

THE SONG FISHERMENS' SONG SHEET

"Come All Ye"

Issued Ever So Often.

Halifax, N. S., April 13, 1929.

Number 10.

SPRING SONNET

--
Or, an exercise in the use of the first and second
personal pronouns, singular.

--
With a low bow to all who claim escape from Eros
in the solitary contemplation of nature.

--
Nothing I care for, now that winter's gone,
But green shoals, and bursting silver surf;
The rock we built our house of passion on
Is wracked with dead sea-froth and gray with scurf.

More than I ever loved you, I shall say,
I care for summer's triumph and retreat;
You stirred my heart to wonder yesterday -
The deep earth stirs today beneath my feet.

Nothing I care for, I shall say again,
But dark stars, the tall sky bending near;
Rain in the running wind, the windy rain.
I would not see you, should you venture here.

Only these three - this earth, and sea, and sky,
Shall know my saying for a blinding lie.

- Charles Bruce -

The following letter has been received from James D. Gillis:

"I beg leave to thank you for the many able poems you have sent.

"Yes, I remember you all and wish you well.

"I intend to study out your poetry. So much has come that I must admit I haven't duly considered the whole lot. I like to ponder over every line and weigh each sentence and judge the thought. I do this not as a critic but I always find such study advantageous.

"But it is not flattery to say that I'm astonished to see how prolific you are and how original.

"I wrote some stanzas, which I'll send when I prune them up a little.

"My good wishes go to you, to Dr. Norwood and Mrs., to K. Leslie and all.

"Your literature is absolutely pure and safe and will eventually tend to uplift the people more profoundly than for seen, and in agreeable ways."

Cana's Guest

a

Marriage Song.

Cana's guest be your guest, today,
The wine of whose love goes round
To gladden whene'er, on earth a pair,
Of trysting hearts is found

Smooth be the road your feet may take,
Bright, your skies, above;
The troubles few, that encounter you,
Accompanied by love.

Whereever you build the roof of home
May Happiness be your guest,
And you find each day, a heart to say:
"Life's latest wine's the best!"

- Alexander Louis Fraser -

It's Up To The Skipper

His constant cry,
 "More fish! more fish!"
 The Songsters try
 To serve a lordly dish.
 Now Skipper, you
 Should bait your rod
 And see what you can do.
 Your "Bluenose To The Wind"
 Was art! but is it right,
 And is it kind
 To have such appetite
 For our poor fish?
 And never put your catch
 Upon the dish?

E. H. B.

Well here goes:

To Nova Scotia

Hunger of sea for the shore,
 Hurt of an age-long feud,
 Were the tools at hand
 When He saw thee stand,
 Rock-sinewed, iron-thewed.
 And gave thee a world to guard
 Where its eastern portals bide,
 Ajar in the wan
 Shrill light of the dawn,
 The sun's leave of the tide.
 So the years took up their task.
 And the seasons gave their due,
 The earth its gain,-
 With sun and rain
 Bower on butress grew.
 Yet when the winds are loosed
 And the furies find release,
 The gnarled rocks hold,
 As they did of old,
 And the hinterland has peace.
 Peace, with plenty and power
 And pride. But never a thought
 Of its bulwark grown
 To a garden, blown
 With beauty, sea-inwrought.

- Andrew Merkel -

Inspiration

A picture, a chance word,
 The caroling of a bird,
 And Beauty begs a dress
 Of shining loveliness;
 Naked, she stands,
 This goddess with the outstretched hands,
 The quiet ever-smiling eyes;
 Her sweet voice cries,
 "Clothe me!"
 And thus the soul is filled with ecstasy.

E. H. B.

I Am The Earth

I am the earth, the earth of dark dark clod;
Above me is the silent sky; the light
Of distant stars shines down on me; the night
Is mine; I am the patient earth; my sod
Bears the imprint where foot of man hath trod;
I wear the scars that man hath made; no fight
Make I against my fate. What is the height
Of my desire? Submission to my God.

The dawn is mine, the noon-tide sun, the glow
Of sunset, and the twilight hour; beneath
Above, beyond the changing wild winds blow;
Storms beat upon me, rain and snow; in grief
I bear all things, and lo! from my dark clay
The blade, the bud, the flow'r spring to the day.

E. H. B.

Robert Norwood writes:

"Ken blew in yesterday with his hair a little longer than usual, and quite effective. He grinned at me and said, "In all things I imitate you."

"I answered: 'Please, only my best.'

"He answered: 'If you rule out the worst, what is there left to imitate?'

"Then he came in last night and we spent the evening in my study at 525 Park Avenue. Our conversation was of many things. He didn't gossip much about what he did during the winter, and I basted him for not writing some poetry. I read him 'Ishwa' and he swore it was good stuff and that I ought to give it to the Song Catches. But I answered that they wouldn't like it.

"Then we discussed 'The Fishermen.' Of course we agreed that great stuff is coming through. I did not get my sheet until this morning, otherwise I should have asked him to discover to me the esoteric glints of Bob Leslie's really fine poem, "Bitter Bread."

"He also tried to explain the fact that Evelyn Tufts passed through New York without letting me know she was here. It would have been a privilege, to say nothing of happiness, to have shown her some hospitality. Tell Evelyn that I have it in for her; that I called on her when I was in Wolfville, but she turned up her petal-like nose and passed me by. Of course, I'm jealous of Seumas, God bless him.

"Print as much of this in the Song Sheet as you like, especially my question about Bob's esotericism and Evelyn's superlative remoteness. Also please tell the song brethren that I read with a group of poets in Rollins College the Sunday afternoon I was there, and that "The Spinner" was voted the best poem of the bunch. After I left, there was a run on the local bookstores for "Mother and Son," so, in spite of the Stewart clan, I am somewhat, though I bean't a scholar. Yours for all good fishermen."

THE WHALE AND THE TOAD

Said the Monarch of the Seas
To the Toad in the Hole,
"I wallow where I please
From Equator unto Pole.
I swallow all the seas
And the world remarks my sneeze
And the fishes do my wishes where the green waters roll!"
"Just to think," said the Toad in the Hole.

"From the Carolina Islands to the Tides of Fundy Bay
I dash
And I splash
With a mighty careless motion.
Every billow knows my sway
When with hurricanes I play
As I roll
To my goal,"
Said the Monarch of the Ocean.
Said the Toad, "Why! I didn't have a notion!"

"Come, leave your shallow pool, learn in a deeper school!
Expand your ego with imperial pride!
The sun has never set
On my Kingdom of the Wet!
Hop on my back. I'll take you for a ride!"
Said the Toad, "Your mouth's so wide
I fear you might get hungry, and bid me ride...inside!"

Dreaming on this lily pad
Since I was a tiny tad,
All the news I fail to see
Of your liquid monarchy;
For your capers
In the papers,
Where you wallow,
Whom you swallow,
I have not had time to read,
Strumming tunes on my guitar
Which is more engrossing far
Than a Monarch's bloody deed!

Just what does it avail
When you flail with your tail,
Can the blue be any bluer for your trouble?
Is the rainbow in the sky
Any grander though more high
Than the rainbow I espy
Within a bubble?

All the beauty ever known
In this shallow pool is sown.
Here the moth candles flicker in the twilight glow.
The pine-tree's sable plume
Nods above its shadow gloom,
And its visitors are stars I'll have you know!"

The Workingclass to Saccho and Vanzetti

I brought them forth
 With my deepest pains,
 I nourished them
 From my dearest veins,
 I cradled them
 With my sweetest breath,
 And I walked with them
 As they went to death ...
 As I went to death.

And there where the dark fire
 Coursed their flames
 And their life went out
 In its lightless flames
 I mastered sorrow,
 As they despair
 When they died for a dream
 They would never share ...
 I would ever share.

I weep for the coward,
 The traitor, the slave,
 But I shed no tears
 For my deathless brave,
 But swear by their ashes
 I will never rest
 Till I break the shackles
 Of the world's oppressed
 I, the world's oppressed.

Then, O, my stricken,
 My deathless ones,
 You shall rise to the music
 Of a million suns
 For a million suns
 Shall your story praise
 In the golden glory
 Of my coming days ...
 Of your coming days.

- Joe Wallace -

Bliss Carman writes from Hollywood as follows:

"It's a treat to have news of home after so long a silence. Without any word I have felt like a Siberian exile. And indeed the winter has been a teaser. From earliest January to late February, twenty below zero with hardly a break, and never above zero! But the cold is a good doctor for me, and the North always a wonderful nurse. So I came through more than O. K. The lectures from all I hear, seem to have been a success, and I was particularly glad to visit the University of Minnesota. Winnipeg and Saskatoon, of course, are old friends, to say nothing of Vancouver.

"Now I am being spoiled in the luxury of the South West, which has always seemed to me the most magical region of this continent.

"My immediate address is 2158 Vista del Mar Avenue, Hollywood, only a few miles from neighboring Pasadena and Los Angeles, and this of course is a fabulous city, near to orange groves, sea, mountains, and deserts, as you please. I shall be making short trips from here during the next month or more before returning East. I must get out to the desert. It is one thing I can never get away from - in nature. I always long for it, and grudge a year when I cannot have at least a day of it. So you see I am bound to offer praise to Allah for this season. Also there are many friends here of old time who it is good to see, though some are gone."

Lovely Martha McIntyre

- Chorus -

Lovely Martha McIntyre,
 She's the one that I admire.
 She's the one that's built for me
 She's like a bird upon a tree,
 She's my darling; She's my dove,
 Bright and charming; full of love.
 She's my hope and heart's desire;
 Lovely Martha McIntyre.

- Verses -

Her house is on The Chapel Hill,
 Tho' far away I love her still.
 Her hair is fair, her eyes are blue.
 That will tole you - she is true.

Her voice is sweet as sweet can be,
 Just like a Robin on a tree.
 Sunday night when I was gay,
 I met my darling on the way.

She called me back to let me see,
 My Bonney Bell was true to me.
 Miss McLellan is her friend,
 Compliments to her I send.

A fair haired girl from Newfoundland,
 I welcome on the other hand.
 I'm not acquainted with her long
 Yet she deserves much praise and song.

Consolation she will bring
 And make me feel just like a King,
 Just to get her folks consent;
 To wed with me right after Lent.

I have sheep, and I have cows
 I have a horse, I have a house;
 I can work upon a farm
 And keep my darling fed and warm.

Her friend McLennan keeps an Inn,
 She's grabbed McKeigan! Took him in!
 Give me Martha while she's thin,
 I'm not a Yahie miner.

- Contributed by Stuart McCawley -

Martha Ann writes:

"Tell King Hazen that if he'll come to the farm sometime I'll attempt to make him a lascivious looking and lovely Angel Cake, and give him plenty of time to woo it, and a tin box to keep it in afterward. Charles Bruce's latest is simply great. I get a little speechless over his things! And I was delighted to see Bob's Bitter Bread in the Sheet. It's my favorite of his, I think. How I do love that line 'strut the three-ringed circus of the mind'."

--

And speaking of Charles Bruce's work, this from E. H. B.:

"Charles Bruce in my humble opinion really can sing. I like to study or rather try to study out his poetry. It is very lovely."

--

A mistake occurred in the mimeographing of Charles Bruce's poem, Rain-fire, appearing in the March number of the Song Sheet. In order to set the matter right we are republishing it.

When towering towns have seen the years bereft
Of grace no song may keep, no dream regain,
One way of swift escape grim Heaven has left:
The archaic tumult of relentless rain.

Time and today are lost in rich eclipse;
In the rain's beat are restless ghosts at strong:
Down the swart strakes of unremembered snips
Full tide makes guttural song,-

Up dusky slopes the inspired horsemen sweep;
Glory and death are in these pounding drums -
Safe in the dark rapt children stir in sleep
When the lull comes.

One song, one flame, withstand the pitying grace:
Through the grey shield of sound one thrusting spear -
The cry of faith to faith through tragic space
Is scarlet clear;

Some word more quick than rain to still their grief
These urgent hearts require;
Nor may this drenching drown one blazing leaf
On autumn uplands fleeced with dying fire.

- Charles Bruce -

J. A. MacGlashen, in his column The Bellman, in the Halifax Chronicle writes:

The Bellman cannot wait another minute. For a long time he has been putting off paying his respects to the Song Sheet in the hope that he might chime his compliments in some sort of verse rather than in his usual commonplace prose. But he is in sheer despair of even a brief visit from the Muse. She will not bestow even a fleeting blessing upon his prosaic pen. It is hard indeed to teach old dogs new tricks.

Perhaps friend Merkel, and other associated with him in the praiseful policy of issuing the Song Sheet, may accept The Bellman's apologies for the seeming discourtesy of failing to acknowledge the kind thought that has brought the Song Sheet rich in blessing to his desk "ever so often."

Every number is better than the last, and all are well worth while and to a high degree good. The number for March 19th gave me prime pleasure. It starts with two bright and sweet "Songs of the Sea" from the graceful pen of Ethel H. Butler, who is a particular friend in the Belfry sanctum. And then Bob Leslie comes tripping along with his rollicking verses on "Fiashul" and "Bitter Bread," which deserve the "warming fires of praise."

Then friend Noel H. Wilcox takes up the tuneful tale and bestows one of his best bits upon the "little footprints" of the Sand Peep;" and Alexander Louis Fraser pays a truly poetic tribute to "Any Poet;" and adds "A Lullaby."

"How the Clams Came to Fundy" is wittily pictured by Grace and Joe Wallace. And what shall I say of the characteristic contribution of my old and brilliant friend, Stuart McCawley on "The Yankee Liner"?

Thanks again and again, friend Merkel, for your ergosity of rich enjoyment.

Seumas O'Brien writes:

Your answer to my letter, or letters, was a copy of "The Song Fishermen's Sheet." A beautiful answer surely! I thank you with all my heart.

Molly's poem is a gem; and who could have but high praise for the others?

May I suggest that you select the best poems of the year and have them published in book form with an introduction by Miss Carman.

I am coming around slowly and hope to get out of doors next week. I did not know how many good friends I have until I became ill. However, Andy, don't get sick. Jonquils from Martha Ann and roses from Eve Tufts, remind me with their pleasant fragrance that Spring is here.

When inspiration comes my way again, I shall send you a contribution for the Song Sheet. Love to all.

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Credited Postage and Stationery Account: Joe Wallace, \$1.00; A. L. Fraser, .50; Ifan Williams, \$1.00; Martha Ann Leslie, \$1.00; Robert Norwood, \$5.00.

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MORE SONGS PLEASE

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This issue of the Song Sheet is being mailed to the following named: Archibald, Rosamond; Baker, Clifford L; Bannon, R. B; Benson, Nathaniel A; Beresford, Molly; Bernasconi, H.P; Bruce, Charles; Butler, Ethel; Carew, W. J; Carman, Bliss; Carten, Laura; Clark, George Frederick; Coleman, Constance; Fairweather, Alice; Fletcher, Molly; Fraser, A. L; Gillis, James D; Harley, H. A; Hatheway, R.H; Hazen, King; Henneon, Ellen; Hopkins, R. F; Huestis, Annie Campbell; King, Agnes; Leslie, Kenneth; Leslie, Robert; Livesay, Dorothy; Llwyd, J. P. D; McCarthy, Molly; McCawley, Stuart; Moore, Phil; MacClashen, J. A; McKay, Donald; Merkel, Florence; Mitchell, J. O'H; Murphy, Leo; Norwood, Robert; Nutt, Elizabeth S; O'Brien, Seumas; Pierce, Lorne; Pound, A.M; Reid, Robie C; Roberts, Charles G. D; Roberts, Gostwick; Lloyd, Roberts; Ross, William; Rhodenizer, V. B; Stewart, Florence; Tufts, Evelyn; Tyler, Hilda; Uniacke, Jim; Vickery, E.J; Wallace, Joe; Wilcox, Noel; Williams, Ifan.

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