

Selected Poetry

MAN BY HIMSELF.

Because my grief is quiet and apart,
Think not for such a reason it is less.
True sorrow makes a silence in the heart;
Joy has its friends, but grief its loneliness.
The wound that tears too readily confess,
Can mended be by fortune or by art,
But there are woes no medicine can dress.
As there are wounds that from the spirit
start.

So do not wonder that I do not weep,
Or say my anguish is too little shown;
There is a quiet here, there is a sleep.
There is a peace that I have made my own.
Man by himself goes down into the deep.
Certain and unbefriended and alone.

—ROBERT NATHAN in the *Century Magazine*.

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BOG-LAND.

I strayed within the bog-land brown
And all its lure I felt,
The cares I carried from the town
Into its azure melt.

The darkling pools, the faery flowers
Still lead me on and on,
As if I forgot the passing hours
Nor saw that day was gone.

When darkness came, I know not whence,
And whispered in her ear,
The bog-land fettered all my sense
And made me prisoner.

No ray of light upon me fell,
No shadow of a sound,
Save that I felt my sentinel,
The night-wind, on his round.

The bog-land pitied my despair
And gently rent my chain;
Who lured afar the wanderer
Now lured him home again.

—A.W. in the *Irish Rosary*.

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FOR THE FALLEN.

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her
children,
England mourns for her dead across the
sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her
spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and
royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.—
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they
were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and
aglow.

They were staunch to the end against odds
unaccounted,

They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall not grow old, that are left to
grow old:

Age shall not weary them, nor the years
condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the
morning

We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing com-
rades again:

They sit no more at familiar tables at
home;

They have no lot in our labor of the day-
time:

They sit beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes
profound,

Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from
sight,

To the innermost heart of their own land
they are known

As the stars are known to the Night.

As the stars that shall be bright when we
are dust

Moving in marches upon the heavenly
plain,

As the stars that are starry in the time of
our darkness,

To the end, to the end, they remain.

—LAWRENCE BINYON, in *An Anthology of
Modern Verse*.

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CROSS ROADS.

I stood at the cross roads where the roads
meet,

And the sun was shining and the birds sang
sweet,

I saw the people passing by, and some were
very old,

And they shivered and they dithered as
though the day was cold,

For the sadness of the weight of years was
on them like a coat—

They were tired of seeking Charon, and his
overladen boat.

I bade them sit a while and rest and take
their ease,

"No rest," they cried, "for such as us."
No rest for such as these?

Then a young man came towards me; and
oh, but he was strong,

And as he came he whistled a stirring battle
song.

I said to him: "Good-morrow, and the day is
fine and dry,"

Then he said: "The rain is coming, though
the crows were flying high."

I asked him where he came from— what took
him on the road.

He was off to find his fortune in the land of
flowing gold.

He was tired of all their talking and their
tales of Tir na nOge,

'Twas talks of war and striking, and the
prices going up,

And many a little hungry child without a
bite or sup.

I said: "May God go with you and keep
you on your way."

But oh, my heart was heavy with the things
I saw that day.

—A.L., in the *Irish Weekly Independent*.

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O SHIP OF STATE!

"O Ship of State!

Our fathers builded thee in toil and pain,
Wet with a blood-red dew and bitter rain,
Early and late.

'Neath heavens without a star,

While in the shingled bar

The wan tide call'd

'Come—follow me

Over the broad, deep sea,

Finding, in service, life;

And peace, past strife,

Or death, in honor pall'd."

"And so they went.

In their wide seeking spent;

And some sank down to sleep

In the dim shadowy deep;

And some return'd,

With eyes that strangely burn'd,

For that they'd look'd through the dim veil
divine

O'er life's horizon line.

But oft they sail'd again,

Returning weary men,

Ragged, and battle-scar'd, and salt wind
tann'd;

Yet bringing back to land

Thoughts beyond mortal price,

Of high achievement born, and sacrifice.

"Whither, O ship, away—

On what strange quests to-day—

Weird writings on thy sails,

Thy broad decks strewn with bales

Of bitter words, and promises, and threats,

So many that the weary heart forgets

Half that is written ere thou leave the bay—

To the poor—money without toil for it:

To all—rewards unmeasured by man's wit:

Heights reach'd without an ache of climb-
ing feet,

And money—money—money—all replete

With happiness, as though that could be
bought—

As though one triumph without pain is got;

Forgetting how our fathers, often poor,

Sought peace, and found it, free from
money's hire—

In Honor's pathway ever fearless trod,

And touched in love the very feet of God.

"O Ship of State,

Ere the grey hour grow late,

Fling half those windy wallets to the wave,

And write upon thy prow that Happiness

Comes not by mere material More or Less,

But by contentment sought

Where honest men have wrought;

And, when thou sailest o'er the singing
foam,

Bring back not Hate, but Love and Friend-
ship, home."

—LAWRENCE MACLEAN WATT, in *Glasgow
Herald*.