garbed in all the graces that she lacked!
Dreams, stealing on us when we wake or sleep,
Man cannot live without, and may not keep!

J. M. Batchelor

The Letter

Beloved, since in slumber

 Your letter close I keep,

Gone are those dreams past number

 That shone upon my sleep.

There was a time when sweeping

 In flashing flight there came

To spread above my sleeping

 Sky-woven wings of flame.

How faded now, and olden,

 Those pinions once so bright,

Your gleaming words and golden

 Quench every lesser light.

Ted Olson

Pursuit

Symbols that fade and flow,
Shadows that die—
How can I ever measure
Reality?

I cannot name you twice
In the same way;
Who you are now you were not
Yesterday.

I cannot beg you share
Love's opulence,
Knowing not who you will be
One hour hence.

Fantom of vain desire
And fleeting grace,
I seek the remembered beauty
Of your face.

Dreaming my dream forever,
Waiting the day
When the last veil is wholly
Blown away.

When from the ash, immortal,

Changeless, you rise;
And I read all reality
In your eyes.

Genevieve Taggard

Moods of Women

Going home, six o'clock; summer evening

Men go to women, mutely, for their peace,
And they who lack it most create it when
They make, because they must, loving their men
A solace for sad bosom-bended heads. There
Is all the meagre peace men get—no otherwhere,
No mountain space, no tree with placid leaves,
Or heavy gloom beneath a young girl's hair
No sound of valley bell on autumn air,
Or room made home with doves along the eaves
Ever holds peace like this, poured by poor women
Out of their hearts' poverty, for worn men.

Genevieve Taggard

She Comes After Years to the Ocean

Leave me alone a little!

Must I be yours

When all my heart is pouring with the sea

Out to the moon's impersonal majesty?

Leave me alone! My little vow endures

Men's irritating love, surviving yours!

Surviving all, surviving even you;

Leave me alone. This is no rendezvous;

I am not false except with my old sea and moon.

You understand me? Wait behind the dune?

Oh, level glow, oh, soft, soft-spoken sea—

Leave me alone! Why will you follow me?

Ultimate

What eye has seen beyond the gray world's edge,
Beyond the last lone limit of the day,
Where lurks eventual silence and the dark,
Where mystery waits and wisdom? None can say.

But this we know: At peace, and far removed
From what has been or yet may come to be,
Each day slips down into the nether-gloom,
More quiet than a ripple on the sea.

Somewhere we know, for each, Oblivion
Holds out his hands, and happily they go,
With certain step, serene and undismayed,
Into the night, out of the land we know.

And we can judge they do not fear to seek
That world where hungry waters close above,
Where no more struggle is and pride has lain
A long time silent on the breast of love.

There is a healing calm that lurks within
The deep and certain quiet of the dead,
And though we see not hence, we can attest
That no day meets the dark uncomforted.

This much we know, and more we shall attain.

One day the wind will summon us, and we
Shall wake and find, who long have ceased to seek,
And fathom all, who no more try to see.

Helen Frazee-Bower

Night and the Sea

Night and the sea—and one gaunt crag that lifts
Above the restless waves a quiet dome.
In from the deep the gray fog curls and drifts,
And out of space, unto the deep, goes home.
Not less of heaven than of earth this mute
Enraptured visage that the world puts on,
Waiting the call of some far distant flute
The wind must play to bring again the dawn.

Night and the sea—and over all the still,
Unruffled beauty of the floating mist. . . .
But old dreams stir, and out across the chill,
Gray folds of peace, like hands that I have kissed
In some forgotten moment of desire,
Two white sails beckon from a misty spire.

Ruth Harwood

Poetry Magic

MY POETRY

Is like a magic wizardry
For with deft hands
I pluck a few
Glad-chosen words
And build for me
A rainbow-tinted bridge;
And leave the sentient, solemn earth,
And dance adown my fairy bridge,
And find some secret, glowing place
Of dream-lit wonders,
And wander there,
And thrill and sing,
And twine dream-flowers in my hair,
And dance and fling
My carefree arms into the air.

And so, when suddenly
You speak to me,
You must be patient
Until I can return from wanderings
A thousand worlds away.

Ruth Harwood

Supremacy

It is not so much your kiss I love you for,
Others' lips are quite as warm and red—
Nor any glowing words that you have said.
Beloved, it is not your touch,
Or your kind eyes or face,
Or any wildly sweet caress,
That makes me care so much.

But somewhere, out in far, dim voids of space,
You come between my soul
And the silent sorrow
Of its eternal loneliness.

Comment

Nobility and Tone

One would think that there has hardly ever been a time when poetry occupied more space in the public consciousness than it does today. Nearly everyone writes it more or less well; and everyone who pretends to an interest in things literary talks about it more or less intelligently. Opinion is divided into this camp and that camp; discussion is heated and verging constantly upon a state of war. Each week someone comes forward in triumph with the solution of all our difficulties, and is the next week scornfully cried down by the apostles of a newer dispensation. Volume after volume issues from the press, only to die and give place to something else; and launching a book of poems today is like tossing a rose petal into the Grand Canyon and waiting for the echo. And yet as time goes on there seems to be no lessening of the interest in poetry, but rather a quickening of it. These facts argue two things: One, that there is in life today a great mental and spiritual need, which the more intelligent look toward poetry to fill. The other, that in most of poetry's attempts to fill this need the public has felt "a hidden want." There is nothing unfair about this second suggestion. If this need were constantly met by works of art in which the needy ones could find sustenance and security, would there be, could there be, this constant and hectic clamor for something new? A man or woman who is seeking, as most of us are, rest and refreshment and peace, does not, after having found them, immediately start on another pilgrimage through the desert. We are restless, but not insane. If we found our haven, we would be only too glad to pause there for awhile. But, incontestably, the majority of us do not find it. Dropping metaphor, what is the matter with much of our present day poetry? "The question of

form can no longer be made either an explanation or an excuse for anything. Free verse is a recognized form of expression, and is now known to have an ancient and honorable heredity and many precious beauties of its own. The value of the regular forms, no one but an artistic anarchist can question. We are all willing to read poetry, whatever its form may be, and to take from it whatever it has to give. To argue about the relative values of free and regular verse today is to put oneself down as hopelessly passé. Each has its place; and the places are too essentially unlike to permit of comparison. What is the matter? Cannot this question be best answered by asking in return: What do people ask from poetry? When we open a book of poems, what special reaction do we expect from it? Do we expect the same reaction that prose gives us, or a different one? If different, then different in what respect? Now, is it not true that what we expect from poetry is: to be taken out of ourselves; to be lifted out of the irritating consideration of petty affairs; to be given access to a region where ideas have free play and ideals bear fruit in beautiful perceptions? Do we not go to poetry to find an expression of the nobler side of life wherein the nobility is made to stand in high relief and the tone of the whole so raised and glorified that for a time we can believe that there is no other side? Nobility . . . Tone . . . Are not these words the key to the whole problem? Man has two sides; so has life. To say that all of us or all of life is beautiful and noble is the merest cant, and is evading a plain issue. We are not; life is not; but what life is depends largely upon us; and we, thank heaven, are always capable of growth. Nobility. Tone. Yes, these words are a key which will unlock many resources of growth and beauty. We live a life today which in its outward manifestations is not often beautiful, nor yet half so noble as our potentialities. Within us, who can question, are the same seeds of beauty and heroism, nobility and high endeavor, that have produced in the past the finest flowering

of our race. These are being stifled by materialism; and it is their mute struggling within us that makes us turn to poetry.

William Foster Ex vior.

Notes

We announce with great pleasure the names of the judges for the Esther Yarnell prize. They are as follows: Samuel Travers Clover, Rupert Hughes, and Gene Stratton Porter. The winner of the one hundred dollar prize will be announced in the January number. The award is to be given to the best poem or group of poems published in *THE LYRIC WEST* from the April number to the December number, inclusive. No manuscript received after November 15th could be considered in this competition.

We are both glad and proud to give to our readers three poems by Zona Gale. They will be printed soon in a forthcoming volume of her poems. We also welcome two other writers of delightful poetry, though new in our columns, Genevieve Taggard and Eda Lou Walton. Also Ruth Harwood, whose two poems here printed are among those which won for her the Cook prize for the best collection of poetry at the University of California.

Beginning with the January issue, the subscription price of *THE LYRIC WEST* will be \$2.00 a year.

Ellen Morrill Mills

The Little Road

By Ellen Morrill Mills

AN INTERESTING volume reaches us this month from the pen of Ellen Morrill Mills, whose work has been twice included in THE LYRIC WEST. Miss Mills is one of the younger writers, and her work has charm of thought and freshness of expression. Strangely, in this age of new forms, she prefers rhyme and exact rhythm, and thus produces an impression of simplicity and quaintness which is very pleasing. The opening poem, The Little Road, from which the volume takes its name, has been quoted in the Literary Digest for October, and elsewhere. It has the old appeal, which is ever new, to the dreamer of dreams and lover of adventure, and has found a response in many hearts. This is a book to read, then to keep as a companion and friend.

John Richard Moreland

Red Poppies in the Wheat

By John Richard Moreland (James T. White & Co., New York)

John Richard Moreland, editor of *The Lyric*, Norfolk, Va., brings to us in this volume of seventy or more poems many fine and artistic lyrics. They cover a wide range of thought and feeling, revealing his philosophy of life, love, work, and death. This is told in simple words, with no straining after metaphysical meanings, the lines, though not always rhymed, are always melodious; the choice of form suits the choice of thought. There are the vigor and joy of youth in this volume, a light of imaginative beauty which transfigures simple experiences, and unusual richness of color. Beginning with the colorful picture of red poppies, it leads us past the blue flower of the sea with curling white petals, to the dripping trees wet with rain, in gray-green colors so exquisite that they would charm the heart of dear Corot. It is perhaps as the poet of human affection that Mr. Moreland makes his strongest appeal—love of the woman, love of the little son, love of the home and its spiritual meaning. The tenderest and most appealing stanzas in the book are the following:

Kinship

I never see a new or broken toy
In sunlit window or in corner dim,
But in the home of love's forgotten joy
I picture him.
O lad of mine . . . a blossom in the sun,
Too frail to stand life's winds so fierce and free
Through you my love seeks out each little one
And every father is akin to me.