

Selected Poetry

On a Friend Who Died upon the Seashore

Quiet he lived, and quietly died;
Nor, like the unwilling tide,
Did once complain or strive
To stay one brief hour more alive.
But as a summer wave
Serenely for a while
Will lift a crest to the sun,
Then sink again, so he
Back to the bright heavens gave
An answering smile;
Then quietly, having run
His course, bowed down his head,
And sank un murmuringly,
Sank back into the sea,
The silent, the unfathomable sea
Of all the happy dead.

—J. D. C. PELLOW, in the *London Mercury*.

The Song of Elder Jones

Old Isaac Jones, he couldn't sing, not worth a tinker's
dam;
And yet he joined in ev'rything, and sang "Just As I Am"
As loud as anybody there, as far as I could see,
Poured forth his soul upon the air, but always off the key.

Right after we had "let-us-prayed" and passed the plate
around,

Before the minister essayed theology profound,
He'd say, "We'll join in singing Hymn Nine-hundred-
ninety-two";

Then Elder Jones braced ev'ry limb, prepared to see it
through.

The preacher read a verse aloud; the organ played a bar;
The choir arose serene and proud, as church choirs always
are;

It sang with care the opening note, or maybe three or
four—

Then burst from out the Elder's throat that celebrated
roar.

It shook the rafters, shook the pews; it shook the country-
side;

The Elder longed to spread the news of glory far and wide.
His heart was full of joy to-day, of joy he longed to shout,
And singing was the only way he had to let it out.

Courageously the choir withstood old Elder Jones' attack
And tried to keep, the best it could, the tune upon the
track.

But, as the three sopranos glad gave forth their highest E,
Then Jones let loose with all he had and countered with
a B.

A free-for-all, when that was done, was all there was to do;
The choir sang one tune, Isaac one, the congregation two.
I often wondered which the more was heard around the
thrones—

The E of those sopranos or the B of Elder Jones.

But I'm a little older now, as old as he was then,
And know, or think I know, just how the Lord arranges
men.

He judges singing, judges what we are from day to day,
By whether we're sincere or not in all we do and say.

The Elder sang—he had to sing—his soul was full of grace;
And that's what counts in ev'rything, in church or any
place.

The Elder's joy the heavens shook, and not the singer's art:
The choir was singing from the book, the Elder from the
heart.

—DOUGLAS MALLOCH.

The Captain

The captain was a silent man
Who never said an extra word;
He'd watch the sea for quite a span,
Nor let himself be heard.

It's queer that such a man as he
Should find himself so strange a friend,
And be companion of a sea
That talked without an end.

—MILTON RAISON, in *Spindrift*.

For a Word

How shall you ever know the adoration
I spread like samite cloths beneath your feet?
How shall you guess the brooding desolation
Learned from your eyes so passionless and sweet?

There must be some word like the star that pauses
In summer's rose transparency of dusk,
Or like the bird-note heard through slumber's gauzes
Between the hour of dew, the hour of musk;
There must be some one word that is more tender
Than any word my lips have ever learned
Without which I can never, never render
In speech the love your cool sweet love has earned.

You know as none my heart's forlorn distresses,
Its passionate tides, its daily tint and glow;
Why must there be within obscure recesses
This tenderness of love you can not know?
—WILLIAM ALEXANDER PERCY, in the *Yale Review*.

Ebb Tide of the Year

Do you not see and hear
Already is the ebb tide of the year,
Though it should seem no more
Than a first wave retreating down the shore?
"No, no," you say, "for still
Noon empties his hot arrows on the hill;
And many are the flowers
And ardent hued to mark the sun bright hours!"

I answer: Though the moon
Flames on the hill, when has night brought such boon
Of cooling drink outpoured—
Deep Sleep—the oldest vintage ever stored;
While the tree cricket plays,
Moving his slender wings of chryso-phrased,
And searching is the sigh
Of the low wind through leaves grown crisp and dry!

And as for many flowers,
Look how—like ladies from their windowed towers,
The bloom creeps ever higher
On foxglove and on evening primrose spire
Until the last flower-bell
With kisses tells aloft its world farewell!

No birds in nests: they fare
In flocks afar—no mated loves are there.
Silver yon stubble fields
Where her swift shuttle the gray weaver wields.
Red gold, the great orb's sun
Leans yearningly toward earth, day being done.
Some beauty—past all guards,
Each evening will be slipping heavenwards!
Summer's old heart is tired,
Beats fitfully, but Time cannot be hired.
You will not have it so?
Too young! These ageing signs you will not know!
More wise—or sad, am I:
So many a year has bidden me Good-bye!

—EDITH M. THOMAS, in the *New York Herald*.