

*Night and  
Morning  
and Other Verses*



BY  
O. N. GILLESPIE



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*Night*

*and*

*Morning*

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# Foreword



*This little book should have proudly borne a foreword by Mr. Justice Alpers—but he will never read it now.*

*All I can do is to remember that he said that he was more than happy to let me dedicate it to him.*

*As a schoolboy, I joined with all the others in giving him unstinted adoration, and these latter years of a precious friendship have shown me that we worshipped wisely.*

*His life was a poem of richer and nobler beauty than will ever be penned.*



*Most of the verses in this book have been published in the Sydney "Bulletin," to whose kindly generosity I am indebted for the right to reprint.*



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## NIGHT AND MORNING

---

### The Sheep-stealer.

*Though the secret mirth  
Of the wrinkled earth  
Leaps lightly now and then,  
There is rarer glee  
When the night skies see  
The queer night ways of men.*

WALLED by the silver dusted night  
The hill sat hunched, a troglodyte  
Giant and grim, whose frown was bent  
Where laughs of summer lightning went.

The blackness held no moving thing,  
Nor lightest sound of whispering:  
No colour showed except the far  
Gleam of a homestead's window-star.  
It paled at last, winked once and died,  
Drowned in the eerie, lightless tide.

....Suddenly, in the clotted dark  
Awoke an impish, moving spark.  
It swayed and halted, swerved and tacked,  
A quick red sprite by mischief racked,  
But climbing all the time with zest,  
Until it reached the hooded crest.  
Here two white rocks stared in surprise:  
They were by day the hill's two eyes,  
Forbidding, cold, insatiate.  
The valley feared their stony hate  
That made the height a shape of dread—  
Some vast Jurassic monster's head,  
And waveringly, beneath those eyes  
Went talk of crops and market lies.

The red spark fluttered to one rock,  
While rang an impudent, soft knock,—  
Then the man stooped,—refilled his pipe,  
Scored a thin phosphorescent stripe  
With a sly match, and cupped the flame  
In clever hands: as in a frame  
There showed a lean and merry face  
Whose wrinkles wore an outlaw grace.

“Laddie,” he whispered to the ground  
And with swift feet that made no sound,  
A legged and jointed thing loped past;  
It seemed a flake the night had cast  
That snapped into the further dark,  
Stifling a low exultant bark.

Soon near the man began to creep  
The misty forms of huddled sheep  
Like rounded drifts of silent snow  
And though they shuddered to and fro  
Crazed by that unseen grim pursuit,  
Their idiot faces all were mute.

One more swift flame, a stealthy rush,  
Brought back the hill’s accustomed hush:  
Like unreal shapes, half seen in sleep,  
Faded the man and dog and sheep.

Forbidding, cold, the hill’s two eyes  
Stared at the faintly smiling skies.

## NIGHT AND MORNING

---

### The Singer

*Though the secret mirth  
Of the wrinkled earth  
Leaps slyly now and then,  
There is laughter clear  
When the day-stars hear  
The singing ways of men.*

Slow wings of giant birds of white,  
The gliding planes of morning light  
Drove up the valley, mile on mile,  
Till, like a ghostly silver pile,  
The hill-top glowed against the sky  
Of pearl and misted lazuli.

This is the hour of quietness:  
It softly cancels all the stress  
Of riot-life in leaf and limb:  
The fire of blossom-flame is dim  
And no beast stirs: even the grass  
Is motionless as graven glass.

This is the lustral hour: a pool  
Of healing moments, clear and cool  
This is the hour of mystery:  
The spinning world seems dreamingly  
To swim in pale enchantment, when  
From day-time's drone of busy men,  
To secret night's scarce-whispered calls,  
This strange white bridge of silence falls.

Now the slip-rails of faery drop  
And from the shadowy grey hill-top  
Wind flocks of slow white thoughts that glow  
In the pale radiance: they go  
Softly from sight and show again,  
Dream sheep that walk a magic lane  
Where only follow those who long  
To change this charmed hour to a song.



Steeped in the wonder of it all,  
The singer passed the shadow wall,  
And face towards the spreading light,  
Steadily climbed the silver height.

There two white rocks stared in surprise:  
They were by day the hill's two eyes,  
Insatiate, forbidding, cold;  
But now they seemed to smile, cajoled  
As one light finger of the sun  
Melted their gloom in soft sly fun.

The singer rested by one rock,  
And then there rang a tiny knock,  
As lazily, he cleared a splash  
Of random grey tobacco ash.  
Turning to watch the far—far, gold  
That on the moving waters rolled,  
He saw, in distant, jewelled spray,  
The sea-birth of the singing day:  
And ringing to his lips, a wave  
Of rapture bore this little stave.

*When lights of Port o' Morning gleam  
And high clouds laugh to coloured foam,  
My shining songs, my flocks of dream  
Go down the sunways home.*

## JUSTICE.

THEY tramped the corridor, and turned  
To where a petulant sunbeam burned  
Upon the high door of the court.  
The lumpish man stepped short,  
And with a huge and hateful hand  
He made her stand.  
He had a broad and sticky face,  
The course for an incessant race  
Between swift grins and sudden stares.  
Her eyes were like a broken hare's,  
But, oh, so indiscreetly blue,  
And this shone through:

*We are two singing wells  
Of waters of the seas of song,  
And love and life and laughter-bells  
Ring in us all day long.*

Suddenly the swing-door creaked,  
And, ashen-cheeked,  
She faced the watching eyes  
That quivered like black flies  
Against the blur of saffron cloud  
That was the faces of the crowd.

A high-backed chair bore one whose glance  
Glittered with grim intolerance.  
One day a week he smugly trod  
To glorify a cold, far God,  
And pray for keener power to find  
The blemish in his fellow kind.  
The rest, with prison filling pen  
He scored his hate of men.  
Deep in his eyes of grey  
Stirred imps that seemed to say:

*We spy foulness breeding  
In hearts that are bleeding,  
And after  
We find souls are evil,  
Worn through by the weevil  
Of laughter.*

With sputtering speed his swift pen ran,  
And so the hideous game began.

Upon her bright soul's careless flames  
He breathed, and they were livid shames.  
In each inconsequential deed  
He found a secret evil seed  
That he could tell, with God-sent power,  
Had fallen from the lecher-flower.

And, as he spoke, heads forward bent  
Nodded an avid, pleased assent.  
Such is the monstrous power of words;  
They wing into our mind like birds  
And roost, and let their droppings fall,  
Till filth bespatters all.

And there are those who walk a track  
Narrow and straight, and all seems black  
Through fear-dimmed windows of their souls  
In the wide fields where laughter rolls.  
These keep a ledger sin-account,  
Where nought's the only prized amount,  
As though the convict, steel-barred in,  
Were guiltless of the hopeless sin  
He dreams of as his peering eye  
Gloats on a maiden passing by.

Silence! the last dull word was sped;  
The high-backed chair, untenanted,  
Stared at the paper-littered desk;  
It seemed an altar—grim, grotesque,  
Built in the market-place of pain,  
Where souls must buy to sell again.

The blue eyes now were dark with fear,  
The lumpish man stopped near,  
And with a huge and hateful hand  
He made her stand.

The sunbeam that had lost his way  
Saw the bowed head, and, as in play,  
Seeking to crown the one he chose,  
Placed on her hair a golden rose.  
It burgeoned to a glory; then  
Died as they closed this work of men.

*No rose of gold or red or white  
Can flower within the awesome night  
That broods in the discreet small hell  
Men call a prison cell.*





*Molly-of-the-Wise-Eyes*  
*and the Others*



## EVENSONG.

SING a song of washing-up—shining clean plates  
Chattering together like a crowd of old mates:  
Buxom cups and saucers, and little white bowls  
Purely and demurely bright like little girl-souls.

Hear the hymn to cosiness  
The tinkling dishes chime,  
Ringing in the doziness  
Of evening time.

Mollie-of-the-wise-eyes leaves her hard sums,  
In important apron she has swept the crumbs.  
All of us are washing up: big and small folks  
Sharing and comparing all the home-sweet jokes.

Hear the speech to cosiness  
The doting kettle speaks,  
Babbling of the rosiness  
Of maiden cheeks.

Lamplight on the busy hands that fold the tea-cloths  
Magically turns them into flitting gold moths.  
Round me all the comfortable gods of home things  
Flick away the fusses of the day with blithe wings.

Ring the chimes for cosiness  
And sweetly humdrum times,  
Passing bells for prosiness  
And high-flown rhymes.

## THE SPECIALIST.

SO this was Death, this kindly, peering man,  
Whose glasses hid the meaning of his eyes,  
Whose voice was gentle, but aloofly wise.  
His grave words ran:

“Where, little one, is the throb of pain?  
Ah, yes, I know, this small blue vein?”

A gaunt tree stood upon the plot of green  
Between the quiet room and the loud street;  
Its branches, shaken by the traffic beat,  
Stealthy, half-seen,  
Wrote on the white walls of the room  
Black, moving hieroglyphs of doom.

The trembling pallor in the girlish face  
Misted my eyes; there seemed about my dear  
Silent white wings, fluttering white moths  
of fear

In death-white grace.  
A blade of steel flashed in a far  
Cabinet like a chill, swift star.

Somewhere a bell! Somewhere ringing of grief,  
Ringing of flowers that die in the bud, die  
In the shadow; life but a fleeting lie  
From God, the Thief!  
That tiny, broken curve of snow  
Was my child's hand...kissed...long ago.

Then from remote and ringing distance came  
The voice of God—a kindly, peering God,  
Whose sounding words marched through all  
doubting, shod  
With joyous flame:  
“There is no fear; as the years go,  
To sure sweet strength your flower will grow.”

This is the street again; the glowing sky  
Is set with little suns for stars, and blent  
With the faint smile, serene, indifferent,  
Of the Most High,  
The lamps of human tending shine  
And my child's hand is warm in mine.





## WHEN MOLLIE SINGS.

WHEN Mollie sings her birthday song  
The little fingers tightly lace  
Behind the snow-white party dress;  
Her tiny throat is like a gong  
That trembles in the ecstasy  
Of making music and her face,  
Upturned and glowing, bears a free  
Delight and all unknowing grace  
Of joy in her own loveliness;  
When Mollie sings her birthday song.  
And wears her snow-white party dress.

When Mollie sings her birthday song.  
The soft piano-notes ring low  
Like far-off bells that chime to bless;  
For, newborn from that tender throng,  
A tiny sound-child flutters in;  
As, thrilled beneath a loving bow,  
The third on some old violin  
Kindles an overtone aglow;  
And glad airs melt in wistfulness  
When Mollie sings her birthday song.  
And wears her flowing party dress.

When Mollie sings her birthday song.  
The thin, pure flame of melody  
Heals the dull pain of day's distress;  
Its burning beauty steals along  
The listeners in the shaded room,  
Till souls learn tongues of gentle glee  
And lose their speech of ledger-gloom.  
A glad new Pentecost they see  
In the sweet fire of girlishness,  
When Mollie sings her birthday song  
And, radiant, wears her snow-white dress.

## BABY WORSHIP.

TOSS,—little feet,  
In twinkling mockery of eld's grimace  
Till, sorely plagued, he veils with clumsy grace  
From you, my sweet,  
The grasping hunger of his careworn face.

Spin,—little hands  
Your careless net of fairy threads that float  
Enlacing grim old trouble's scraggy throat:  
Those joyous strands  
Turn into music each discordant note.

Smile—merry eyes  
And send Death packing: for your busy glee  
But fashions you to miniature of me;  
That I may prize  
A dimpled pledge of immortality.

O,—babe of mine  
I know not templed priest nor sacrament,  
But in your eyebrow's tiny trembling tent  
I build my shrine,  
And kneeling, hear God laugh in glad assent.

## SIX-THIRTY.

THE hilltop street lamp, suddenly in jest  
Flicks out the pale flame of the climbing moon,  
And twilight, dropping from a cloud balloon,  
Sets off as postman with a bag of rest.

And I'm on the ferry where neighbourly fun,  
Is sign that the day's drab flurry is done.

The hill-dames round the harbour sit and smile,  
Green grannyhoods with earth-gee quivering;  
They gossip slyly on the one droll thing—  
That men must leave their ledgers for a while.

And both ferry funnels wave fat plumes of smoke,  
To show they have fathomed the hill's fine joke.

The fond bay stretches out his warm brown arms,  
And from them slips that ready flirt, the pier.  
Coquettishly, as we draw slowly near,  
She stirs to make parade of all her charms.

And home thoughts like stars dance in everyone's face,  
As steamer and pier hug in shameless embrace.

Soon all the hills awink with window eyes,  
Warm eyes that watch beside the waiting doors,  
That hide joy-brimmed, ecstatic pinafores.  
And so I'm singing, swinging up the rise!

I'll soon have one knuckle delightfully in  
The tiny cleft curve of my baby's chin.

## SMOKE.

### 1.

THE pipe for quiet comfort of the home,  
The cigarette for riot of hot youth,  
The brown cigar's a many leafed tome  
Of sad and laughing weary-wise old Truth.

### 2.

Life's a cigar  
Love is the taper.  
Life's a cigar.

Life's a cigar  
Lit at Love's star.  
Life's a cigar.

Life's a cigar  
Love is the taper  
Puff! And we are  
Ashes and vapour.  
Life's a cigar.

### 3.

The dark draws to the cool recess,  
My briar pipe smokes low,  
As with a softly fierce caress  
It's last rich embers glow.

Against the white porch rail my wife  
Leans idly, eyes adream;  
Through screen of smoke the thorns of life  
But pointed petals seem.

We age—we two; but in the bowl  
I see the fire deep lying,  
And ardours of the fading coal  
Grow stronger still in dying.



4.

My burning love for gay Lizette  
Is lightly lit and lightly set,  
As on her lips her cigarette  
Tilts in a fashion airy:

And so it burns a little space,  
Weaving about the dainty face  
A cloud of ghostly light blue lace,  
Ephemeral and fairy.

And as it slowly smoulders, I  
Its progress watch and anguished sigh,  
“Lizette, stay with me till I die,  
“Be fortune fine or fleeting.”

But she will say, “Ow zat is triste,  
“Le marriage it spoil ze feast  
“of all zings gai”;—I see the least  
Cold fretful frown completing.



And now the drifting vapour blue  
Fades fast, and so my hopes fade too.  
There scarce remains to me a sou

On dear Lizette to spend—  
“L’amour ees bête wizout ze ’oof”  
“C’est tout fini as zis is”—“Pouf,”  
And from her lips for final proof

There

Falls

The Bitter

End



*The Bush and the Sea  
at Muritai*



## THE REFORMER.

THE harbour was a dreaming lake  
Of quiet water brimming,  
Where, all alone, a kittiwake  
Was delicately swimming.  
Her quick feet made a double fret,  
Dark threads upon a coverlet,  
Whose level blue was overset  
With points of silver trimming.

The blue eyes of the sleepy sea  
Smiled lazily.

The kittiwake swam here and there  
With purposeful endeavour;  
Her dainty consequential air  
Showed pride in being clever;  
Her breast, she knew without a doubt  
Had rubbed the ocean wrinkles out,  
And all the waters round about  
Would now be smooth for ever.

The gray eyes of the watching sea  
Smiled thoughtfully.

The hurrying dawn was pale with pain.  
Wind-furies, harshly crying,  
Tossed on the pier a draggled skein  
Of feathers, slackly lying.  
Like a street hag whose hideous sleep  
Marks the drear end that high days reap,  
The kittiwake lay still—a heap  
Of brave dreams, drably dying.

The green eyes of the wanton sea  
Smiled carelessly.

## THE AVENGERS.

Tauwhinu and tall fern, fox-glove and hutiwai,  
Swarming up the long slopes, pouring through the  
passes  
On the flats the ragwort's yellow standards fly  
"Vengeance for the slain trees; death to stranger  
grasses."

Like some huge earth-god, sprawling motionless  
And staring at the sea, the long hill lay.  
While busy centuries wrought him a dress  
Of splendid green to cloak the dingy clay.

So the wan Mist Maid in the evening times  
Would find a forest glory in the height:  
A monotone that made soft colour-rhymes  
With green of trees and drifting robes of white.

The wind that moved about the hooded crest  
Sighed laughingly to find the sombre gown  
Of green bush beauty hid a secret zest,  
A riot of quick life, a fairy town.

For down long colonnades of arching green  
Where creekstones rang the low-toned river chimes,  
The kiwi darted, silently, half seen,  
A Polynesian sprite of olden times.

In companies the lesser trees would halt  
To peer in awe, Was it a soaring spire?  
Or a great rimu clutching at the vault  
Of dim far blue with fingers of green fire.

Tuis sat gravely, little singing nuns  
Of some old pagan fane of long ago;  
And swift small birds like tiny coloured suns  
Flashed up from pools and sparkled to and fro.

Enduringly through root and bole and stem  
The spirit of the bush distilled the earth,  
Now to rich fruit, now to a flower gem  
And all was work and growth and life and birth.

In a distant shuttered room  
A parchment rustled in the gloom  
And straightway flocks of written words  
Set out like black ill-omened birds:  
And "Fell" they said, and "Burn" they said  
"The green grass grows where trees are dead."

In toiling hands the spinning axes rang,  
Till, crashing one by one, the great ranks fell:  
Hark! As they lay, a grim bush spirit sang:  
"Brothers, the Bush . . Will take revenge . . Farewell."

Next at the reckless bidding of a fool,  
The sunlight sunken in each dying leaf  
Leapt to fierce flame that raged in mad misrule,  
Leaving an ashen desert, grey as grief.

The timid alien grasses came at last,  
Pliant and servile, dreading the strange land;  
Faintly they heard, rustling with fear, aghast,  
The warrior song of an attacking band.

Tauwhinu and tall fern, fox-glove and hutiwai,  
Swarming up the long slopes, pouring through the  
    passes  
On the flats the ragwort's yellow standards fly:  
"Vengeance for the slain trees; death to stranger  
    grasses."

High on the slopes comes down the ruthless fern;  
Mark his green lances tossing in the sun?  
The marching fox-glove ranks are closed and stern,  
And forward massed platoons of ragwort run.



The countless brown bombs of the hutiwai  
In swift relentless broadsides fall and spill:  
So . . . as the sullen year goes sighing by  
The craven grasses, routed, leave the hill.

Like some huge earth-god, wounded and aggrieved,  
And staring at the sea, the long hill lay;  
Then, as in agony, his shoulder heaved,  
Toppled and crashed, a mass of dingy clay.

In a distant shuttered room  
A parchment chuckled in the gloom.  
“Dead trees,” it said, “Slain trees,” it said,  
“I grow and grow where trees are dead.”



### COLOUR.

**B**LACK is the master of the crowded hall  
Where all the colours meet; he is the Head,  
For mauve is tame, magenta badly bred,  
Purple and brown to vapid languors fall,  
And pink and meretricious yellow brawl;  
Sly blue and lissom green and lazy red  
Are only friends in some chance flower-bed;  
Grey, but the toneless echo of them all.

Black is the regal, universal friend,  
Who softly brings to humankind his store  
Of quiet amity and comfort deep;  
Who kisses mother night, and makes her lend  
The sable fabric from her wardrobe door  
To veil the sweet halfdeath that men call sleep.

## TRANSMUTATION.

THE gleaming shuttle of the white moon flies  
With cord aglow to slyly sew  
About the world a silver net of lies.

The moonthreads through the night air spill  
And magically float and spin,  
They change the bulging massy hill  
To one black sheet upright and thin,  
Of painted tin.

A ribbon of the moonstuff lies  
Against the rata's shadowed feet,  
And black its scarlet flowers rise,  
While on the hill the yellow wheat  
Sways, white as sleet.

And there is knit a sorcery  
On relics in the picnic place,  
A gleaming jam jar dons in glee  
A cozen-gown of jewelled lace  
With tricky grace.

I walk with Maud in ecstasy.  
Her love-drenched eyes are lustral wells  
That purely shine with modesty,  
I seem to hear the tinkling swells  
Of sanctus bells.

The creekstones ring like little gongs  
Tapped softly by the fishes' fins,  
And trees lilt airs of greenwood songs;—  
The purl of pixy mandolins  
Far-off begins.

And then I light a cigarette!—  
The matchflame is a searing spark.  
It burns away the moonlight net  
And Maud's a drab—the park's a park!  
Lord—where's the dark?

## EARTH MUSIC.

THE hill standing tall and stark  
Stared over his shoulder,  
And stolidly grinned;  
Each wrinkle a furrow mark,  
Each wart a grey boulder  
Bared by the rough wind.

Knuckling tight, the fierce windfists  
Beat thin the lastgreening;  
The hill felt them not,  
But watched through the swaying mists  
With ominous meaning  
One creeping dark spot.

Painfully the man went past  
His wide-spreading acres,  
Tilled all the years long.  
The hill with a thunder vast  
Like harsh winter breakers  
Trolled this sounding song:

I have taken his heartflame for toll,  
And the light of his eyes  
Is a dimness; the dyes  
Of my brewing disfigure his jowl.

I have twisted his sinews; his hands  
Are but hooks for my soil;  
With my harrow of toil  
I have tattered his muscles to strands.

I have wasted his woman, and slain  
Half his lubberly brood;  
With my rack I have screwed  
Every newborn in marrow and vein.

EARTH MUSIC—Continued.

Lo, he who once walked as a god  
Is my chattel—a prone  
Soulless mannikin, stone  
Of my outerop and clod of my clod!

But in a far booklined room  
Lay, pliantly hellish,  
A smooth mortgage draft.  
Rustling its parchment womb  
It captured with relish  
The hill's boast and laughed:

The hill is a braggart! My fine  
Black hieroglyphs lurk  
Where this man-wrecking work  
Is encompassed. The Glory is Mine!



## BLUE BALLAD.

THE black night-brats that whine about my pillow  
Are weary company;  
Bobbing with glee each swaying dream-negrillo  
Grins wide at me.

But when the dawn, with pale lax fingers groping,  
Limps through my window-pane,  
I find myself incontinently hoping  
For night again.

Dawn, bent to pull the plug with sloven slackness,  
Lets out the tide of dark,  
And, faint at first, from out the sinking blackness,  
Stand objects stark.

That square-edged isle that holds the shape of sable,  
Deep-curved and rising sheer,  
Is only proof that on the dressing-table  
Is last night's beer.

The dark grey ghost, in helpless posture sprawling,  
As though in death grotesque,  
Is but the coat in which I'm daily crawling  
From stool to desk.

The brownish bluff that, growing clear, is knotted  
With strange white-twisted hills,  
Resolves itself into my washstand, dotted  
With unpaid bills.

So, one by one as on a bigot mission,  
The dawn drags in his gifts,  
Each one a mark of workaday attrition  
And mean drab shifts.

The black night-brats have flown, but in their places  
I rise for work to glimpse  
The sharp teeth, lancet claws and hatchet faces  
Of Day's damned imps.

## BONDI BEACH-GOLD.

A FAIRY park of colour-guns  
Shatters the clouds of gray,  
And, blazing like a hundred suns,  
The fire of golden day  
Burns down upon the sand for us,  
Turning the creamy strand for us  
To opalescent land for us  
Who love the golden day.

The sun's wide parasol of blue  
Rifts into roselit crannies where  
A million tinted strings come through  
And fill the golden air.  
They lift and fall and sway for us,  
And magic measures play for us,  
Till, chiming clear, the spray for us  
Rings out a golden air.

Below each string a bubble floats,  
A crystal bright and frail;  
Voyaging through the tide of motes  
It lifts a golden sail.  
This is the flashing sign for us  
That life is fair and fine for us,  
And joy will always shine for us  
Who fly the golden sail.

A dropping bubble lightly breaks  
To splash the sand with pearl,  
And in the jewelled pool it makes  
There stands a golden girl;  
She bows before the sun for us,  
The day-fires vestal nun for us,  
This surf-girl posed in fun for us,  
This golden, golden girl.

### THREE CINQUAINS.

#### Morning Disillusion.

The sun  
Rose-tints the murk  
And moving heiroglyphs  
Break through in flame—then pale to skiffs  
At work.

#### The Alchemist.

Blossom!  
Your rich tints hold  
My passion colour now,  
Your subtle hues for me spin Gold!  
Prize cow.

#### Phases of the Moon.

Her eyes  
In moonwine steeped  
Bred by Faith, but in my room  
The lamp stared hardily: Outpeeped  
Two lies.

*August 1914 and after*



1914.

LOVE lounged with Death in that supernal bar  
Where stand life essences in coloured line  
Love's rosy smile was blandly infantine  
While Death was ponderously jocular.  
"Partners," he said, "known to the House we are"  
And bragged of comfort in his frosty wine:  
"Each bubble soul in Love's liqueur ashine  
Breaks at the brim into a death sweet star."

Love, sweetly fuddled, sleepily agreed  
That they were drinking mates for all men's need,  
When footsteps clanked outside; the jade bar door  
Crashed open suddenly, and in slouched War.  
He roared for drinks, belched like a drunken crone,  
Sat down with Death, and now Love drinks alone.



## THE NIGHT RAID.

In our office in Pitt-street  
Smithson is working  
On the March balance,  
Blue-ticking the journal entries,  
Crosschecking the castings in his patient way,  
Slipping  
Midway in the morning to the corridor  
For a cigarette,  
Dragging his club foot furiously,  
Loudly.  
It is dull for Smithson,  
But his dreams are whole.

London glows for Smithson,  
Splendid traffic canyons  
Bright with the living glances of passing armies,  
Whereas  
It is black—  
Even its day is dull yellow,  
Half-hiding sooty brick and stone monsters,  
One of which  
Squatting in Manly  
Would frown the creamy cheeriness out of the sand.

France for Smithson  
Calls up sparkling girls, cafés, high voices, talking  
shoulders  
And ribbons of coloured sunlight.  
It is mud  
Smoking with stench  
Trampled in endless marchings,  
And it is only the Sun's  
Sick brother  
That lights this greyness  
They call the Old World;  
While for Smithson there blazes  
In his hearty, persistent, golden way  
The good Australian Sun.  
This longed-for time  
Has only come to me  
To cancel my dreams  
—There's the whistle.

How did it finish, Nurse?  
I was sure.  
We outplayed that Bavarian team,  
Went through them?  
Good.  
Oh, the dreams I'll always have!  
I must get back to Smithson.  
We'll only have one good leg apiece.  
But dreams—my dreams!  
Poor damned old Smithson!  
Lame,  
And no dreams,  
No living dreams!

## THE COURT OF ARCHES.

As a tree splintered on the heath  
A Somme lagoon rocked underneath  
The roaring ceiling of the world,  
And noises hurled  
About the air, set up a quaking,  
Tilting the banks, till dried ooze flaking,  
Spattered the swaying pool all over  
And drove the gauzy flies to cover.

A sedgy corner thus far quiet  
From work of that corroding riot,  
Held frogs in council, earnest, rapt:

Portly and calm, their leader mapped  
The course of their enquiry on  
The 'Whence' and 'Why', the pro and con,  
Whence came the noise, unequalled by  
The imagined croak of all frogs? Why  
The marshroof's turbulence?  
Could He in truth be praised or blamed?

An underfed and thin one claimed  
The mystery brought punishment,  
And all should speedily repent  
Desertion of the old lagoon.  
His croak of warning ceased, and soon  
Another showed the obvious good,  
The bounteous insect crop of food  
That strewn the surface of the pool;

And one said "Fool"  
"This is the last that may befall";  
"This the end, the end of all";  
"Rich slime and waterweed and logs";  
"All ended . . . . . even frogs."

And thus and thus they wrought,  
Weighing each word, counting each thought;  
When down the feeding rivulet,  
By turn and deep and fret,  
Slow tiny clots of red came drifting  
Dissolving, spraying, rifting,  
To scarlet filaments that laced  
And writhed and broke in spectral haste.

Without surcease, the flocculent  
And delicate masses glowed; and spent  
Till all that smooth green water-lawn  
Was tinted like a rosy dawn.  
And joyously the Council saw  
That wonder-change; and hushed in awe!  
Their answer had evolved!  
Enigma solved!  
Forever now, their soft green sides  
Would lave in gracions, soft pink tides.

Their loud full-throated anthem rang;  
'O Great Suffuser! Hail!' they sang;  
'Blessings Alway'  
'Are Thine.....Non Nobis, Domine.'

## FLOWER OF WAR.

THE soundless planes of trance  
Had whirled me past a hundred sleeping years,  
And dimly, far below, through haze of tears,  
I saw the wound of France.

From little hill to town,  
From road to river silver-string it ran—  
An endless hurt: and, like a swooning man,  
I drifted slowly down.

Lo, all the growing things  
Were steeped in red, and red, and red again,  
As though dead years still fanned their blooms of  
pain  
With unforgetting wings.

Here swayed red violets;  
There grass was red, and marched with crimson  
plumes,  
To where tall scarlet lilies split perfumes  
Above red mignonettes.

A daisy bowed its head  
Vainly to hide its shapeless, bloodied spots  
From eyes of jubilant forget-me-nots—  
Forget-me-nots of red.

But, checkered on the sod  
Among the flowers, stood rows of crosses white.  
They wore no red: they flamed with living light—  
The glory-gold of God.





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