

Selected Poetry

WINTER

Not death, but sleep wherein all Nature lies
'Neath low'ring clouds and sullen sombre
skies,
But leafless trees 'mid scenes of dusky hue
And drear and cheerless landscapes meet
the view!

Harsh winds shriek wild a mournful fright-
ning air
As if of life's rebirth they did despair,
With storm and tears they often mourn the
dearth
Of leaves and flowers that beauteous made
the earth.

The silent brooklets held in icy thrall,
And snowflakes cover earth with virgin pall;
The artist, Frost, attempts designs to trace—
Fair, fleeting pictures dainty in their grace!

Not death, but sleep wherein all Nature lies
'Neath low'ring clouds and sullen sombre
skies;
Sleep-season's brief—though skies be over-
cast,
In newer beauty Nature wakes at last!
—MONA FORDE in the *Irish Catholic*.

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BABYLON

The blue dusk ran between the streets: my
love was winged within my mind,
It left to-day and yesterday and thrice a
thousand years behind.
To-day was past and dead for me, for
from to-day my feet had run
Through a thousand years to walk the ways
of ancient Babylon.
On temple top and palace roof the burnished
gold flung back the rays
Of a red sunset that was dead and lost be-
yond a million days.
The tower of heaven turns darker blue, a
starry sparkle now begins;
The mystery and magnificence, the myriad
beauty and the sins
Come back to me. I walk beneath the sha-
dowy multitude of towers;
Within the gloom the fountain jets its pallid
mist in lily flowers.
The waters lull me and the scent of many
gardens, and I hear
Familiar voices, and the voice I love is whis-
pering in my ear.
Oh real as in dream all this; and then a
hand on mine is laid:
The wave of phantom time withdraws; and
that young Babylonian maid,
One drop of beauty left behind from all
the flowing of that tide,
Is looking with the self-same eyes, and here
in Ireland by my side.
Oh light our life in Babylon, but Babylon
has taken wings,
While we are in the calm and proud pro-
cession of eternal things.
—A. E. in *An Anthology of Modern Verse*.

SEEN AND UNSEEN

(To a boy who thought he had seen a leaf
leave the tree)

"Not to sight or taste or touch be credit,
Hearing only do we trust secure."

St. Thomas Aquinas.

1.

You say you've watched the trees
Grow green, then fade away;
The brown leaf flutter in the breeze,
Then drop and turn to clay.

2.

Ah! I remember how
The wind sighed in the trees,
And crooned and called: "Come see if now
You see me fall—sight ne'er deceives!"

3.

Ah! mocking wind, my eyes
Delude, for well I know
Sight, touch, and taste is but disguise
To veil God's secrets here below.

4.

The shooting star; the soul
Winging its homeward way;
Falling leaf to its earthly goal—
Faith sees, but not the eyes of clay.
—J. A. FITZPATRICK in the *Irish Rosary*.

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THE JOLLY FELLOW

He slaps you on the shoulder,
When you meet him on the street,
And smiles his very broadest
With a smile that can't be beat.
He'll give you the "once over,"
And he'll ask you how you are,
And then, to top the climax,
He will offer a cigar.
Sometimes you'll see him smiling,
And sometimes you'll see him grin,
He's just the sort of fellow
Who will stick through thick and thin.
He doesn't brood o'er troubles—
He's of optimistic bent,
He'll give you his last dollar
When you're down to your last cent!
When other fellows shun you,
And the world seems upside down,
He'll take you out and treat you
To the biggest feed in town,
You'll find your spirits soaring,
And your courage coming back,
And with it, strength to conquer
With your feet firm in the track!
He's just a jolly fellow,
But you miss him when he's gone,
Like you do some cherished relic
When you've turned it into pawn.
You can't realise the value
Of this honest, loving heart,
Until the pathways widen
And there comes a time to part.
But, memories of that friendship
Will endure until the end,
And that same carefree fellow
Will remain a sincere friend!
—CATHERINE ELIZABETH HANSON in the *Irish
World*.

ON TWO SISTERS DYING AFTER AFTER SERVICE IN WAR

In woods remote, hid in the mountain hol-
lows,
Doves there are that have a gentler beauty,
Doves that are marked as by a poet's image,
And they are called Doves of the Wounded
Heart.

And such they were, Doves of the Wounded
Heart:
We knew their names, but we could never
learn
The call would bring them to our breasts or
hands.

Bearing the grain of mercy they, too went
To reeking wastes, and there they took their
places
And soared and cowered with strong-faring
birds
Till their hearts were a-strain.

Doves of the Wounded Heart, with hearts
a-strain,
Out of the reeking wastes there grew before
them
Their woods remote, hid in the mountain
hollows,
And they fled towards them from the reeking
wastes
And barnyard-world that we would have
them in!

Doves of the Wounded Heart, they left our
world,
Our barnyard world and left our reeking
wastes,
Doves of the Wounded Heart that had the
beauty
Of far-off woods hid in the mountain hol-
lows!
—PADRAIC COLUM in the *Irish Statesman*.

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THOUGHTS BEFORE DAWN

This breathing self—though to myself 'tis I—
Cannot itself contain. Around me die
Daily a world of things, which, by their make
Seem other—separate. But in you sky,

Where wanes one moon, what thousands were
awake
While memory, with rich breath at give and
take,
Receives and renders life! Thus must I be
Always unsatisfied, from having drunk
So deeply of a wave where moons have sunk,
Thirsting for moons which I shall never see!

Yet in my dreams they rise; their kingdoms
come.
Oh, softly, upon a world where I lie dumb,
What breathing dawns shall break! My day
goes by,
Fore-knowing, and fore-shadowed of its rest:
But those far suns are gathered to my breast,
As here, released from self, content I lie,
Watching an old moon reap the morning
sky.
—LAURENCE HOUSMAN in the *Saturday Re-
viewer*.