

Marvelous Marin Poetry

by

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Blossoms in The Lily Pond

Foreword

Deep in the midst of the redwoods,
In the green hills of Marvellous Marin,
Lays a pool, so secluded, it is almost unseen,
Untarnished by the visits of mankind.
Its silent, un murmuring surface,
Is protected by broad, leafy lilies,
And there, in the heat of the summer,
An occasional wandering hiker,
Comes to relax and admire the white blossoms,
Seated like young, laughing bridesmaids,
Admiring themselves in the mirror,
Unmindful of others, who moved by their charm,
Steal softly away, and thereby preserve,
The secret of those happy young lilies.

Deep in the midst of the city,
With its smoke and its grime and its traffic,
Its noise and its barter, its hustle and bustle,
Lives a maiden who bears in her bosom,
A secret of life, and a warm, healing touch,
Whose gifts are not seen on the surface.

She is pretty or plain, as your mind may decide,
She is charming or not, as your eye may perceive,
Attractive or not, but that is your choice.
But come to her, worn out, dispelled,
Beaten in life's many battles,
Needing her soothing touch and warm sympathy
It is yours; and in almost a moment,
You feel healed and relaxed and may go on your way,
As if some angelic physician
Had come to your aid when you needed it most.

Ah, lilies who dwell in the forest,
How often I have stood and admired you,
But not felt your touch because I have deemed
Human handling would soon desecrate you.

Ah, Lily, who dwells in the city,
These verses attest where my silence or speech
Would fail. Their manifested dedication,
Offers no gap for woeful desecration.

Sanskrit

Salutation to the dawn with its warm scented breath!
Salutation to her all embracing smile,
To her cheerfulness, and her many colored bosom.
She stimulates all the creatures round about,
She brings the blessings of heaven to earth,
She instills spirit into the little song birds,
Men arouse from slumber and greet her,
Farm yard animals throw off their lethargy,
The cock vents forth his expression of ecstasy,
The cattle moo, and the horses neigh,
And all alike welcome the new born day.

Salutation to the damsel with her warm sweet breath,
Salutation to her all embracing smile!
She bathes the atmosphere in loveliness,
She entrances all the creatures round about her.
With her, heaven comes into our midst,
With her, man recovers from his stupor,

She stumbles, unable to utter even a word of praise.
But if his tongue is still, his heart is full,
And his eyes are ablaze in wonder and delight,
For she, to him, is a paragon of light.

Sonnet

When the water lily opens up her breast,
Dispersing the gloominess of shaded pond,
The denizens of forest all around,
Forsake the solitude of den and nest.
The whip-poor-will completes his needed rest,
Calls to his mate to join him on the ground;
Where grubbing, many a dainty may be found,
And she comes gladly to his fond request.

Ah, would that I could call upon your heart,
That it, unburdened, opening apart,
Could cherish these deep hopes now locked within,
As if the soul were looking for its kin,
Beholding you, would lay all at your feet;
In loving you, the whole world is made sweet.

Iroquois

Into my tent I beckon her,
“Come to my tent, O Plumage-of-the eagle,
That might share our happiness together,
The warrior, and the mother of his children.”

Japanese

Trace of her garment in the wind,
Fluttering of heart in the moonlight.

Crossing the bridge I look down into the waters;
Who but she, can occupy my heart?

Ah, the wisteria is again in blossom,
And everywhere I see her smiling face.

Moorish

Hooded is she and I cannot see her face;
Custom opposes free address to a woman.
So closely enwrapped she walks I fathom no garment,
Nor can my heavy eye discern her age.
Is she pretty? Is she unaware of men?
Does she perceive my ever watchful gaze?
Or my most constant solicitude?

Ah, wretched custom that keeps two selves apart!
It was not ordained by the Holy Prophet;
It is a creation of narrow minded legalists,
Determined to transfix tradition for their own gain,
Though future generations suffer, one and all.

Hooded is she, but there is sparkle in her eyes:
Wonderful is the flash of light upon light,
Whereby hearts can commune and souls entwine.
I glance up to her window. Potted plants
Reveal her every mood, her momentary whims.
I do not have to talk; I can perceive
My beloved desires, her inner longings.
Her balcony appears like many others,
But the observant one observes:
The changed position of a flower pot,
Another carefully placed, a new arrangement,
And messages fly as though the angels,
Invisible and modest, mediated between us.
Ah, most delightful custom, holy tradition!
The marriage of body and body is for the animals,
But our communion will surely hallow marriage.
Firmly rooted, love can not fly off;
What is so easily gained is easily lost,
While character stands strong when strongly tested,
And she and I: we have our tests.
So I give thanks to my God and His Prophet,
And patiently, so patiently wait for her.

Peruvian

Why do you keep yourself within, my love?
Why do you hide behind the grating?
Is there some that you fear, my dove?
Some one you are hating?

Will you heed me while I sing, my love?
Music alone can express my feeling,
Melodies come from my string, my dove,
Melodies so revealing.

While I play I must look up, my love,
You and heaven then stand above me,
My heart is as an empty cup, my dove,
Fill it; tell me you love me.

Beneath your balcony I stand, my love,
My message comes from my guitar:
Here is my heart, also my hand, my dove,
You are my hope, my guiding star.

Whispering winds rise to your door, my love,
Breath is carrying my earnest prayer,
Listen, I beg, nay I implore, my dove,
I give my all for you to share.

There is nothing more to say, my love,
There is nothing more to sing,
You are the sunlight of my day, my dove,

You are my life, my everything.

Come out on your balcony now, my love,
Oh, come and listen to my voice,
Before God and you, here is my vow, my dove,
Say "Yes;" let me rejoice.

Irish

As the Shannon flows down to the sea,
May your love flow back to me,
For my love ever flows to you,
And your vision keeps me true.

As the shamrock covers the ground,
Your love over me is wound,
The shamrock is food for sheep and kine,
But your love is my food and wine.

They call this the Emerald Isle,
Nurtured by God's most gracious smile,
I call mine the Emerald Love,
Nurtured by you, my precious dove.

Solomon Islands

Come with me into the depths of the forest:
There I have built a hut and all for you,
There I have collected many yams, and all for you,
There I have a roof to protect you from the rain,
When the storms come you will be protected,
When the hard times come you will be fed.

Come to the hut I have built for you in the forest,
There I have collected many coconuts,
There I have stored the fish I have snared,
Many fish have I snared and all for you,
Many a feast is ready and all for you
Come with me into my hut in the forest.

Chinese

Pale the moon that shines upon the water,
Small the foot of her that passes by,
The peach trees shakes its scented blossoms,
My heart quakes at the thought of her.

Over the bridge she walks in dainty steps,

And sees the moon's reflection in the waters.
Oh, that my heart were crystal clear,
That I might see her face within its borders.

She guides the cattle to their humble shelter;
Tinkling bells follow her everywhere;
The moon, delighted, sends its beams upon her-
Would that I could ride the moon up there.

Pleasant the pastures bordering the farm house,
Pleasant the sight of May's delightful blossoms,
Pleasant the thoughts that she sends to this person,
But wretched the one who dreams and dreams in vain.

Let me take out my easel and my canvas,
A line I draw—straight from my heart,
A pattern I make—straight from my heart,
But the picture is ever the same.

The fireflies in the night,
The butterflies in the day
The circus clouds far above the earth,
Love is always drawing fancy pictures,
Fancy is always drawing pictures of love.

Sicilian

Now I must go to war, my love
And leave this blessed isle,
And never see you more, my dove,
With your soft devoted smile.

The hour to depart, my love,
Every moment is coming nearer,
But I'll keep you in my heart, my dove,
When afar, and hold you dearer.

My ancestral home and field, my love,
Is yours. My horse and sheep
And all the oranges, my dove,
Are there for you to keep.

May you keep them well, my love,
And may they comfort you,
One sweet kiss, then farewell, my dove,
Adieu! my life, adieu!

Persian

How sweet the music of the babbling brook,
But sweeter she; if I could only look
Upon her as she smiles. Alas!
She's buried in her ponderous book.

How sweet the carol of the nightingale,
But sweeter she. If she would lift her veil
I fear I'd fall into a deathlike swoon,
And that would mean the ending of my tale.

How sweet the odor of the fragrant rose,
But sweeter she. I fain she would disclose
Her secrets. That would end my doubts,
And bring heart's needed repose.

How sweet the softness of the autumn moon,
But sweeter she. I wait from night to noon,
From noon to night. No answer comes:
Will she ever grant my boon?

How sweet the music of the muted string,
But sweeter she. Although my heart would sing,
My voice is still. How can the part
Portray the all? She is my everything.

Balinese

Come with me to the temple where we may share in the feast,
Rice have I brought for the feast,
And fruit have I brought for the feast,
And again shall I bring rice and fruit and fish;
Of the abundance of nature shall I bring,

Wherein your parents may share, and my parents may share,
In all that I do shall they share,
And sweet one, I pray you will share,
That you will love me as I love you.

Hindu

Is there anything more lovely than the odor of jasmine,
The scent of God returning to God,
The made sacrificing to the maker,
So the breath of our bodies may delight,
And the life of our hearts may delight,
O my radiant jasmine flower, is there? is there?

When the deodars are in blossom,
Then the eyes may delight,
Then the light of the soul may behold the Handwork of love,
For of Love all came.
And the light of the eye is but the light of the soul,
And you, my deodars are the light of that light.

Ah, most wonderful is the lotus,
The lotus most modest in its early youth,
Until she throws off the garments of her shame,
And reveals all the glory of the world.
Ah, light of my world, my lotus,
Tell me, is there anything more wonderful, more modest.

How bold the gigantic Himalayas paint the background,
How soft the Holy Jumna flows by,
As if God had given us a blessing,
Wrapt in silken string.
How bold the outline of your homestead,
How softly my holy one passes by,
Where has me my blessing of blessings,
Wrapt in a silken sari.

Zulu

I will hunt the hart and wildebeeste,
I will lay them at her door,
I will gather many rabbits,
I will lay them at her door,
I shall seek the eagle feathers,
And shall lay them at her door,
I shall get some ostrich feathers,
And shall lay them at her door.

I shall travel through the forest,
I shall stalk the leopard there,
And skins from dying quarry,
I shall soon lay at her door.
I shall shoot the mighty elephant,
And bring her many tusks,
I shall fish the rushing rivers,
And bring food to her door.
I shall bring the food and fine skins,
And shall lay them at her door,
And shall dance and sing before her,
And delight before her door.

Tuareg

Over the desert I ride,
Wild and free with the members of my tribe;
There I see the glory of God in the sunrise and sunset,
There I feel the anger of God in the wild sandstorm,
There I feel even the scourge of Iblis in the drought,
But the beauty of God I do not see.
Few are the trees, fewer the oases,
Few even the spotted leopards.
Where then can I go to witness God's beauty?
Only where God's beauty approached perfection on earth,
Only in the loveliest of God's creatures:
For woman is the loveliest of God's creatures,
And my beloved is the loveliest of all women.

I am not as the Arab:
The Arab loves his horse more than his camel,
And his camel more than his woman.

But I, the true son of the desert,
Though loving my horse more than any camel,
Find my greatest delight in the purest of God's creatures.

Look, beloved, I have brought you a gazelle,
In the chase I caught the gazelle,
Outstripping the best of riders of my tribe;
For your spirit led me on, beloved:
There was no hill I could not climb,
There was no dune that hindered my spirits,
The heat of the day did not deter me,
And the darkness of the night was not an obstacle.
I rode and rode, and with a single shot won my prize,
The prize which I lay at your feet, beloved.

I am not as the Arab,
The Arab who jealously garbs his women,
And places coarse veils over their faces,
As if God had erred in producing magnificence.
Free shall you be when you go abroad,
Free shall you be when you remain indoors.
Though I travel many miles on long journeys,
Your latch shall be open to whom you will;
You may select your women friends as you would,
You may even select your men friends as you will.
Jealousy is not love, possession is not love:
I would love you without owning you,
I would add to your freedom, not circumvent it.
Only hear me as I plea, beloved,
For in you alone have I found abundance of beauty and grace.

Hebrew

In Spring I ascend the hills over the Jordan,
From whose heights I behold the Holy Land,
The land that God has blessed;
Whence I can see the flowers and the fields,
Wherefrom I behold the many coloured wild flowers of the hillside,
Where I can scan the tall corn and watch the sheep in pasture.

Beautiful are these hills in the Springtime,

How beautiful are the works of God at their best.
Let me thank Him for these many blessings,
And for the hills wherefrom I may look:
For there, far off is she, tending her flocks.
More beautiful than the sheep is she to me,
More beautiful is she than all the flowers,
Than the cultivated flowers of the garden,
Or the wild flowers of the field.
O blessed hills, that have offered me this view,
That undiscovered I may gaze upon her and her ways,
Her loving ways, her heart inspiring ways;
O blessed hills, that let me dream, that let me plan,
That have never intervened between her and me.
O wretched hills that keep me far away,
That bind me to my needed occupation,
That chain me to my thoughts while she is free,
Free to mingle with whomsoever she choose,
While I am left alone in misery.

German

Of all the flowers that bedeck the hillside,
Of all the beauties strewn upon the plain,
The lily stands foremost among her sisters,
The lily sweet, yet plain.

Of all the maids that dwell within the cities,
Of all the lasses working on the farms,
My Lilchen stands our first and foremost,
My Lilchen and her charms.

It seems that God has pressed out all the flowers,

Into an essence, thereby bringing forth
The lily, queen of vegetation,
East and West, South and North.

And God has also wrought unto perfection,
(At least my heart says that to me)

Whispering when I behold my Lilchen:
"That is she! Aye! That is she!"

Mongol

The desert is vast, I travel afar,
Guided by sun and guided by star.
My valiant steed moves with his swiftest pace,
When duty calls me to some distant place.

I roar at the storm and laugh at the wind,
And dream of my loved one left far behind.
Neither hunger nor thirst ever embarrass me,
Nor do I let any enemy harass me.

I carry my falcon and seek the wild game,
Caring little for fortune, money or fame.
I soon catch my quarry, am off and away,
Through the Great Gobi where I work or play.

Life remains pleasant while the desert is free,
Free for my people, my loved one and me.
So I take up my guitar and sing her my song:
"May you ever be sweet, may you always be strong."

"Give me two brave sons—I ask nothing more,
You and two brave sons—I want nothing more.
The desert is vast, and all that I need
Are you and my falcon and my fiery steed."

Umbrian Dirge

Where has she gone? She who was to be my bride,
Whose laughter and whose merriment,
Scattered like sunshine wherever she went,
Who was the pride and joy of the countryside.
Whose pretty little face looked gaily up to mine,
Who kissed my lips as she held-my hand,
Who sat by my side as we calmly planned

Our future, with a home of our own design.

Death took her in the midst of a promising life,
And now I am resolved never to take a wife,
Nor Orpheus like roam on a fruitless search.
Instead thank the mother of God, the church
Will offer me a home. And as a monk shall I
Strive incessantly for the glory of Christ, until I die.

Mende (Nigeria)

The drums boom deep!
Sound of earth over the soul of flesh.
The drums boom deep!
Music of the heart of the world:
The ground gives out music,
The mother's life-throb is felt,
Nature is calling.

The drums boom loud!
The animals answer:
The lions roar,
The jackals howl,
The leopards shriek,
The little leopards cry,
The muskrats squeal.
Above, the wild birds are heard,
The hunting eagle is heard,
Vultures circle round and round;
Below, the hunted songsters are singing.

The drums boom together!
Dancing upon the stretched membrane,
Musicians speak in secret language,
Their muscles quiver,
Their minds vibrate,
Their emotions soar,
Their hearts rise and fall,
Their very flesh echoes.

The drum boom fast!

Rhythm of earth overcomes the performers,
They can not stop
Their feet are entranced,
Their flesh is alive,
Their minds touch heaven,
Their inner beings are in ecstasy.

The drums boom deep!
The drums boom loud!
The drums boom fast!
I am alive,
I am caught in the spell,
Willingly I enter into the spirit of the music,
I am aflame I
Come! Beloved, Come!

Russian

I do not want your eyes for myself alone,
I want to share their glory with everyone;
I do not wish to captivate your charms:
They, like the yield of factories and farms
Are for the world. Love is not possession,
Love is not for barter of concession,
Love is to be freely given and received,
And especially not to be conceived
As a lump for sale, as a sort of ware
To be thrown across a counter and sold
To a bidder with suitable title or gold,
Until nothing remains of it, but a word.
O heart of my heart, how utterly absurd!
Rather would I share my very life with you,
And pass my days always with you, always for you.

Neopolitan

Let the sunshine of the morning come over the hills,
Let its brilliance shine in the dew.
Fal, la, la, la; fal, la, la, la!

And let the merriment of the sun,
Be found in you,
Fal, la, la!

Let the laughter of the day come over the hills,
And let it be heard in every street.
Fal, la, la, la; fal, la, la, la!
Yet the most musical of all those laughs,
Is yours, my sweet,
Fal, la, la!

Let the beauty of the hour appear on the hills,
And may I pass it on every road.
Fal, la, la, la; fal, la, la, la!

But the most precious beauty I find
In your abode.
Fal, la, la!

Let the blessings of every moment appear on the hills,
And may you share in every blessing.
Fal, la, la, la; fal, la, la, la!

But the greatest joy of my life comes
In your caressing,
Fal, la, la!

Camp Taylor

It was here that I first met God.
The Faustian redwoods were in silent prayer
While I heard the hymnals of the rippling brook
And the Gregorian chanting of the placid pools.
In the shadows I could feel the depths of life,
Emanating from the gigantic sequoia trees,
And they converted me—and I have remained converted.

I concur with the ancient Greeks,
That the Earth-Goddess gave birth to the Titans,
For here was the evidence—

But these Titans did not war upon the gods;
It is man that has become the enemy, man with his fire,
Man with his heedlessness, man with his selfishness,
Who has so often endangered the forest.

Yet man is not devoid of wisdom,
Nor were the owners of the park without sagacity,
For they have since dedicated this forest temple,
That others may come to worship or to play,
To contemplate amid the quiet surroundings,
And let their souls be fed.

Fog

Let the sleeping maiden rest,
Let her sleep in peace.
I, the fog, am her protector, her nurse-maid.
Is she not always ready to welcome you?
Do you not enjoy the sights, the smells, the sounds of the mountain?
You can picnic, you can sport,
You can escape from the toil-worn city,
But remember, the mountain also needs some relaxation;
She cannot be a three-shift hostess and always please.
Many walk carelessly over her throbbing body,
Enthusiasts speak well, but are sometimes needless in action.
But I, the fog, consider the mountain,
I enable her to rest, to relax, to recuperate,
So it is possible for her to regain that mood
That will help you enjoy her welcomes.
I soothe her fevers, warm her chills
And gently and lovingly help when she is down-hearted;
Then, and only then, when she is again at her best,
Smiling, beckoning, joining in your games,
Do I silently steal away.

Mistletoe

I am dispossessed and justly.
I, the prime parasite, the witch, the schemer, the murderess,

I am dispossessed and justly.
I was the arrogant ruler over the naughty Nordics,
Long, long ago when women dominated society,
And I employed both witchcraft and pure augury to lead them,
Worshipping either God or the devil as it pleased me,
Leaning to any side that would enable me to keep the reins.
Of course I was responsible for the death of Balder,
I was afraid of him,
Afraid lest the world should turn to masculinity,
Jealous of his comeliness and noble character,
Fearful lest the women should succumb to him,
Even though they might lose their prerogatives thereby
(Just as with that fool Adolph in these later days)
So I became responsible for his death,
And for the resultant loss of purity in the ancient Norse religion.
But I was crafty and so escaped their vengeance—
Murdering Balder, I fled over to the Christians,
I intrigued with the bloodthirsty Pepin and Charlemagne,
Instigating them to persecute my people
(In the name of God, of course).
You talk about the Coliseum and its paltry band of martyrs!
Did we make blood flow!
You should have seen what **we** did to the Saxons and their kin
(We certainly were the ancestors of the Nazis)!
We utilized the banner of Christ as our cloak,
We wiped the Balder-worshippers from the earth,
And from then on I continued my scheming,
And every year added just a little bit more.
Nobody ever stopped me or even tried,
So I added to my prestige and authority without stint,
And worshipped either God or the devil as it pleased me.
I was the veritable leader of the witches,
I nurtured schisms and played one group off against another,
And later began to abet revolts against the Pope.
Once they celebrated the birth of Christ in Spring,
For assuredly He was born while the shepherds were out on the hills—
So I suggested the advantage to statecraft of another time,
The date of the northward course of the sun being the best,
And besides, it had been an ancient pagan holiday.
Soon my fondest hopes were realized, though not too officially,
The December date was selected to the delight of the masses,
For it had many advantages and absorbed ancient rituals,
Which had nothing to do with the birth of the Lord of mankind.

But satisfaction did not follow victory,
I upheld the bible against the Church, the Church against the Bible,
And ironical as it seems,
The very Bible devotees accepted the non-biblical date of birth—
Ha! Ha!
Now it was all too easy:
I trotted out my St. Nick (pretending it was St. Nicholas),
But everybody now knows who St. Nick really is. Ha! Ha!
Instead of blessings, gifts; instead of candles, toys;
Instead of devotions, attention to material things—
The more of the Bible the less, the more of Christ the less,
Until the department store became the temple of religion
While I worshipped either God or the devil as it pleased me.
Parasite of the forest, I became parasite of mankind,
And when people became too rigid, I was appointed mistress of the kiss:
Men to the right, women to the left, even glancing is wrong!
So instead of the kiss of Christ, the kiss of me, the Mistletoe,
The kiss of the witch, the schemer, the murderess.
How old Judas must have groaned, if he didn't laugh—
His one kiss of betrayal checkered through the ages,
My billions overlooked.
But the day of reckoning came, at last it came:
Now they kiss, and without **me**.
I encouraged the kiss of passion instead of the kiss of love,
I had changed Christ's birthday and introduced commercialism,
I had brought forth my St. Nick under clever guise,
In the name of God, of course, for that may it easy;
Now these things remain, though I am exiled,
I, who have worshipped God or the devil as it pleased me.
Now people have no further use for me,
True lovers do not need a chaperone
And passionate amorists would not accept one:
A kiss is but a kiss they say,
It needs no sanctity and is not a ceremonial.
"Out, witch, and leave us to our fancies,"
So boy meets girl and girl meets boy
And there is a smear of chemicals and contact of the flesh,
Which they consider love—all is done on the Surface.
I have been only a kind of procuress,
And it is entirely my own fault
That customs and traditions have been thrown aside;
In abetting their destruction I have dispossessed myself.
O Galilean, again Thou hast conquered,

And in eternity Thou art avenged,
Avenged over one who has worshipped God or the devil as it pleased me.

Grass

I am so common that I may not inspire you,
But you are my friends and I admire you;
If not, would I try to cover so much ground,
Which would be barren without me around?
I am not like the dust that is under your feet
For my ambition is to make your life sweet,
So I bow before you, I bow gladly as if I must,
Happy to know I protect you from the dust.
I am earth's charwoman, keeping it fresh and clean;
Give me my way and I would paint everything green;
I love the world and all of Nature's creatures;
I would conceal the mean, so that only the better features
Of beings would be seen. So I want to hide
All the noxious blights that reside
In the great forest. So I, the grass,
Rejoice that I belong to the lower class
Socially—I would not have it otherwise.
Let your feet trample as they will, but let your eyes
Remember that prophets have placed me in Paradise.

Eucalyptus

I was a stranger and you took me in,
Letting me settle where the meadows begin,
Asking me to buffet the storm and the wind,
And having me introduce more of my kind.

You accepted my blossoms as one of your flowers,
And admired my kindred as gigantic towers,
Who maintained their manhood, though they had come far,
And were pleased to be welcomed, just as they are.

I am known in my own land just as a **gum**
(For we bare no titles in the land I came from),

But though I have acted rather by stealth,
I can and I do delight in good health.

Nature endows me with an aseptic oil
Which is fine for the atmosphere but bad for the soil;
Weeds are unwelcome and so is disease,
And friends, please remember, I do strive to please.

The Redwood

I am the Redwood, **Sequoia Sempervirens**;
I am the long-suffering of the ages arborized,
Yet, like the true sufferers, greet you with a smile,
And hide my pains, conceal the sorrows I have witnessed,
And in this time-space appear as the shadow of eternity.
I know the values of the underworld and of the overworld,
For Nature has endowed me with a double set of eyes:
One set draws life from the ground beneath,
While the other looks with longing upon my paternity.
You who scan only surfaces cannot fathom the depths;
Your miners may bring you valuable gems and ores,
Your geologists may tell you of wonders below the ground,
But that which I bring cannot be so measured.
Is not the water that my roots seek the very resilience of life?
Have I not learned to transmute stagnant ions into plasm?
I know the titanic power of limestone and granite,
And this power I transmute into my very tissues;
I know what tiny herbs have done to rocks and boulders,
I know what the little worms are doing to the soil –
My eyes and roots follow their thread-paths down, down, down.
Thus I secure nourishment and succulence,
Making possible my long-abiding foliage,
These verdant needle-forms which stand the test of seasons.
Then there are those eyes which always look up,
Upward to the God whom you would worship,
Upward toward that sun which you admire,
And I am pulled along their rays,
So that I grow and grow, becoming the hugest of trees.
I am not the least like the ego-proud palm,
Nor do I remotely resemble the umbrellaed oak,
But I send out my branches and chant my praises.

Ah, you whose ears are so attuned to matter,
You do not understand the music of the spirit,
For I sing to your nostrils, to your breath, to your very life.
I am not so vain to vie with the songbirds;
Nay, I am their protector, not their rival,
But I emanate a pungency which is my delight,
And my music is always attuned to the season and its needs.
While I stand in the forest I protect you from sun and rain,
While I stand in the forest waters are gathered for your benefit,
While I stand in the forest I give to you and do for you
I am thus both your master and your slave.
Even when you cut me down and timber me into your homes,
Even when you carve me into furniture,
I continue to protect you from the sun and rain,
I continue to give to you and do for you,
Living and dying both your master and your slave.

Buttercups

Is it our fault that we have been admired through the ages?
A wise God, and not ourselves has given this heart of gold.
We are not anything really,
Yet we are the child of earth calling to the sun;
There is no doubt of our legitimacy!
Have we not our father's golden hair?
Have we not his smile, his graciousness?
Is not the sun there through the ages,
Linked in aeonic wedlock to the earth?
What surprise that this union should bear fruit,
Proper fruit, not mere spawn of bastardry.
And if we put on the same "look" every year,
Are we so different from the daughters of men?
For looking backward through the ages,
We doubt if you find anything "new" under the sun.

Toyon

I Worship the Savior in winter,
And venerate him in the Spring,
I offer my gifts to humankind,

Yet never ask for a thing.

My flowers attract the butterflies,
My succulence is for the bees,
My fruit is a gift to migrating birds,
My one desire is to please.

I am the St. Francis of the woods,
I would gather, protect and share,
I appear at my best when the weather is worst,
Yet I prosper without seeming care.

I am happy to cover your bleak hillsides,
I delight in your warming heart-fire,
I love to give and give to love,
Spreading joy is my deepest desire.

I dance in the forest with the chanting birds,
My life is my philosophy,
Please do not touch me unless you invite
Me to worship at your Christmas tree.

Steep Ravine

Down, down, O Messenger, and take my greetings to my beloved!
Speed, speed, O gushing waters, for my passion cannot wait.
Take the swiftest steed and run,
And when the steed gives cut, go on foot-but haste.
Tell the Ocean that the Hillside is her lover,
Tell the Ocean that the hillside cannot wait.
Tell the Ocean that he needs an early tryst.
Rush, rush, rush and spare nothing,
But when you reach the water's edge,
O waters of the hillside,
Greet the maiden with a kiss.

Poison Oak

I am not the villain of this piece;

Whatever opinion man may hold about me,
Fortunately the forest does not scorn me,
The barren hills and meadows welcome me,
Nor do botanists accept the common opinion.
Scientists do not create a fancied soul of our being
And condemn us as being socially **déclassé**,
And I will not confess to many faults.
The world is full of people who love to complain,
But here when we neither starve nor suffer
Nor witness sudden breaking up of families,
You can see as much unhappiness as anywhere.
It is only perverts who despise us,
Who poison their bodies with unwholesome foods,
Who constantly hold destructive thoughts
And are so careless in their daily habits
That their inner beings have become acidified;
Then the very thought of me breaks out in a rash.
How many times have I fashioned trellises
When wanderers may clamber up the steeps?
What other plant colors the barren spots,
Willingly sacrifices water and pleasant soil
To add a touch of color to the waste?
I never try to crowd out other plants,
I tolerate, and love the charming oaks.
Besides, I welcome most my antidote,
Seldom are we, the one without the other.
Do timbermen and rangers rail at me?
No, it is only you poor timid souls,
Not botanists, or calm adventurers,
Who, poisoned by their libertinism,
Living in cluttered and clustered houses,
Feeding on luxuries rather than decent foods
Who cannot stand the rigors of the outdoors.
Certainly I am not for those who have acids in their veins
Who secrete poisons instead of radiating life;
I did not start them on the road to illness,
And if I seem to accentuate such states,
It is only as a warning for self-correction.
If people would resort more to discipline,
They might some day discover that the poison,
That is to say, the sap that is my life
Might be of service to some industry; what then?

The Oak

I am the steadfast one of the forest or meadow,
I am the spirit of democracy,
Who shares his pleasant home with all:
The sojourner and the traveller are alike to me,
The haughty and the proud, the noble and the ignorant may be my friends.
I am the good shepherd and around me abide the sheep,
And the horses and the milch-cows and the beef-steers.
Where other trees may refuse, I welcome,
I do not object even to the caterpillar and the mistletoe,
My branches are for the birds—and bugs,
My leaves are for any of God's creatures.
Yes, it is said that the Lord was crucified upon a tree,
And the tree took root and blossomed and budded and fruited,
And a multitude of trees came therefrom,
And the blessing of the Lord was in all those trees,
And they acted as the Lord would have acted had He remained.
So I, the oak, have remained and prospered and shared;
I am happy in the forest or out on the meadows,
In groves of my own kind or in variegated woodlands,
And I do not care if I stand alone out in the bleak flat.
I say: "Perhaps the farmer is an artist and would welcome me,"
Or: "The traveller must not think this land too desolate,"
So I embellish hillside and plain, rocky crests and lowlands.
I am the good shepherd, and welcome high and low,
I welcome the fauna without distinction,
For as the sun shines upon the just and the unjust,
So does the Divine Spirit love all creation.
It is not strange then, that through history I have been held
sacred, And there is a long tradition of me in connection with
religion, But I do not pride myself on ancestry,
Or compensate miseries with anecdotes of the past;
I have no misery and need no compensation.
Whenever the forest suffers from the axe, I rush to its succor,
To cover the bare skin of the hills,
To ward off destructive erosion,
To preserve the water supply,
To restore verdant freshness to the landscape.
Yes, the Lord was crucified upon the tree,
But the tree was blessed therefor,

And has extended these blessings from generation to generation;
I, the oak, was and am and will be that tree,
And I would make you feel that the forest is a temple,
And the open woodland a home.

Myosotis

I am called Forget-me-Not.
A host of people have written about me,
And they include botanists and scientists who want to classify me,
And nature lovers who really admire me,
And poets who pretend.
My very name has become suggestive,
And there is talk about my modesty, my grace, my sky-blue color,
So I have been made the repository of **clichés**.
What if I be a wanton?
What if I am full of guile?
Must I continue to be the theme-song for those
Who are only looking into the mirror of self-approbation:
“Ah yes! we shall write about the Forget-me-Not;
Then our readers will have to enjoy our serves,
And editors will not reject our writings;
We shall paint her with glowing colors,
And drawn moral platitudes from her way of life.”
Poor me! I have been but an excuse,
An excuse alike for what I am and what I am not.
Does anyone know the chemistry of love and labour
That has made possible the woven hues of my habitaments;
Or the wonder of the pigment of my eyes?
Those who really love me might grasp something of eternity,
For here I am, the eternal feminine of the forest,
Making fancy lace patterns on its bedroom floor,
Smiling, and have my whims misinterpreted,
Or even when appreciated becoming sources of misguidance,
As if I were a cheerful demoiselle
Whose exuberance is always construed as a “Yes.”

Chinquapin

There was a tree with golden leaves and golden fruits
—If we can believe the nonsense of mythology;
There is a tree with golden leaves and golden fruits,
If we accept the conclusions of biology.

Moss

If I could only be the carpet under your feet,
If I could only ease your weary steps,
If I could soften your pathways in every direction,
Save you from scorpions and snakes and all other loathsome creatures,
If I could only be of service to you!
Look at the proud slaves of humility who pretend their slavery is humility,
They are the slaves of slavery;
But I, I am the slave of liberty.
I revel in my servitude,
I do not seek to rise above it,
Revolt is furthest from my mind.
I would protect you, that is enough
I would keep the dirt and pebble from your feet and clothing.
But perhaps I am a two-face traitor at that,
Perhaps I have another nature which behaves otherwise,
For when I turn toward the earth I say:
O earth, let me protect you,
Let me guard you against the heavy footsteps of mankind,
From those who walk shodden and thus upset your tranquillity,
Whose civilization opposes the true cause of Nature.
O earth, may I not protect you?
I am not one to restrain my duplicity,
For I claim to protect the very vermin that hide beneath me,
Fending off rain and snow in the days of winter,
Warding off heat and detrimental sun-rays in the summer.
I rejoice in this double-dealing,
For I am the moss, the lowliest of plant-forms.
I am lowly in my moral standards,
I am lowly in my refusal to mature;
I am the Peter Pan of vegetation,
I love to live with the fairies,
And it was I, not they, who created the **Never-never Land**.
It has been I who provided the wherewith for their magic rings,
It has been I who have enjoyed the thumb of their tiny feet.

Through aeons I have refused to evolve,
I am low and I love it,
I am the hierophant of herbal proletarians,
I want my place, I love my place, and I do not even extol democracy,
Because I want nothing, praise be to God.

Hazelnut

I ought to be the misanthrope of the forest,
For though I have chosen most secluded spots,
I am often uprooted when men find me.
In their mad quest for civilizations,
They have compelled me to practice race suicide;
They do not appreciate the fancy lace curtains
Strung across the lattices that I frame,
Nor do they protect me who feed the animals.
I have always shared my small stores willingly,
But roads **must** be built, streams **must** be dammed, trees **must** be cut,
So the spirit of the primordial is broken,
And I die.

Drake's Bay

Where a rocky coast is dangerous for play,
The fingernail of Mercy touched the land,
Laid down a velvet carpet of smooth sand,
And flooded it to form a tranquil bay,
Where children swim with no cause for alarm.
The beaches greet both native and newcomer
Who enjoy the mildness of an erstwhile Summer,
And a hinterland which keeps its natural charm.
We now know Drake once landed on this shore,
Claimed it for England, but did not explore
The giant forests on the hills that lay
On every side of this secluded bay.
This habitat was made for relaxation,
Where thousands come each year for their vacation.

Cascara

Yes, you may refer to me as a physician,
And I have taken my position
Quite seriously. I would cleanse the inner man.
I was sacred to the healers of old
Who considered health more important than gold.
I would rid you of your poisons, and I can;
In fact I can assist you in many ways.
Have you ever tasted my leaves after a rain?
That was an ancient custom. I maintain
That if you follow this practice you would never lack
Good health, nor long for the fancied days
Of your vaguely remembered youth. I am not a quack,
I am a physician. I offer the bitter with the sweet
Just as life does. I do not entreat
You to mend your ways, or dispense with your vitamin pills
That you imagine rid you of your ills.
Give me the opportunity to restore your body to it's healthful condition
And you will no longer fear that dreaded perdition
Of old age. And I, who am nature's physician
Will feel gratified,
When you are satisfied.

Acacia

I am the golden laughter of the Winter,
The Winter that never fully comes,
The Winter that brings the dewy kiss of the heavens,
The Winter that stores up sustenance for the coming year,
The Winter so necessary for all the floral world.
I enjoy those boastful native sons and daughters,
That are the pride of California.
I also am its pride,
I parade the golden color of the State,
Long before the poppies and the fruits and flowers awaken.
I pity those who fear the pollen and its living force
Blown out into space by the cryptograms;
If people only knew the value of life-force,
If they would be rid of their negative fear of allergies,
How better would this whole earth be.

Caught in the web of artificiality,
Eating wrong foods, breathing foul air, holding useless thoughts,
They coin Greek words to hide their souls' excrescences.
What has the healthy man to fear?
I am the golden laughter of the Winter,
And when this Winter comes,
Spring is never far behind—in California.

The Mountain Theatre

The effete must build an amphitheater,
The keen-eyed perceive the arena of the ages.
Man wants special actors upon a chosen stage,
But Nature scoffs at specialties.
Let the rocks speak,
Let them tell of their games of leap-frog and ball;
How, dissatisfied with their place beneath the sea,
They pilgrimaged and built a chosen homeland.
They wanted to enjoy the world, from extremes of heat and cold,
So the Titans revolted against the Oceanides,
And while the war was one,
The mighty San Joaquin altered its course,
The San Geronimo ridge displayed a nervousness,
Quite unknown among Lithospheroides—
The marvellous rift formations came into being,
Granite and gneiss and marble were born when they were,
But the stories of jasper and serpentine and chert are different,
And prenatal romances have seldom be dramatized.
Yet these stolid rock-formations are not dead,
Someday their stories will be published,
Even as those of the trees and shrubs and all their kin.
We can extract manuscripts from their bosoms,
So from the coming of the earliest redwood to the visit of Drake,
There have been streams of endless adventures,
Tales which no Sophocles or Shakespeare has yet told.
The coming of the wild deer and its kind,
The advent of the wild cat and the squirrel, the fish and birds,
Even the arrival of the earliest men—are written in the soil.
Yes, the effete may need an amphitheater,
But the keen-eyes perceive the arena of the ages.

Mountain Lilac

How I love the azure of the heavens, how I love the sky!
For that no sacrifice can ever be enough,
For that love would I die.
In the world of phanerograms and cryptograms there are two hearts:
There is that pearl-like string adjoining the cambium layer,
Where the love of spirit fructifies into matter,
That the play may live and grow and propagate;
And that is the heart which seeks the bosom of Mother-earth,
That fructifies into spirit, where feeling transmutes to form.
I love the heavens, I love to see the sky,
Even a cleft in the rocks may be enough,
My hearts sustain me, my love sustains me,
My heart-beat keeps me on the borders of the barren—
If only I can see, reflect that manifest that blue.
This body came from the dust and to the dust it shall return,
But my spirit belongs to the heavens whence it would go,
And I remember and remain the lower and devotee of the mountainside,
Who worships in love and loves in worship,
And lives for nothing else.

Madrone

I am the mighty one of the forest;
Though my heart is encased in hardness,
Its pulsations are the throbbings of compassion.
Look at my blossoming bells which hang out every year –
Does not their very silence touch your being?
Do I not wave my magic wand and bring out flowers,
Fruiting the same to feed the birds,
Delighting in the enjoyment of all creatures?
Do I not decorate the hillsides,
Like some silent artist who, when left alone,
Sculptures a patterned pathway through hardened space.
Yes, space is a mighty power,
And I have become an artist and an artist's tools,
To exhibit endless shapes and forms in it.
Come, and sit among my variegated branches,

Feel my smooth, well-tendered skin,
Conditioned by a lotion which is the blood-spirit of my being.

Humus

Ignore me not. Without me the forest would not be.
I am its wet-nurse and its foster-mother;
I neither conceived nor bare it, yet be-long have nourished it,
And kept a watchful eye through countless years.
I have a corrective, if not a caressing hand,
May not give a mother's tenderness nor father's solicitude,
But I refuse to let it starve,
And when a scourge comes, I do my best to have it repopulated –
I scorn loneliness.
I am Hathor of the many breasts,
And I'll never enemy—I refuse.
The sun blesses all, and I feed all:
I make no distinction between tree and weed,
Between poisonous plant and food-bearing shrub;
For myself I have no use for the parasite, that is all;
I work and love to work, but I don't demand labor or others,
But I hate parasites.
Do not mistake me, though I love labor,
I am the banker of the forest and its capitalist:
I offer loans and does not demand repayment with usury,
But woe, woe unto them who do not repay—**out they go!**
They can have the meadows and the waste places,
The bogs or the dunes—but not the forest.
Oh, I can wait; I am, so to speak, timeless;
I wait and wait and while I am patient many do pay me back,
So I don't mind a few rascalion dead-beats.
If their friends and neighbors and relatives wish to reimburse
That is good enough for me.
I honor all checks,
Straighten all accounts,
But do not investigate any private morals.
Nature has its own morality,
And in the game of balance that is all I want,
So long as I am not swindled at the dead end.
The forest protects the world against erosion,
It is only when man interferes aimlessly that I am bereft;

Give me half a chance and I take ten;
I am gambler as well as banker,
I am older than the elephants and I remember,
I remember that that memory sustains me.

The Gulch

Once great god Pan passed this way,
And he instructed the mountain in the art of his music;
No one heeds the god nowadays—we have our own superstitions.
We keep harping that material wealth brings happiness,
Though few may demonstrate it.
We proceed without the gods,
But we cannot proceed without music,
For even the most worldly-minded have their music.
In the Orient the flute was born among the marsh-reeds,
In the Americas animal bones produced living music,
But here the mountain stripped herself of her marrows,
Her very being became the vehicle of the joy of expression,
And the expression of joy.
Then the heavens helped the earth,
The rains came and the wind,
And you can almost **see** their music:
It is the music of eye and ear,
It is the music of day and night,
It is the music of summer and winter,
It is the music of autumn and spring.
You who must travel, travel, travel to see a wonder,
You can see a wonder and hear a wonder at your very doorsteps,
Where familiarity brings contempt; alas!
But the mountain does not care; she sings,
And the lovers of joy can come and climb about the organ-fluted rock-bed,
Where symphonies are broadcast throughout the year,

Godesias

Why are we always associated with a farewell, even a farewell to Spring?
Is gray the color of gladness and pink an emblem of sadness?
Is a smile a token of somberness and sobriety?

If man cannot perceive the **soul** beyond the **thing**,
He ought to know he cannot remove us from society,
From the grand society of Nature. But we return
Good for evil, and hope that he may learn,
The Spring in California is not a season.
Not based upon a printed calendar or human reason,
But is a long apprehension of the sun's coming, and an attitude
Of youthfulness connected therewith. Gratitude
Is thus the nature of the Californian who loves his land,
Gratitude is something which we understand,
And express in our dances, and our freedom from care.
We are not a farewell, but a welcome from despair.
A sign of continued loveliness even beyond the solstice.

Ferns

We have been here a long, long time;
Yes, there are trees that outlive generations of us,
But our ancestors have lived alongside many generations of those trees.
No doubt many of our comrade are Darwinians,
But we have little desire to change,
We are the Chinese of the woods,
We pay abiding tribute to our ancestors
And accept the teachings of Kong-Fu-Tse and Buddha.
Is this world not filled with those who constantly long,
Yet are never satisfied?
Why should we be like them, and suffer?
We stolid Chinese of the woods do not see expression in expression,
We do not vaunt our characteristics nor parade our personalities;
We simply are.
And who would gainway us for our attitude?
We have few enemies and many friends.
When we are occasionally taken from our homes,
We go as peaceful immigrants,
To be transplanted into a proper setting:
A shady nook, or well-laid rock garden,
Where we continue to live in tranquility.
No doubt we prefer to remain in the forest,
And delight in our age-old heritage,
But we are willing to go when we should,
And form the curtain drops and offsetting scenery when we are needed;

We have no zeal for marked celebrity,
We never play the leads—we simply are.
Together we act as choral dancers to troupe some artist,
Or accompany some well-known opera singer.
We rather disdain the new, considering it rather useless,
Yet we adjust ourselves rather than revolt,
And for all that may be said about the trees
With whom we have dwelt in friendliness,
The forest would hardly be, without us;
Yet in saying this we are not vain,
We simply are.

Buckeye

I presume that I am different, I would be different,
I won't pretend to conceal my feminine instincts—
I am never too satisfied and I don't mind showing it,
I want—and I guess I cannot help wanting.
Every year I throw away my old garments,
When winter approaches and I am cold,
And I seem to be standing naked,
I am really staying close to my own hearth-fire.
But I get my reward: Easter means something to me,
I am the Easter Christian, not the Christmas Christian,
Well, Easter is a real Holiday of God and Christ anyhow,
While Christmas is a mere pagan hold-over,
(Don't I know how to justify myself?)
Well, come Easter, and you see me put on my new dress,
But only after I am thoroughly clothed—and not until then—
Do I put on my best selected bonnet.
Those silly dogwoods and fruit-trees do otherwise, they would,
But all things come in their proper places,
And after I am clothed, I do those nice little funny things,
Like the eternal feminine:
I blush, and you see it in my buds,
I have my especial private perfume,
Which may be malodorous to some, but not to me,
And I don't think I am a bit bad looking then.
But I prefer a change of moods to mere fanciness;
After all, the Good Book says there is a time for all things,
And in the end, you can see the fruit thereof.

Nobody thinks of me as a tree,
Only as the barer of those huge nuts which have brought me fame;
For am I not the proud mother of one of your States
(No, I am not boosting Taft for Presidency, but you can't dispossess ancestral pride).
Every season I stand out in some definite pose,
So welcome or unwelcome, comely or homely, I stand out,
And men do look at me.