



## SECTION I

### *The Wild Swan (1930)*

#### I1 DEDICATORY

##### In Memory of My Father

I have known many men, and many men  
     In the quick balance of the mind have weighed,  
 And even as Abram found his score was ten,  
     His ten was one,<sup>1</sup> so was my hope betrayed.  
 But though the tale is told, and fallen, spent, 5  
     Is the first fiction of a great man's name,  
 Eminent amid the uneminent  
     He still stands tall, a lonely mark for fame.  
 Yet where Truth sweeps Time's mouldered, dusty floor  
     I have seen fame, long swollen, flung out as naught, 10  
 And I have seen one, whom the world called poor,  
     Walking amid the mountains of his thought.

(19 August 1929) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV(A) Wright1 (B)*  
 2 weighed,] ~. B 5 fallen, spent,] ~ ~ AB 8 tall,] ~; AB 9 Yet] So,  
 too, AB Truth] truth AB sweeps] sweeps out AB Time's] time's AB  
 mouldered,] Om. AB floor] ~, B 10 fame] names AB swollen] praised AB  
 naught,] ~; AB

<sup>1</sup> In pleading against the destruction of Sodom, Abraham had to reduce the requirement of righteous men from twenty (a 'score'), to ten, to one (Genesis 18. 23–32).







THE WILD SWAN (1930) 9

Wakened upon the sound the night-air servant brings, 5  
 Whispered, "The birds are restless for far journeyings!"  
 And like a cloud above the lakes, and like a cloud  
 Above the river reaches and the long lagoons,  
 Mounted the wing that through eternities had ploughed  
 The plains of heaven, until each flight became a shroud 10  
 Of shadowy movement drawn beneath high-riding moons,  
 And faint in distance as the ghosts of lost galleons.<sup>2</sup>

II THE WHITE SWAN

Once a child waking heard the beat of those great wings,  
 And, running, saw where like a shining angel rose  
 A glistening bird, bright in its moonlit silverings: 15  
 Saw the wing's curve and spread, and the white breast that  
 springs  
 Round as the prow of cloud, that, at the evening's close,  
 Night slowly stalls above the sun that setting goes:  
 Saw where an army ranged in endless ranks that ran  
 On either hand as each dark fugler,<sup>3</sup> in his might, 20  
 Climbing upon the air moved out and led the van:<sup>4</sup>  
 Saw the vast mass up-soar and sail in widening fan:  
 And saw the snowy-breasted wanderer, gleaming white,  
 Lace in and out the host, and go with that great flight.

III THE MURRUMBIDGEE<sup>5</sup> HEARD

O ye wild swans the Murrumbidgee yearning heard, afar, 25  
 Cry through the height, "To thee thy children come again!"

5 sound] sounds *A* 6 are] grow *A* 10 heaven,] ~ *A* 12 galleons] platoons *B*  
 13 child waking] ~, ~, *A* 15 silverings:] ~; *A* 16 springs] ~, *A* 17 cloud,]  
 ~ *B* 18 stalls] stills *A* goes:] ~; *A* 19 where] then *A* ranged] rise *A*  
 20 as] where *A* 21 moved] sped *A* van:] ~ *A* 22 Saw] As *A* up-soar and  
 sail] upsoared and sailed *A* fan:] ~; *A* 23 And saw] Saw there *A* 24 host,]  
 ~ *A* flight.] ~! *A* 25 swans] ~, *A* yearning] *Om. B* 26 through] from *B*

<sup>1</sup> Confines (noun), possibly alluding to the smallness of a settler's hut.  
<sup>2</sup> Galleons, in particular the large vessels used by the Spaniards in carrying on trade with the Americas. <sup>3</sup> A soldier who, because of his skill, led troops during drill exercises, hence one who shows the way; cf. usage in E24 and J12. <sup>4</sup> Vanguard.  
<sup>5</sup> From Aboriginal *murrumbidgea*, big water (Reed); cf. MG's more poetic translation in M13 (line 14). See Preface for MG's use and glossing of Aboriginal words.



And, as ye came, felt all her bosom stir, as bar  
 By bar upon the mountain side, by cliff and scar,  
 She loosed the rising waters out till grey Ganmain<sup>6</sup>  
 Called to her reeds the white spoonbill and gentle crane— 30  
 And bid the old Deepwater Swamp set wide each gate,  
 And drink her swelling tide till every billabong  
 Ran flush, and all the summered marshes in the spate  
 Bloomed out again in green, while little birds, elate,  
 Dipped in the flood and sang—O ye wild wings, how long, 35  
 How long since last your mighty pinions beat in throng!

## IV NEVER AGAIN

Never again as of old shall we know the flight  
 Of the swans in their going; like petals they fell,  
 They are gone, they are dead; they have passed in the blight  
 Of our being! Never again will the day, or the night, 40  
 Hear, as they fly, the sound of their trumpeting bell  
 On the air till it dies like the lapse of a swell!  
 Never again shall the moonlight gleam on the wing!  
 Like a blast of the desert we came, and we slew;  
 We burned the reeds where the nestlings lingered, till  
 Spring, 45  
 That sang in the bird, came in like a dull dead thing!  
 Now only the dreamer dreams of the hosts we knew,  
 That trembling died in the flame of our passing through.

27 And, as ye came] Who, as she heard. *A* as] till *A* 29 out] ~, *A B*  
 30 crane—] ~; *A* ~, *B* 31 And] Who *A* Swamp] swamp *A* gate,] ~ *B*  
 33 in] felt *A* 34 Bloomed out] And bloomed *A* 38 going; like] ~. Like *A*  
 they] that *A* fell,] ~ *A* ~; *B* 39 dead;] ~—*A* 40 will . . . night,] shall  
 day (or the night) *A* 41 Hear,] ~ *A* fly,] ~ *A* 43 shall] will *B* moonlight  
 gleam] moons shine out *A* wing!] ~; *B* 44 came,] ~ *A* slew;] ~, *A*  
 45 Spring,] spring *A* spring, *B* 46 bird,] ~ *A* dull dead] sad dumb *A*  
 thing!] ~. *A* 48 flame] wind *A* through.] ~! *A*

<sup>6</sup> Not the small town of that name in the Coolamon Shire of the Riverina district, but the wetlands of the property described in G12 as: 'Far Ganmain of swamp and sedge' (line 12).

I<sub>4</sub> THE TRUMPETER\*

Dulled is the glossy breast, heavy the wing;  
 Slow beats the great heart naught could slacken;  
 Shimmers no more the back that once could fling  
 A glinting sun-spar over hill and bracken!  
 For now as earthward, where the shadows blacken, 5  
 Drops slowly down his mighty pinion,  
 Wakes not for him again the spring:  
 The years have brought to end his old dominion.

Once like a king he rode the aery coast,  
 And marked, below, the trackless ocean; 10  
 Or, lifting through the cloud his flagging host,  
 Eased there the flight upon earth's windy motion.  
 But none now call upon that old devotion,  
 And slowly downward moves the pinion;  
 Life has defined its uttermost: 15  
 Fallen the sceptre from the old dominion.

The black man knew his path, and, star by star,  
 Watched the timed route of his returning;  
 And named at night his trumpeting, afar,  
 As toward the swamps he sloped in homeward yearning. 20  
 Empty the forests now of eyes, discerning,  
 That loved to greet that looked-for pinion:  
 The reedy marges silent are,  
 And at an end is all the old dominion.

His was the wisdom of the trumpeters, 25  
 The father-wisdom born of power;  
 He made the fretful winds his ministers,  
 And taught the young the way within the nower.<sup>1</sup>

[cont. overleaf]

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV (A)**Not otherwise recorded: MG's note is not signalled in A.*

5 now] ~, A 21 eyes,] ~ A

<sup>1</sup> Obsolete variant of *nowhere*; hence, here, uncharted space.



And time he knew; the season's clanging hour  
 Struck like a bell upon that pinion, 30  
 Which felt throughout its breadth, in spur,  
 The call to rise and lead in old dominion.

And they who held, as he, unwritten law,  
 Who heard Biامي<sup>2</sup> in the thunder,  
 Who charted heaven by what on earth they saw, 35  
 Named the great trumpeters "The Wings of Wonder."  
 And these no hungry need might stalk and plunder;  
 Where spread each broad, upsoaring pinion,  
 No youthful pride the spear might draw. . . .  
 Alas! the end of that old wise dominion! 40

\* When I was a child, "trumpeter" and "trumpeters" were familiar words. Not every swan was called a trumpeter. The aboriginals, regarding the wild birds and animals as their flocks and herds, had provision made for their preservation. The great old leaders of flight were known, and never killed. The wisdom of centuries was with them. And I remember well the disgust expressed by my own people when a man who was either a "new-chum" from overseas, or a "green-horn" from the city, shot, and boasted of shooting, a trumpeter. The act was reprobated by everybody. As my father said, he might as well have killed an albatross.<sup>3</sup> Everyone thought the bird should have been hung round his neck. n10

29 clanging hour] change and stir *A*    36 Wonder.]" ~". *A*    38 broad,] ~ *A*  
 39 draw. . . .] ~. *A*    n7 "new-chum"] ~ *A*    "green-horn"] ~ *A*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Bai-ame* (Ridley), *Byamee* (Parker, Reed), *Baiami* (Reed): creator god, All-Father, giver of tribal laws and customs; see also I22, I24, K2, M62 author's note, line 13 and R71 author's note, line 15.

<sup>3</sup> When the Ancient Mariner kills an albatross, traditional sign of good fortune, and his ship is becalmed, his fellow sailors hang the slaughtered bird around his neck to mark him as the cause of misfortune: see 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (1798) by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834).

## I5 THE FLIGHT OF THE SWANS

Long, long ago I stood amid the thundrous rout  
 Where restless swans beat on the waters, in their might,  
 Till all the wash was foam: when suddenly from out  
 The waste one bird arose in orient for flight.





THE WILD SWAN (1930) 13

I marked his widening pinions cut upon the air, 5  
 In sound as though one whipped the wind and whispered  
 there.

And as he swaying upward reared, his cry, far sent,  
 Ran like a ribbon-length of clarion through space—  
 A call that floated out as if it could not die;  
 Which, as the bird made on, hung lone in its high place 10  
 As might a man's loosed spirit hang, when, from the clay,  
 In first release it wavers toward its outward way.

Then, as full flight began, the forest heard, and heard  
 The lakes, and every little cove and inlet woke,  
 And said, "Moves from our reaches now the gallant bird!" 15  
 And from each linked recess the tides of movement broke,  
 As the first squadroned companies swept out and took  
 The forward way where death, alone, might backward look.

And from that urgent moil<sup>1</sup> of wings trail upon trail  
 Out of the tangle of the rising turned to plane, 20  
 And upward through the sky swung out like wisps of veil,  
 Smaller, yet smaller seen, and then not seen at all.  
 Thus in the void of night the milky star-dust shows,  
 In faint receding light, and ever passing goes.

Then as I watched where line by line the leaders flew, 25  
 Roiled<sup>2</sup> from the marsh the mass till all the air with wings  
 Was tremulous and tumult-shaken through and through. . . .  
 So sped the birds that there seemed mightier than kings:  
 And as they went a stillness fell upon the waste,  
 Stranger than sound, stranger than movement in its haste.\* 30

[*cont. overleaf*]

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV(A)*

*Not otherwise recorded: MG's note is not signalled in A.*

1 Long,] ~ A 3 foam: when] ~! When A 7 cry, far sent,] far sent cry A  
 9 die;] ~, A 10 place] ~, A 11 As] So A 13 Then,] ~ A began,] ~ A  
 14 woke,] ~ A 17 out] ~, A 18 death, alone,] ~ ~ A 19 wings . . . trail]  
 ~, . . . ~, A 20 rising] ~, A 22 at all] again A 23 star-dust] stardust A  
 shows,] ~ A 25 Then] ~, A 27 through. . . ] ~, A 28 kings:] ~, A

<sup>1</sup> Turmoil, confusion.    <sup>2</sup> Roll or flow vigorously (archaic, of a stream).





Now, when the moonlight drips in silver on the grass,  
 And when each pendant leaf is hung with shining dew,  
 Sometimes I hear a wreath of lonely migrants pass,  
 And dream of old things where late comers dream of new;  
 Then on the earth again that stillness seems to fall; 35  
 Then broods the widowed land o'er loss beyond recall.

\* My husband has often told me how, when he was a boy, along the  
 Coorong<sup>3</sup> the swans would be in thousands, and that suddenly something  
 would stir them to meditate flight, and they would beat the waves with  
 their wings, with a sound like thunder, till all the waters whitened with  
 foam. Then in a mass they would rise and fly, and leave a silence itself 15  
 as strange as thunder. And many a time in Riverina, as a child, I have  
 run to my mother in terror because I heard "thunder" when there were  
 "no clouds," and she would tell me it was swans in the distance beating  
 their wings as they readied for flight. Later on I learned to recognise  
 the sound, and to listen to it unafraid. The Bush learned in those days 110  
 what it can never learn again.

32 pendant] pendent *A* 34 late comers] late-comers *A* n1 has] *Om. A*  
 n4 wings,] ~ *A* n5 silence] silence in *A* n6 child,] ~ *A* n8 "no clouds,"]  
 ~ ~. *A* and] *And A* n9 recognise] recognize *A* n10 Bush] bush *A*

<sup>3</sup> Wetland ecosystem at the mouth of the Murray River, South Australia.

## 16 THREE SWANS WENT BY

Whither, ye wanderers in the heights your wings still dare,  
 Crying as though forgotten things mourned in your keening?  
 Our hearts are broken as we hear you go,  
 So few in flight, so slow.  
 Lone in the lonely verge, scarce can the ear ensnare 5  
 The thin, sad notes that downward fall; that leaning  
 On the shouldered air seem but a breath  
 Of sound, haunted by death!  
 . . . Out of the land long swept away, from woods laid bare,  
 Surely the wonder of our youth went with them there. 10

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV (A)*

5 Lone] ~, *A* 6 thin,] ~ *A* 7 shouldered] shouldering *A* 9 . . . Out] ~ *A*





## 17 SWANS AT NIGHT

Within the night, above the dark,  
 I heard a host upon the air—  
 Upon the air they made no mark,  
 For all that they went sailing there.  
 And from that host there came a cry, 5  
 A note of calling strange and high;  
 I heard it blown against the sky,  
 Till naught there seemed but it and I.  
 A long and lonely wraith of sound,  
 It floated out in distance wide, 10  
 As though it knew another bound,  
 A space wherein it never died.  
 I heard the swans, I heard the swans,  
 I heard the swans that speed by night;  
 That ever, where the starlight wans,<sup>1</sup> 15  
 Fly on unseen within the height.  
 I never knew how wide the dark,  
 I never knew the depth of space,  
 I never knew how frail a bark—  
 A speck—is man within his place, 20  
 Not till I heard the swans go by,  
 Not till I marked their haunting cry,  
 Not till within the vague,<sup>2</sup> on high,  
 I watched them pass across the sky.

[*cont. overleaf*]

(8 March 1924) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DT*, 9 December 1924, p. 14 as THE FLIGHT OF THE SWANS (*A*) *GEPP*, 11 December 1924, p. 6 as THE FLIGHT OF THE SWANS (*B*) Green, stanzas 1–6 only, as *FROM SWANS AT NIGHT* (*C*) *SV(D)*

2 air—] ~; *AB* ~, *D* 3 air] void *D* mark,] ~ *AB* 6 calling] keening *AB*  
 7 sky,] ~ *AB* 8 Till . . . seemed] As though there were *AB* I.] ~ *B*  
 11 bound,] ~ *AB* 16 on unseen] ~, ~, *AB* 19 bark—] ~, *D*  
 20 A speck—] How small *D* place,] ~ *AB* 21 swans] swan *B* 22 haunting]  
 wailing *AB* 23 till] ~, *D* vague,] ~ *ABD* high,] ~ *AB* 24 watched]  
 heard *AB* sky.] ~ . . . *C*

<sup>1</sup> Grows pale.    <sup>2</sup> Undefined expanse (rare usage); cf. I67 line 15.



O trackless birds, far-journeying, 25  
 What guide have ye, or swift or slow,  
 To give ye trust in strength of wing  
 That must upbear ye as ye go?

What mark is set before your way?  
 What urging burns within the heart, 30  
 That bids ye, at the close of day,  
 Uplift the wing of your depart?

What visions drawn from inner sight  
 Declare to you the way ye go;  
 What power upholds you in your flight 35  
 To that unknown ye cannot know?

I heard against the phantom sky  
 The swans their hollow music cry,  
 I felt the loneliness on high,  
 The dark where they went sailing by. 40

They say the swan sings but for death,  
 They say he wans in height to die;  
 Has he no more than that sharp breath  
 That whistles outward on his cry?

Is he but offspring of a vast<sup>3</sup> 45  
 Where no Hand shaped but gusty chance?  
 That draws no future from the past?  
 That goes unconscious of advance?

Nay, though we were but shaken dust,  
 Nay, though in darkness still we went, 50

(25–60) O . . . cry.] *Om. C* 25 far-journeying] far journeying *D* 26 ye] you *D*  
 slow,] ~ *AB* 27 ye] you *D* 28 ye as ye] you as you *D* 30 heart,] ~ *AB*  
 31 ye] you *D* 33 visions] vision *AB* 34 Declare] Declares *AB* ye] you *D*  
 36 ye] you *D* 38 cry,] ~; *AB* 42 die;] ~: *A* 43 Has] Hath *AB* that] his *AB*  
 46 Hand] hand *D* 47 past?] ~, *AB* 48 goes] moves *D* advance?] advance?// Is  
 he but child of will-less law/ That, moving, knows not that it moves;/ Has eyes, and yet  
 which never saw,/ And its own proof, itself, disproves? *AB*

<sup>3</sup> Immense space (mainly poetic).





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

17

We still must measure by our trust  
 The Power that lifting o'er us bent;  
 And He Who held within His Hand  
 That trackless bird, by night and day,  
 Guided him out by sea and land, 55  
 His Hand will never cast away.  
 I never knew how vast the sky,  
 I never knew how small was I,  
 Until I heard, remote and high,  
 The distant swans' far-floated cry. 60

51 We still must] Still do we *AB* 52 bent;] ~. *AB* 54 That] The *D*  
 56 Hand *A*] hand *X* 57 I] . . . ~ *AB* 58-9 I never . . . remote] Until I heard,  
 in broken cry, / Upon its rim, far-thinned *AB* 60 distant swans'] keening of the  
 swans *AB* far-floated cry] go by *AB* far floated cry *D*

18 THE MOPOKE

I heard the hautbois\* of the solitude,  
 And followed after that elusive sound,  
 Which, uttered from the shy bird's feathery hood,<sup>1</sup>  
 Haunted all places, yet in none was found.  
 For now on air it seemed, 5  
 And now on tree,  
 Muting and fluting over me.  
 How many a moonlit night—a girl—a child—  
 I sought to trace that strange and wandering note,  
 Now running here, now there, till, half-beguiled, 10  
 My will upon its movement seemed to float!  
*Mopoke! Mopoke!* it cried;  
*Mopoke!* Till all  
 The chequered darkness held the call.

[cont. overleaf

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV (A)*  
*Not otherwise recorded: MG's note is not signalled in A.*  
 9 trace] find *A* 13 Till] till *A*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. I125, lines 22-3.





It is a lovely thing to hear a bird—  
 And hear it through the shadowy places of  
 The night!—to seek a wing that goes unheard,  
 And trace its flight through spaces far above!  
 Ah, follows still my heart,  
 And half afraid,  
 The mopoke's note within the shade.

\* There is no bird-voice in all the bush so like the sound of the hautbois<sup>2</sup> as that of the mopoke. And I recollect, well, my father explaining to me, as a child, how the aboriginals spoke of it as, "The tree speaks." Had they known the hautbois, it is certain they would also have said, "The wood speaks."  
 n5

15 bird—] ~, A 16 shadowy places] leafy shadow A 17 night!—] ~! A  
 18 spaces far] some dim place A 20 half afraid] half-afraid A 21 shade.] ~! A  
 n1 bird-voice] bird voice A n2-3 And . . . as,] My father, showing the bird to  
 me, said the aboriginal name—with them one word, of course—was A  
 n3 speaks."] ~". A n3-5 Had . . . speaks."] Om. A

<sup>2</sup> Oboe.

## I9 THE FIRST THRUSH

IN THE TREES OF THE OLD CHISHOLM GARDEN  
 AT GOULBURN

Though leaves have fallen long since,  
 The wagtails flirt and flit,  
 Glad in the morning sun;  
 While, on the knotted quince,  
 The dewdrops, pearled on it,  
 Bead to a little run. . . .  
 Soft as a breathing air  
 There came a lovely sound  
 Out of the branches bare;  
 So rich it was, and round,

(n. d.) Copy-text: WS Collated states: Mackness1 (no subtitle) (A)  
 6 run. . . .] ~ . . . . A





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

19

Sense stood, in listening bound,  
Stilled to its sweetness there!

It was the thrush's note,  
That seemed as though his heart  
On some loved thing did dote;  
As though he yearned apart,  
Knowing some hidden smart,  
Pain in the long sweet rote.<sup>1</sup>

15

There, as the spider hung  
Grey-breasted 'gainst the brown  
Skin of the quince, he sung  
A song that, o'er the town,  
Rose up as though to crown  
The tree-tops whence it sprung.

20

And now, it seems to me,  
That long full breath he drew,  
Like perfume shed on air,  
Still dwells within the tree,  
Though long ago he flew,  
And left it naked there.

25

30

<sup>1</sup> Repeated phrase.

110 THE GREEN-LEEK<sup>1</sup>

Thou wast a leaf,  
Thou wast the grass in sheen,  
Thou wast the corn in spathe<sup>2</sup>  
Ere yet the grain was seen:  
Of all green loveliness that went on wing

5

(12 November 1923) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV (A)*

*Not otherwise recorded:* Wherever copy-text has 'Thou wast', *A* has 'You were'.

5 wing] ~, *A*

<sup>1</sup> One AMS of I10 in NLA 727 2/3/13 is annotated: 'To a cut pocket of an old wattle-tree by the house, the greenleeks used to come. We used to stand behind the bole, so small we were, & slipping the hand round it, catch the greenleeks as they came for





Thou wert the chief,  
O emerald of the spring!

These hands, that held,  
In memory hold again,  
As when thy beating heart 10  
Throbbled out its fear and pain!  
Ah, though my will for thy detention stood,  
Thou wast not celled  
A prisoner from thy wood!

My hollow grasp 15  
Thy slender body filled;  
And thought, reminding, tells  
How a child's startled wonder thrilled  
To feel that thou, so small, shouldst be so warm,  
Who in my clasp 20  
Fluttered thy sharp alarm!

Now like a dart  
Thrusts loneliness, as though  
Something I loved was lost,  
O long ago! 25  
And longing asks, in spite of years of calm,  
To feel a child's heart  
Hoard thee, breast and palm.

6 Thou wert] You were *A*    10 thy] your *A*    12 thy] your *A*    13 celled] ~, *A*  
14 thy] your *A*    16 Thy] Your *A*    19 thou] you *A*    shouldst] should *A*  
20 Who] When *A*    21 Fluttered thy sharp] You fluttered in *A*    25 O] ~, *A*  
28 thee,] you—*A*

the gum. Only sometimes, when the boys did not want it, was I allowed to hold one in my hand; & though I was eldest too sensitive & suffering to ask for it often. Besides I was always told "Girls should not want things": I think no child ever wanted things withheld with more longing than I did. M.G.' See volume 1, Appendix for manuscript locations and descriptions.

<sup>2</sup> The sheathing leaf enclosing the early inflorescence of plants such as corn, arums and palms.





## 111 THE GODWIT\*

So far it flew  
 Upon the distant verge of sight,  
 I saw (and scarcely knew  
 I saw, so small dimensions ran)  
 A bird that looked no larger than 5  
 A mote, and yet it held in view  
 Immeasurable flight!

Thou hadst no fear that thou shouldst come to naught,  
 O little living thing which Thought  
 The Slinger on the distance hurled— 10  
 O godwit, passing over all the world!

But thou, within thy heart, by day and night,  
 Held that which led thee safely through the height;  
 And we, who baffled stood and watched thee go,  
 Envied thy fortitude, thy power to know! 15

God-wit indeed art thou! His wisdom spoken  
 In thee, who makest flight, unbroken,  
 In conquest over land and sea.  
 But O, how small a thing thou art,  
 Sanctioned, and set with stars apart, 20  
 To breast infinity!

\* The godwit leaves Australia in the morning and is well on its way to Asia by evening. Wit, in the older use of the language, meant wisdom or knowledge. The word godwit is beautiful, both in its own meaning and in its burden of history.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV (A)*

*Not otherwise recorded: MG's note is not signalled in A.*

4 ran] ~), A 12 night,] ~ A 16 God-wit] Godwit A n1-2 to Asia] Om. A  
 n3 both] alike A



## I12 SWIFTS

Who has declared to them their powers,  
 Their wings for flight;  
 Bid them where distance towers  
 Attain the height;  
 Sustained them through the hours 5  
 Of day and night?

Ye have not thought, O heedless man,  
 How learned these eyes  
 Whose sight must ranging scan  
 What forward lies, 10  
 And lift from earth's low span  
 To search the skies!

Nor have ye thought (or ye had seen!)  
 What wonders pleat  
 These wings of glistening sheen, 15  
 That, bravely fleet,  
 Seek, over seas between,  
 Their far retreat!

O little feathered float! O frail  
 And tiny oars! 20  
 Ye do not fear to fail,  
 Though tempest roars,  
 And icy winds impale  
 These nether shores!

Ah, had man but your steadfast will! 25  
 I watch you where

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Wr, 7 July 1926, p. 14 (A)*

1 has] hath *A* powers,] ~—*A* 2 flight;] ~? *A* 3 them] ~, *A* towers] ~, *A*  
 4 height;] ~? *A* 5 Sustained] Or keeps *A* 8 How learned] What mean *A*  
 9 must] may, *A* ranging] ~, *A* 11 And] Or *A* 12 To] And *A* 13 thought  
 (or] ~—~*A* seen!)] ~!—*A* 15 sheen,] ~ *A* 16 That,] (So *A* fleet,] ~!) *A*  
 17 Seek, over] That seek, o'er *A* 19 little] tiny *A* 20 tiny] downy *A* 21 Ye  
 . . . fail,] Fearless you onward sail *A* 25 but] half *A* will!)] ~! . . . *A*





THE WILD SWAN (1930) 23

You mount in flight, until  
 Unseen you fare,  
 And dream I see you, still,  
 Who are not there. 30

27 flight,] ~ A 29 And dream] Thinking A you,] ~ A

I13 THE SOLDIER-BIRD

How oft we stalked a leaf and thought it you,  
 Where, in a bush, you watched us, peering through—  
 We who as Indian braves had marked your flight,  
 And thought our eyes still kept you in their sight!

In greeny-gold and grey, a trace of black, 5  
 Surely for camouflage you did not lack,  
 As you, half wondering what was our intent,  
 Poised on your twig, awhile, before you went.

O wise, wise bird, whose grave considering look  
 Spoke learning deeper than in any book, 10  
 Surely your wit was ours! But ours (so young!)  
 Was less than yours as from your perch you swung,  
 Leaving us wrangling there, where each one claimed  
 The first to sight you—lost, the other blamed!

Alas, what lengthening years have passed between 15  
 Since first I saw you flit amid the green—

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DT, 9 January 1926, p. 10 as THE SOLDIER BIRD (A)*

*Not otherwise recorded: A divides each pair of lines into a four-line stanza, and lines 5 and 6 follow 7 and 8.*

1 and] And A 2 a] the A us,] Us A peering] peeping A 3 who] ~, A  
 braves had] ~, / Had A 4 And thought] Thinking A you] You A 4 sight!]  
 ~, A 5 a] A A trace] hint A 6 you] You A 7 As] While A was] Was A  
 8 twig,] ~ A awhile, before] ~ / Before A went.] ~! A 9 O] ~, A  
 considering] Considering A 10 in] In A book,] ~! A 11 ours! But] ~; / ~ A  
 12 yours] ~, A your] Your A swung] sprung A 13 wrangling] ~, A  
 where] Where A 14 The . . . the] Pre-eminence of sight:/ The A 15 have]  
 Have A 16 amid] Amid A green—] ~: A



I with my black-boy sling,<sup>1</sup> and John and Hugh<sup>2</sup>  
 As bow-and-arrow chiefs to follow you!  
 And oft, as now, I pause with wistful sigh,  
 Wondering if still within your trees you fly, 20  
 Wondering if in the old familiar ways  
 Children exploring go, as in our days,  
 Wondering, if one returned to his old place,  
 Would it be his would be the stranger's face . . .  
 Time gives us dreams; there you still fly o'erhead, 25  
 To nest amid the ghosts of trees long dead.

17 I] ~, *A* and] And *A* John] Jack *A* 18 bow-and-arrow] bow and arrow *A*  
 to follow] To capture *A* 19 And oft] Sometimes *A* with] With *A* 20 your]  
 Your *A* fly,] ~; *A* 21 if] ~, *A* familiar] Familiar *A* ways] ~, *A*  
 22 Children . . . go,] Any still wander *A* in our] In other *A* days,] ~; *A*  
 23 Wondering,] ~ *A* to] To *A* 24 the] The *A* <sup>s</sup>face . . .] ~, *A* 25 Time . . .  
 there] My day is done. But *A* still] Still *A* 26 To nest] Nesting *A* of] Of *A*

<sup>1</sup> Slingshot or catapult seen as an Aboriginal weapon.

<sup>2</sup> Hugh and John Cameron, MG's brothers, b. 1866 and 1869, are her companions in other childhood reminiscences (F122, G8 and H69). Hugh is the subject of M11, John of Z6.

#### I14 THE PEEWEE

When the dawn awakes, and the morning breaks,  
 Who cries as he flies,  
*Curulit! Curulit! Curulit!*  
 Who but the bird that we call  
 The peewee—the mudlark—even pug-wall— 5  
 Who, bright as the point of a share<sup>1</sup>  
 In the sun laid bare,  
 Cries out as he flies—  
 Flit-Flit—  
*Curulit! Curulit! Curulit!* 10

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV(A)*

2 Who] What *A* 4 Who] What *A* 5 peewee—] ~, *A* 6 Who] Which *A*  
 9 Flit-Flit] Flit-flit *A*

<sup>1</sup> Ploughshare (blade).



## 115 THE SPOONBILL

Where yonder brooding spoonbill stands,  
 Once stood another by that pool;  
 And there two children, holding hands,  
 Saw him at evening in the cool.

Strange how the mind a scene retains! 5  
 The children, through long-sundered years,  
 Still keep, amid life's counted gains,  
 That memory—with tears, with tears!

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV(A)*

1 Where yonder] Here, where yon *A* stands,] ~ *A* 6 long-sundered] long  
 sundered *A* years,] ~ *A*

## 116 THE IBIS

All day he watched within the reedy flood,  
 All day the sickle of his bill  
 Pierced through the weed, and oozy mud,  
 Where the quick fled, the slow lay still.

He knew no title-deeds by which to hold 5  
 An idle land against his kind;  
 He knew his life's communal fold,  
 The law of fellowship defined.

Stately among the dredging weeds he walked,  
 Alert where most he seemed the slow; 10  
 He saw the spoonbill, where he stalked,  
 And the plumage that shined like snow;

He saw the egret that in silence stood  
 Like a demoiselle<sup>1</sup> in a dream,  
 And the black duck swim, with her brood 15  
 Trailed out like a kite at stream.

<sup>1</sup> Damsel, maiden.



And theirs was the water, his was the sedge,  
 While behind him the peewee ran;  
 Land, and water, and water's edge,  
 And freedom for each in its span. 20

He drew his own full sustenance from earth,  
 He made none slave that he might reign;  
 He shut no plenty up till dearth  
 Starved for the blade that gave the grain.

Not his th' inquiet hunger of man's heart,— 25  
 The piercing doubt, hope's dark alloy;  
 Not his to feel the tears that start  
 Where pain yoke-fellow walks with joy.

No lord commanding bid him bend to toil,  
 No chain of time denied his wing; 30  
 He knew the marsh was his to spoil,<sup>2</sup>  
 And his the harvest of the Spring.

And all day long, within his beating heart,  
 He felt his fatherhood, elate,  
 As in his feathered nest, apart, 35  
 He saw his nurslings and his mate.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

<sup>2</sup> Plunder.

117 THE KOALA:  
 A PLEA FOR THE SLAUGHTERED

Make now complaint all ye who love the forest things,  
 Cry it aloud and bid the distance heed,  
 And pray all swift and friendly feathered wings  
 To tell abroad what shame is in this deed—  
 How from the woodland and 5  
 The hill, and from the happy vales are driven  
 The furry tribes, that found within this land  
 Their haven and their heaven.

And hear me, O ye trees, that through the kinder years  
 Sent out the shelter of your boughs, that fed 10  
 Through endless centuries the little bears  
 And in your fastness made for them a bed—  
 Tell how the carnage runs  
 By height and hollow, as to death are given  
 These helpless things that found, beneath our suns, 15  
 Their haven and their heaven.

Ye crystal streams that ever mantling clothe the hills  
 With tender green, that dress the earth with moss,  
 And slake the fern-leaf that the noontide stills,  
 Do not your borders mourn to you, in loss, 20  
 As slaughter makes resound  
 That runs through every valley, where man's levin<sup>1</sup>  
 Strikes down to death these innocents, that found  
 With us their haven and their heaven?

Ye cliffs that hold the mountains up! Ye rocks 25  
 That guard! Will ye not backward fling to man,

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DT, 20 August 1927, p. 6 AS A PLEA FOR THE SLAUGHTERED (A)*

*Not otherwise recorded:* *A* has this note: 'BRISBANE. Thursday.—Hunters and trappers have taken early advantage of the open season for native bears. At the first fur-skin sale of the season no fewer than 23,510 skins of the koala were offered at auction.' *A*'s text is in italics throughout; the swung dash here means the repeated word is in italics.

1 Make now complaint] *Come now with me, A forest] woodland A* 2 Cry it aloud] *Gather ye in, A bid] from A heed] call A* 3 And . . . and] *That we may ask of A* 4 tell . . . deed—] *bear a message ere worse ill befall: A* 5 How] *Lest A woodland] forest A* 6 happy] *whisp'ring A vales] ~, A* 7 tribes,] *~ A that] once A this] the A land] ~, A* 9 And . . . O] *Hearken, A* 10 Sent out] *Gave them A boughs] leaves A* 11 Through . . . little] *With blossom and with honey-dew the A bears] ~, A* 12 fastness] *hollows A* 13 Tell . . . carnage] *Hear now how ravage A* 14 height . . . as] *hill and valley, where A* 15 things] *~, A that] once A found,] ~ A suns,] ~ A* 17 Ye crystal] *O, glistening A streams] ~, A ever] Om. A* 19 slake] *slaked A* fern-leaf] *fernleaf A* that . . . stills] *where the moonlight spills A* 20 Do . . . in] *Will not the trees about ye speak their A loss,] ~? A* 21 As . . . resound] *Hear ye not, too, the sound A* 22 valley,] *~ A* 23 Strikes . . . that] *Cracks in the slaughter of the wild once A* 25 Ye] *O A* cliffs] *~, A* 26 guard! . . . fling] *ever stand on guard, fling back A*

<sup>1</sup> Man's lightning, i.e. the flash of the hunter's gun.

In loud detaining thunder, till it shocks,  
 The word by which this evil thing began?  
 O, bid the cities learn  
 How these dear foresters to death are given, 30  
 Who, for so long, found in each wooded turn  
 Their haven and their heaven!

O noble waratahs that paint the South, are these  
 Not also of the tribes of old ye knew—  
 These little clinging things that through the trees 35  
 Reached clambering forth to drink the morning dew?—  
 That now like children cry  
 Within the night: mascots to murder given:  
 Who once found here, beneath this Austral sky,  
 Their haven and their heaven. 40

27 detaining] *complaining* *A* 28 by] *with* *A* began?] ~; *A* 29 O, bid] *Shout*  
*till* *A* 31 Who . . . long.] *Though once they* *A* each] *every* *A* 32 heaven!] ~. *A*  
 33 noble] *Om.* *A* waratahs] ~, *A* paint] *clothe* *A* South] *south* *A*  
 34 knew—] ~?—*A* 36 Reached] *Reach,* *A* dew?—] ~: *A* 37 That] *Who* *A*  
 now] ~, *A* children] ~, *A* 38 night:] ~—*A* given:] ~—*A* 39 once . . .  
 beneath] *lived and once found* *'neath* *A* sky,] ~ *A*

### 118 THE LESSER BRETHERN\*

They grave no living word in stone,  
 Their hampered paws no record leave;  
 Only they know in pain to moan,  
 Only they know in loss to grieve.

And yet they read our human eyes, 5  
 Love's message in their deep look shown;  
 And longing speak in little cries,  
 Almost in utterance our own.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SMH, 24 September 1927, p. 11 as FAITHFUL DOGS (A)*

*Not otherwise recorded: MG's note is not signalled in A.*

6 shown;] ~. *A* 7 And longing] ~, ~, *A*



THE WILD SWAN (1930) 29

The loyalties of life are theirs,  
 And conscience lives where these are strong; 10  
 But we—unnumbered as our hairs  
 The days we do these kind things wrong.

Ah, had we only thought how far  
 Man stands from man, although we hear  
 A common speech that makes no bar, 15  
 We might have held these friends more near!

\* Cootamundra,<sup>1</sup> Wednesday.—While Mr. and Mrs. Edward Weissel, of Illawong, were absent from home, two of the children had a remarkable escape from death. A 6-ft. brown snake was about to spring at one of them when three of Mr. Weissel's dogs rushed in. A battle ensued, in which the snake was killed. Two of the dogs—one a valuable sheep dog and the other a fox terrier—died from bites. The fox terrier was found dead on top of the snake.—(*Sydney Morning Herald*, 22/9/'27). 15

10 lives] speaks *A* 11 hairs] ~, *A* 12 these] those *A* 13 had] if *A*  
 14 man,] ~—*A* 15 A common speech] And speak a tongue *A* bar,] ~—*A*  
 n1 Cootamundra] COOTAMUNDRA *A* n2 home,] their home *A* the] their *A*  
 n3 6-ft.] 6ft *A* n5 dogs] faithful dogs *A* dog] dog, which had taken prizes at  
 various shows, *A* n7 snake. *A*] ~" *X* (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 22/9/'27)]  
 "Sydney Morning Herald," 22/9/'27 *A*

<sup>1</sup> From *gooramundra*: swamp, low-lying place; also breeding-place of turtles (Reed) but Thieberger gives Wiradjuri *gudhamang*: turtle, place of turtles; cf. R65 author's note, lines 53-4.

119 THE ABORIGINES[\*]

Who is this that cometh here,  
 Bent and bowed, and in the sere,<sup>1</sup>  
 Who is this whose ravaged frame  
 Seems to speak of wrong and shame?

[*cont. overleaf*]

(n. d.) *Copy-text*: *WS* *Collated states*: *DT*, 25 October 1925, p. 10 as THE ABORIGINES: A LAMENT (*A*) Stable as THE ABORIGINES: A LAMENT (*B*) *SV*(*C*) Pizer as FROM "THE ABORIGINES" (*D*)

*Not otherwise recorded*: Wherever copy-text has 'ye', *C* has 'you'. MG's note, omitted in *D*, is not signalled in *A-C*.

(1-59) Who . . . fern!] *Om. D* 2 bowed,] ~ *C* sere,] ~? *AB*

<sup>1</sup> Dry withered state of old age, decay.



Child of people we betrayed, 5  
 Name him man, and yet a shade.  
 Quick feet I no more know,  
     Where are ye now?  
 Once ye were like the river's flow;  
     Like leaves that thickened on the bough; 10  
 Like dust that, whirling hither, thither,  
     Pillared upon the winds that lent  
 It height ere they had wandered on,  
     Or fallen spent;  
 Now ye are gone as these are gone. 15  
 Ah, whither?  
 O friends whom I once knew,  
     Where are ye now?—  
 Ye who were thick as grass that grew,  
     Or as the ibis, when the prow 20  
 Of his far flight (turned hither, thither)  
     Swept upward ere the fall of night,  
 And swung, borne his strong wing upon,  
     Beyond our sight!  
 Now ye are gone as these are gone, 25  
     And no man answers whither!  
     O ye who were mine own,  
     Where are ye now?  
     What blighting wind was on ye blown  
     That broke ye ere ye learned to bow? 30  
 Ah, as the swans that, hither, thither,  
     Made their blind way within the height,  
     Where no star lit and no sun shone  
     To give them light,

6 man,] ~ *AB* 9 flow;] ~, *AB* 10 thickened] quickened *AB* bough;] ~. *A*  
 ~, *B* 12 winds] ~, *AB* 13 It] Its *A* on,] ~ *AB* 14 fallen] ~, *AB*  
 spent;] ~. *A* ~: *B* 15 gone . . . gone.] ~, . . . ~; *AB* 17 O friends] ~, ~, *AB*  
 I once] once I *B* 18 now?—] ~? *A-C* 19 Ye who] Once ye *AB* You who  
*C* 21 thither)] ~), *AB* ~,) *C* 22 upward] ~, *A* 25 ye are] are ye *B*  
 27 O ye] Ye *AB* were] were once *AB* 29 ye] you *A-C* blown] ~, *AB*  
 30 broke ye] broke you *A-C* 31 Ah] Now *C* 32 height,] ~ *C* 33 lit] ~, *C*  
 shone] ~, *A* 34 light,] ~— *AB*





THE WILD SWAN (1930) 31

As they are gone, so ye are gone, 35  
And now none comes to tell us whither!

O, the lost tribes! . . .  
He came a ghost,  
Where once there walked a host.  
O, the lost tribes! 40

O, the fern, the bonny, bonny fern! . . .  
With what shall we bind ye?  
O scattered tribes, forsaken,  
Whither turn to find ye,  
And from what darkness waken? 45  
Down from your tree the blossom has been shaken.  
O, the fern, the bonny, bonny fern!

When the snow delivers  
Of its burden to the sun,  
Out along the rivers 50  
Cry the waters as they run,  
“Where now are they to whom we once were givers?”  
O, the fern, the bonny, bonny fern!

Where fled the quarry, leaping,  
By hill and creek and plain, 55  
They lie together, sleeping,  
The hunter and the slain!  
Now but the rain remembers them in weeping.  
O, the fern, the bonny, bonny fern!

Never again from the night, the night that has taken, 60  
Shall ever the tribes return to tell us their tale;  
They lie in a sleep, whence none shall ever awaken  
To mark the shadow at noon, or follow the quail.

35 gone, so] ~ ~ C 37 O,] ~ C 40 O,] ~ C 41 O,] ~ C fern! . . .] ~! . . . A  
~! C 42 ye?] ~, A ~. B you, C 43 O] ~, A B forsaken, A] ~? X C  
46 shaken.] ~, A B 47 O,] ~ C fern!] ~. A 52 “Where] ~ B they] ~, A B  
givers?”] ~? B 53 O,] ~ C 57 slain!] ~. A B 58 Now] ~, A B weeping.]  
~: B 59 O,] ~ C 62 whence] where C awaken] ~, A B 63 mark the]  
mark a A make a B



Never again shall be heard the sound of their calling,  
 Through space sent out on a breath, in a cry blown thin; 65  
 Their forests are still; the pad of the soft foot, falling,  
 Returns no more to the camp when the dusk draws in.

Fallen the flame and the spear, and fallen the hunter;  
 The child's bones lie in the grass, by the weed o'ergrown;  
 The gunyah<sup>2</sup> once home is fallen like fallen Arunta,<sup>3</sup> 70  
 Only a womerah<sup>4</sup> left, and a mouldered bone.

Burned in the ash of the fire the conqueror lighted,  
 Driven to drown in the swamp—but the wind their dirge;  
 The hunted of the dogs: whom no man ever has righted;  
 Their blood is black on our hands that nothing can purge. 75

O, the lost tribes! . . .  
 There came a ghost  
 Where once there walked a host.  
 O, the lost tribes!

[\*] In Spring Street, Melbourne, in the winter of 1924, I heard an old blackfellow, sitting out of the wind in the sun, singing over and over again to himself the half-forgotten songs of his people. Once I was “sister” to the aboriginals; long ago when I was a child.

64 calling,] ~ B 65 space] ~, A B out] forth C 70 gunyah] ~, A B home]  
 ~, A B fallen like] ~, ~ A fallen, like the B 72 fire] fires A-C lighted,] ~;  
 A-C 73 swamp—] ~; C 74 The hunted] Hunted A B the] Om. A B  
 dogs:] ~; A-C righted;] ~— A B 75 hands] ~, A B 76 O,] ~ C  
 tribes! . . .] ~ . . . A B ~! C 77 ghost] ~, A B 79 O,] ~ C (n1-4) In . . .  
 child.] Om. D n1 In . . . 1924,] Om. A B n2 out of the wind] in the sun A B  
 in] and in C out of A B sun] wind A B singing] sing A-C again] Om. C  
 n3 to himself] Om. A B people.] people. He sang outside my window in Spring  
 Street, Melbourne, in the winter of 1924. A people. . . . B Once] When I was a  
 child A B “sister”] ~ B n4 aboriginals;] ~. A B long . . . child.] Om. A B

<sup>2</sup> From Dharuk *gunya/ gunyah*: hut of boughs and sheets of bark (Thieberger, Dixon).

<sup>3</sup> See Preface, p. xxxiv. Cf. K2 line 3, K4 line 24 and author's note, K6 line 12, K12 IINE 13 AND R54 IINE 11.

<sup>4</sup> FROM DHARUK *wamara*, Wiradjuri *wamarr*: spear-thrower (Thieberger, Dixon).



## I20 WHERE NOW IS BRIBENABOOKA?\*

Hear, O ye tribes, my words, my words!

Like wind ye came, like wind ye go—

Ye are no more than passing birds

That fly before the storms that blow;

The spear is sped, the lance is sprung,

The fire is dead, the song unsung.

5

Where now is Bribenabooka, he

Whose feet were swift to climb the tree?

Where now is Narrandierra, who

Out of its hole the adder drew?

Where is Kedarr whose pace outran

The white canoe a hundred span?

Where are the masters, where the seers?

Only the wind that passes hears.

10

Never again the mantling trees

That clothed the land will call the bees;

Tamed are the bees, that all their lives

Fly in and out their chambered hives!

Tamed are the bees and tamed the wild,

Charted and fenced and reconciled.

15

Who now sings Mirrabookarra's spear

That swifter flew from year to year—

Swift as a hawk in its hunting flight,

Swift as the star that fled by night?

Father to son it passing came,

Now is there none to name its name.

20

Great was Boondarra, but he is gone,

Great was Bemboka, but he is dust;

Time in his passing took them on,

Time is the judge, and time is just.

25

<sup>30</sup>  
[cont. overleaf]

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SMH*, 23 February 1929, p. 13 as WHERE NOW IS BRIBENABOOKA (A)

1 words!] ~— A    2 go—] ~! A    30 judge,] ~ A    just.] ~; A





But, ah, where lies the page we scan  
How spoiled the writing Time began!

Who now shall call the heroes' song,  
Or shout the challenge from the strong?  
Who hold tradition to the light 35  
Lest it decay and fall to night?  
Fathers and sons a thousand years  
Chanted the names that now none hears;  
The bones are dust, the songs are dead,  
Like leaves a gust of wind has shed. 40

\* The references are to aboriginal historical folk-lore stories. I remember that my father constantly spoke of parallels with the Iliad and the Odyssey; the great spear that no man but the right one could pull out of the tree, being one.

31-2 But . . . began!] Injustice dwells alone with man/ Who blots the page that time began. *A* 34 from] of *A* 35 hold] holds *A* 38 hears;] ~— *A*  
n1 folk-lore] and folklore *A* n4 tree,] ~ *A* one.] one.—M.G. *A*

## I21 THE LAMENT OF THE LUBRA

What have we left of all the long, long years,  
The untouched forest and the vanished tribes?  
O eyes that seek, and seeking shall not find,  
O lips would sing, and know not to what airs,  
O hands would touch, and that find naught to touch, 5  
And memory, within whose urn men keep  
In childish disarray the record of  
The past, now but from fragments shall ye shape  
Anew the lore of this disvalued land!  
The strange romances centuries handed down, 10  
The aspirations of the race we had

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DTNP, 14 May 1927, p. 41 (A) SV(B)*  
*Not otherwise recorded: A's text is in italics throughout.*

2 The untouched] Of ancient *B* 5 and that] but which *B* 8 past,] *past; A*  
8 shall ye] can you *B* 9-10 land!// The] *land!// The A* ~!// ~ *B*





## THE WILD SWAN (1930)

35

Not asked to know—their legends and their dreams—  
 These fallen blossoms of uncounted years,  
 These have we trampled in the dust, and these  
 Laid waste while yet the treasure filled our hands! 15  
 What wise philosophies are lost, where men,  
 Too ignorant to know the silk within  
 The stranger thread, despise, and then destroy!

Beside the riverbank the lubra mourned,  
 She mourned the child the stranger's hand had slain:— 20

“Dear fledgling of the reeds,  
 I hold thee  
 Here at my heart whose needs  
 Foretold thee!  
 Now must the wilgas weep, 25  
 Where lonely thou shalt sleep,  
 Thou who hadst but an hour  
 Ere fallen like a flower.

“How like a broken leaf  
 Art lying 30  
 Slack in my arms of grief,  
 While, flying,  
 Time speeds hastening on!  
 Soon, soon wilt thou be gone,  
 All lonely in thy sleep, 35  
 While o'er thee wilgas weep.

“Yet my heart sees thee near,  
 As standing  
 With thy high-lifted spear  
 Commanding, 40

12 know—] *know*, *A* ~, *B* 13 years,] *years*—*A* ~—*B* 15 hands!] *hands*. *A*  
 ~. *B* 16 lost,] *lost* *A* 18 destroy!] *destroy*. *A* 19 riverbank] *river-bank* *A*  
 river-bank *B* 19 mourned,] ~; *B* 20–1 slain:—// “Dear] *slain*:/ “*Dear* *A*  
 ~:// “~ *B* 21 fledgling] *fledgeling* *B* 23 heart] *heart*, *A* 24 thee!] *thee*; *A*  
 25 wilgas] *wilga's* *A* 29 broken] *bruised* *A* 32 While, flying,] *While flying* *A*  
 35 All] So *B* 35 sleep,] ~ *B* 36 While] Where *B* thee] *the* *A* 37 “Yet *B*]  
 ~ *X* “*Yet* *A* 38 As] *As*, *A* ~, *B* 39 thy *B*] my *X* *thy* *A* 39 high-lifted]  
 up-lifted *B* spear] *spear*, *A*





I watched thee like a king,  
 Fresh from the Bora ring—<sup>1</sup>  
 Who now art but a flower,  
 Low fallen ere its hour.

“O nursling of my heart, 45  
 Thy token  
 Declared thee as a dart  
 Unbroken;  
 Among thy fellows none  
 Made mock of thee, my son! 50  
 Now must the wilgas weep,  
 Where thou, so lone, must sleep!”

*. . . Here I, dreaming a dream of justice, bring  
 This thread of thought to twine from it a chord  
 To make my land a native harp, whereon 55  
 Some day the wind may blow, and one who hears  
 Draw from its slender note a song profound.*

42 ring—] ~. B    43 Who now] Now thou B    43 flower,] ~ B    51 weep,]  
 weep A    52 so lone] alone B    must] shalt A    53 s. . . Here] ~ B    54 thought  
 to] thought, or A

<sup>1</sup> From Kamilaroi *buurra* (Dixon), *boorah* (Parker 1905): site where boys were initiated into manhood in the ceremony of the same name; cf. K17 line 20. Ridley derives it from *bor* or *bur*: the girdle investing the initiate with manhood.

## I22 OUR LOST FIELD\*

Moorangoo, the dove,<sup>1</sup> in her high place mourned,  
 And Mulloka, the Water Spirit, turned  
 In his shade as he heard her weep,  
 Sad as the lone Koala that cries in his sleep

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SMH, 29 October 1927, p. 11 (n. t.) (A)*  
*SV (B)*

*Not otherwise recorded: MG's note, omitted in A, is not signalled in B.*

1 Moorangoo] Moorango A    2 Water Spirit] water spirit A    4 Koala] koala A B

<sup>1</sup> Uncorroborated, as are Aboriginal words at lines 2, 7, 9 and 13.





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

37

At the sound of the gun, 5  
Asking for pity where pity was none.

And Mulloka, looking up to the sky,  
Raised to Mirrabooka, the Cross,<sup>2</sup> his cry;  
Maipoona, the deep water, heard,  
And old Pannamoona, the ocean,<sup>3</sup> stirred 10  
To his depths, and the gilgais<sup>4</sup> shook to the sound  
As it rang to the uttermost bound  
Of Attunga, the height,  
To Biama, All-Father of day and of night.<sup>5</sup>

\* This stanza is taken from a series of articles called "Our Lost Field," which appeared in the "Sydney Morning Herald" in 1927.<sup>6</sup> In these I tried to point out, more fully than in former pleas, what Australia has lost in distinctive literature in not using the aboriginals and aboriginal lore, with their native customs and words. I tried to show by the verse quoted the use that could be made of the material even yet at hand. The words I took without regard to difference in tribal language, applying them as I found them, and purely as an example for others to follow, and do better. n5

5 the gun,] a gun—*A* 6 pity where] ~—~ *A* 6–7 none.// And] ~./ ~ *A*  
11 To his depths] At the call *A* sound] ~, *B* 13 height] Height *A*  
14 Biama *A*] Biama *X* All-Father] All-father *A* n1 Field,"] ~", *B*  
n2 "Sydney Morning Herald"] *Sydney Morning Herald B* n4 aboriginals] ~, *B*  
n4 and aboriginal] their *B* n5 with their] and *B* n9 better.] better. I think Dr  
John Dunmore Lang was the first to do this. *B*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. K1, K3 and K4, and see Preface, p. xxxiii.

<sup>3</sup> From *panamuna*: deep water (Reed).

<sup>4</sup> From Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi *gilgaay*: waterhole, or terrain characterised by the presence of mounds, rims and hollows in which water might accumulate (Dixon).

<sup>5</sup> See I4 n. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Collated state *A*, part of the fourth *SMH* article, showed how schoolchildren might be educated 'in the words belonging to our own country', just as New Zealand children were with Maori language and culture. 'It will be objected here', MG added, 'that I have taken words of mixed dialects and used them as if they were of one dialect and kind . . . but better a bold attempt at something than a dumb acquiescence to silence and nothing'.



I23 THE RING-BARKED TREE<sup>1</sup>

Come not again, lone wandering by the shore,  
 The years have said farewell, and from their place  
 Have blotted out the names thy kindred bore!  
 O come no more!—ask not again to trace,  
 With sad and wistful fingers, 5  
 Where, upon the rocky face,  
 Thy totem sign still lingers;  
 The happy days are gone and none them shall restore.  
 Yet for remembrance this one day remain,  
 And from the box-tree strip thy last canoe; 10  
 Scorch hard the ends and dare the stream again,  
 And, in thy brave courageous passing through,  
 Show us once more the steering  
 That of old the fathers knew,  
 When, on the current veering, 15  
 They held a branch as fin in conquest over strain.  
 Gather the twigs to stay the swirling flow—  
 The little hands the tree hangs down to part,  
 As thou the waters, all the winds that blow;  
 And show the hard white man what ancient art 20  
 Thy worn and ravaged fingers  
 Follow still through memory's chart,  
 As when the old Churingas,\*  
 Guardians of the past, watched with thee long ago.  
 Pole outward to the stream's high crest, and let 25  
 Thy lubra trail the sternward branch to steer,

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV(A)*

*Not otherwise recorded:* Except where noted, copy-text instances of 'thou', 'thee' and 'thy' are replaced by 'you' and 'your' in *A*. MG's note is not signalled in *A*.

4 more!—ask] ~! ~ *A* 7 Thy] The *A* 8 The] Your *A* 12 thy] a *A* brave]  
 ~, *A* 16 branch] ~, *A* fin] ~, *A* 18 part,] ~ *A* 19 As] (~ *A* waters,] ~) *A*

<sup>1</sup> A tree killed by cutting a circle of bark around the entire trunk, usually to clear land; here a metaphor for the destroyed Aboriginal way of life (line 36). Bark for canoe-making (line 10) was stripped lengthwise.





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

39

Moving the bodies' balance—easing yet—  
 As currents, roiling,<sup>2</sup> touch the banks and veer;  
 And, lest thy frail craft flinder<sup>3</sup>  
 In the midst, and no help near, 30  
 Where the stream angles hinder,  
 With hand and leaf diffuse what pressures toward thee set.  
 Then when thou comest to thy landing place,  
 Who hast so used the stream it ferried thee,  
 Turn toward the setting sun thy lonely face, 35  
 And read thy history in a ring-barked tree.  
 O shadowy wanderer on a twilit shore,  
 Return no more! Ask not again to trace,  
 With sad and ravaged fingers,  
 Where upon the rocky face 40  
 Thy totem sign still lingers.  
 The happy days are gone and none them shall restore.

\* Churingas are sacred stones, or emblems of wood, intricately carved and with hidden meanings in the carving.<sup>4</sup> Every tribe and family had them. Great care was taken of them, and if my memory is not at fault they were the title deeds of tribal land boundaries, together with rights of hunting, fishing and safe conduct in travel. I do remember that a tribe or group without them could be treated as trespassers, and killed, when passing through territory not their own when on their way from the plains to the rivers; a migration in olden times made regularly for the fish season. The tribe that lived nearest the Murrumbidgee, in the case that I remember, would cross to the far side, leaving the other bank free to the strangers for the time of their stay. Riparian rights everywhere were open to all, but they were regulated by inter-tribal law.<sup>5</sup> Further, there was an interchange made in that when those near the rivers wanted another kind of diet they were allowed to hunt unmolested for a fixed period in certain parts of the territory of those on the plains, with a n5  
n10  
n15

28 currents, roiling,] roiling currents *A*    30 midst] flood *A*    33 thou comest to] at last you reach *A*    34 hast so used] bid *A*    it ferried thee] your ferry-hand to be *A*    35 toward] to *A*    41 Thy] The *A*    lingers.] ~! *A*    42 gone] ~, *A*  
 n4 were] were in a way *A*    land] *Om. A*    n5 fishing] ~, *A*    n7 when passing] if passing *A*    n8 in olden times] *Om. A*    n9-10 in . . . remember] when I was a child *A*    n12 Further,] ~ *A*    n15 with] allowing *A*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. I5 n. 2.    <sup>3</sup> Rare verb meaning to break into flinders or pieces.  
<sup>4</sup> Cf. Dixon: 'sacred ceremonial objects', from Arrernte (see Preface, p. xxxiv); see further K1 author's note for line 26, K2, K3 line 4, R65 line 10 and R69 entry for n17-24. As





return right for those on the plains who needed fish and water-fowl. It was conceded that when the tribal health required it, this should be done. All this I heard at later times from my father, but I quite well remember being taken as a little child to the bank of the Murrumbidgee and having it explained to me, then, as showing how wise and just for the conservation of their people the aboriginal laws were. n20

n16–17 water-fowl] water fowl<sup>A</sup> n17 it,] ~<sup>A</sup> n18–21 All . . . were.] *Om. A*

a name for Australia, see K1 line 26, K2 line 7 and P1 line 6, and for a bull-roarer see I26 n. 2.

<sup>5</sup> In English Common Law, any person owning and occupying land on the bank of a natural stream acquires rights to use its waters. In Aboriginal law the land was not owned and access was communal, although tribal territorial occupation might modify rights of usage.

## I24 UNTO THEE, BIAMI,<sup>1</sup> UNTO THEE

Unto Thee, Biami, unto Thee!  
The woods call, and the stream  
Sings as of old, but we  
Are but drift of a dream.

The stranger came, and no more the shield 5  
Is in the hand! The spear  
Lies broken in the field,  
Like summer grass in sere.

Fallen is the boomerang, and slow  
The swift foot once so free, 10  
Homeless and lone we go,  
O Biami, to Thee.

Unto Thee, Biami! for in Thee  
Hunger shall end, and thirst  
That wrung no longer be 15  
Dry at the breast that nurst;

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV(A)*

*Not otherwise recorded:* A provides an unsignalled endnote gloss on Biami as ‘God the All-Father’.

7 field,] ~<sup>A</sup> 10 free,] ~; <sup>A</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See I4 n. 2.





## THE WILD SWAN (1930)

41

We shall not be afraid in the night;  
 But the fire shall be lit,  
 And secure in the light  
 Of it there we shall sit.

20

Unto Thee, Biامي, unto Thee,  
 Ending we go.

16 nurst;] ~! A    17 night;] ~, A    22 go.] ~. A

## 125 THE HUNTER OF THE BLACK\*

Softly footed as a myall,<sup>1</sup> silently he walked,  
 All the methods of his calling learned from men he stalked;  
 Tall he was, and deeply chested, eagle-eyed and still,  
 Every muscle in his body subject to his will.

Dark and swarthy was his colour; somewhere Hampshire born; 5  
 Knew no pity for the hunted—weakness all his scorn;  
 Asked no friendship, shunned no meetings, took what life  
 might bring;

Came and went among his fellows something like a king.

Paid each debt with strict exactness, what the debt might be;  
 Called no man employed him master; master's equal, he; 10  
 Yet there was not one who sought him, none who held his hand,  
 Never father, calling, bid him join the family band.

[*cont. overleaf*]

(20 July 1925) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Bn, 17 September 1930, Red Page, signed MARY GILMORE (in the "Wild Swan," just published by Robertson and Mullens) (A) SV (B) Trib, 26 November 1952, p. 8 (C) Pizer (D)*

*Not otherwise recorded: C indicates omission of stanzas 4 and 5 with a line of four asterisks. MG's note, omitted in C, is not signalled in B.*

1 walked,] ~ C    2 stalked;] ~ C    3 was,] ~ C    5 colour] color A C  
 6 hunted—] ~, B ~; C    all] met B C    7 friendship] friendships C    8 king.]  
 ~; B    10 equal,] ~ A C    11 hand,] ~; B C    12 father,] ~ B C    calling,] ~ C  
 bid] bade A

<sup>1</sup> From Dharuk *mayall/ miyal*: a stranger (Dixon), thus an Aborigine living in a traditional tribal way, outside European civilisation. Author's notes for K15 and K23 give it as a general term for Aborigines. It also means native vegetation (cf. *myall*: a drooping acacia, Parker 1905): see I37 line 26, K15 entry for n1, R55 author's note for line 4, and R70.



Tales and tales were told about him, how, from dawn till dark,  
 Noiselessly he trailed his quarry, never missed a mark,  
 How the twigs beneath his footstep “moved but never broke,” 15  
 How the very fires he kindled “never made a smoke.”

Men would tell, with puzzled wonder marked on voice and brow,  
 How he'd stand a moment talking, leave, and none knew how;  
 “He was there! . . .” and then had vanished, going as he came,  
 Like the passing of a shadow, like a falling flame. 20

Once (I heard it when it happened) word was sent, to him,  
 Of a lone black on Mamoosa—O, the hunting grim!  
 Through three days and nights he tracked him, never asking  
 sleep;  
 Shot, for him who stole the country, him who killed a sheep.

Tomahawk in belt, as only adults needed shot, 25  
 No man knew how many notches totalled up his lot;  
 But old stockmen striking tallies, rough and ready made,  
 Reckoned on at least a thousand, naming camps decayed.

Time passed on, and years forgotten whitened with the dust;  
 He whose hands were red with slaughter sat among the just, 30  
 Kissed the children of his children, honoured in his place,  
 Turned and laid him down in quiet, asking God His grace.

\* Called in those days a sharp-shooter; to-day he would be a sniper.  
 I remember this man well. I met one of his daughters lately, but I did  
 not mention that I had known her father, or knew what he had been.  
 He had a large family and many grandchildren, and as a paid killer of  
 the black, he was but one of many. n5

(13–20) Tales . . . flame.] *Om. C* 13 till] to *A* 15 footstep] footsteps *A*  
 broke,] ~, *B* 16 smoke.]] ~. *B* 17 tell,] ~ *AB* wonder] ~, *B* brow,]  
 ~ *A* 18 how;] ~. *A* 19 “He was there! . . .”] “~ ~ ~!” . . . *A* “*He was*  
*there!*” *B* 20 the] a *D* 21 happened)] ~,) *B* word was] words were *A*  
 sent,] ~ *A-C* him,] ~ *A-C* 22 Mamoosa] Mimoso *BC* O,] ~ *BC*  
 23 nights] night *A* 26 lot;] ~. *A* 31 honoured] honored *AC* place,] ~. *C*  
 32 His] his *BC* *ni* in ] *Om. D* *ni* sharp-shooter;] ~, *B* *ni* to-day] today *BD*  
 (n2–5) I remember . . . many.] *Om. B* *n2* this] the *D* *n3* father,] ~ *D*  
 n5 black,] ~ *A*

## I26 O, RACE THE FOREST KNEW

Blow, blow ye winds, and bid the mountains hear once more  
 their call;  
 Echo again, ye streams, the rustle of a foot's light fall;  
 Mourn for them, hills, and O, ye grasses, cry,  
 Grieving for those whom we condemned to die!  
 Hunters no more, no more they stalk the quarry through  
 the glade, 5  
 Passing like shadows through the trees, and shades within a  
 shade;  
 No more the womerah<sup>1</sup> speeds the driving spear—  
 The tribes have fallen like the leaves of yester-year!  
 The Murrumbidgee whisp'ring at its banks cries, "Where  
 are they  
 Whose thousand camp-fires drove the darkness of the night  
 away?" 10  
 Silent the camps—the tawny embers cold,  
 No more to throw on night their scattered gold.  
 Climbing the sky the moon peers through each dusky tree:  
 "Were they not here," she says, "who month by month  
 measured by me  
 The ceremonial and the feast, and sung 15  
 The waking life within the initiate young?"

[*cont. overleaf*](21 August 1925) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV* as O RACE THE FOREST KNEW (*A*)

*Not otherwise recorded:* In *A*, MG adds this unsignalled note, referring to lines 42–4: 'When a black twirled his spear, threw it up above his head, caught it again without stopping the twirl, and then launched it forward while rotation was still in it, it meant death. The spear was held in the middle for this tossing and twirling, and in its descent caught farther back for the drive. The catch and drive had to be simultaneous, otherwise the twirl was lost. As a child I used to stand in terror or run like lightning into the house and shut the door when I saw this. Yet, because of father, I was always safe.'

1 mountains] mountain *A*    3 them,] ~ *A*    and O,] ~, ~ *A*    grasses,] ~ *A*  
 9 whisp'ring] whispering *A*    11 camps—] ~, *A*    14 here,] ~ *A*    says] asks *A*

<sup>1</sup> See I19 n. 4.



“Were they not here who twined the hunter’s belt of  
 ’possum fur,  
 Who loopd the snare, and edged the boy’s spear with a  
 plover’s spur;  
 Who drew the lengthened sinew out, that bound  
 The whirling flint rolled silence in its sound?”<sup>2</sup> 20

Disconsolate and sad she wanders on, disconsolate  
 She moves through heaven; and as the wonga-wonga<sup>3</sup>  
 mourns its mate,  
 She downward peers amid the trees to call  
 The lost of every creek and waterfall!

O race the forest knew in days gone by! 25  
 O people of the wild!  
 As winds blow out the cloud against the sky,  
 So were ye rent and blown, so flung to die,  
 The father slain beside the child.

The broлга<sup>4</sup> called you brother, and the swan 30  
 Declared your name abroad;  
 The lizard wrote your shadow on  
 The rock at noon, and as the night came, wan,  
 Your symbol in the sky was to’ard!

Now is there no one left to name the stars 35  
 Whose constellations spake  
 For you the way your fathers trod, as Mars

17 Were] Came *A* ’possum] possum *A* 18 loopd] looped *A* spur;] ~, *A*  
 19 out,] ~ *A* 22 and] ~, *A* 28 die,] ~— *A* 31 abroad] on high *A*  
 33 noon,] ~; *A* as] when *A* 34 symbol . . . to’ard!] starry symbol lit the sky. *A*  
 35 is there] there is *A*

<sup>2</sup> Describes the making of a bull-roarer, a piece of flint or wood attached to a string and whirled in the air to make a roaring sound; used in ceremonies and rituals and therefore sometimes called a *churinga* (see I23 n. 4). On different kinds and functions of bull-roarers, see K1 line 19 and author’s note, K9 author’s note, and K17 lines 27–8 and author’s note. MG’s ‘nurmi’ or ‘narmi’ for the small bull-roarer she calls the ‘woman-drawer’ (see K1 author’s note for line 19, K8, K9 and R69) is uncorroborated.

<sup>3</sup> From Dharuk *wanga wanga*: the wonga pigeon (Dixon).

<sup>4</sup> From Kamilaroi *burralga*: dancing bird (Dixon); cf. *b<sup>u</sup>ralga* (Ridley), *brälgha* (Parker), *baralga* (Reed).





THE WILD SWAN (1930) 45

And Buddha speak the ancient avatars,<sup>5</sup>  
 And, silent, still the silence break;

Now is there none to tell the hidden lore, 40  
 To shape anew the bowl of stone,  
 To twirl the spear that, ere the rifle-bore,  
 Bid weaponed flight sail straight nor wasting soar,  
 Death writ on every shaft so thrown!

We who destroyed denied the tribal law 45  
 We who had not wit to read;  
 Upon a rock a flawed stone all we saw,  
 Where the unknown had put his hand to draw  
 The emblem of his race and creed . . .

There is a star that shines at eve above the mountain edge, 50  
 And o'er the darkling verge of forest and of sedge,  
 Like a benignant face that turns in grief  
 Where life's poor blotted story stains a leaf:

There swims a moon within the sky, that hangs like some  
 great tear,  
 A tear which, rounding out, yet may not fall (as set too near 55  
 The heart of God) lest it should once again  
 Flow forth, and drown the sinful race of men:

There is a Pity, infinite, wherein the slayer and  
 The slain lie in a sleep; and there the earth lays hand in hand:  
 There Death pleads up to God for brotherhood! 60  
 O ill deeds done, be yet man's plough for good!

40 Now] Nor *A* none] one *A* 41 anew the] the grinder's *A* 42 spear] ~, *A*  
 46 who] *Om. A* 49 <sup>s</sup>creed . . .] ~ . . . *A* 53 poor] ~, *A* leaf:] ~; *A*  
 57 men:] ~; *A* 59 hand:] ~, *A* 60 There Death] While death *A*  
 61 good!] ~, *A*

<sup>5</sup> I.e. give names to past manifestations of the divine in physical form.



## I27 PRIMEVAL AUSTRALIA

Lift up, ye Winds, and part the cloudy curtains of the sky  
 That they may feel the sun, on whom has fallen the dark!  
 And, O ye lamps of Memory, that years gone by  
 Must cling to for remembering, out of your spark  
 Send forth a ray to tell to later comers 5  
 All that has vanished with the far-off summers.

Tell of the tribes that once were many as the sands—  
 Were many as the landward waves where storm-winds blow,  
 Bidding the white-caps leap till each a moment stands  
 O'er watery wastes far seen, before it falling goes! 10  
 O Memory, tell of these to later comers,  
 Lest we forget them and their far-off summers!

Tell of the kangaroos, whose numbers none could name,  
 Lifting above the grass their heads of stately mien;  
 They played as children play when dusk of evening came, 15  
 They played again at dawn where now no play is seen!  
 Tell of them, Winds, to all the later comers,  
 Lest none remember them and their far summers!

Tell of the emu rising like a king of birds,  
 His nesting place the earth, his pasture all the land; 20  
 Now where he led his flock deploy man's spreading herds,  
 While where he with his young ones stalked great cities stand.  
 O Memory, wake and tell the later comers,  
 Lest he go unremembered with his summers!

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DTPS, 23 July 1926, p. 2 (A) SV(B)*

*Not otherwise recorded:* The division of stanzas in *A* (lines 17–22 grouped as stanza 4 and lines 23–30 as stanza 5) is corrected by MG in the clipping held in ML 17/9. *A's* text is in italics throughout.

1 ye] O *B* Winds] *winds A* 1 sky] ~, *B* 2 sun,] ~ *B* 3 O] O, *A*  
 lamps] *Lamps A* 3 Memory,] ~ *B* 8 Were many] Many *B* storm-winds]  
*storm winds A* blow,] *blow A* 9 Bidding] *And bid A* leap] *leap, A*  
 9 stands] ~, *B* 11 these] him *B* 12 summers!] *summers. A* ~. *B* 16 seen!]  
*seen. A* 20 land;] ~! *B* 21 Now] ~, *B* 21 flock] ~, *B* 22 While] ~, *B*  
 22 stalked] ~, *B* 23 wake . . . the] *tell of him to A* tell of him to *B*





THE WILD SWAN (1930) 47

Tell of the brolga and his ancient minuet 25

Learned long before the race of man began to climb;

A scattered few there be that somewhere dance it, yet,

As children whisper vaguely on a broken rhyme:

Tell of it, O ye Winds, to later comers,

Lest they forget these, too, and all their summers! 30

For centuries untold, at dawn the forest stirred

To multitudinous voices chirping to the sky;

Saw the wing-stretching of the newly-wakened bird,

And heard amid the down the hungry nestlings cry:

Now who is left to tell to later comers 35

All this, O Winds that knew the far-off summers?

Upon the earth a thousand wandering tracks enlaced,

Like rain-made rivulets that move towards a stream;

Here the echidna crept, and there the dingo paced,

Yonder the quail set, trembling, at the eagle's scream. 40

O Memory, wake and tell to later comers

What wonder and what lore filled far-off summers!

Once all the whole year through the happy Bush was loud;

And, O, the singing and the chatter after rain!

Now on the plains the grass is like an empty shroud; 45

The woods are silent—for the hand of man has slain:

And ye will never know, ye later comers,

What we, who pass, knew in the old far summers!

25 minuet] *minuet*, *A* ~, *B* 27 it,] *it* *A* ~ *B* 28 rhyme:] *rhyme*. *A* 29 it]  
 these *B* 30 these] them *B* 32 sky:] ~, *B* 34 cry:] *cry*. *A* ~. *B*  
 36 Winds] *Winds*, *A* 37 enlaced,] ~ *B* 38 Like *Ed.*] Lake *X* *B* Like *A*  
 40 set] sat *B* 40 trembling,] ~ *B* 43 Bush] *bush* *A* bush *B* 44 O,] ~ *B*  
 46 silent—] ~, *B* slain:] *slain*. *A* 47 ye . . . ye] *ye will never know*, *ye* *A* you  
 . . . you *B* 48 summers!] *summers*. *A*



I28 KOSCIUSKO AND CANBERRA<sup>1</sup>

Hear Kosciusko call his brother heights,  
 And breathe in icicles upon the wind!  
 And hear his henchmen shout each note, until,  
 Beyond the ranges borne—by distance thinned—  
 The mighty-sounded names seem but the breath 5  
 Of soft airs falling to their death!

Calls Kosciusko to the Kookbundoons,  
 Crookwell and Laggan answer him again,  
 And yet his cry, insistent, searches forth  
 Where bleak Taralga breeds her hardy men; 10  
 And there he piles the snow on fell and moor,  
 And writes in sleet on every door.

And still he calls, till all the drowsy vales  
 Of Pejar and lone Grabben Gullen wake,  
 And don for him the garment of the frost 15  
 Until the very grass-blades, trodden, break  
 And crackle like the twig that summer burns  
 Beneath the solstice ere it turns.

Then on through poplared Roslyn runs his voice,  
 And beats upon the golden Autumn leaves 20  
 His bannered words, which, to the listening ear,  
 Whisper of patterns that the hearth-fire weaves;  
 Of wood high-heaped upon the whitened hobs,  
 And flame that quivering leaps and throbs.

(3 May 1927) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DTNP, 7 May 1927, p. 22 (A)*

*Not otherwise recorded: A's text is in italics throughout; the swung dash in this collation means the repeated word is in italics. MG's note is omitted in A.*

3 hear . . . shout] *shouts his henchman there A* 14 Pejar] *Pijar A* 15 frost] ~, *A*  
 16 break] ~, *A* 17 crackle] ~, *A* 18 solstice] ~, *A* 20 Autumn] *autumn A*  
 22 that] *th[. . .] A* weaves:] ~ *A* 23 Of wood] *In logs, A* 24 that quivering]  
 ~, ~, *A*

<sup>1</sup> In 1927 Canberra became the new home of the government of the Commonwealth of Australia with the opening of the temporary Parliament House. The highest mountain in Australia, now spelled Kosciuszko, was named in 1840 by explorer P. E. Strzelecki



THE WILD SWAN (1930) 49

Ainslie and Tidbimbilla<sup>2</sup> answer him, 25  
 And from his heights Mount Campbell makes reply;  
 And, where a blue Sierra lifts its points,  
 The Murrumbidgee Ranges hear his cry:  
 Which softly onward to the plains is borne,  
 Like the last note of some far horn. 30

. . . To-day\* he calls upon his brother heights  
 To greet Canberra, waking like a bride;  
 Old Father Dandenong has heard his voice,  
 Mount Lofty answers from the Torrens' side;  
 The gaunt Coolgardie Ranges lift the head, 35  
 And hear again lost myriads tread!

The Barron Falls have lent a bridal veil,  
 Tasmania knits a scarf of silver lace—  
 Behold she stands; whom nations yet shall hail,  
 The sun of morning on her lovely face! 40  
 She comes, unhistoried 'mid her mountain walls,  
 Where Kosciusko waits and calls.

\* The opening of Canberra as the capital of Australia.

27 a] *the* *A* 28 cry:] ~, *A* 29 Which] *That*, *A* softly] ~, *A* 31 To-day\*]  
*To-day* *A* heights] ~, *A* 36 myriads] *millions* *A* tread!] ~, *A* 39 Behold]  
*See where* *A* stands;] ~, *A* 41 unhistoried] ~, *A* 42 Where] *Whom* *A*  
 waits] *hails* *A* calls.] ~! *A*

after Polish patriot Tadeusz Kosciuszko (1746–1817). It and other places named up to line 30 are in the Australian Capital Territory or nearby in NSW. From line 33 Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland are designated by a representative mountain, while Tasmania is directly named.

<sup>2</sup> Standard spelling is now Tidbinbilla.



I29 CASTERTON<sup>1</sup> TO MOUNT GAMBIER

O, to go out once more and see the moon's clear shining  
 Break on the waters into silver bars,  
 Hear the curlew and plover call, in lonely pining,  
 Under the spear-points of ten thousand stars;  
 To stand where opening spaces show the heath's low level, 5  
 And watch the gold of early morning rim the sedge;  
 Where, in the long lagoon, the rippling wavelets bevel,<sup>2</sup>  
 As the black swan swings downward to the water's edge!

Once more to see the Blue Lake,<sup>3</sup> like a sapphire shimmer  
 In the deep heart of steep descents of green; 10  
 To watch again in winter nights the stars' faint glimmer  
 Tremble in waterpools where rain has been;  
 To feel across Strathdownie heaths,<sup>4</sup> in distance risen,  
 The soft, susurrant wind climb upward to the hill,  
 And hear the sunny bees, in some fair flowering prison, 15  
 Murmur of sweets where eucalyptine perfumes spill!

O, to pull rein on one clear height, and there, in wonder,  
 Mark the far summit of Mount Gambier rise,  
 Above the faint and misty veils, the heavens under,  
 Like some great finger pointing to the skies! 20  
 For there in quick, courageous hours of youth, high-hearted,  
 Life stood immortal in its own immortal dreams,

(9–12 April 1924) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DT, 19 September 1925, p. 10*  
 (A) *SV(B)*

1 O,] ~ B 3 call,] ~ B pining,] ~ B 4 spear-points] spearpoints *AB*  
 6 sedge;] ~, *AB* 7 bevel,] ~ A 9 Lake,] ~ *AB* 17 O,] ~ B 18 rise,]  
 ~ *AB*

<sup>1</sup> Casterton is in s.w. Victoria where MG lived (1903–11) nearby on the Gilmore farm or in the township itself (see volume 1, Introduction, p. xl).

<sup>2</sup> Go on the angle, normally used of hard surfaces.

<sup>3</sup> In a volcanic crater close to Mount Gambier, where poet and horseman Adam Lindsay Gordon (1833–70) leapt his horse over the safety fence onto the narrow edge of the crater. On Gordon, see I31 and n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Strathdownie is a scrubland area of heath and marshes between Casterton and the South Australian border area of which Mount Gambier is the main town.



E'en though it saw where from on high the falcon darted,  
 And heard the dying leveret perish in its screams!

Once, there, through a night I rode with the moon high-sailing, <sup>25</sup>  
 Naught heard but the sound of the wheel, the hoof,  
 When came the cry of a child, like a ghostly wailing,  
 From the pallid shield of a frost-bound roof;  
 Only that and the crackle of frore<sup>5</sup> in its breaking  
 Under the firm strong shoes, and the turn of the wheel; <sup>30</sup>  
 Only the click of ice as it sprang in the making,  
 Where the splash of the waters lay under its seal!

. . . I dream I hear in Cawker's paddocks<sup>6</sup> the hoof-beats flying,  
 Where the foals string out like pennons that sway behind;  
 I hear the whinnying mares make answer to their crying, <sup>35</sup>  
 And stirs, as of old, a thought long kept in mind;  
 And I have written it here that others may read it,  
 And seal with the seal of love what all should keep;  
 For memory starves, if never comes one to feed it,  
 When they whom the land first knew in its bosom sleep! <sup>40</sup>

23 where] ~, B high] ~, B 24 screams!] ~. A 25 rode] drove, B high-sailing]  
 high sailing A B 26 wheel] trace B 29 that] ~, B breaking] ~, B 30 shoes,]  
 ~ B 36 mind;] ~. A 38 keep;] ~, B 40 they] ~, B knew] ~, B

<sup>5</sup> I.E. FROSTY GRASS (NEOLOGISM).

<sup>6</sup> THOMAS CAWKER (1837–1926) operated a livery stables in Casterton – which ‘lost a friend, a sportsman and a man’ through his death (Mount Gambier *Border Watch*, 19 December 1927). See further I31, line 18 and n. 2.

## I30 MALEBO\*

There is a hill—I know it well;  
 Sunlit it stands, and odorous of pine;  
 The river in the distance runs  
 With many a rounding curve and twine;  
 And, there, in the heavy trees <sup>5</sup>  
 Is heard  
 The low song of a bird,  
 And the bombinating<sup>1</sup> bees.





Bunched in the cool of dusky swales<sup>2</sup>  
 That by the river lie, as huge black shapes 10  
 The cattle stand, darked by the sun  
 Whose brilliance deeps what shadow drapes.  
 There, as wandering fancies cruise,  
 They seem  
 Like things half seen, in dream, 15  
 When the summer noons bemuse.

There, too, in days long, long gone by,  
 My father set his mill, and the pit-saw  
 Sang like a greater bird its song,  
 As it cut where a line was law. 20  
 How still the great plumbob<sup>3</sup> hung!  
 How clear  
 To the young listening ear  
 Steel teeth on the white logs rung!

Maybe on Malebo is still 25  
 One who remembers how my father ran,  
 And with his bare hands held the log  
 That, slumbering<sup>4</sup> down, had nipped its man!  
 So little he thought the deed,  
 Unheard 30  
 It went, save one told, stirred,  
 How quick his mind to the need.

\* \* \* \*

What others played I know not; we  
 In self-contained content, tradition-learned,

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV(A)*

*Not otherwise recorded:* MG's note is not signalled in *A*. There is a second note in *A* on the Horse-stinger (line 43) as 'the dragonfly, also called "the devil's darning needle", from the way it "darns" the air in flight.'

15 seen,] ~ *A*    21 hung!] ~; *A*    24 logs] slabs *A*    31 save] till *A*  
 32.1 \*... \*] *Om. A*    33 we] ~, *A*

<sup>1</sup> Buzzing, humming.    <sup>2</sup> Patches of shade.

<sup>3</sup> A metal bob attached to the end of a plumbline, used to determine perpendicularity.

<sup>4</sup> Portmanteau word from slamming and lumbering.





THE WILD SWAN (1930) 53

Dwelt in a world whose olden flame 35  
 Beside our humbler hearth-fire burned;  
 So Roland to the Dark Tower came;  
 There Ilium fell;  
 There Merlin wove his spell;  
 There was proclaimed proud Iseult's fame.<sup>5</sup> 40

And when Spring brought the buttercup,  
 And o'er the rushy coolamons<sup>6</sup> the grey  
 "Horse-stinger" poised in shining mail,  
 Or like a spear sped on away,  
 Then as crusaders bold we flew, 45  
 Banner and cross,  
 A straddled stick for horse,  
 That haughty paynim<sup>7</sup> to pursue.

And in still nights, when o'er the Bush  
 The moon moved like a ship that no man's hand 50  
 Drave on, as mystic, wonderful,  
 Unshadowed she shadowed the land,  
 Held there enthralled, we watched her go,  
 Racing the cloud,  
 Or, calm and ample-prowed, 55  
 Sail lone, and white as the white snow.

There, the lamp lit, came bumping in  
 The beetle upward veering toward the height;  
 And a little moth, like a knot  
 Of silk, slew itself in the light; 60

36 burned;] ~, A 38 fell;] ~, A 39 spell;] ~, A 40 There was proclaimed]  
 And there was told A 41 Spring] spring A 42 rushy] reedy A 43 "Horse-  
 stinger"] ~ A 44 on] far A 48 That] Some A 49 in] on A Bush] bush A  
 54 cloud,] ~; A

<sup>5</sup> References are to the romantic narratives of Robert Browning's 'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came' (*Men and Women*, 1855), Homer's *Iliad* and Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur* (c. 1470), which includes the stories of the wizard Merlin and the doomed lovers Tristan and Iseult. Cf. childhood reading and make-believe games in G12, H69 and I97.

<sup>6</sup> From Kamilaroi *kuluman* (Ridley) or *gulaman* (Dixon): a wooden vessel for carrying water, by extension a small lake or waterhole; cf. K4 author's note for line 12.

<sup>7</sup> Pagan.





While in the dark outside, the oak  
 Stood sentinel,  
 And in the sky's deep well  
 Star to star calling woke . . .

Odorous of pine is the hill, 65  
 And the years nor lessen nor take away

That scent, nor the hush on the air  
 Of a noon on a summer's day.

Beautiful is Malebo, 70  
 Although

Never again I go  
 Where the warm winds o'er it blow.

\* A hill near Wagga Wagga.

64 woke . . . ] ~. A      nr A] Malebo: a A

### I31 THE GORDON FOX

We found the fox, we found the fox,  
 We found the fox at Dingley Dell!<sup>1</sup>  
 I heard the hounds tongue out their cry,  
 I heard the huntsman pounding by,  
 I heard the heathcock rise and fly, 5  
 As we went hunting the fox!  
 As we went hunting the fox!  
 The fox! The fox!

Away! Away! The fox! Away!  
 The fox we hunt at Dingley Dell! 10  
 The mare extends and pulls her head,  
 Her eyes are lit, her nostril red,

(n. d.) *Copy-text*: WS *Collated states*: Bn, 19 December 1928, Red Page as THE GORDON FOX! (A)<sup>2</sup>

*Not otherwise recorded*: The collation for lines 23–4 and 31–2 is identical to 15–16.

4 huntsman] huntsmen A      9 Away! Away] ~! away A      fox! Away] ~!—away A

12 nostril] nostrils A

<sup>1</sup> Adam Lindsay Gordon's cottage near Mount Gambier. See also I29 n. 3.







THE WILD SWAN (1930)

55

She bites the bit as it were bread—  
 As we go hunting the fox!  
 As we go hunting the fox! 15  
 The fox! The fox!

Jack Filgate lifts and cracks a fence,  
 And Cawker<sup>3</sup> flings the brush aside;  
 While o'er the hill, and down the dale,  
 The hounds and huntsmen string and trail 20  
 Like wind behind the rusty tail—  
 As we go hunting the fox!  
 As we go hunting the fox!  
 The fox! The fox!

His pads he beats to save his brush, 25  
 The fox we hunt at Dingley Dell;  
 Four small round pads that carry him,  
 O'er hill and scarp, and valley rim,  
 Beyond the hounds and huntsmen grim—  
 As we go hunting the fox! 30  
 As we go hunting the fox!  
 The fox! The fox!

Hola! Hola! Away! Away!  
 If lost the fox at Dingley Dell,  
 The huntsman lifts his glass and cries, 35  
 "Here's to the fox where'er he lies!  
 Here's to the hope that never dies!"  
 As we go hunting the fox!  
 As we go hunting the fox!  
 The fox! The fox! 40

15–16 As . . . fox! The fox!] *Om. A* 17 lifts] ~, *A* 19 hill,] ~ *A* dale,] ~ *A*  
 21 tail—] ~, *A* 25 beats] heats *A* brush] mask *A* 27 small round] little *A*  
 that] to *A* him,] ~ *A* 28 scarp,] ~ *A* rim,] ~ *A* 33 Away! Away!] ~! ~!  
 . . . *A* 37 dies!" ~" — *A*

<sup>2</sup> Printed in *Bn* to support MG's suggestion that the newly-formed FAW should 'make a new song every year in remembrance of the past, or in celebration of the present . . . It is written in memory of Gordon. Filgate and Cawker were friends of his; he was a rider, and if there had been a fox at Dingley Dell he could not have helped hunting it. If there were no fox, then that was the fault of the times and not of Gordon.'

<sup>3</sup> See I29 n. 6.



## I32 THE WILD HORSES

Let the dark mountain shake to the thunder  
     Where the wild horses trample the fern,  
 Let the deep vales re-echo and wonder,  
     When, like an eddy, they circle and turn!  
         Watch the lithe motion 5  
         Run free as an ocean,  
 Never has man laid a hand on a head;  
     Never a halter  
     Has bid a step falter,  
 Never a crest bent down to be led! 10  
 Mark, in their starting, the pride of their bearing!  
     Swift wheel the leaders, each in his place;  
 Snorting, they stare at us, timid and daring,  
     Ere with a whirl they are off at a race.  
         O, the wild sally, 15  
         As, down through the valley,  
 Turn they again to the mountains they know;  
     Chased and the chaser  
     Outstretched like a racer,  
 Where, as the wind, unconquered they go! 20  
 Follow them, hunter, follow and follow—  
     Let the heart pound its answering beat—  
 Over the top, and into the hollow,  
     Where the loud echoes awake and repeat!  
         On through the timber, 25  
         Quick thew and limber,<sup>1</sup>  
 While the wide nostril drinks deep of the air;

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DT, 2 May 1925, p. 10 (A) SV (B) Mackanness (C)*

2 fern,] ~; A 3 wonder,] ~ A 6 ocean,] ~— A 7 head;] ~: B 9 falter,]  
 ~; A 10 led!] ~ A 11 bearing!] ~ C 15 O,] ~ B sally,] ~ A  
 16 through] *Om. A* 21 follow—] ~! A 23 top,] ~ A hollow,] ~ A

<sup>1</sup> Speedy and supple muscle.



THE WILD SWAN (1930)

57

Never feet blunder  
 Where tree and rock sunder,  
 Never a balk,<sup>2</sup> but its conquest is there. 30

Lift, for your life, where the low logs are lying;  
 Swing from the branches, sway from the brush;  
 Clamber the rocks—the hoof-beats are flying—  
 Bend to the withers, and leap for the rush!  
 O, the hard panting 35  
 For breath that is wanting;  
 O, the drooped head, and the fallen-in flanks!  
 Winded and shaken,  
 Yet never o'ertaken,  
 Hear the shrill leader rally the ranks! 40

What though the pommel scarce keep you from reeling;  
 What though the breath be almost a cry;  
 What though all turn in a dream that is stealing  
 Sense from intention and light from the eye—  
 Follow them, follow, 45  
 By height and by hollow;  
 Follow them, follow, whatever the course!  
 Soon will the wonder  
 Die out with the thunder,  
 Soon will the mountain forget the wild horse. 50

29 sunder,] ~ A    30 balk,] ~ A    32 branches,] ~; A    41 reeling;] ~, B  
 42 cry;] ~, B

<sup>2</sup> OBSTACLE, BARRIER



I33 PEJAR CREEK<sup>1</sup>

Deep in the meadow grass  
 Easy stand the cattle,  
 Lightly lock the young bulls  
 In a mimic battle,  
 Pride gathers with each shock, 5  
 Every break and rally—  
 That's where the Pejar runs,  
 Runs like a slip of silver through the valley.

Softly as a thrush sings  
 In the morning hushes, 10  
 Softly sing the waters  
 Round the reedy rushes,  
 Softly at the sand-bar,  
 Softly at the sally—  
 That's where the Pejar runs, 15  
 Runs like a slip of silver through the valley.

Where awakes the morning  
 To dapple all the hills,  
 Where the dewdrop, shaken,  
 Pendent slides and spills, 20  
 Where with golden bugles  
 Sunset calls reveille—  
 That's where the Pejar runs,  
 Runs like a slip of silver through the valley.

Where the Springtime blossoms 25  
 Like a mellow laughter,  
 Over all the grasses,  
 Over ridge and rafter,

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DT*, 5 September 1925, p. 10 as PEJAR CREEK (GOULBURN) (A) *SV* (B) Mackaness I (C)

2 cattle,] ~; A 4 battle,] ~; A 12 rushes,] ~; A 17 Where] When B  
 18 hills,] ~; A 19 the] *Om. C* 20 Pendent slides] Pendant runs A spills,]  
 ~; A 25 Springtime] springtime A B 28 rafter,] ~. A

<sup>1</sup> The Pejar, like the Wollondilly (line 34, and see F58), rises in the mountains w. of



THE WILD SWAN (1930) 59

Over all the tree-tops,  
 Down each ferny valley— 30  
 That's where the Pejar runs,  
 Runs like a slip of silver through the valley.

Where the Pejar rises  
 Springs the Wollondilly,  
 Twinned upon the mountains 35  
 Babbling brook and ghyllie;<sup>2</sup>  
 Where the bridge-heads rumble  
 Side by side they dally—  
 Out where the Pejar runs,  
 Runs like a slip of silver through the valley. 40

30 valley] alley <sup>A B</sup> 34 Springs] Runs <sup>A</sup> 35 mountains] ~, <sup>A</sup> 37 the]  
 their <sup>A</sup> rumble] ~, <sup>A B</sup>

Goulburn. Both now run into the Pejar Dam, built 1980. Reed glosses the Aboriginal name as 'water trickling over stone'.

<sup>2</sup>Variant spelling of *gill*, a small stream or rivulet. Cf. F27 line 1.

I34 AS THE BEAUTY OF SHIPS

Turn back ye ever passing hours! Once more  
 A while bid Time in armistice to stand,  
 As when the moon her native course forebore  
 And Gideon heard the chosen voice command!<sup>1</sup>  
 O turn again, ye hasting hours, 5  
 And, to the fields restoring,  
 Re-clothe with hue and scent the flowers,  
 The sun to be adoring.

[*cont. overleaf*]

(n. d.) *Copy-text*: *WS* *Collated states*: *SV(A)*<sup>2</sup>

1 back] ~, <sup>A</sup> 2 Time] time <sup>A</sup> 3 forebore] ~, <sup>A</sup> 4 chosen] mighty <sup>A</sup>  
 7 Re-clothe] Reclothe <sup>A</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Making the moon stand still is one of the exploits not of Gideon (Judges 6. 11–28) but of Joshua (see Joshua 10. 12–13).

<sup>2</sup> The MS of *SV* sent to Angus & Robertson contained a stanza (its lines 49–56) omitted in *WS* and marked for deletion for *SV*. They appeared in *SV* at the request of Angus & Robertson's in-house editor, Beatrice Davis (letter to MG, 9 December 1947): line 49 helped to justify the poem's title. MG's autograph annotation of Davis's letter





Ye have taken away the beauty, the gay  
 And gallant colour of the Spring's glad march, 10  
 That, marshalling on the earth as dawn on day,  
 Broke in bright hosting 'neath the heavenly arch!  
 Ye have stolen and taken away,  
 And there is no restoring,  
 Beauty that knew not to delay, 15  
 The sun to be adoring.

Once bloomed a groundling herb, the moccasin,  
 Which in the Springtime held its slipper up,  
 As though it asked that fairy feet step in!  
 At dawn a dewdrop glistened in its cup, 20  
 And there the early bee would stoop,  
 And drink in full restoring,  
 Ere he his upward way would loop,  
 The sun to be adoring.

And once amid the grass, as far as eye 25  
 Could reach, the blue-bell raised its slender stalk,  
 And told its joy to every breeze went by—  
 A field of blue, clear as the azure balk<sup>3</sup>  
 Where hung the curtains of the sky;  
 And there, through distance soaring, 30  
 Came the great eagle sailing high,  
 The sun to be adoring.

There was a little cushioned flower—who now  
 Remembers it?—which on its wiry stem  
 Raised from the clay a head drought could not bow, 35  
 As it, from scant, repaid earth with a gem.  
 And there the blue-winged butterfly  
 Would light, as though, in-shoring,

10 Spring's] spring's *A*    18 Which] ~, *A*    Springtime] springtime, *A*    up,] ~ *A*  
 26 blue-bell] bluebell *A*    27 by—] ~; *A*    29 sky;] ~! *A*    31 eagle] ~, *A*

(held in ML 5/1) does not refer specifically to the lines' inclusion, but their appearance in *SV* shows she agreed.

<sup>3</sup> I.e. a space of blue between clouds ('the curtains of the sky', line 29) as in a strip of land left unploughed ('balk').





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

61

A ship with sails drew nigh,  
Beauty to be adoring. 40

And trees gave shade; and their foundations held  
Like hands the earth against the call of suns  
Whose hot winds blew, or waters torrent-swelled;  
And axes ate as war eats men with guns.  
O, with what scent the ancient trees, 45  
From riper sap outpouring,  
Enriched still air and passing breeze,  
The sun to be adoring!

The hard, devouring destiny of man  
Bids him as chessman take earth's native hoard, 50  
His their replace; yet, through what length time span,  
Above his moves sits Nature at the board,  
She, the All-Mother, watching lest  
He, in his hasty scoring,  
Dim the far vision, lose the quest, 55  
Beauty to be adoring.

42 Like . . . earth] The earth, like hands, *A* 43 or] and *A* torrent-swelled;] ~. *A*  
44 And] Then *A* 45 O] Oh *A* 48 adoring!] ~.// In the beauty of ships, and  
wind-blown clout,/ Man conquered the earth and furrowed the waste;/ Yet the  
conquered was beauty the plough put out/ In the buds turned down in the furrow's  
haste./ So never more, through later hours,/ Come again here, restoring,/ Beauty  
of sail, beauty of flowers,/ The sun to be adoring. *A* 50 him] ~, *A* chessman]  
~, *A* 51 their] to *A* 53 watching] ~, *A*

I35 THE BUSH-BORN CHILD

I

My mother's terrors wake in me,<sup>1</sup>  
And all her fears are mine;

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DT*, 21 November 1925, p. 10 (*A*) *SV* as THE  
BUSH BORN CHILD (*B*)

2 mine;] ~! *A*

<sup>1</sup> In 1866, Donald Cameron's work on the mail run meant that his wife and Mary



She was so young where silence lay  
 Round her small world, like some great sea  
     Which no man's measure might define! 5  
  
 There, 'mid the endless range of trees,  
     Unspaced both land and time,  
 Home in the vast a tiny bay,  
 The unknown spoke in every breeze,  
     And made each darkling bough its mime. 10  
  
 For in the tree-tops, at the dusk,  
     Were formed strange caravans,  
 Which seemed, though shadow-shaped, to sway  
 'Neath ancient bales of silk and musk,  
     Telling time's history, and man's. 15  
  
 There giant horsemen rode, and there  
     The elephant's huge bulk  
 Rolled, mountainous, where the last ray  
 Of light died out upon the air,  
     And left earth darkened like a hulk. 20  
  
 Then from the pines came whisperings,  
     Low and mysterious;  
 Complaints night made, and even day  
 Held half-released! . . . What suffering clings  
     Through other's pain asleep in us! 25

## II

My mother's terrors wake in me,  
     And all her fears are mine!  
 The hollow night that arching bends

3 lay] ~, *AB* 8 Home] ~, *A* vast] ~, *A* bay,] ~— *A* 9 breeze,] ~ *A*  
 10 mime] mine *B* 11 For] ~, *B* tree-tops,] ~ *A* dusk,] ~ *B* 12 Were  
 formed] She saw *A* 13 Which] ~, *A* seemed . . . shadow-shaped,] shadow-  
 shaped, yet seemed *A* 14 'Neath ancient] Beneath the *A* musk,] ~ *A*  
 15 Telling] That speak *A* 18 Rolled,] Rose, *A* ~ *B* where] as *B* 19 air,]  
 ~ *A* 24 suffering] suff'ring *A* 25 other's] others' *AB*

(b. 1865) were often alone in an isolated two-room slab hut at Red Bank, near Crookwell: here, this period is run together with the earlier pregnancy.





THE WILD SWAN (1930) 63

Above the earth, dark, though we see  
 The stars that down upon us shine, 30  
 Seemed but to emphasise how small  
 In its pavilion,  
 How lone where its grey curtain ends  
 Folded her round, was she whose call  
 Broke on the boundless and was gone. 35  
 Yet there love built its house for her,  
 And there with hovering wings  
 Life poised and smiled—who never lends  
 Save with the usury of a spur  
 Upon each gift of joy he brings. 40  
 Now, as beneath her heart she bore—  
 Me—her unconscious child,  
 So in my heart, while time ascends,  
 Sounds the deep spaces' murmuring roar,  
 Shudder the tremors of the wild. 45  
 My mother's terrors wake in me,  
 And all her fears are mine.

31 emphasise] emphasize *B*    33 curtain ends] curtain-/ ends *A*    curtain-ends *B*  
 41 bore—] ~, *B*

136 THE DEEP WATER

PANNAMOONA<sup>1</sup>

There is a spot,  
 And though my eyes may not  
 Upon it look again,  
 Yet would my full heart carry it,  
 As it were fain to marry it 5  
 With all things held in tender thought.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Aboriginal names in I22, where 'Pannamoona' is the ocean, and the deep water is 'Maipoona'.





Swans in its coves  
 Of quiet lay, and doves  
 Within its coasts made nest;  
 And the wild plover of the night, 10  
 In his unrest waning in flight,  
 Plaintively uttered there his loves.

And on the hill—  
 O that it stood there still!—  
 There was a quandong tree 15  
 To which the small bush bee would come,  
 In husbandry busy and dumb,  
 And of its nectar take his fill.

In blossoming time  
 The bee! . . . When the sun's climb 20  
 Spoke summer drawing near,  
 Then *Yarri*\* read in its bright fruit  
 Time o' th' year, and heard the bruit<sup>2</sup>  
 Of wild fowl crying, "Flight is near"!

And by it grew 25  
 A currajong, which who  
 Should see must love, its green  
 Shade havening the kangaroo,  
 When the fierce teen<sup>3</sup> of summer drew  
 From its retreat the very dew. 30

Once long ago,  
 Where now the wheat fields glow,  
 We flushed a curlew, where  
 It kept itself a secret place—  
 A tiny lair hid where no trace 35  
 Might to the prowling dingo show.

And there all day,  
 Only as children may,  
 We ran and busy played;

<sup>2</sup> Noise or sound conveying rumour or news.

<sup>3</sup> Affliction (archaic; cf. Hgo line 7).





THE WILD SWAN (1930) 65

Built cubby-houses bough by bough, 40  
 Our stock-yards made, and with a plough  
 Of stick furrowed a yard of clay.

Now the flock sheep  
 Over that country sweep,  
 And there sleek cattle lie; 45  
 While never one remembered sound,  
 Or woodland cry, utters its round  
 Amid the paths we used to keep.

\* The aboriginals. Yarri is a man's name among the tribes.<sup>4</sup>

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

<sup>4</sup> Uncorroborated.

137 THE WOMAN OF FIVE FIELDS

ANZAC DAY

The Woman of Five Fields she stood at the gate,  
 And over the gate she leaned;  
 "For the tall sons who went," she said, "I wait,  
 Though the soil they ploughed is gleaned."  
 She took the bonnet from off her head, 5  
 And she wept for her sons, her sons long dead.

The Woman of Five Fields looked out where the gulls  
 Sailed up and over the sea;  
 "Long I followed," she said, "the darkened hulls  
 That carried my sons from me. 10  
 They came not back" . . . And she bowed her head,  
 And wept for the sons, the sons long dead.

The Woman of Five Fields leaned over the gate,  
 Her bonnet fell from her hand:

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DT, 25 April 1927, p. 6 (A) SV(B)*

4 soil] crop *B* ploughed] sowed *B* 8 sea;] ~: *A* 9 said,] ~, *A*  
 11 back" . . . ] ~" . . . *A* ~ . . ." *B*





“I loved my sons,” she said, “yet, heart elate, 15  
 I gave them all to the land:  
 I gave them all for the land,” she said;  
 “I count them still, and they are not dead.”

Then the Woman of Five Fields named, one by one,  
 The homes where her sons were born: 20  
 “I loved them all alike, first son, last son,  
 And each grew straight as the corn;  
 And the homes where they were born,” she said,  
 “I loved . . .” She wrung her hands for her dead.

“My sons made dancing-time of the harvest home 25  
 Till they swayed like the myall trees,  
 And they sang love sweet as the honeycomb,  
 And the time of flowers and bees:  
 That was a long while ago,” she said,  
 “Long ere in Flanders their bones lay dead. 30

“At shearing time, when the sheep were penned, the high  
 Clip-clip of the flying shears  
 Made music as fine as when, passing by,  
 Spring speaks and the young grass hears. 35  
 That, too, was long, long ago,” she said,  
 “Or ever in France their youth lay dead.”

Low and softly a far Voice whispering passed:  
 “Death could not diminish them;  
 Now none shall see their glory overcast,  
 Their flower fade upon its stem!” 40  
 Then the Woman of the Five Fields said,  
 “They died: but Death himself in them is dead.”

And she said, “I weep but mother’s tears: my sons  
 Were my sons, bone of my bone:

16 land:] ~. A 18 “I A] ~ X are] are A 20 born:] ~; B 24 loved . . .]  
 ~. . . A 25 harvest home] harvest-/ home A 26 myall trees] myall-trees B  
 28 bees:] ~. A 31 “At] ~ A 33 fine] sweet A passing by] drawing nigh B  
 38 them:] ~. A 42 Death] death A 43 tears:] ~; A 44 bone:] ~; A





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

67

And, though in my heart I heard the guns, 45  
 They went—and I made no moan.”  
 She took her bonnet up in her hand;  
 Its silken folds hung over the land.

47 hand;] ~: A

138 “LEST WE FORGET”<sup>1</sup>

I heard the roll of the kettledrum beat,  
 Rat-a-tan, rat-a-tan-tan, tan!  
 It sounded as though in a far-off street,  
 An empty, hollow, and echoing street,  
 Like some lone place in the heart of a man. 5  
 And all on the air, as it throbbed and beat,  
 The rap of the little drum said,  
 “Come out, all ye ghosts of the world, and meet;  
 Come out and follow me, Shades of the Dead!”  
 So haunting and strange was the call, it seemed 10  
 Like a note in the mind half-heard;  
 Yet never a man in his dark place dreamed,  
 But down where he slumbered the quick notes streamed,  
 Till the dust of the grey flesh waked and stirred;  
 And as round by round ran the rhythmed repeat, 15

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DT, 26 March 1927, p. 6 (A) SV (B)*

*Not otherwise recorded:* The collation for lines 18, 26, 44, 53 and 62 is identical to 9.

2 Rat-a-tan] Ratan A rat-a-tan-tan, tan] rata-tan-tan, tan A rat-a-tan-tan-  
 tan B 7 rap] lilt B 8 out,] ~ B world,] ~ A B 9 Come] “~ A  
 10 call,] ~ A 13 But] ~, A slumbered] ~, A 14 stirred;] ~. A 15 And]  
 ~, A B by round] ~ ~, A

<sup>1</sup> Originally in ‘Recessional’ by Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936), written for Jubilee Day 1898, the phrase had empire-wide significance. So MG refers in succession to World War I battles in Egypt, the Middle East and France; the Scots in the Crimean War (1853–56); the Irish contingents of both the War of Austrian Succession (1741–48) and Wellington’s Spanish campaigns during the Napoleonic Wars (1808–14); and the sailors of Drake’s naval victory over the Armada (1588). Australian participation in the Gallipoli campaign of World War I completes the sequence. See also Z8 for an Army of the Dead.





The call of the little drum said,  
 “Come out, ye ghosts of the war, and meet;  
 Come out and follow me, Shades of the Dead!”

Loud, as from the turn of a street, it came,  
 Loud as from the turn of a street, 20  
 The rattle of the sticks it leapt like flame,  
 And each rap-tap-tap was a dead man’s name;<sup>2</sup>  
 The dead men rose and gathered for the meet,  
 As the kettledrum rip-rap said,  
 “Come out of your graves, O men, like the wheat; 25  
 Come out and follow me, Shades of the Dead!”

All up from the dark, then, the dead men marched,  
 They gathered like a soundless wind;  
 Like locusts they came from where the sand parched,  
 And the sun burned red, and the dust storm arched, 30  
 And the curtains of heaven fall down unpinned;  
 And, as each one came in his old array,  
 The roll of the kettledrum said,  
 “Fall in, ye ghosts of the dust, as I play:  
 Fall in, and follow me, Shades of the Dead!” 35

They came from the South, and the warm brown lands,  
 Where the earth ran thick with their blood,  
 They came from the North, where the iron ice stands,  
 And the guns belched fire from their frost-bound hands,  
 And the slow Somme covered their eyes with mud; 40  
 From out of their holes in the earth they came,  
 They met as the kettledrum said,  
 “Was it for gold, or was it for a Name?  
 Come out and follow me, Shades of the Dead!”

16 call] lilt *B* 19 street,] ~ *A B* 23 rose] ~, *A* 27 dark,] ~ *A B* then,]  
 there *A* ~ *B* marched,] rose; *A* 29 parched] glows *A* 30 burned] burns *A*  
 red,] ~ *B* dust storm arched] Khamsin blows *A* 31 unpinned;] ~, *A*  
 34 play:] ~; *A* 35 Fall] “~ *A* 36 South] south *B* warm] ~, *A* 37 thick]  
 red *A* 38 North] north *B* 40 mud;] ~, *A* 41 came,] ~; *A* 42 met] ~, *A*

<sup>2</sup> If stanza 3 is to agree in rhyme pattern and form with the other nine-line stanzas, a line is missing here, but there is no MS extant to provide it.





THE WILD SWAN (1930) 69

Then forth from the host stepped a kilted man, 45  
 And his pipes played an old, old lay:  
 “We’ll hae nane but Hielan’ bonnets!” it ran,  
 And it told the tale of a dark redan,<sup>3</sup>  
 And the Heights of Alma won in a day.  
 And all through the lilt of the Highland air 50  
 The cry of the kettledrum said,  
 “Lest their names should perish, and no man care,  
 Come out and follow me, Shades of the Dead!”

Swift came the Wild Geese,<sup>4</sup> flying thick as rain,  
 Back from the countries of the world; 55  
 O’Donnell, and O’Ruark, Shea, and Lehane,  
 Singing out of France, singing out of Spain,  
 The colours that they carried never furled.  
 There, as they gathered—regiment, platoon—  
 The ruffle of the drumsticks said, 60  
 “Who would forget the Risin’ of the Moon?<sup>5</sup>  
 Come ye and follow me, Shades of the Dead!”

Now from the caverns of the sea there rose  
 The roll of another drum-beat;  
 Its challenge rang out (O, the long tide knows!) 65  
 Till over the deep spake a Voice, “Who Goes?”  
 And back came the answer, “The Dead of the Fleet!”  
 Loud called the drum of the Men of Devon,<sup>6</sup>  
 As the rip of the little drum said,

46 lay:] ~, A B 47 hae] ha’e B 48 redan A] Redan X 50 And] ~, B air]  
 ~, B 51 cry] note B 54 Swift] Then A 56 O’Donnell] O’Donnel A  
 Shea,] ~ A O’Shea B 57 Spain,] ~ A 58 colours] colors A 61 Risin’]  
 risin’ A 63 Now] Then A 65 O] Oh A B 67 “The . . . Fleet!”] “The Dead  
 of the Fleet!” B 68 Loud] Then A of the] of B

<sup>3</sup> A form of ground fortification.

<sup>4</sup> First used of those eighteenth-century Irish troops who, during the War of Austrian Succession, fought on both sides (for the Anglo-Dutch alliance or for the French). With its alternative form ‘the grey geese’, it later came to be used generally for all the Irish who left their homeland during the long period of Irish emigration (cf. W. B. Yeats, ‘September 1913’). See also F24. <sup>5</sup> See H5 n. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Francis Drake (c. 1540–96) came from the s.w. county of Devon, as did most of his sailors.





“O, come ye from hell, or come ye from heaven, 70  
Rise up and follow me, Shades of the Dead!”

Though the earth was thick with the ghosts of men,  
Yet the kettledrum made no stay;  
Boomeranged each stroke with the sound of ten,  
As ripped through the air another call then, 75  
And Australia answered it, “Suvla Bay!”<sup>7</sup>  
Then the drums of the world beat up, beat on,  
And the drums of the whole world said,  
“We have remembered you, ye who are gone;  
We have remembered you, O ye dead!” 80

70 O,] Oh, *A* ~ *B* 71 Rise] “~ *A* 72 Though] Then *A* 73 Yet] But *A*  
80 We] “~ *A*

<sup>7</sup> On the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign, which saw 27,000 Australian casualties, as well as massive New Zealand, French and British losses, see C38 n. 1. Suvla Bay and Anzac Cove were the two sites of the final withdrawal of some 80,000 Anzac and Allied troops in December 1915.

### I39 A CHANT OF ANZAC

The Lord shall deliver us from our foes,<sup>1</sup>  
He shall scatter them in His might;  
They shall be consumed as consume the snows  
When the sun rides out in the height.  
They shall not behold the face of the sun— 5  
They shall be put out; and the dark  
Shall write their day as a course that is run  
Where the runner knows not the mark.

(n. d.) *Copy-text*: *WS* *Collated states*: *DT*, 24 April 1926, p. 19 (*A*)

*Not otherwise recorded*: *A* places a stanza break between lines 9 and 10, not 8 and 9, but *MG* marks this as a typographical error in its print clipping held in *ML* 5/1.

3 snows] ~, *A* 5 sun—] ~, *A*

<sup>1</sup> The poem conflates Old Testament passages such as: Ezekiel 14. 23, ‘I will deliver my people out of your hand’; Hosea 10. 8, ‘and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us’; Job 18. 5–6, ‘the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall







THE WILD SWAN (1930)

71

The arm of the Lord shall be our right arm;  
 In it we shall know no decay; 10  
 Nor wounds shall affright, nor terrors alarm,  
 Nor death in his coming dismay.

We shall not fear the dark, for the Lord  
 Shall be our Captain and our Light;  
 To us will He give the strength of His sword, 15  
 Till the foe run scattered in flight.

From the terror that pursues them they shall cry  
 To the mountains to cover them;  
 But from them even the waters shall fly,  
 And the tree forbid them its stem. 20

The Lord shall deliver us from our foes;  
 They shall be as shadows that pass;  
 They shall run as the leaves that the storm wind blows,  
 And break as a strickle<sup>2</sup> of grass.

16 run] ~, A    17 cry] ~, A    19 But] ~, A    them] ~, A

not shine. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him'; and Psalm 9. 5, 'thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever'.

<sup>2</sup> Confuses *strick* (a bundle of broken hemp, jute or grass) with *strickle*, meaning a piece of flat wood used to strike off surplus grain at the rim of a measure.

I40 AUSTRALIA

Here in the leisure  
 Of this hour I write,  
 Who once must seize the hasty measure<sup>1</sup>  
 In its flight.

Now may I, dreaming, 5  
 Dip into the deep,  
 And trawl the thought, that still broods teeming,  
 From its sleep.

<sup>1</sup> Melody or rhythm.



O thou, my country,  
 We, who were too young 10  
 To praise thee singing as the wintry  
 Lands are sung,  
 Now leave the callow  
 Rhythms of youth behind,  
 And sound thee from the ripened fallow 15  
 Of the mind.  
 We were so young we  
 Knew thee not, and feared  
 The fuller note we might have sung thee,  
 And endeared. 20  
 And thou wast stranger,  
 Too; where custom clung,  
 Thought lowly born in history's manger,  
 O unsung!

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SMH*, 14 April 1928, p. 13 (A) *SV* as THIS AUSTRALIA (B)

9 O] And <sup>A</sup> country,] ~! <sup>A</sup> 10 We,] ~ <sup>A</sup> 11 thee singing] ~, ~, <sup>A</sup>  
 15 sound] sing <sup>A</sup> 16 mind.] ~! <sup>A</sup> 19 sung] lent <sup>B</sup> thee,] ~ <sup>A</sup>  
 20 endeared.] ~: <sup>A</sup> 22 Too;] ~, <sup>A</sup> where custom clung,] and young—how  
 young!—<sup>A</sup> 23 Thought] ~—<sup>A</sup>

#### I41 THE FIRST-FOOTERS

Whose be these bearded faces,  
 And whose these weathered hands,  
 Which, from the outer spaces,  
 Stand as on border lands?  
 Whose be these forms that gather, 5  
 Eager and yet retreating,  
 Set to depart, yet loth  
 In wistfulness of meeting?  
 These are the rude first-footers,  
 Who, ere a road was marked, 10



THE WILD SWAN (1930)

73

Fiercely, and as free-booters,  
 Took what no hand had clerked;  
 These are the men, who, grasping,  
 Seized as the eyes commanded;  
 Nameless they are, and yet 15  
 They made the land, fore-handed.

Hell had no power to hold them,  
 These ghosts for Hades named;  
 Lucifer first enrolled them,  
 Left them the still untamed; 20  
 Hither they came, earth-wandering,  
 As beasts enchained—defiant—  
 Who broke their chains, as men,  
 And faced the wild, reliant.<sup>1</sup>

They were the dread beleaguered, 25  
 They were the black-defamed,  
 Who, though their gaunt frames meagred,<sup>2</sup>  
 Mocked at what law acclaimed;  
 Ships held them not, nor prison,  
 Nor stormy seas affrighted; 30  
 Death-driven they deemed death but  
 A camp with fire unlighted.

Savage was all their going;  
 Theirs was a brutal prime;  
 Dark are their faces showing, 35  
 Yet darker still their time;  
 Dark were their deeds, but, hark ye,  
 A road they made before us,  
 They were the pioneers,  
 We follow as the chorus. 40

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV(A)*

15 and yet] ~, ~, A    25 beleaguered A] beleaguered X    31 Death-driven] ~, A

<sup>1</sup> Convicts permanently banished from England but free to take up land in the Australian colonies after the completion of their sentence. Until the 1830s land was often taken by squatting, i.e. occupying it without licence (lines 9–14).

<sup>2</sup> Grew thin.



## I42 THE LEGISLATORS

These are the men whom peace obeys,  
 War answers to their call;  
 Dynasties count through them their days,  
 And nations rise and fall.

And they are fellow-men, no more 5  
 Than we, who give them power  
 To stand upon a storied floor,<sup>1</sup>  
 And flourish for an hour.

Winds out of far eternities 10  
 Beat on us as we go;  
 Fallen are those, and risen these,  
 And that is all we know.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DT, 31 July 1925, p. 6 (A) SV(B)*

5 And they are] They are but *A* fellow-men,] ~— *A* 6 we,] ~ *AB* 8 hour.]  
 ~! *A* II those,] ~ *A*

<sup>1</sup> A historic place (i.e. the floor of Parliament).

## I43 THE GREAT NAVIGATORS

From whence do ye come, O ye rovers,  
 Who bear in your hands the gifts of the proved,  
 In your eyes, as in old sea-lovers,  
 The mariner's inlook, slow to be moved?  
 Say who ye are, ye men of eagle feature, 5  
 And the mien of those long brooding on a dream?  
 O, surely ye have made the deep your creature,  
 And it hath acknowledged you o'er it supreme!

Wayfarers we, burdened unknowing,  
 From darkness drawn to the traverse of life; 10  
 We are seed of an ancient sowing,  
 Fashioned for conquest, and measured for strife.



THE WILD SWAN (1930)

75

For life hath endued us with fullness of stature,  
 And the might, though we fall, to rise and redeem;  
 We are the passionate firstborn of nature, 15  
 Time-marked, and time-held to be children of dream.

Ere we were born, lapped in a seeming,  
 E'en as the dumb-lipped we heard the sea's call;  
 Saw in the dark a strange star gleaming,  
 Stirred to the pull of the tide in its fall; 20  
 We felt in the cradle the sea's deep hollow,  
 And we saw in a rushlight a Pharos<sup>1</sup> gleam;  
 The cry of the waters called us to follow;  
 We rose and we answered it, children of dream.

They name us Columbus, Balboa, 25  
 Magellan, di Gama;<sup>2</sup> we trod the wave  
 In ships little more than a proa;<sup>3</sup>  
 Yet beaten of winds, and of storms that drave,  
 Like ravens of Haakon, like eagles of Rollo,<sup>4</sup>  
 From terror of rock, and the whirlpool's scream, 30  
 Back from the deep we returned as the swallow,  
 With the seas of the world made ours by a dream.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

<sup>1</sup> Lighthouse: from the island Pharos, near Alexandria, site of the tower lighthouse listed among the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Columbus (1451–1506) and Vasco Núñez de Balboa (1475–1519) explored the New World on behalf of Spain, and Ferdinand Magellan (1480–1521) and Vasco da Gama (1469–1521) on behalf of Portugal. Cf. H56, H60 and M26.

<sup>3</sup> Small sailing-boat of the type used in the Malay archipelago.

<sup>4</sup> The raven and the eagle were insignia of the Viking seafarers of Norway and Denmark. Haakon IV of Norway (1204–63) conquered Iceland and Greenland, but was defeated by Alexander III of Scotland in 1263. Rollo, ancestor of William the Conqueror, sailed his ships up the Seine as far as Rouen and later besieged Paris before becoming the first Duke of Normandy.



## I44 THE OLD PORT OF SYDNEY

## A BALLAD

“Now who be you, my foreign man,  
 Who stand so still and stare,  
 Where the streets are full of busy feet,  
 And the houses rise in air?

“Who be you that ye look so long, 5  
 Like a man in a manner lost,  
 With your skin so brown, and your eyes so bright,  
 And your locks like the white, white frost?”

He turned him round, that stranger man,  
 And he looked at him who spoke; 10  
 “I am one who wandered far,” said he,  
 “And my good ship was the oak;

“My good ship was the oak,” said he,  
 “But her sails went one by one,  
 Till never a shroud was left,” said he, 15  
 “And her masts were all undone.

“Her masts were all undone,” said he,  
 “And yet did the good ship stand,  
 And I steered her course by the Southern Cross,  
 And I sought for my own dear land. 20

“O wanner and wanner grew the men,  
 The steersman died at the wheel,  
 The bo’sun flung himself to the waves,  
 Where the waters spun like a reel,

“But I trimmed the ship, and I kept the course, 25  
 Though the seas ran mountains high;  
 Like a man in a dream I turned the spoke,  
 As the days and the nights went by.

“And I sailed till I came to the narrow strait,  
 And the two Heads great and bold; 30



THE WILD SWAN (1930)

77

But the very planks were all I held,  
And the hulk was naught but a hold.

“I have come to the place and the place is strange!<sup>1</sup>  
And I ask you now,” said he,  
“To tell me here, as I wander lost,  
How my own land this can be!”

35

“Nay,” said the other, “but this is your land!”  
And he took him and showed him where  
The city went down, by step and step,  
To the sea as it were by a stair;

40

He took him and showed him the water-leap  
Where the sea-wall binds the sea,  
And the iron ships of every land  
Lie in like sheep at the knee;

He showed him the tide-mark at the Fort,  
And the Pinchgut<sup>2</sup> light that shows,  
Like a star in the black, black heart of night,  
When the storm in a tempest blows.

45

He measured the depth of the Plimsoll mark,<sup>3</sup>  
Where the liners bask at ease,  
And he pointed the House-flags<sup>4</sup> flaunting out  
By the great and the lesser quays.

50

“Nay then, nay then,” said the old man, then,  
“When Flinders sailed,”<sup>5</sup> said he,  
“Never a one of these things ye show  
Could any man show to me.

55

<sup>1</sup> Details of the voyage recall Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s ‘Rime of the Ancient Mariner’ (1798), but returning to find all changed is more akin to the experience in Washington Irving’s ‘Rip Van Winkle’ (1820).

<sup>2</sup> Small island in Sydney Harbour, used in early times for punitive isolation of convicts. Fort Denison was erected there in 1829.

<sup>3</sup> Mark or line on British merchant ships, showing the depth to which they may be submerged when loaded.

<sup>4</sup> Flags of the commercial house or line to which a merchant ship belongs.

<sup>5</sup> Matthew Flinders (1774–1814) circumnavigated Van Diemen’s Land in the *Norfolk* in 1798 and Australia in the *Investigator* (1801–02).





78

COLLECTED VERSE: SECTION I

“And my heart is asking for mine own land,  
Is hungry for things I knew;  
For the place where the waves ran up on the sand,  
And the green grass white with the dew; 60

“For the dip where a little stream ran down,  
And the wind was a scented breeze,  
Where only the rocks stood bare and brown,  
For the land was a land of trees!”

“Nay!” said the other, “But this is your land, 65  
And none ever fairer knew! . . .”  
But the old man asked for his ship of wood,  
And the coast where the tall trees grew.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*







## BOOK II: OF BEAUTY THAT IS PRAISE

## I45 THE SINGER

I, a poor singer, send out song  
 In flights upon the air,  
 All homely as a sparrow throng  
 In brown and hodden<sup>1</sup> wear.

And yet, where others stand, and round 5  
 Their melodies of worth,  
 How oft I hear, in their full sound,  
 Some song asked me for birth!

We all have, deep within us set, 10  
 Chords that we never know,  
 Till horns, in others' hunting met,  
 Winding about us blow.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DT, 7 June 1926, p. 4 (A) SV (B)*

3 All] And <sup>A</sup> throng] ~, <sup>A</sup> 5 stand] sing <sup>A</sup> 7 hear,] ~ <sup>A</sup> 9 have,] ~ <sup>A</sup>  
 12 us] ~, <sup>A</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Coarse undyed grey woollen cloth: cf. E5 and E91.

## I46 I WHO NO BEAUTY HAD

I who no beauty had  
 Loved it alway,  
 Sought it with wondering,  
 Drank its allay.<sup>1</sup>

The wilderness showed me 5  
 Beauty unshamed—  
 Moons at the scimitar,  
 Planets that flamed;

<sup>1</sup> I.e. its capacity to allay my thirst for beauty.



Showed—and I lived!—where the  
 Stars, at the Horn,<sup>2</sup> 10  
 Shone as though thundered, there,  
 Light as first born.  
 Bred to one sensitive  
 Gift of clay,  
 I, who no beauty had, 15  
 Loved it alway.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

<sup>2</sup> Cape Horn, the notoriously stormy southernmost tip of South America.

#### I47 OF BEAUTY THAT IS PRAISE

O Beauty that is praise,  
 That speaks the Eternal, and declares His name,  
 How shall a man, whose days are brief as flame,  
 Know thee, and understand?  
 Thou dost not end! Though man 5  
 Must count his fleeting hours, and pass while still  
 He names his tiny span, thy cisterns fill,  
 Thy living tree still flowers.  
 Ambition falls with breath,  
 The throne's high tapestry grows dim—defined 10  
 To dust; but thou, though death on all else bind  
 Decay, he mars not thee!

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

#### I48 BEAUTY WITHOUT A PEER

Beauty without a peer  
 Hath me in thrall;  
 Not life, itself, more near  
 Standeth, withal.



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Though at the sere 5

Its golden leaf may fall,  
Yet shall be stayed the shear:  
Love keepeth all.

Who hath known beauty where 10  
Its look is seen,

A kingdom hath, whate'er  
His lot hath been!

Ah! through the air  
One cometh like a queen, 15

Beauty her stair,  
My heart and hers, between.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

I49 SILK OF THE SUNLIGHT

Put away beauty,  
Bury it deep,  
Never to waken  
Out of its sleep!

Gold of her hair and 5  
Rose of her skin,  
Silk of the sunlight,  
Find their last inn.

Where by the fountain  
Pines her lone bird, 10  
What if her spirit  
Whispering stirred?

Silent forever!  
Ah, never more  
Will she, impatient 15  
Tap at the door!

[*cont. overleaf*]

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV(A) Mackaness1 (B)*  
3 waken] awaken B



Cold, cold the hand<sup>1</sup>  
 That led her away:  
 Housed but in memory  
 Laughter and play! 20

Gold of her hair and  
 Rose of her skin,  
 Out of the darkness  
 Come no more in.

17 Cold . . . hand] Gold of her hair, and A 18 away:] ~; A 21 hair] ~, A

<sup>1</sup> A's variant line 17 is a nonsense attributable to compositor's eye-skip to line 21.

### I50 ETERNAL BEAUTY

O, beauty of beauty,  
 Too long have I lost thee,  
 Too late have I found thee;<sup>\*1</sup>  
 In the cry of my heart  
 To thee, I must depart. 5

Though thou wast forever  
 Around and about me,  
 Blind, blind were my eyes that  
 Beheld thee unseeing,  
 That knew not thy being. 10

Now wonder enfolds me,  
 Who tremblingly touch but  
 Thy mantle, thy sandals—  
 The sills where enamber<sup>2</sup>  
 The lamps of thy chamber. 15

<sup>1</sup> From the *Confessions* of St Augustine of Hippo (AD 354–430): 'Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved you! You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you. In my unloveliness I plunged into the lovely things which you created. You were with me, but I was not with you. Created things kept me from you; yet if they had not been in you they would have not been at all.' <sup>2</sup> Perfume – as if by ambergris, a scented wax-like resin.



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83

My heart I have set at  
 Thy hands for an altar,  
 O beauty of beauty,  
     Where, who hath perceived thee,  
     He hath received thee. 20

O joy of perception!  
 O glory of knowing!  
 Here as a sheaf, as a  
     Bowed down stem of the wheat,  
     I kneel at thy feet. 25

Too long have I lost thee,  
 Too late have I found thee,  
 O beauty of beauty;  
     In the cry of my heart  
     To thee, I must depart. 30

\* Saint Augustine.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

I51 I SAW THE NEW MOON IN THE SKY

Death hath its beauty, too:  
     Even though it were but  
     That the pale mirror knew  
     When the proud eyes lay shut.  
 Yet of that beauty life shall comfort take, 5  
 Lest of its own despair the heart should break.

But now—ere it was dawn—  
     I saw the moon, a thread  
 Of silver sharply drawn  
     In curve; and she was dead. 10  
 But O, the beauty of that dead world in  
 That place wherein all beauty dwelleth kin!

[*cont. overleaf*]

(19 April 1928) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV(A)*

I too:] ~, A    3 the pale] which the A    II O,] ~ A





... I saw the new moon in the sky, and I  
Was stunned alive to know that beauty could not die.

13<sup>s</sup>... I] ~ A

I52 ON A DEAD GIRL

Beauty was here that now is gone away;  
Short, short the time it made its stay!  
It was a morn in Summer,  
It was the Spring's delight;  
Death came,—O, the black comer!— 5  
And brought the night.

All we who have known beauty, how we weep  
To see it perish in a sleep!  
There the dropped lids deny us,  
E'en as we seek the eyes, 10  
That now—so strange!—look by us  
In cold surprise.

Who would believe that she could go away—  
Could die so soon! But yesterday  
She bloomed, in her bright gladness, 15  
A full bud on life's tree;  
Then, as we watched in sadness,  
Death named his fee.

Now, though we call to her, slipped are the bonds  
That held between, for the slim hands 20  
No more reach out enfolding,  
Palm laid on palm, as though  
Life spake in that close holding,  
And would not go!

And all love's commerce ends where once the gay 25  
Glad laugh made music of the day,  
For, from the inward altar  
Of the spirit, the heart





THE WILD SWAN (1930) 85

That knew not how to falter,  
Turned to depart. 30

Now none shall remember beauty and dream  
To make of it love's happy theme,  
For, though the dawn came splendid,  
Calling us to its praise,  
Here is the glory ended, 35  
Muted the phrase.

Beauty was here that now is gone away;  
How short the time it made its stay!

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

I53 THE LOVER OF BEAUTY

I have been drunken on beauty as a bee on a flower;  
Now beauty is slipping away with each passionate hour!  
How shall I stay beauty, who cannot stay time,  
Though it stand at the turn of its last full prime?  
I have loved beauty . . . 5  
God grant I may sing, ere fallen to rust,  
The red of the rose, the glory of dust.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

I54 WINTER IN HYDE PARK

The sun moves north;<sup>1</sup> too swift  
His flight away,  
And coldly mourns the wind  
The shortened day!  
High on a naked bough, 5  
Half comatose,

<sup>1</sup> I.e. towards its winter solstice at the Tropic of Cancer.





The hungry sparrows sit  
 Huddled up close.

Yet from a ruffled breast  
 There slips a thin  
 Lost note, which, lone as life  
 That finds no kin, 10

Dies mateless out; for there  
 The frost-chilled ear,  
 Unkeyed, tunes not such sounds  
 To hold and hear. 15

Bare are the distant trees;  
 No butterfly,  
 To tell us of Spring, comes  
 Fluttering by; 20

But the casemoth's basket  
 Swings to and fro,  
 Where the eucalypt leaves  
 Hang green and low.

No passionate scent now  
 Calls to the bees; 25  
 The sap is asleep in  
 The poplar trees;

For Winter is come with  
 His cold, cold breath; 30  
 Yet in golden beauty  
 The leaves meet death.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV(A)*

19 Spring] spring *A*

28 poplar trees] poplar-trees *A*

29 Winter] winter *A*







## I55 SPRING SONG

Let the air be clamorous,  
 Bid all the wild to sing,  
 Beauty upon the earth  
 Is wed to Spring.

Now will flowers breed awake, 5  
 And the young leaf bud out,  
 And every bush echo  
 The plover's shout;

The pee-wee will cry *kling-klang*,  
*Klirry-klang!* and again 10  
 Will the brolgas gather  
 And dance like men;

There will be gladness abroad,  
 For in every hill  
 The thrid<sup>1</sup> of the cicad's 15  
 Jews-harp<sup>2</sup> will thrill;

The sun-worshipping crickets  
 Will leap high in the grass,  
 And the jet of their wings  
 Will shine like glass! 20

When all things a marriage song  
 Make and joyfully sing  
 Of beauty to earth come,  
 Briding the Spring,

I, too, will a marriage sing, 25  
 Humbly as dust, yet proud,  
 For over love's down-bent  
 Head I have bowed.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

<sup>1</sup> Obsolete spelling of *thread*.

<sup>2</sup> Musical instrument with a piercing note: see F122 n. 3.



## I56 THE SONG OF THE FURROW

Who shall with joy declare the night  
 As he, who, from his toil,  
 Stretcheth his arms of might  
 Where he tilleth the soil?  
 5  
 Though his hours run out on their tide  
 With as even a strain,  
 Where the muscles abide,  
 As a team on the chain,<sup>1</sup>  
 10  
 Yet he flingeth aside the plough,  
 Clear of the furrow's rough,  
 And he lifteth his brow,  
 Crying, It is enough!  
 For the day's work proveth his best;<sup>2</sup>  
 And at night he turneth,  
 15  
 A man an-hungered for rest,  
 Where the hearth-fire burneth.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: AinA* (March 1930), n. p. (A) *SV* (B)

*Not otherwise recorded: A's text is in italics throughout.*

3 Stretcheth] Stretches *B* might] *might*, *A* 4 Where] As *B* 4 tilleth] breaks  
 up *B* 8 the] a *B* chain,] *chain*. *A* 9 Yet . . . aside] He shall fling on its side *B*  
 10 furrow's] *furrows* *A* 11 And he lifteth] And, in lifting *B* 12 Crying] Will  
 cry *B* It] *it* *A* " ~ *B* 12 enough!] ~!" *B* 13 proveth] asks of *B* 13 best;]  
 ~, *B* 14 And] Till *B* 14 night] evening *B* 14 turneth] turns *B*  
 16 burneth] burns *B*

<sup>1</sup>The chained team pulling a bullock wagon.

<sup>2</sup>Tests and demonstrates his best qualities or efforts: cf. entry for line 13.

## I57 FIVE SONS SHE HAD

Old Granny on the hill,  
 As she sweeps with a will,

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Wr*, 7 March 1928, p. 5 (A) *SV* (B)

1 Granny . . . hill] Granny-on-the-hill *A*



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Surely she knows,  
As each year goes,  
The burden laid on her still! 5

Five sons she had—all wed;  
Five girls she had—all dead;  
Sons and sons' wives  
Lead their own lives;  
Granny eats pensioner's bread. 10

Old and a pensioner . . .  
As the leaves fall, and stir  
When the wind blows,  
Surely earth knows,  
Lonely, none lonelier. 15

Yet in her sad old might,  
In her hut in the height,  
Like a last leaf  
She cries, "Too brief,  
O Life!" shrinking from flight. 20

3 knows,] ~ *A* 4 goes,] ~ *A* 5 laid] *Om. A* 6 had—*A*] ~ *X* 9 lives;]  
~: *A* 11 Old] ~, *A* pensioner . . .] ~ . . . *A* ~! *B* 12 fall,] ~ *AB*  
13 When] And *A* 16 might] night *A* 17 in] on *AB* 19 cries,] ~: *A*  
brief,] ~ *A* 20 Life!" life!"—*A* life!" *B* shrinking from] dreading the *A*

158 WHO SPRING DELIGHTED HEARS

How wonderful is man,  
Who, with his eye all heights can span,  
Who, with his ear distinguishing,  
Finds his delight in Spring!

[*cont. overleaf*]

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV(A)*

*Not otherwise recorded: A* sets the refrain as the second half of the preceding stanza in each instance.

2 eye] ~, *A* 4 Spring] spring *A*





Over the rose poises a bee, 5  
 And the bee is sound, and the rose an ear;  
 And the bee has taken a word from me,  
 A word from my heart for love to hear.

Rose unto rose  
 The pollen goes; 10  
 And, but for a word,  
 Love perished unheard.

I have looked into eyes and seen  
 Love's eyes look back again to me, and there  
 Was wakened in the deep all that had been 15  
 Asleep; the hidden by a look laid bare.

Rose unto rose  
 The pollen goes;  
 Love looks, and the spirit  
 Wakes to inherit. 20

I have heard in a tree a bird,  
 And the bird sang only a single note,  
 That, there, as it sprang to its fullness, stirred  
 My heart as it stirred in the singer's throat.

Rose unto rose 25  
 The pollen goes;  
 Love (starving alone)  
 Grows rich on a tone.

How wonderful is man,  
 Who with his eyes can span 30  
 All space, and in his ears  
 The Spring delighted hears!

Rose unto rose  
 The pollen goes . . .  
 Rose unto rose . . . 35

23 sprang] lifted *A* its] *Om. A* 24 stirred in] sprang to *A* 27 alone)] ~), *A*  
 30 eyes] eye *A* 32 Spring] spring *A* 34 goes . . .] ~, *A* 35 'rose . . .] ~ . . . . *A*





## 159 THE SONG OF THE HAND

Blessed be God who gave us the need  
 To break the clod for the good round seed;  
 Who set the hand, and the fingers five,  
 Over the land and over the hive.

The harvest home shall reward the toil, 5  
 The bee-built comb shall declare the spoil;  
 Monarch of man are the fingers five,  
 He by their span must measure to thrive.

Contest is life! not war that destroys, 10  
 And breaks, in strife, as a child breaks toys;  
 But joy and pain, with honey in comb,  
 The good round grain and the harvest home.

He who shall sow with his fingers five,  
 Love he shall know, and his soul alive;  
 He shall abide a Winter of days, 15  
 Till Spring set wide the gate of its praise.

Then sap shall flood through the briary brake,  
 The hip shall bud, and the thorn awake;<sup>1</sup>  
 And there shall sing of its nest a bird—  
 The heart of Spring in a man's breast stirred. 20

Tender his eyes at the young lamb's bleat,  
 Where weak it lies a flake at his feet;  
 Yet proud he stands as he looks, abroad,  
 Over the lands where the plough is sword.

Monarch of man are the fingers five, 25  
 His soul their span shall carry alive.

[*cont. overleaf*](n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV(A)*

5 harvest home] harvest-home *A* 7 five,] ~; *A* 10 And] That *A* 12 grain]  
 ~, *A* 15 Winter] winter *A* 16 Spring] spring *A* 17 briary] briery *A*  
 20 heart] pulse *A* Spring] spring *A* 22 lies] ~, *A* 23 looks, abroad,] ~ ~ *A*

<sup>1</sup> I.e. The thicket of wild rose ('hip') and hawthorn ('briary brake') will bud and blossom.





What the reward? Sleeps deep in the womb  
The child—life's hoard of honey in comb.

28 The] His *A*

I60 OF PRIDE WILL I SING

Of pride will I sing, in a song  
I will make to the meek and strong;  
For I will sing you of dust, which,  
Wakened by life, leapt from the ditch;  
Dust, servant of man, who was born 5  
Of a breath as sound in a horn.

Palaces, crowns, history's masque,  
The broad strong back bent to the task,  
The seed man willed of love and lust, 10  
These are but shapes upraised from the dust.  
Only the dust is mighty; man  
In a dream of the dust began.

Lo, I have sung  
Of pride; a song  
Of the dust that 15  
Is meek and strong.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

I61 THE UNDELIVERED

As the soft gloaming fell,  
And the flowers closed their eyes—

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Des* (February 1930), p. 14 (*A*) *Wr*, 14  
May 1930, p. 5, signed Mary Gilmore (in *Desiderata*, a literary review published in  
Adelaide) (*B*) *SV* (*C*)

*Not otherwise recorded:* There is no stanza break in the collated states. In *A* the initial  
letter of every alternate line is lower case.

2 eyes—] ~, *C*





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As homeward the last late bird  
 Blackened against the skies—  
 As the thin cloud of eve 5  
 Frittered away in laces—  
 While yet a faint light veiled  
 The woods and shadowy places,  
 I stood as one to whom, as a dream,  
 An old memory clung; 10  
 And suddenly I heard the yoes<sup>1</sup>  
 That wait for their young.

4 skies—] ~, C 10 clung;] ~, A B

<sup>1</sup> Ewes.

162 THE TRESPASSER

He hath a hunger of the eyes  
 For all things beautiful and fine,  
 And ever sees with quick surprise  
 The young moon silver-pointed shine.  
 He loves, as though he were a child, 5  
 The new-born lamb so white and still,  
 And bends to note how softly piled  
 The velvet moss beside the rill.  
 And he will stand at even-time  
 To catch the last note of some bird, 10  
 As, on the wing's uplifting climb,  
 Dropped from the sky the sound is heard.  
 He hath a child's heart, though a man  
 Counts in him long-destroying years—

(n. d.) *Copy-text*: WS *Collated states*: DT, 27 March 1926, p. 5 as HE HATH A HUNGER OF THE EYES (A)

2 beautiful] beautiful A 3 sees] ~, A surprise] ~, A 6 lamb] ~, A 7 bends] leans A note] feel A softly piled] soft and mild A 11 uplifting] uplifted A





To ache, as but a man's heart can, 15  
In wild remorse and tears.

## I63 THE ROAD

The road broke under the wheels,  
And a new rut made a new road;  
The mare's foal ran at her heels—  
The quick when her pulse had slowed;  
Seed in the furrow knew Spring, 5  
And, high in the air, the wing  
Of a gull soared upward going:—  
And suddenly I was immortal,  
Knowing the old beauty of death!

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV(A)*

4 when] where *A* slowed;] ~. *A* 5 Spring] spring *A* 7 going:—] ~— *A*

## I64 OUT IN THE STORM

Now turned toward its doom,  
Dark is the soul with gloom,  
As in the sky the thunder-head,  
Where soon will the lightning-thread  
Cross-shuttle the loom, 5  
And the torment tread.

Grey is the vale, below,  
Where the slack waters flow  
Like a tired pulse that would sleep;  
Like eyes, that mourned to weep, 10  
The vortices grow  
Where the dun clouds sweep.

Yet, in this dim forlorn,  
High on the winds upborne,







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Like a lute in the air, there flies 15  
 A cage-bird's song to the skies,  
 In eloquent scorn  
 Of the faith that dies.

Shall we remember less  
 Than he, whom no duress 20  
 Can break from his tribute of song,  
 However his heart may long  
 For the fields that bless,  
 And the wings that throng?

Dark, dark is the soul with gloom 25  
 In its narrowing room,  
 But the Infinite Will  
 Covers it still.

(27 July 1923) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

165 THROUGH WHAT DARK HUNGERS  
 OF THE FLESH

Through what dark hungers of the flesh the soul peeps out,  
 And through what clash is made its cry,  
 E'en as the moon looks through the cloudy rout,  
 That veils it, passing by.

Only in earthquake slacks the rind of earth, to loose 5  
 The hidden springs that lie within;  
 So with the hardened world of men, whom use  
 Indures<sup>1</sup> lest weakness win.

Yet from man's dark enveloping cloud, his thickened crust,  
 Sometimes, somehow, in moments rare, 10  
 An angel face looks out, and love, with trust,  
 Turns back to meet it there.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

<sup>1</sup> Obsolete form of *indurate*, to toughen; of human beings, to render hard-hearted.



## I66 DUST

“I reign!” said man;  
     And the dust: “Your rule is chaos!”  
 “We are the law,”  
     Said man, “All things obey us!”  
 Now in the law’s great halls 5  
 Dust falls, and falls, and falls.  
 Only the rhythms of the dust endure.  
  
 Mighty is man,  
     Who, in his mountainy measures,  
 Digs like a wolf, 10  
     Seeking the things he treasures;  
 Then on his treasure falls  
 Dust of his roof and walls.  
 Only the rhythms of the dust endure.  
  
 Softly and slow, 15  
     The dust in its long, long falling  
 Masses in sleep;  
     Tenderly shawling, shawling,  
 Over the crumbling walls,  
 Heaping it falls, and falls . . . 20  
 Only the rhythms of the dust endure.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV (A)*

2 dust:] ~, A    7 of the A] of X

## I67 SPRING SONG

Spring is not gone—not yet! not yet!  
 Across Gundry Plain<sup>1</sup> the shadows flight,  
 And where Monaro gleams, a snowdrift glistens white;

(10 November 1923) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SMH, 13 September 1924, p. 13 (A)*

1 yet! not] ~, ~ A    2 flight] flit A    3 gleams,] ~ A    4 tawny] dark and A

<sup>1</sup> Places named in I67 are in the Southern Highlands, from Gundry Plain near Goulburn



THE WILD SWAN (1930)

97

Against her tawny eucalyptine hills  
 Tarlo still holds her willow-green, 5  
 Tender as when it first was seen;  
 While o'er the Kookbundoons, faint, fainter growing,  
 The Wind-Boy whistles in his going.<sup>2</sup>

Spring is not gone—not yet, not yet!  
 Still mounts the speeding cloud its airy steed, 10  
 And still on Goulburn hills the yellow weed  
 The glory of its blossom spills;  
 While, from his close, the wintered bee  
 Drops to the pollened gold he takes in fee,  
 As, far within the skyey vague's<sup>3</sup> blue showing, 15  
 The Wind-Boy whistles to his going.

Spring is not gone—not yet, not yet!  
 Barely is lost the lamb's first flickering bleat—  
 The little white thing, lying in the sun's new heat,  
 Thin as the snowflake seen on mountain sills; 20  
 Scarcely the unbound, budded leaf  
 On orchard trees forgets its sheaf,  
 Where winter-held it knew not Spring's bestowing—  
 The Wind-Boy whistling in his going.

Not yet the Spring is o'er—not yet! 25  
 The blood of winter in the charging vein  
 Leaps like a courser scornful of the rein—  
 Swift as the purling Pomeroy rills,<sup>4</sup>

6 seen;] ~, *A* 7 Kookbundoons] Cookbundoons *A* 10 airy] flying *A*  
 11 Goulburn hills] Eastgrove Hill *A* 12 spills;] ~, *A* 13 While,] And *A*  
 14 Drops to the] Fattens on *A* fee,] ~; *A* 15 As,] While *A* 16 to] in *A*  
 19 thing, lying] ~ ~, *A* in . . . heat] where the shadows fleet *A* 20 snowflake]  
 snowflakes *A* 22 sheaf,] ~ *A* 23 Where winter-held] ~, ~, *A* bestowing—]  
 ~, *A* 25 o'er] past *A* 26 winter] ~, *A* vein] ~, *A* 27 courser] ~, *A*

(see F165, H7 and J13) to the high tablelands of the Monaro region near the Snowy Mountains to the s. and the Kookbundoons to the n. On the latter, see F98, H94 and cf. *A*'s spelling in line 7; cf. also I28 line 7.

<sup>2</sup> For comparisons of the wind to an energetic or mischievous boy, see C17 and C18 and cf. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's refrain 'A boy's will is the wind's will' in 'My Lost Youth' (1858). <sup>3</sup> See I7 n. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Rivulets, small streams: the small township of Pomeroy is e. of the Great Dividing





That whisper, whisper through the leaves  
 Where the glad sun his wayward pattern weaves, 30  
 And the loud cock hears echo crowing—crowing—  
 The Wind-Boy whistling in his going.

Not yet the Spring is gone—not yet!  
 In all the radiance of the ambient height,  
 In loveliness of day, in loveliness of night, 35  
 Hovers eternal power that o'er life wills,  
 Waiting the movement that shall wake  
 When young things from their swaddlings break,  
 Hearing the sap within them flowing—flowing—  
 The Wind-Boy whistling in his going. 40

Not yet the Spring is gone—not yet!  
 Not while within the heart a full note sings,  
 And love can play upon deep, hidden springs  
 Till quivering life in answer thrills!  
 Not yet the Spring is gone—not though 45  
 Upon the head the years sift down their snow!  
 . . . Alas! how Time the Scythe-man<sup>5</sup> answers—mowing—  
 The Wind-Boy whistling in his going!

28 purling] quickened *A* rills,] ~ *A* 29 leaves] ~, *A* 30 glad] gay *A*  
 wayward pattern] patterned measure *A* 32 going.] ~! *A* 34 all . . . the]  
 radiant splendour held in *A* height,] ~ *A* 35 In . . . in] The . . . the *A*  
 36 Hovers] Hover *A* wills] stills *A* 37 movement] moments *A* shall wake]  
 awake. *A* 38 break,] ~ *A* 39 Hearing] And hear *A* 42 sings] springs *A*  
 43 And] Or *A* deep,] the *A* 45 gone—] ~!—*A* 46-7 snow!/. . . Alas!  
 how] ~ . . . // ~! How *A* 47 Scythe-man] Scytheman *A* answers—mowing—]  
 ~, ~, *A*

Range, about 50 km from Goulburn. Heffernans and Ryans Creeks are nearby.

<sup>5</sup>The figure of Father Time (like that of Death) often carries a scythe or sickle to indicate that he mows down all living things; cf. J21 line 52.





## I68 WINTER

Who now cometh here  
 With his locks at the sere,<sup>1</sup>  
 And a face like a boy?  
 Winter full of joy,  
 Young heart and old head, 5  
 Appetite for bread,  
 And a laugh like a lad  
 Who is glad.

With wind and with rain  
 He knocketh on the pane; 10  
 He calleth to the fire,  
 And the heart, leap higher!  
 And palms on his knees,  
 As the long nights freeze,  
 He laugheth like a boy 15  
 Full of joy.

With ice and with frost  
 He wrappeth pool and post;  
 And, sickle-new and bright  
 In the cold sweet night, 20  
 Like a far-flung shoe  
 The moon peepeth through,  
 While the star showeth white  
 In the height.

With thick porridge cool, 25  
 Put in chair, put in stool;

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV(A)*

1 cometh] enters *A* here] ~, *A* 10 knocketh on] knocks upon *A* 11 He  
 calleth] While he calls *A* 13 And] Then *A* 15 laugheth] laughs *A*  
 18 wrappeth] covers *A* post;] ~, *A* 19 sickle-new] silver-new *A* bright] ~, *A*  
 20 In . . . sweet] He shows, on the *A* 21-2 Like . . . through] The moon shining  
 through, / Like an upflung shoe *A* 23 star showeth] stars glisten *A*

<sup>1</sup> See I19 n. 1.





For, with hunger sharp set,  
 Naught need'st now to whet  
 Appetite the bold,  
 Edged up by the cold, 30  
 As the eave ice drippeth,  
 And slippeth.

Now winter to the bird  
 Sayeth, "Sleep thou unstirred!  
 With bill under feather 35  
 Heed not the weather!  
 Though the wind bloweth,  
 Though the cloud snoweth,  
 Yet at day cometh sun,  
 Little one." 40

And saith he to love,  
 "With coverlet above,  
 When thou shalt hear the rain  
 Thou shalt turn again,  
 And, whispering and warm, 45  
 With arm under arm,  
 And with breast unto breast,  
 Thou shalt rest."

28 need'st] needs *A* 31 As] Where *A* drippeth,] slips *A* 32 And slippeth]  
 As it drips *A* 34 Sayeth] Says *A* thou] on *A* 37 wind bloweth] sharp wind  
 blow *A* 38 cloud snoweth] dark cloud snow *A* 39 cometh] comes the *A*  
 41 saith he] then he says *A* 43 thou shalt] you shall *A* 44 Thou shalt] You  
 will *A* 45 And,] ~ *A* 48 Thou shalt] You shall *A*

## 169 THE RED-BREAST HASTETH AWAY

Now lifteth the ice its pack  
 And pricketh its way on the ground,  
 Now slippeth the hoof on the track  
 That frost with its iron hath bound;  
 Now rougheth the hair 5  
 On the thick o' th' hide,





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

101

Where oxen and horse  
 The winter abide.

The red-breast hasteth away,  
 Hasteth away from Crookwell town, 10  
 For he heareth the winds that say  
 Soon will a whippet of snow come down.  
 He flee-eth the wind,  
 And flee-eth the snow,  
 But where he hideth 15  
 There's none to know.

Aloft on Roslyn heights,  
 Where the polar<sup>1</sup> sheddeth his fire,  
 As the lamp at Maryvale<sup>2</sup> lights,  
 There memory writeth a quire.<sup>3</sup> 20  
 There under the snow  
 The crocuses hide—  
 But who shall the winter  
 Of time abide?

So heap the wood on the hearth 25  
 Till the chimney roast with the flame,  
 Let of logs be never a dearth,  
 Lest wanderers call on us shame;  
 For breedeth a wind  
 (And breedeth a snow) 30  
 And who shall abide it  
 There's none may know.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

<sup>1</sup> The pole star is the nearest naked-eye star to the celestial pole – in the southern hemisphere, Sigma Octantis.

<sup>2</sup> MG's maternal grandparents' property, where she was born. Crookwell (line 10) and Roslyn (line 17) are nearby.

<sup>3</sup> I.e. enough to fill a set of twenty-four sheets of writing paper or, in printed books, a gathering (the sequential leaves that make up a folded sheet).





## 170 THE YELLOW DAFFODIL

Why should I ask  
 To follow folly's way,  
 For folly 'tis  
 Thy wilfulness to follow!  
 Yet I, who would 5  
 The careless huntsman play,  
 Losing thee pine my loss  
 By every height and hollow.

For still must I,  
 What way thou deign to turn, 10  
 Or through what hurt  
 Thy wayward going lead me,  
 Where'er thy foot  
 Step, my heart's candle burn,  
 And, lost, must cry my loss 15  
 In hope that thou shouldst heed me.

O, were I but  
 The yellow daffodil  
 That thou within  
 Thy wood bent stooping over, 20  
 Or were I but  
 Thy chambered window-sill!  
 But I my loss must cry,  
 Longing to be thy lover.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: BPMag* (December 1929 – February 1930),  
 p. 47 (A) *SV*(B)

*Not otherwise recorded: A* is in italics throughout.

11 Or] *And A* 13 Where'er] Or where *B* 14 Step, *B*] ~ *X* Step *A* 15 And,  
 lost,] *And lost A* 17 O,] *O A* ~ *B* 18 yellow daffodil] *Yellow Daffodil A*





## 171 THE MOPOKE, MEMORY

O Memory, mopoke of the heart,  
 How often does thy hollow note,  
 Like the bird's cry, mournful, apart,  
 Over the spirit's twilight float!

Beneath a moon, whose pallid hue 5  
 Blackens each shadow where it lies,  
 That voice calls solitary through  
 The night, by range, and rill, and rise.<sup>1</sup>

O, lone, lone note! O Memory, thou 10  
 Who, too, dost wake by night to call,  
 Thou mak'st the human heart thy bough,  
 Thy grievous moonlight covering all.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Wr*, 29 August 1928, p. 5 (A)

2 hollow] echoing *A* 3 cry,] ~— *A* mournful, apart,] hollow, remote— *A*  
 5–8 Beneath . . . rise.] The bird calls solitary through/ The darkling night, by range  
 and rise,/ Or 'neath a moon whose pallid hue/ Blackens each shadow where it lies. *A*  
 9 O, lone, lone] O lonely *A* Memory,] ~!— *A* 10 dost] must *A* 11 Thou]  
 Who *A* 12 Thy grievous] Grievous thy *A*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 18.

## 172 I SAW THEIR DREAMS

Young love that has no fear,  
 That, knowing nothing, understands,  
 Stepped up into the tram, last night,  
 And sat beside me holding hands.

Shoulder to shoulder leaned, 5  
 While thought in each knew only faith.

[*cont. overleaf*]

(29 March 1920) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Wr*, 1 September 1921, p. 9 as IN  
 OXFORD STREET (A) *Wr*, 27 November 1929, p. 5 (B)

3 tram,] ~ *A* B 4 me] ~, *A* 6 thought] ~, *A* each] ~, *A* knew *A*] know *X*  
 faith.] ~; *B*



104

## COLLECTED VERSE: SECTION I

Theirs th' eternal immemorial world;  
This world was but its wraith!

Love in their eyes looked forth,  
As innocent as heaven's first star: 10  
I saw their dreams; they did not know  
I saw—how sweet they seemed, how far.

7 th'] the *A* eternal] ~, *AB* 8 its] the *A* wraith!] ~. *A* 9 forth,] ~ *AB*  
10 star:] ~; *AB* 12 far.] ~! *A*

## I73 NEVER ADMIT THE PAIN

Never admit the pain,  
Bury it deep;  
Only the weak complain,  
Complaint is cheap.

Cover thy wound, fold down 5  
Its curtained place;  
Silence is still a crown,  
Courage a grace.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: PPA (A) Mackaness2 (B) SV (C) Wrightz*  
(*D*) Mackaness3 reprints *B*  
7 crown,] ~ *B* 8 a] is *A*

## I74 SOMETIMES A PETAL FALLS

Speak soft above her grave,  
Put no slight on her;  
She was of love the slave,  
His blight he laid upon her.  
Only she asked to give, 5  
Love's insolence obeying;

(21 March 1924) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Wr, 11 December 1929, p. 5 (A) SV*  
as SOMETIME A PETAL FALLS (*B*)

*Not otherwise recorded: A* divides the poem into four 4-line stanzas.  
6 obeying;] ~— *B*





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

105

Love, the wild fugitive,  
Home from the straying.

Sometimes a petal falls,  
Silently, slightly; 10

Never the ear forestalls<sup>1</sup>  
Where it drops lightly;  
So went she, wanned and white

As a bud that uncloses;  
Dropped as a petal might, 15  
Fallen from roses.

9 Sometimes] Sometime *B* 12 lightly;] ~. *A* 13 white] ~, *A* 15 Dropped]  
~, *A B*

<sup>1</sup> Anticipates, and thus prevents.

I75 LET NEVER DESPAIR

Let never despair  
Upon thy heart his name  
Grave deeply down; share  
Not in his evil fame!

Yet grieve, if thou must, 5  
Lest memory should fail,  
And leave but the dust  
To hold love's long entail.<sup>1</sup>

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV (A)*

2 thy] the *A* 5 thou] you *A*

<sup>1</sup> Inherited obligation.





176 THE ROOK,  
THE RAVEN, AND THE CHOUGH<sup>1</sup>

I have wept long enough!  
Now let me sing  
The rook, the raven, and the chough,<sup>2</sup>  
And the bold black wing.

The rook to the raven said, 5  
“My nest is bare,  
Except for a single thread  
Of a girl’s gold hair.”

And the chough croaked, “It is enough!”  
But the raven said, 10  
“Down in the clough<sup>3</sup>  
A lamb lies dead.”

He sleeked his shining wings:  
“I am fed,” he said,  
“I am fed!” 15

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV* (no variants)

<sup>1</sup> Cryptic ballads, often medieval in inspiration, were a particular interest of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, e.g. of poets Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–82), Christina Rossetti (1830–94), William Morris (1834–96) and Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909). Other examples, some faux-medieval, are: J85, J96, K93, K94, M19 and M21.

<sup>2</sup> In England, a bird of the crow family, a jackdaw.

<sup>3</sup> Steep-sided ravine or valley.

177 WHOM SHOULD LOVE PITY?

Whom should love pity if not the lover,  
Mourning and mateless like a lone plover!  
Nay, let him go to muse in his dreaming;  
Little his loss who still has the seeming.

What if the dust 5  
Of the long years cover?  
There shall survive,





## THE WILD SWAN (1930)

107

As comb in the hive,  
Beauty to dwell  
In the heart of a lover!

10

Spoil of the bee the sweet of the clover,  
Sweeter the spoil that falls to the lover!  
Yet never the flesh brightens the ember—  
Only the dreamer knows to remember.

Look in her eyes,  
Let beauty uncover!  
Held in the comb  
Of the heart for home,  
Beauty is born  
In the eyes of a lover!

15

20

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

## I78 HATH SHE NO MORE THAN MOODS

Hath she no more than moods?  
Is her love but a breath,  
Which, when the whim is passed,  
Falleth to death?

Nay! had I thought her so,  
I had not turned again,  
Fearing the parting word,  
Dreading the pain!

5

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Tri (December 1927), p. 32 as IS HER LOVE BUT A BREATH? (A)**Not otherwise recorded: A's text is in italics throughout.*3 passed] *past A* 5 Nay!] *Ah, A*

## 179 IT WAS MY LOVE COMPLAINED

It was my love complained,  
 Not I;  
 My love that pined thee  
 When not nigh.  
  
 Hungry it waited, 5  
 Hungry watched  
 The moments time  
 Unfeeling snatched.  
  
 It was my love complained;  
 My heart 10  
 Still knew thee constant  
 As thou art.  
  
 Ah, wayward love that would  
 Complain,  
 That old pursuit might 15  
 Sound again!

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Tri* (December 1927), p. 32 (*A*)

*Not otherwise recorded: A's text is in italics throughout.*

7 moments time] *moments' Time A 9 complained;] complained, A 12 art.] art! A*  
 15 That old] *So that A 15-16 might/ Sound again] might sound/ Again A*

## 180 IN THE SPRING

Hath the bud heard of the bee,  
 As it reddens and flushes,  
 There as it hangs on the tree,  
 Like a maiden that blushes?

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Tri* (December 1927), p. 32 as A SONG OF THE BUD (*A*)

*Not otherwise recorded: A's text is in italics throughout.*

1 bee,] *bee A 2 As] That A 3 There] There, A*



THE WILD SWAN (1930) 109

Hath the twig word of the down, 5  
 And of two blue eggs resting  
 Under the feathers of brown,  
 At the end of the nesting?

Ah, hath my lady, my own,  
 Dreamed, as the white breasts blossom, 10  
 Of the bee, the bud and the down,  
 Or the nest in her bosom?

6 resting] *resting, A*    7 brown,] *brown A*    8 nesting] *questing A*    9 lady] *boy A*  
 11 Of the] *O' th' A*    12 Or] *And A*

I81 WHERE THE WATERS LOOPED

Tenderly she stooped,  
 Then slenderly stepped  
 Where the waters looped  
 As the current swept;  
 And I saw in her hand 5  
 A broken flower,  
 Such pity God gave her  
 For dower!<sup>1</sup>

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

<sup>1</sup> Natural endowment.

I82 CONTEST IS ENDED IN SURRENDER

Contest is ended in surrender;  
 What is there left to say,  
 O passionate and tender  
 One at bay?  
 Thou hast no word? and yet, O veiling 5  
 Lids, what speaks so loudly,  
 Here where my heart, thine quailing,  
 Beats proudly?

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*





## 183 STRANGELY UPON THE NIGHT

Strangely upon the night,  
 Strangely upon the pane,  
 There fell a shadow, light,  
 That paused and went again.

Ah, was it death that came,  
 With hungry eyes that sought  
 The firelit hearth, the flame,  
 The silence love had wrought?

5

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

## 184 THE PRAYER

Suffer no more thy anger  
 To burn me with its fire,  
 For I have conquered longing,  
 And I have quenched desire.

Only do I remember  
 One strange, one haunting look—  
 When soul met soul and grappled,  
 And my world shook.

5

(27 April 1919) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

## 185 SPEAK LOW OF LOVE

Speak low of love;  
 Hast thou not known the Spring?  
 Heard the young grass rise  
 To it, whispering?

Speak low of love,  
 So that thy heart may hear

5







THE WILD SWAN (1930)

111

Its rumour on the wind  
Against thy ear.

Speak low of love—  
Wonder that wonder wakes!  
Hush! lest a tendril,  
Tremulous, breaks.

10

(7 February 1920) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

186 HOT LOVE THAT COMES AND GOES

Once like an ocean ran  
Love from his heart to hers;  
Now spreads a desert, wan,  
And there no memory stirs.

Slain, in a moment brief,  
By some word hotly said,  
How like a stricken leaf  
Love from its height falls dead!

5

How like, how like to life  
Is love that comes and goes;  
The edged word, like a knife,  
Stabs—and the death-feud grows.

10

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

187 NURSE NO LONG GRIEF

O, could we weep,  
And weeping bring relief!  
But life asks more than tears  
And falling leaf.

[*cont. overleaf*]

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV (A) Pizer (B) Trib, 10 February 1954,*  
p. 1 (C)

1 O] Oh *A* weep,] ~ *C*





112

## COLLECTED VERSE: SECTION I

Though year by year 5  
 Tears fall and leaves are shed,  
 Spring bids new sap arise  
 And blood run red.

Nurse no long grief, 10  
 Lest thy heart flower no more;  
 Grief builds no barns; its plough  
 Rusts at the door.

6 shed,] ~ C    7 arise] ~, A    9 grief,] ~ C    10 thy] the A

## 188 THE GIFT

Tortured, tormented, and enslaved,  
 A prisoner love made of me,  
 Who, as a wild bird, once was free;  
 But from the heart's death me he saved.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV* (no variants)

## 189 OF WISDOM

There is no wisdom but  
 It has love for its root;  
 Love brought to flower the bud  
 Upon the tawny shoot.

Fear watched the skies; but love 5  
 Saw God beyond the cloud,  
 And took the hands of life,  
 And left death but the shroud.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*





## 190 THE DESERTED ORCHARD\*

Rome,<sup>1</sup> he sleeps at my feet,  
 And I pull on the silk of his ears,  
 Thinking how passion is fleet,  
 How salt is a portion of tears.  
 And over by hill and by the hollow, 5  
 An apple-tree, blooming alone,  
 Seems as one who would whisper,  
 Come follow! Come follow!  
 To ask for a word of his own.

For the apple tree, there, 10  
 Is the only thing living is left,  
 Telling a tale on the air  
 Of patterns half done in the weft.  
 So ever by hill and by hollow,  
 And out of the distance, alone, 15  
 It seems as one who would whisper,  
 Come follow! Come follow!  
 To ask for a word of his own.

Rome, he sleeps at my feet,  
 And I pull on his satiny ears, 20  
 Thinking how passion is fleet,  
 How salt is a portion of tears!

\* On the road to Gunning.<sup>2</sup>

(30 October 1922) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rome's appearance in A10 and Z3.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. G37.



## 191 FAMOUS

He sat, a leader and acclaimed by men,  
 And all his heart was with the yellow corn;  
 He saw the paddocks of his youth again,  
 The weathered hut where he and his were born.  
  
 And as he dreamed he heard the wind 5  
 Blow up and down upon the tawny wheat,  
 And marked the rustle, how it fell and thinned,  
 And died upon the wind in its retreat.  
  
 He heard the milkers lowing at the rails,  
 And saw his father rise and let them in; 10  
 Caught the horn's rattle on the closing bails,  
 Heard the first milking on the pail strike thin.  
  
 The firelight leaped behind his chiselled brass,  
 A bell beside his polished table rang;  
 He only heard a troop of horses pass, 15  
 The battered door of an old stable clang.  
  
 Upon the wall the great companioned him:  
 His heart was with a little barefoot lad,  
 Running to find a ferny brookside dim,  
 And chequered waters by a forest pad.<sup>1</sup> 20

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: BPMag* (June 1929), p. 64 as FAME (A) *SV* (B)

*Not otherwise recorded: A's text is in italics throughout.*

1 by] *of*<sup>A</sup> 2 And] But<sup>B</sup> heart was] *thoughts were*<sup>A</sup> 9 rails,] *rails*<sup>A</sup>  
 11 horn's] *horns'*<sup>A</sup> 13 leaped] *leapt*<sup>A</sup> leapt<sup>B</sup> chiselled] *burnished*<sup>A</sup>  
 14 A] *The*<sup>A</sup> 17 him:] ~; B 18 lad,] *lad*<sup>A</sup> 19 brookside] ~, B

<sup>1</sup> Path or track, worn by animals.



## 192 THERE SHALL COME DREAMS UPON A MAN

There shall come dreams upon a man,  
 And he shall see the sun;  
 He shall look upon the waters,  
 And watch them as they run,  
 And he shall know them wonderful, 5  
 Or ere his day is done.

There shall come dreams upon a man,  
 They shall be quiet dreams,  
 Then he shall see with open sight  
 Where once he saw in gleams; 10  
 And he shall find a friend in trees,  
 And brotherhood in streams.

There shall come dreams upon a man;  
 He will not count them loss,  
 For he shall trawl the blue serene 15  
 Where sails the cloudy floss;  
 And his shall be the emerald  
 Within the little moss.

He shall awaken in the night,  
 And look from star to star, 20  
 Till he shall know them one with him,  
 Not vague things set afar;  
 And he shall there forget himself  
 In thinking what they are.

There shall come dreams upon a man, 25  
 Or ere his day is done,  
 And he shall stand, a conqueror,  
 And know all battles won;  
 He shall look up, though it were dark,  
 And he shall see the sun. 30

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SMH*, 11 October 1924, p. 13 as DREAMS SHALL COME (A) Pizer (B)

2 sun;] ~, A 3 waters,] ~ A 5 wonderful,] ~ A 7 man,] ~; A 9 Then] Where A 14 loss,] ~. A 19 night,] ~ A 21 Till he shall know] Until he knows A





## I93 THE BLANKET

What art thou whom I seek but a wind!  
 Then blow to me hither,  
 For the branches above me are thinned,  
 The scattered leaves wither;  
 Parching I go under pitiless skies, 5  
 Who ask but the dew of thy lips,  
 And thine eyes!

What art thou whom I seek but the sun!  
 The wintered I perish,  
 Like a tree where the blossom is done, 10  
 And no one to cherish.  
 O, would I were lying, warm at thy heart,  
 One roof-tree to cover, and  
 No one to part!

And to thee I am wind, and am sun, 15  
 And, love, thy pursuer!  
 Come then to me, come, O, wistfullest one,  
 Let need be the lure.  
 O that thou wert with me, close to my heart,  
 One blanket to cover, and 20  
 No one to part!

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

## I94 DOWN BY THE POLDER

Down by the polder,<sup>1</sup> where  
 Knee deep the cattle stand  
 With drowsy cud and stare,  
 And stilled is all the land  
 Beneath the Summer haze, 5  
 I walk once more in dreams,

<sup>1</sup> Pasture land, especially river flats.





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

117

And with me one dream stays,  
And more than seems.

Was it a shadow stood,  
Half hidden and half seen, 10  
Where, with its shade, the wood  
Darkened the luscious green?

Once two were there, while youth  
Spoke its adventurous will;  
Would that in very truth 15  
They stood there still.

Age writes upon the face  
Its furrowing of lines,  
And through its filmy trace  
Life's pattern there defines; 20  
But in the polder no  
Lines show; the grass is still  
As when, O, long ago,  
Love wept its will.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

I95 IN THE WINTERING SNOW

Where alone he sits with his dreams,  
As the flame of the candle gleams,  
A shadow rises and falls, and seems  
Like one who was there,  
O, long long ago, 5  
Ere the wintering snow  
Had whitened his hair.

And it almost seemed that she stooped  
Low over him, there, as he drooped,  
And her white arms about him she looped 10  
In the old, old way,



Of long long ago,  
 Ere the wintering snow  
 Had whitened the grey.

Dreams! dreams! dreams! and yet to what shore 15  
 Do they reach, that there, evermore,  
 We must go forth to seek—to restore—  
 The look that was fair,  
 O, long long ago,  
 Ere the wintering snow 20  
 Fell white on our hair?

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

### 196 REMEMBERING

When you will some day turn old letters over,  
 Reading familiar phrases you will say,  
 “Here was no cheap love-rover,  
 Changing from day to day;  
 But here was one to whom love meant 5  
 All should be given—not lent!”

And when, at evening, you will stand in lonely  
 And nostalgic mood, and in the grey  
 Low dusk see one star only  
 Lift in the sky, O say 10  
 “So lone was she: to whom love meant  
 All to be given—not lent.”

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: WMag (December 1927), n. p. as SPENDTHRIFT OF LOVE (A)<sup>1</sup>*

1 When] (Specially written for the Wentworth Magazine)// When *A* 2 say,] ~: *A*  
 3 love-rover,] ~ *A* 6 should] to *A* lent!] ~ *A* 10 say] ~: *A* 11 she:] ~— *A*

<sup>1</sup> The *WMag* archives are incomplete. *A* occurs, with Z11 and Z12, as part of a single page of print cuttings held in NLA 727 11/9/2. All are annotated by MG as printed in *WMag* and display its characteristic typography.





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

119

When by the hearthside you will linger dreaming  
 Of days far gone, then you will think of her  
 Tenderly—without seeming— 15  
 And an old longing stir,  
 Remembering how, to her, love meant  
 All to be given—not lent.

13 When] ~, *A* hearthside] hearth-side, *A* 17 meant] ~: *A*

197 THE WOOD-DOVE

O, with what passionate,  
 With what upsoaring love  
 I heard the long-looked-for  
 Call of the first wood-dove;  
 Wandering I followed, 5  
 Peering through bush and brake,  
 All the wild dreams of life  
 Within the heart awake!  
 For the whole world was there,  
 Deep in a child's heart hid; 10  
 Books I had read, old tales  
 Oft heard—the Moor, the Cid,  
 Aladdin, Lalla Rookh,  
 The horn by Roland wound,  
 Mount Ida, Italy<sup>1</sup>— 15  
 Dwelt in that moving sound.

[*cont. overleaf*]

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SMH*, 31 December 1927, p. 9 as THE WOOD DOVE (*A*) *SV* as THE WOOD DOVE (*B*)

1 O,] ~ *B* 2 love] ~, *A* 3 long-looked-for] long-looked for *A* long looked-for *B* 4 wood-dove;] wood dove. *A* wood dove; *B* 8 the] my *A* awake!] ~ *A* 14 horn] Horn *B* wound,] ~ *A*

<sup>1</sup> Respectively, the eponymous heroes of Shakespeare's *Othello* (c. 1604) and the early medieval Spanish epic *El Cid*; Aladdin of *The Arabian Nights* (translated 1885–88 by Richard Burton from the medieval Arabic); the heroine of *Lalla Rookh: An Oriental Romance* (1817) by Thomas Moore (1779–1852); the hero of the medieval French *Chanson de Roland*; and Mt Ida, the site of Troy (Ilium). Cf. 130 n. 5.





Never, through what long years  
 May come to me and bring  
 Full harvest in, shall I,  
 As then, with that swift spring 20  
 O' the heart entranced run,  
 And stand, and run again,  
 In such a joy released,  
 Almost it seemed like pain!

18 me] ~, A 19 I,] ~ A 21 O'] Of B entranced] ~, A entranced B run,]  
 ~ A 24 pain!] ~. A

## I98 THE PLOVER

I shall not need the moon  
 To find thy trysting-place;  
 The plovers, late and soon,  
 O'er it in flight enlace;  
 Forward and back they fly, 5  
 Hearts in eternal hover;  
 My cry is in their cry,  
 My heart thy plover.  
 I shall not need the moon!  
 No night too dark for me, 10  
 Who count thee all my boon,  
 To watch where thou shalt be!  
 Backward and forth they fly,  
 Wings of the heart at hover—  
 The bird's cry is my cry, 15  
 My heart thy plover.  
 About Life's darkling field,<sup>1</sup>  
 Moves in unending flight,

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SMH*, 2 February 1929, p. 13 (A) *SV*(B)

1 moon] ~, A 2 trysting-place] trysting place A 4 enlace;] ~. A 6 hover;]  
 ~, A 12 be!] ~. A 13 they] must B fly,] ~—A ~ B 14 heart] ~, B  
 at] and B hover—] ~; A 17 About Life's] Above life's A B 18 Moves] ~, A  
 unending] eternal A





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

121

Grief that may not be healed,  
 To cry upon the night; 20  
 Therefore, as time goes by,  
 Love still must call the lover:  
 The bird's cry is my cry,  
 My heart the plover.

19 Grief] ~, B 20 cry] weep B night;] ~. A 21 goes] runs B 22 lover:]  
 ~. A ~— B

<sup>1</sup> Growing dark, in darkness – common poetic usage; cf. ‘Darkling I listen’ in John Keats’s ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ (1820) or ‘the darkling plain’ in Matthew Arnold’s ‘Dover Beach’ (1867). See also I128 line 3.

199 NINETTE

The marigold shuts her leaves,  
 While the clover folds its hands,  
 And the bees creep out like thieves  
 From the honeysuckle strands,  
 And the honeysuckle breathes 5  
 Its scent on the evening air:  
 Are you there, Ninette, at the gate?  
 Ninette, are you there?  
 The lamp of the evening star  
 Like a glow-worm lights the sky, 10  
 And the poplar’s slender spar  
 Lifts like a finger on high;  
 The curlew wistfully calls  
 His lonely cry on the air:  
 Are you there, at the gate, Ninette? 15  
 Ninette, are you there?  
 Swallows are home to the nest;  
 And under the wing, to sleep,

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SMH, 10 March 1928, p. 13 as NINETTE, ARE YOU THERE (A) SV (B)*

2 its] her A 4 strands,] ~; A 5 honeysuckle] dark carnation A 6 air:]  
 ~— B 14 air:] ~— B 15 there,] ~ A





Under the soft warm breast,  
 The last of the nestlings creep; 20  
 Tenderly darkens the eve,  
 The stars are a silver stair:  
 Are you there at the gate, Ninette?  
 Ninette, are you there?

The fire-flame leaps at the hob, 25  
 And the candle lifts its light—  
 Was it the sound of a sob  
 Like a lost thing stirred the night?  
 Out of the distance I call,  
 My heart in its pain laid bare, 30  
 Are you there at the gate, Ninette?  
 Ninette, are you there?

19 breast,] ~ *A*    22 stair:] ~— *B*

I100 TO HAVE LIVED IS ENOUGH

Oft have I stood to see the failing  
 Of the great star<sup>1</sup> mark the coming dawn,  
 And watched, upon the earth, the veiling  
 Of the night move backward o'er the lawn;  
 And I have seen, at eve, the day 5  
 Draw to an end and go,  
 And I have asked, as it passed away,  
 Did it know? Did it know?

I have watched flowers that in the burning  
 Beauty of their hour glowed like the sun, 10  
 And I have bent above them, yearning,  
 Lovingly have touched them, one by one;

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SMH, 19 May 1928, p. 13 (A)*

1 see] watch *A*    2 great star] daystar *A*    mark the] tell of *A*    3 watched,]  
 marked *A*    earth,] ~ *A*    8 know? Did] ~, did *A*    know?] ~. *A*    9 watched]  
 loved *A*    12 Lovingly] Tenderly *A*

<sup>1</sup> Venus, which is both evening and morning star: see entry for line 2.





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

123

And I have seen their splendour fade,  
 At eve their petals strown,  
 And I have asked of the thing betrayed, 15  
 Had it known? Had it known?  
 I have asked my soul, with wonder:  
 O brief sojourner in this clay, say  
 When the bonds now binding sunder,  
 Whither away, O, whither away? 20  
 Or is it enough, in thy spark,  
 To see life in the buff?<sup>2</sup>  
 And it answered me out of the dark,  
 And said, It is enough.  
 Only the lover of beauty knows 25  
 How eternity dwells in the heart of a rose.

14 strown] strewn *A* 15 asked] ~, *A* 16 known? Had] ~, had *A* known?]  
 ~. *A* 17 my] of my *A* soul,] ~ *A* 18 say] ~, *A* 19 sunder] shall sunder *A*  
 20 O,] ~ *A* 24 said,] ~: *A* 25 Only] . . . ~ *A*

<sup>2</sup> Naked, i.e. as it is in itself.

1101 THE LAMENT

To what far shore shall I turn me,  
 And in what dark shade shall I seek,  
 That thou may'st pause to discern me,  
 Thy voice in my ears to speak!  
 Whitens the dawn to its breaking, 5  
 And thy bird wakes, knowing the light;  
 But my heart, in loneliness aching,  
 Pines like a child in the night.

[*cont. overleaf*]

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Wr*, 15 August 1928, p. 5 as A LAMENT (*A*)  
 2 shall] will *A* 3 may'st] shalt *A* 4 Thy] That thy *A* to] shall *A* 5 to its]  
 for the *A* 6 wakes,] ~ *A* knowing] glad of *A* 7 heart,] ~ *A* loneliness]  
 lonely *A* aching,] ~ *A* 8 Pines] Pines on *A* the] its *A*





If thou could'st but whisper to me,  
 Were it ever so small a sound! 10  
 The hushes of silence pursue me,  
 The stillness deepens, profound.

9 could'st] couldst *A*    10 small] low *A*    sound!] ~!— *A*

## I102 THE PEAR TREE

What though thou should'st declare  
 Thyself a broken thing,  
 Yet will the wintered, bare  
 Tree blossom in the Spring,  
 And, in the orchard where 5  
 The nests no longer cling,  
 In yet enambered<sup>1</sup> air  
 Will newer nestlings sing.  
 Ah, not for pain shall man  
 Give up his gifts to death; 10  
 He hath so short a span  
 Wherein to sigh his breath!  
 Though thy flower withereth,  
 Art thou beneath the ban?<sup>2</sup>  
 Summer still something saith 15  
 Of harvest and its fan.<sup>3</sup>

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

<sup>1</sup> See I50 n. 2.    <sup>2</sup> Curse.

<sup>3</sup> Winnowing fan, used to separate the chaff from the grain.





## 1103 THE FLAIL

O! Life, beat not so heavy with thy flail—  
 Not all the grain is worth the pain  
 Where, broken, lies the straw thy strokes assail!

Ah! Could we but escape thy heavy hand,  
 And, wandering go, softly and slow, 5  
 Into the quiet of some childhood's land,

And there, at peace, forget the bruised grain,  
 So much defaced, so much poor waste,  
 Thrown where so little lies to count as gain!

Once, as a child, upon the night I heard 10  
 A bird cry, note by note, a rote<sup>1</sup>  
 Of song, as though some tenderness had stirred,

Deep in his sleep, his happy heart to sing  
 Though all else slept, and o'er me swept,  
 E'en then, prevision of thy flailing fling! 15

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DT, 13 March 1926, p. 4 (A) SV (B)*

1 O!] ~ B    5 And,] ~ A    6 childhood's A] chidhood's X    land,] ~ A  
 7 bruised] stricken B    grain,] ~ A    8 defaced, so] ~ (~ A    waste,] ~), A  
 9 Thrown] And A    13 sing] ~, A    14 slept,] ~; A

<sup>1</sup> See I9 n. 1.



BOOK III: *AS THE WAYS DESCEND*

## I104 FANTASY

In a haunted wood  
 Lay a secret pool,  
 Crying there aloud,  
 “Wrap me, O thou cloud!  
 In thy shadowy hood 5  
 Hide me out of sight,  
 Lest the pointed moon  
 Stab me with her horn,  
 As I lie forlorn,  
 In the night—in the night!” 10

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

## I105 HUNGER

I have known bread hunger,  
 Yet have I strength;  
 I have known heart hunger,  
 Yet do I live;  
 I have known soul hunger, 5  
 And faith is not dead.  
  
 When the body cried  
 I lit love in my heart;  
 When the heart wept  
 I lit a lamp in my soul; 10

(8 January 1917) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Wr, 18 January 1917, p. 11 (A) SV (B)*

1–2 hunger,/ Yet] ~: yet *A* 2 strength;] ~. *A* 3–4 heart hunger,/ Yet] heart-hunger: yet *A* 4 live;] ~. *A* 5 known] *Om. A* 5–6 hunger,/ And] ~: and *A* 6–7 dead.// When] ~./ ~ *A* 7 cried] ~, *A* 8 heart;] ~, *A* 9 wept] ~, *A* 10 soul;] ~. *A*





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

127

Yet all the while I heard the cry of life  
 Asking its goal.  
 . . . I was as one looking out of a house,  
 Knowing the empty rooms.

11 the cry of] *Om. B* life] each the other *A* 13<sup>s</sup>. . . I] ~ *A B* a] the *A*

1106 THE UNCHAINED HEART

Do I mind poverty? Never!  
 Poverty hurt no man's heart—  
 Only the word of the mean  
 Has the power to smart!  
 Though I were poor as the deer, 5  
 Were I free  
 I had sung like a bird,  
 Though but a beggar heard,  
 Lifting his head to see  
 Whose was the song that stirred! 10

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

1107 HILARIA<sup>\*1</sup>

Lift it from the dust,  
 Beauty that has stumbled,  
 Wake again the trust  
 In the heart was humbled;  
 Innocence is not 5  
 Bought and sold—and sundered—  
 From the flesh that, caught,  
 Suffered and was plundered!

\* In *Blind Raftery*, by Donn Byrne.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

<sup>1</sup> The erring wife in *Blind Raftery and his Wife Hilaria* (1924) by Irish novelist Donn Byrne.





## 1108 LET ME, TOO, MAKE MY PRAYER

Let me, too, make my prayer,  
 One with that company,  
 Which, in hope's last despair,  
 Lifting the lute e'en there,  
 Still played full symphony. 5

And I would make, as these  
 Whom the rich prime has named,  
 Something old Herrick's bees,<sup>1</sup>  
 Moving amid their trees,  
 Might hear and unashamed. 10

Something, though small it be,  
 One in his hour of dread  
 Might whisper lingeringly,  
 Might whisper tenderly,  
 Leaving all else unsaid. 15

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

<sup>1</sup> With MG's version of the modesty trope, cf. Robert Herrick (1591–1674): 'As my small pipe best fits my little note' in 'A Ternary of Littles' from *Hesperides* (1648), the title-page of which is decorated with bees, probably in reference to the commonplace comparison of poetic activity to the gathering of honey by bees.

## 1109 WHEN FROM ITS SECRET PLACE

When from its secret place speaks the unconscious mind,  
 Calling upon the unaccustomed flesh to hear,  
 Maybe it is the soul of man that seeks to find  
 Some way to tell its presence to the ear.  
 Maybe the spirit is thus moved 5  
 As move the buds to form in Spring;  
 Maybe as when the music of his heart  
 Bids some bird sing.

And in that mystery that deeper lies than flesh—  
 Held in the flesh as life is held within its shell— 10





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

129

As the trapped leopard thrusts from out the netted mesh,  
 So this, too, turns and thrusts from out its cell.  
 Maybe the soul of man is stirred  
 As are the sudden thews<sup>1</sup> of Spring;  
 Maybe as when young leaves awake; 15  
 As when birds sing.

Something within us speaks, we know not how or why,  
 Its language still untaught us who must live by breath:  
 Poor breath that lives by that first Breath<sup>2</sup> which cannot die,  
 And Which, though in the tomb, still conquers death. 20  
 Ah, Love, with man (and words) behind  
 The less a greater meaning springs;  
 For him who hears the flowing sap  
 A spirit sings.

(25 April 1926) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

11 trapped *Ed.*] tripped x

<sup>1</sup> Physical powers.    <sup>2</sup> Metonym for God, who as Creator breathed life into Adam, whose fall condemned humanity to mortality ('Poor breath'). Line 20 refers to Christ, who manifests the breath of divine life in his resurrection from the dead.

1110 O, TO SING BEAUTY

O movement of the dust above decay,  
 Singest thou, Summer? Singest thou the Spring?  
 What is it in thee, hid away,  
 That stirreth thee to sing? . . .  
 O, to sing beauty as it should be sung, 5  
 To name it in the fullness of its measure—  
 Not as from some poor spirit wrung,  
 Or misers yield their treasure;

(3 November 1923) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DT, 25 December 1924, p. 4 as O TO SING BEAUTY (A)*

2 thou, Summer] ~ ~ A    4 stirreth] stirrest A    8 sing? . . .] ~? A    5 O,] ~ A  
 8 treasure;] ~, A





But in untrammelled verse to rise on wings,  
 Now the swift swallow, now an eagle soaring, 10  
 And still in each note, as it springs,  
 Beauty to be adoring!

O, for the piercing word to wound and burn,  
 Till of that wounding joy itself is born;  
 As when, with eyes dream-filled, we turn 15  
 To watch the bursting thorn!

There to look in upon the folded leaf, and find  
 New worlds of beauty where new buds unroll;  
 And then the wond'rous thing to bind  
 Upon the written scroll! 20

Could we sing beauty as it should be sung,  
 Loosed from the heart's full deep, free from the portal,  
 From what low depths he risen sprung,  
 Then were man made immortal!

12 adoring!] ~. A 13 O,] ~ A 14 born,] ~, A 15 when,] ~ A eyes] ~, A  
 16 thorn!] ~. A 17 There] O, A leaf,] ~ A 18 new] now A 21 Could]  
 Ah, could A beauty] it A 23 he risen] ~, ~, A

### III SONG IMMORTAL

Still must I sing, though I should die  
 Consumed by fire I cannot hold!  
 Though in grave cold I come too soon to lie,  
 Song waits not on a mounting sigh.

Sweet song that burns us in the heart! 5  
 Sweet song that rends us to the bone!  
 Though all alone, with death my only chart,  
 Still must I give thee all my art!

(24 June 1923) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DT, 7 July 1923, p. 13 as THE SONG IMMORTAL (A)*

1 sing,] ~ A die] ~, A 3 cold I] ~/ ~ A lie,] ~ A 7 alone, with] ~, /  
 With A





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

131

What if by breath life makes its way?  
 Yet in the bud the root is held! 10  
 So, God-impelled, though death the body slay,  
 Sings on one song death cannot stay.

9 What if] Though but *A* way?] ~, *A* 10 held!] ~: *A* 11 God-impelled,  
 though] ~,/ Though *A*

1112 O FOR THE WINGS OF A DOVE<sup>1</sup>

O, with the careless heart  
 Of a bird to rise in the height and go,  
 With only the wave of the wind to part—  
 Earth, and the sea below!  
 Never to feel the weight 5  
 Of the day's long care make claim of the hour,  
 But only to know in the vast, elate,  
 All space for a dower.<sup>2</sup>  
 Not to be bound by time,  
 But, uplifted high in the silent air, 10  
 With a fetterless will to soar and climb,  
 Naught but the wing for stair;  
 There, as a swift made free,  
 Outsailed all else in a passion of power,  
 To poise where the uttermost spaces be, 15  
 At rest in the nower.<sup>3</sup>

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DT*, 7 March 1925, p. 10 as O, FOR THE WINGS OF A DOVE (*A*) *WWld* (October 1930), p. 6, signed By Mary Gilmore, in "The Wild Swan." (*B*)

*Not otherwise recorded: B's text is in italics throughout.*

2 height] air *A* 4 Earth,] ~ *A* 4 below!] ~. *A* 6 care] ~, *A* 6 make] the *A* 8 All . . . dower] The infinite power *A* 10 But,] ~ *A* 10 uplifted] ~, *A* 10 silent air] silence, rare *A* 12 wing] *wind B* 15 poise] ~, *A* 15 be,] ~. *A* 16 in the nower] like a rower *A*

<sup>1</sup> I.e. to escape an unacceptable situation – traditional.

<sup>2</sup> See I81 n. 1. <sup>3</sup> See I4 n. 1.



## I113 THE DOOR

I have come lonely to my house,  
 The house of flesh,  
 As one who from the little hut  
 Of his young, fresh  
 And happy years went wandering forth, 5  
 And then returns once more  
 To its old hospitable door.

I have come lonely to my house,  
 And it is dust;  
 Gone is the glowing form wherein 10  
 Once lay my trust,  
 Gone the proud splendour of its worth!  
 How strange from death's dark shore  
 To come and seek in vain that door!

I have come back, eager as one 15  
 To his old place  
 Who hopes for long familiar things—  
 And finds no trace;  
 One who has never ceased to hear

(n. d.) *Copy-text*: *WS* *Collated states*: *Spin* (October 1924), pp. 10–11 (*A*) *Wr*, 29 October 1924, p. 5 (*B*)<sup>1</sup> *NZT*, 24 December 1924, p. 30 (*C*)<sup>2</sup>

1 house,] ~— *A-C* 2 flesh,] ~— *A-C* 3 who] ~, *A-C* 4 fresh] ~, *A-C*  
 5 years] ~, *A-C* 8 house,] ~: *A-C* 9 dust,] ~... *A* ~. *B* ~... *C*  
 12 splendour] splendor *B C* worth!] ~. *B* 13 death's] Death's *A C* 14 seek in  
 vain] find no more *A C* ~, ~ ~, *B* door!] ~. *A C* 15 back] here *A C* 17 for  
 long] to find *A C* 18 trace,] ~— *B*

<sup>1</sup> See entry for lines 29–35. *B* explains: 'Reprinted from "The Spinner," a small magazine of verse and prose newly published in Melbourne – a verse accidentally omitted before being added.' In a letter to MG of 30 September 1924 R. A. Broinowski, editor of *Spin*, apologised that it was too late for a new verse to be included, as the journal had already gone to press. He continued: 'I am glad that you sent "The Door". I[t] is a very striking and poignant thing, and I often think of it. It is rather terrible in a way . . . if, after all the suffering in this world, we should be exposed to the danger and horror of the situation you describe' (ML Papers vol. 11).

<sup>2</sup> *NZT* printed the poem as part of a notice for *Spin*, which provided its copy-text (see, e.g., entry for line 9) but included the stanza missing from *A*, presumably deriving it from *B* or from the manuscript sent to Broinowski (see preceding note).



THE WILD SWAN (1930) 133

Cry, deep in his heart's core, 20  
 Sounds he had heard round one old door.

So, far at sea, will sailors dream  
 They hear a cock  
 Crow from a farmyard fence, and wake  
 In sudden shock, 25  
 To feel upon the face a tear  
 For things they know no more,  
 Known long ago round one old door.

And in The Scattered Lands<sup>3</sup> a man  
 Will ride all day, 30  
 And in and out the grass will see  
 A kitten play,  
 Hear a child's laughter, there, and dream  
 He sees himself once more  
 Sit by an old familiar door. 35

And in The Scattered Lands a man,  
 Sodden with drink,  
 Will pause and sway as one whom some  
 Sharp pang made shrink  
 (Struck as the dim-eyed by a gleam!) 40  
 When, as from youth's far shore,  
 A thought hails, passing, one old door.

And in The Scattered Lands where lone  
 A woman sits,  
 Or, risen, trims her housewife fire, 45  
 A shadow flits,  
 Or a voice calls, and suddenly

20 Cry,] ~ A-C core,] ~ A-C 22 So] Far A-C sea,] ~ B 24 wake] ~, B  
 28 long ago] Om. A-C one] an A-C old] old familiar A-C (29-35) And . . .  
 door.] Om. A 29 The] the C 33 laughter,] ~ B C 36 man,] ~ A-C 39 pang]  
 thought A-C 40 gleam!] ~ B 42 thought] sound A-C 46 flits,] ~ A-C

<sup>3</sup> Combines two elements in Celtic myths of the Otherworld paradise, sometimes called Tir-nan-Og, the Land of Youth. After the defeat of the Irish 'old people' (inadequately translated as fairies) by humans, some retired to Tir-nan-Og. But some were dispersed overseas where they retained the memory of this happy and longed-for place. In other accounts, Tir-nan-Og is a place that, once left, could not be re-entered.



She sees far Sydney's shore,  
And an old, old door she knows no more.

And I, coming again to mine 50  
Own house, find but  
An empty echo answer there,  
And an old door shut.  
. . . Ah, with the flesh sleeps memory,  
Not to be wakened more, 55  
Save through its own familiar door!

47 and suddenly] ~, ~, B 52 An empty] A haunted A C 53 an old door] a door  
long C shut.] ~ . . . A C 54 s. . . Ah] ~ A C 55 more,] ~ A-C 56 through]  
by A C its own] that old A-C door!] ~. A-C

#### II 14 MOTHER AND SON

Born of my spirit, still mine in loss or merit,  
Child of my body, and fondling of my heart,  
What wilt thou render me of whom did'st inherit,  
Wide the way or narrow where life sets thy part?  
From the void I brought thee, in the darkness carried, 5  
Blind mouth I nourished, and formless that I formed;  
Dreamed of thee, hoped for thee through what changes tarried,  
Curtained thee with calm though tempest round me stormed.  
Thou whom from night I brought to wake at morning,  
Drawn out of chaos to fullness of estate, 10  
Thou for whom I suffered, all my weakness scorning,  
How wilt answer, when life trumpets at thy gate?

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Spin* (December 1924), pp. 42-4 (A)<sup>1</sup> *SV* (B)

*Not otherwise recorded:* Lines 1 and 3 are reversed in A.

2 heart,] ~; A 3 did'st] didst A 4 Wide the] What wide A way] ~, A  
narrow] ~, A B where] *Om. A* sets] shall set A 5 carried, A] ~. X B  
7 thee] ~, A 8 with] in A stormed.] ~—A 9 whom] ~, A night] ~, A  
11 scorning, A] ~. X 12 How wilt] What of thine A answer,] ~ A thou  
answer, B trumpets] beats A

<sup>1</sup> Broinowski (see II 13 n. 1) wrote on 22 December 1924: 'I also want to congratulate you on the poem which I had the honour of including in the December "Spinner."'



From the first fore-fathers brought I bone to make thee,  
 Brought thee steadfast pulses, shaped thee slim and tall;  
 Brought thee from the fathers fire to wake and shake thee, 15  
 When toward strange horizons power within should call;  
  
 Brought thee by my suffering, brought thee by my longing,  
 Twice ten thousand rhythms tuned to life's appeal;  
 I, the string high-tensioned to vibrations thronging,  
 Set and marked them on thy being as my seal! 20  
  
 I, the cup that held thee, leaned above thee hearing  
 All the moaning forest crying in the night;  
 Heard the winds wide raging, saw the lightning, searing,  
 Smite upon the shuddering lid of hidden sight;  
  
 Heard the long roll where the valley of the thunder 25  
 Shaken moved beneath the shout of heaven's might,  
 Gazed upon the stars, and, trembling at their wonder,  
 Knew the sudden thought that flies beyond all sight;  
  
 Watched in ecstasy where like a child's sweet smiling  
 Gleamed the new-cut silver of the threaded moon, 30  
 Marked, in gentled darkness, star by star come filing—  
 Planetary verse of an eternal rune!<sup>2</sup>  
  
 Aye, and long ere thou beneath my heart cam'st moving,  
 Gathered I an unthought harvest for thy sake;  
 Bent my head to swift obedience in behooving<sup>3</sup> 35  
 Ere the high tide of my being turned to wake.  
  
 All my heritage—thou still unknown—I brought thee;  
 On the altar of my heart I laid it down;

13 first] farthest *A* fore-fathers] fathers *A* forefathers *B* 15 thee,] ~ *A*  
 16 toward] towards *A* call;] ~ *A* 18 rhythms] rhymes *A* 19 high-tensioned]  
 high tensioned *A* vibrations] ~, *A* 21 thee] ~, *AB* 24 sight;] ~ *A*  
 26 might,] ~; *A* 27 and,] ~ *A* 28 sight;] ~ *A* 29 ecstasy] ecstasy *A*  
 where] ~, *A* smiling] ~, *A* 30 moon,] ~; *A* 32 rune] tune *A* 33 Aye,]  
 Ay! *A* and] ~, *A* 37 heritage—] garnering . . . *A* unknown—] ~ . . . *A*

I think it is one of the finest things produced by an Australian poet – it is most moving and rich in music' (ML Papers vol. 11).

<sup>2</sup> Song: cf. entry for line 32, and E66 n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Obedience to that which is proper or needful (archaic).



Inly held as thine until I rose and sought thee  
 By mine ancient birthright of the woman's crown. 40

Now what yield is mine of all my beaten harvest,  
 Thorns that I have watered, sheaves that I have bound?  
 This, that where shalt ride, or in what hunger starvest,  
 Some grain saved from out my gathering shall be found.

Ah, and more is mine! for, in thy blood immortal, 45  
 I being dead cease not though seeming I am gone;  
 Lo, my life is but the step, and thine the portal  
 Thorough which to ends far set I follow on.

39 Inly] Only *A* I only *B* thee] ~, *B* 40 crown.] ~! *A* 42 watered]  
 gathered *A* 44 saved] garnered *A* out] *Om. A* 45 Ah,] Ay! *A* mine!]  
 ~!—*A* for,] For *A* blood] ~, *A* 46 I] ~, *A* dead] ~, *A* 47 step,] ~ *A*  
 48 Thorough] Through *A* which] ~, *A* set] ~, *A*

### 1115 TO MY SON

O thou, My Son, who, when thy youth began,  
 Put off thy childhood to become a man,  
 Who, where the tropic sees each day begun,<sup>1</sup>  
 Dost watch the coursing hours how swift they run,  
 “Mark ye tradition,” sayest thou, and lo, 5  
 Thou speakest of “Eve—that woman long ago,”  
 Around whose name still fancy weaves her spell,  
 Whose name men call forever out of hell.

If I have failed thee aught, or helped thee on,  
 Think this of me when I away am gone: 10

(19 November 1920) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Bn*, 10 February 1921, p. 3 as UNTIL IN ME (*A*) *SV*(*B*)

1 O] Oh, *A* My Son] my son *AB* when] as *A* 3 where . . . begun] while the table of the year is spun *A* 4 watch] match *A* run,] ~. *A* 5 tradition,"] ~", *B* thou, and] ~; ~, *A* 6 ago,"] ~", *B* 8 hell.] Hell! *A* 10 away] afar *A* gone:] ~—*A*

<sup>1</sup> Springbank, the Gilmore property e. of Cloncurry in Queensland was close to the Tropic of Capricorn.





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

137

How that we two were friends; such friends, it seems  
 As though that ancient woman's power still held,  
 Through all the blood of womanhood impelled,  
 Until, in me, thou tellest her thy dreams.

11 seems] ~, A    14 Until,] ~ A    me,] ~ A

1116 TO A BABE

Dear messenger of Spring,  
 Who hast not yet  
 Forgotten thy white wing  
 In the world's fret,  
 But still dost hold of God, 5  
 In innocence,  
 All that life's withered rod  
 Clothes with pretence—  
 The Spring has welcomed thee, 10  
 Tying its bows  
 Upon the orchard tree,  
 In white and rose,  
 And where young leaves still fold  
 In sarcinet,<sup>1</sup>  
 For thee, in crimson rolled, 15  
 Love's name is set!  
 O rainbow fair! O, bud  
 Of heaven! thou dew  
 That on our earthly mud  
 Shin'st ever new, 20  
 Surely thou art our Spring;  
 The love of God  
 About thee, who dost bring  
 Joy where grief trod!

<sup>1</sup> *Sarsenet*, a fine and soft silk material, in various colours (obsolete form).



O thou, love's innocent! 25  
 Thou whom the star  
 Within the firmament,  
 Watching afar,  
 Still knoweth for his peer:  
 When, from thy home 30  
 Down wandering to us here  
 Wast newly come—  
 When from thy heavenly range  
 Thou camest near,  
 And found this world so strange, 35  
 Knewest thou fear?  
 White as a pearl that shone  
 Within the dark,  
 No earthly stain upon  
 Thee set its mark, 40  
 And as I look on thee  
 I ask, What bough  
 Of the heavenly tree,  
 What bud, wast thou?  
 Wast thou thy father's? or 45  
 Wast thou all mine  
 In the slow hours before  
 My look met thine?  
 Or wast thou just a leaf  
 Of Paradise, 50  
 Blown where my heart was thief,  
 Love all thy price?  
 Ah! like a petal from  
 A flower, so sweet,  
 So soft, so light to come 55  
 Were thy small feet!  
 Spring's messenger art thou?  
 Thou who dost bring



THE WILD SWAN (1930)

139

Joy's presence here, and now,  
Thou *art* the Spring.

60

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

1117 KILLED IN THE STREET

He was so frail,  
So small where he lay dead,  
Hands at the trail,  
And slack the little head!  
They laid him in her lap,  
And still she did not weep,  
But with his tattered cap  
Fanned him asleep.  
And then, "O God!" she said,  
And then, again, "O God!"  
And touched him where the shod  
Hard hoof had marked his head.

5

10

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Wr, 2 February 1927, p. 5 as THE DEAD CHILD  
(A) SV (B)*

*Not otherwise recorded: A divides the poem into three 4-line stanzas.*

3 trail,] ~ A 4 head!] ~ A ~; B 5 lap,] ~ A B 9 then,] ~ A 10 then,] ~ A

1118 THE LITTLE BROTHER

He went. His going made no sound,  
No door made movement as to close;  
And now no vision shows his bound,  
And where he journeys no man knows.  
Only we know he went. Only  
We know that, as the long hours go,  
We count the empty days, lonely  
For that loved face we used to know.

5

[*cont. overleaf*]

(25 January 1926) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Wr, 24 February 1926, p. 5 (A)*  
7 the] each A days,] day—A





Beside the gate his sheep-dog lies,  
 And, waiting, watches down the road; 10  
 Or, restless, moves about and sighs,  
 As though his heart, too, felt a load.

Sometimes he lifts his head and looks  
 With that long look all men may read,  
 Or seeks in old familiar nooks 15  
 The presence once blessed all his need.

And by the fence his pony stands,  
 And wonders why no more he feels  
 The reins beneath a boy's young hands,  
 The urging of two eager heels. 20

Ah, if, some day, this journey done—  
 Somewhere—upon some other plane—  
 We could but hear his quick feet run,  
 Old Bruno at his side again!

9 sheep-dog lies] old dog sighs *A* 10 road;] ~, *A* 11 sighs,] ~ *A* 13 head]  
 ~, *A* 14 read,] ~; *A* 15 old] long *A* 19 reins] rein *A* 21 if,] ~ *A*  
 22 Somewhere—] ~, *A* 24 side] heels *A*

## 1119 LUIKIN' AWA' DOON

Luikin'<sup>1</sup> awa' doon, luikin' awa',  
 The Lord saw Jeannie playin' at ba';  
 An' though He had heaven itself and a',  
 Wistfu' He luikit at Jeannie's ba'.

Wistfu' He luikit as though nane saw, 5  
 Leanin' doon owre the heavenly wa';  
 An' intil His hert cam' cryin' the ca'  
 A bairn wad mak' for hittin a ba'.

<sup>1</sup> Looking. Other Scots words include 'ba' (ball, line 2), 'luikit' (looked, 4), 'owre' (over, 6), 'intil' (into, 7), 'wad' (would, 8), 'roustin' (shouting, clamour, 9) and 'Yin' (One, 10).





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

141

An' He saw a roustin' o' bairnies, plain,  
 Wi' the wee Yin rinnin' ahint, alane;<sup>2</sup> 10  
 The ithers had ba's an' He had nane,  
 Awa' in Bethlehem fields, lang gane.  
 Luikin' awa' doon, luikin' awa',  
 The Lord saw Jeannie playin' at ba';  
 An' though He had heaven itself an' a', 15  
 Wistfu' He luikit at Jeannie's ba'.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

<sup>2</sup> MG wrote to Hugh McCrae on 22 September 1930: 'I am glad you liked "Luikin' awa doon . . . wistfu' he luikit at Jeannie's ba'." I could hardly see for tears when I was writing that, & "The wee Yin rinnin' ahint alane". I see him still, a little fellow in a not overclean well worn and faded garment, following on after the older longer legs *and always left behind*' (ADFA G62 1/2).

I120 THE SICK CHILD

Creep thou up to my shoulder,  
 Lean there thy head;  
 Thou wilt forget, when older,  
 Love was thy bed.  
 Only the old remember! 5  
 Youth, in its day,  
 Knows but its burning ember;  
 Age, the decay.  
 Hush, then, and slumber;  
 Hush, then nor ail! 10  
 What should thee cumber,<sup>1</sup>  
 Small and so frail?

[*cont. overleaf*]

(16 March 1924) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Bn, 4 December 1924, p. 7 (A)*  
 5 remember!] ~: A 6 Youth,] ~ A day,] ~ A 7 ember;] ~— A 10 then]  
 ~, A

<sup>1</sup> What should burden or trouble you.





Ah, with my arms for cover,  
 Sleep yet awhile;  
 Love, that must pine thy lover, 15  
 Waits but thy smile.

## I121 THE CRADLE SONG

Leave me not, leave me not,  
 My little love,  
 Thou art my nursling,  
 Thou art my dove;  
 Thou art my comfort 5  
 When blows the cold blast,  
 Thou art my hope  
 When Summer is past.

Leave me not, leave me not,  
 My little lamb! 10  
 Shall I not hold thee  
 With all that I am?  
 Home is thy sheepfold,  
 My arm is thy nook,  
 Stay with me, then, 15  
 And rest in my look.

Leave me not, leave me not,  
 Little white bird;  
 Here, at my heart,  
 Let sleep be unstirred! 20  
 Ah, though thy wing  
 Hath its ache for the sky,  
 Mother would fold it,  
 Lest thou should'st fly.

(8 September 1924) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Wr*, 15 October 1924, p. 5 as  
 MOTHER SONG (*A*)

2 love,] ~! *A* 3 art] are *A* 6 cold] cruel *A* 8 Summer] winter *A*  
 13 Home] Earth *A* 16 look.] ~! *A* 18 bird,] ~! *A* 20 unstirred!] ~. *A*  
 23 it,] ~ *A* 24 should'st] shouldst *A*







## I122 SLEEP, HUSHLING, SLEEP

Sleep, hushling, sleep;  
 Peace, restless one;  
 Arms for a cradle,  
 My little son!

Arms for a cradle— 5  
 Nay, never start!  
 Pillow and slumber  
 Close to my heart.

Sleep, then, my babe, 10  
 Softly and deep,  
 While I sing Jesu  
 Tending His sheep;

Jesu whom Mary  
 Held at her breast,  
 Lulled as I lull thee, 15  
 Hush thee to rest.

Hush to my bosom,  
 Thy mother am I;  
 Close to me, close,  
 My little one lie! 20

While Jesukin, watching,  
 Sings from the sky,  
 “Hush, little lambkin,  
 Hush thee a-bye!”

(16 March 1924) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

## I123 A CRADLE SONG

Husha-husha-bye!  
 In a lamb's skin  
 I shall wrap thee warm,  
 Lest the winds break in.





I shall pillow thee 5  
 On the swan's breast;  
 Hush, then, hush-a-bye,  
 For soft thou shalt rest.

I shall cradle thee  
 Deep in my arm, 10  
 Where, as thou liest,  
 Nothing need alarm.

Hush, Innocent,  
 My heart is thy throne!  
 Yet, on the man's path, 15  
 Thou shalt walk alone.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

#### 1124 THE SLEEPING CHILD

Draw near to beauty as it sleeps  
 And holds an empery<sup>1</sup> all its own,  
 Which, as ye ask what state it keeps,  
 Though ye are answered, dwells alone.

Ye, too, to that far country go, 5  
 Where sleep gives boundary and frame;  
 Yet of that realm ye nothing know,  
 Save the community of name.

But, O, the beauty of the child,  
 As innocent and flexed it lies; 10  
 Beauty man sees, so dear and mild,  
 And ever with his first surprise.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: BPMag (June–August 1930), p. 44 (A)*

*Not otherwise recorded: A's text is in italics throughout.*

11 sees,] *sees A* 12 surprise.] *surprise! A*

<sup>1</sup> Majesty.





## THE WILD SWAN (1930)

145

## 1125 SYDNEY

There is an isle, a city isle,  
 Laced by a thousand streets;  
 And summer, like a woman's smile,  
 Lingers about it for a while,  
 Turns, and returns, and then retreats. 5  
 And there like butterflies  
 Yachts fill the Bay,  
 While the white-caps<sup>1</sup> leap  
 Like seals at play.

Beautiful are its women, and 10  
 Great the hearts of its men,  
 They have furrowed seas at command,  
 And answered the call of land,  
 Were it one man alone, or ten.  
 And now, like butterflies, 15  
 Yachts fill the Bay,  
 And the white-caps leap  
 Like seals at play.

Once on its coasts the dingo howled,  
 The dim grey curlew cried; 20  
 And there the grisly bush-cat prowled,  
 And, under its feathery helmet, cowed,  
 The mopoke's hautbois<sup>2</sup> fluted wide.  
 Today, like butterflies,  
 Yachts fill the Bay, 25

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Hermes* (Michaelmas 1928), pp. 160–1 (*A*)

*Not otherwise recorded: A* divides the poem into alternating five- and four-line stanzas. The collation for lines 26 and 35 is identical to 17.

2 streets;] ~, *A* 5 Turns,] ~ *A* returns,] ~ *A* and then,] ere it *A* 6 there]  
 ~, *A* butterflies] ~, *A* 8 white-caps] white caps *A* 11 men,] ~; *A*  
 12 seas] the seas *A* 13 land] the land *A* 17 And] As *A* white-caps] light  
 waves *A* 19 coasts] coast *A* 21 bush-cat] bush cat *A* 22 helmet,] ~ *A*  
 23 wide.] ~! *A*

<sup>1</sup> Breaking waves.    <sup>2</sup> Oboe. See also 18 line 1 and author's note.





And the white-caps leap  
Like seals at play.

Far down, in the dusk and the cool  
Of lucent watery sweeps,  
The great shark made its breeding pool, 30  
And the sleek porpoise, school by school,  
Played tig through the hummocky deeps.  
And now, like butterflies,  
Yachts fill the Bay,  
And the white-caps leap 35  
Like seals at play.

And this is our isle, our city isle,  
Laced by its thousand streets!  
May Summer ever upon it smile,  
And Winters strengthen it as they file 40  
Where the round o' the year repeats.  
O, ever more like butterflies  
May her white yachts fill the Bay,  
And her rising waters crest, and run,  
With a leap like seals at play. 45

28 down,] ~ *A* and the] and *A* 29 lucent] limpid *A* 32 through the]  
through *A* deeps.] ~ — *A* 33 And] Where *A* 38 its] a *A* streets!] ~; *A*  
39 Summer ever] ever the summers *A* 40 Winters] the winters *A* it] ~, *A*  
41 Where] When *A* o' the] o' th' *A* repeats.] ~! *A* 42 O,] ~ *A* more] ~, *A*  
butterflies] ~, *A* 43 her] the *A* 44 And . . . run,] Where the crests of the  
wavelets rise *A*

## I126 THE CAB-HORSE

Time has devoured him—taken him away!  
No more we hear his homely *klip-klop* sound  
In hasty tattoo from some distant bound,  
Telling a tale of revellers, late astray,

(26 December 1926) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DT, 29 December 1926, p. 6*  
(*A*) *SV* (*B*)

2 homely *klip-klop*] lovely klip-klop *A* sound] ~, *A* 3 tattoo] ~, *A*  
4 Telling] To tell *A*





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

147

Who yet have hope of haven ere the day; 5  
 While we, awakened in the dark profound,  
 Half vision at his heels some shadowy hound  
 Of night, haunting the streets in search of prey.

And with him also went the tinkling bell  
 That told how urban cows came home, at eve, 10  
 Through city streets to some familiar stall;  
 Gone, too, in Paddington, the travellers' well,  
 And, by the Barrack Gate,<sup>1</sup> where use gave leave,  
 The fire of him who camped beside the wall.

5 day;] ~—A 8–9 prey.// And] ~./ ~A 9 bell] ~,A 11 stall;] ~.A  
 13 Gate] gate A

<sup>1</sup>Victoria Barracks, constructed 1841–50 in Paddington, Sydney, a focal point of military activity until the mid-twentieth century.

I127 OF WONDER

Give life its full domain and feed thy soul  
 With wonder; find thou in a clod a world,  
 Or, gazing on the rounded dewdrop purled  
 Upon a leaf, mark how its tiny bowl  
 Includes the sun: that sun in whose control 5  
 The planets run their courses, and the furled  
 Comet, onward driven, resists what hurled  
 It downward, outward to its nether goal!

[*cont. overleaf*]

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SMH*, 17 December 1927, p. 13 (A) *SMH*, 7 April 1928, p. 7 as OF BEAUTY (B) *SV* (C) Wright1 (D) Wright2 (E)

*Not otherwise recorded:* No stanza break after line 8 in A and B.

1 life its full] thou they heart B domain] ~, AB feed] build B thy] they B  
 the C-E 1–2 soul/ With] ~ with B 2 wonder; find] ~. Find A ~!/ Find B  
 thou in] within C-E world,] ~ B 3 Or, gazing on] E'en as thou seest, in B  
 rounded] *Om.* B 4 mark . . . bowl] how from each limpid Pole B (5) Includes  
 the sun:] The sun rays out—B sun:] ~—A ~; DE that] That B  
 7 onward driven] outward driven A in its fiery fall B 8 outward] ~, AC-E  
 its] some A goal!] ~. D



O, as a child, how often have I stood  
 And watched a turning furrow, beauty spelled! 10  
 That rhythm, that curve of moving earth that felled  
 In endless seam upon the narrowing rood,<sup>1</sup>  
 Not e'en the sea itself has me so held,  
 So to my heart brought full beatitude.

9 O] Oh *B* 10 beauty spelled!] beauty-spelled: *A* 11 curve] roll *A*  
 12 rood,] ~! *A* rood; *B* 13 held,] ~; *A* 14 So] ~, *A* beatitude.] ~! *B*

<sup>1</sup> *To fell* in sewing is to stitch down the wider of the two edges left projecting by a seam so that it lies flat over the outer edge. A 'rood' is a measure of distance or of land; here, the amount of land unploughed.

### 1128 THE THUNDER ROLL

He whom the tempest calls shall stand,  
 And he shall see, unfurled upon the land,  
 The darkling shadow of the cloud  
 That wraps the heavens as in a shroud;  
 And he, exultant, there shall hear 5  
 The deep, reverberant thunder rear  
 Its cresting head toward some far redoubt,<sup>1</sup>  
 Ere from its height it drops in mighty scroll,  
 To slowly dwindle out  
 In distant roll. 10

And he, who through long years has fought,  
 At last made free of storm (where youth distraught  
 Fared on, and knew nor way nor end,  
 Or but the torment's wide extend)  
 His clash gone over, he shall stand, 15  
 And hear beyond his falling sand,<sup>2</sup>

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV(A)*

2 unfurled] down-flung *A* 5 he] there *A* there] he *A* 13 and] nor *A*  
 nor . . . end] the way it went *A* 14 extend] extent *A* 15 gone over] being  
 ended *A* 16 hear] ~, *A*

<sup>1</sup> Bastion, raised work of fortification.

<sup>2</sup> Declining lifetime, as in sand running out in an hourglass.



THE WILD SWAN (1930)

149

Through endless generations borne, his own  
 Reverberations rolling, rolling on,  
 To burst in seed far sown,  
 When he is gone.

20

I129 THE LOOK DOWN<sup>1</sup>

BUNGONIA

Vast is the chasm, and in the deep, below,  
 Silence has fallen asleep beneath her tree;  
 But we, above the stark declivity,  
 Hear there the hush of winds we do not know,  
 While, in the void that covers all, the slow  
 Trail of the air, like thick soft hair flung free,  
 Draws with the moving earth, that far stars see  
 Like some unbodied head swayed to and fro.

5

O pigmy man, so like a thistle seed  
 Blown hitherward from out of space! O mote<sup>2</sup>  
 In an eternal wind! O little float  
 On Time's scarce entered sea, art thou the crown  
 Of all immensity? Nay, would'st thou read  
 Thy finite place, o'er this dark brink look down!

10

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SMH*, 4 February 1927, p. 13 (A)

1 deep, below,] ~ ~ A 2 her] its A 3 But] Yet A 4 Hear there] Still hear A  
 know,] ~; A 5 While] For A void] vague A 6 thick soft] floating A  
 7 earth,] ~; A that] which A 8 Like] As A unbodied] titanic A 9 thistle  
 seed] thistleseed, A 10 out of] distant A mote] note A 12 Time's] time's A  
 13 would'st] wouldst A 14 finite] Om. A brink] brink look down, A

<sup>1</sup> Cf. F154 and HR, Pt II, Chapter IX 'Bungonia and the Look-down'.

<sup>2</sup> Speck.



## I130 OF POWER

All powers recessive in the atom lie;  
 From dominant to dominant we spring;  
 And yet, as in progression on we swing,  
 We lift recessives we had thought passed by.<sup>1</sup>  
 For the great pendulum of change, swung high, 5  
 Swung low, arcs wider than its upward fling;  
 We climb, but, if to climb were all, a king  
 Unkingdomed, man went spindling to the sky.  
  
 Therefore we stoop, must ever stoop to rise,  
 And what recessive backward falls must bring 10  
 To power lest progress fail, and, failing, dies  
 Like the lost bud that knows no pollened wing.  
 Yet there are those who ask Nirvana—where  
 All power recessive lies, unfecond,<sup>2</sup> bare!

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV (A)*

8 Unkingdomed, *Ed.*] ~ *XA* 11 failing] fruitless *A*

<sup>1</sup> E58, E59 and E90 exemplify MG's early interest in eugenics, in which mental deficiencies or disorders were seen as the result of faulty inheritance due to parental vice, 'bad blood' or a mysteriously adverse fate (see volume 1, Introduction, n. 66, and N1). But I130, R36 and R45 exemplify Lionel Penrose's observation in 1940 that '[m]uch attention is paid in all books dealing with human genetics to dominant, recessive and sex-linked types of inheritance': *The Biology of Mental Defect* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson), p. 102. MG became attracted to the new idea that recessive genes were not simply 'bad', but a potential resource – cf. 'all the powers, that once were ours,/ In life's still deep recessive sleep' (R45). See also O7. <sup>2</sup> Infertile, barren.

## I131 TO A FAR SHIP

O thou great ocean on  
 Whose breast yon ship, less than a leaf,  
 Hath chosen its way, how small  
 To thee its course, how brief!

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: BPMag* (March–May 1930), p. 31 (*A*)

*Not otherwise recorded: A's text is in italics throughout.*

1 ocean] *ocean, A*





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

151

As a shell thou could'st bruise, 5  
 And of its ribs could'st make  
 A hermitage for death,  
 Deep down where no dreams wake.  
 And yet it plougheth over thee  
 With its short keel its path, 10  
 And ministers of power it  
 Maketh thy winds, daring thy wrath.

And thou, O distant ship,  
 That on the far horizon gleamest,  
 So lone 'twixt sea and sky, 15  
 What in thy lot thou seemest,  
 No loneliness is thine,  
 For thou hast, even as man,  
 More than the kingdom of  
 Thine inch of length and span! 20  
 And whether thou dost make thy port,  
 Or whether goest down,  
 Thou hadst the tides in fellowship,  
 And in the storm was thy renown.

Though in thee no words be, 25  
 Yet, where man's life  
 Ascending veereth,  
 All that full speech might say  
 In thy making inhereth,<sup>1</sup>  
 O thou immortal dream 30  
 Of beauty wrought by man,  
 Who by devisal made,  
 While yet unknown the plan!  
 Thou'st gone? My spelled eyes follow where,  
 Upon th' horizon seen, 35  
 Thy trail of smoke still treadeth air,  
 To show the watcher where hast been.

13 ship,] *ship* *A*    14 gleamest,] *gleamest* *A*    26–7 life/ Ascending] *life*  
*ascending* *A*    33 unknown] *unknown*, *A*    36 air,] *air* *A*

<sup>1</sup> Inheres, i.e. is inherent, innate.





We, too, like thee on life's  
 Impulsing sea in wandering go;  
 In solitudes not lone: 40  
 For, in the to and fro  
 Of warp and change that make  
 This lot of ours, we find  
 All things are one in the  
 Wide kingdom of the mind. 45  
 And when at ending we fare on,  
 O, be the far-flung smoke  
 We leave behind, some song we sung,  
 Some word of love we spoke!

46 fare on] *must go A*    47 O,] *O A*

I132 CHANGE<sup>1</sup>

The Gods, grown weary, passed from earth and came  
 Not back—all save the witling of the heights,  
 Who bore a scullion's<sup>2</sup> part, a scullion's name.  
 And he, grown sick of long, laborious work,  
 Found him a cranny by the lone seaside, 5  
 And there he entered in and slept.  
 And as he slept there came upon his peace  
 A dream of dreadfulness, in which he saw  
 All movement cease, himself stand motionless;

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Wr*, 26 September 1928, p. 5 (*A SV(B)*)  
 2 back—] ~; *A*    3 bore *A*] bare *X*    4 long,] ~ *AB*    5 the] a *B*    seaside]  
 sea side *A*    sea cliff *B*    6 in] in awhile *A*    9 motionless;] ~ *A*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'To change and to flow . . . Is law and the world', from Ralph Waldo Emerson's 'Illusions' (Part ix of *The Conduct of Life*, 1860, rev. 1876), where Momus (Greek God of mockery – 'witling', line 2) is mentioned in the prose commentary among masters of illusion. He was banished from Mount Olympus for disrespect to the other gods. His association with a cave (line 5) may be due to his mother, cave-dwelling Nyx (Night), or to conflation with another of her sons, Morpheus, god of sleep. Cf. also George Meredith's 'Ode to the Comic Spirit' (1888), where the eviction of Momus is causally related to the passing of the gods (Book iv, lines 95–115).

<sup>2</sup> Low fellow, menial worker in kitchen and scullery.





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

153

And in his fear he wept, and like a child 10  
 That in the dark puts out its hand toward  
 Its mother's face, he waked and sought the sea.  
 And, as his pulses hammered heart and brain,  
 He heard the great slow-moving tongue  
 Of ocean lick upon the shore; 15  
 And there, returning to his place,  
 He slept again.

10 and] ~, *A* then, *B* 13 And,] ~ *A* 15 shore:] ~, *A* 16 And] ~, *B*  
 there] so *B*

I133 HORSES OF THE MIND

Beautiful are they, that, ranging on the mountains,  
 Crop the green pasture, and drink at the fountains;  
 Bunching and scattering, and quick with sudden greeting,  
 Touching nose and high crest in a friendly meeting.  
 But more wonderful than these, bred on the mountains, 5  
 Are the thoughts a man thinks, unseen their fountains;  
 Unknown their eager birth, uncontrolled their breeding,  
 As they rise and range and scatter, onward speeding.  
 Like a herd, like a host—a flight of birds winging—  
 Now turn they hither, and now thither, swinging; 10  
 Unbitted as a foal, and yet, caught and bridled,  
 Man upon them rides, who as dreamer idled.  
 Beautiful the wild horse, screaming on the mountains,  
 Climbing on the height, quenching at the fountains;  
 But, more wonderful than these, man's thoughts awaking: 15  
 Drawn from out the vast, Creation in the making.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SMH*, 28 July 1928, p. 11 (*A*) *SV* (*B*)  
 3 with] in *B* greeting] meeting *B* 4 meeting.] ~ *A* greeting. *B* 5 on]  
 upon *A* 9 host—] ~, *A* ~, — *B* a flight of] as light as *B* winging—] ~, *A*  
 10 thither,] ~ *A* 11 and] ~, *A* 12 as] as a *A* 13 mountains] mountain *A*  
 14 fountains] fountain *A* 15 these] this *A* thoughts] thought *A* awaking:] ~, *A*  
 ~; *B* 16 Drawn . . . the] Viewless, wingless, *A* vast,] ~: *A* Creation] creation *B*





## I134 THE OLD BOOKSELLER

My heart (he said) is hungry for  
 The many friends I knew of yore,  
 Who, like young leaves upon a tree,  
 In high hope lusted young with me;  
 Death came and gathered them, and left, 5  
 In his strange choosing, me bereft.

Happy who at the good prime goes;  
 Not his the loneliness of those  
 Who sit, heart-starved, 'mid empty chairs,  
 In houses mocked by empty stairs; 10  
 Not his in suddenness to come  
 Where once familiar speech is dumb.

I have grown old (he said) and I  
 Am hungry for a day gone by.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

## I135 DANUBE OR DARLING

Less than the Tiber? Nay!  
 Danube or Tiber, we have rivers fine as they!<sup>1</sup>  
 Time is a slate where man  
 Writes down in deeds for script the way his wild course ran;  
 Thus the old rivers wear 5  
 The glamour of the past, born of life's current there.

And looking back one cries,  
 "Behold the Tiber!" as he sees with dewy eyes  
 Ranks of the dead in hosts  
 Go marching by, clothing its movement with their ghosts. 10

<sup>1</sup> On this theme, cf. T5.





So, too, one day shall we  
Clothe rivers here that flow majestic to the sea.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

1136 THE BAGS OF DEATH

O the ungathered that decay has stolen—  
Keats in his youth and Shelley in his prime!<sup>1</sup>  
The heavy bags of storeman Death are swollen  
With harvest that was ripened ere its time.

Had these no deeper root than the frail flesh, 5  
Which, senile as it came, could only fail?  
That gave no floor where they might later thresh  
A riper harvest with a wider flail?

They wrote a full man's thought in terms of youth,  
They ran before their feet had learned to walk; 10  
Theirs was a stripling prime; then inborn drouth  
Took them while yet the flower was on its stalk.

Keats in his youth, and Shelley ere his time!—  
And Hardy, singing like a king of men,  
Chanting the vision of his richer, fuller prime, 15  
In the deep measure of three score and ten.<sup>2</sup>

(13 January 1929) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*  
3 swollen *Ed.*] swollen *x*

<sup>1</sup> Poets John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley died young: 1795–1821 and 1792–1822 respectively.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Hardy (b. 1840) died 11 January 1928. 1136 marks the first anniversary of his death.





## I137 WHEN IN THE DUST I LIE

When in the dust my light is hid,  
 Tell if you must the things I did,  
     But let no word betray  
     Truth from its narrow way.

I shall not ask to be as one 5  
 Whom death must mask when all is done;  
     Mine be the light, although  
     Ragged and patched I go.

Pity I take not of any—  
 Few to forsake me, or many; 10  
     Only I ask that you  
     Tell that my heart was true.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Wr*, 31 August 1927, p. 5 as WHEN IN THE DUST (A) *SV* (B)

2 did,] ~; A 4 narrow] own strait A 6 all] life A 9 any—] ~; B 10 to] who A many;] ~; A 11 ask] would A 12 Tell] Told A

## I138 OF WONDERS

I have heard trumpets on the wind,  
 And I have seen the cloudy banners of the sun thinned  
 Until distance hid them out of sight!  
 And I have heard upon the night  
 The roar of ocean haunt along the shore, 5  
 And lifting up my eyes have marked afar  
 The gleaming whiteness of a star;

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: DT*, 28 February 1925, p. 7 (A) *SV* (B)

1 wind,] ~! A wind's wild roar, B 2 cloudy . . . thinned] clouds about the sun race B 3 Until] Until the B sight!] ~; B 5 roar] voice B shore,] ~; A B 6 And lifting] Have lifted A have] and A marked] ~, A B afar] ~, B 7 The gleaming] Within the deep, the shining A star;] ~. B





## THE WILD SWAN (1930)

157

And I have watched the moon slow pace  
 The age-long path where heaven has set her face,  
 And looked upon the flower— 10  
 Love's beauty radiant for an hour—  
 And then, with sudden longing turned,  
 Back, where the homely hearth-fire burned.

But I have been drunken on  
 The beauty that has shone 15  
 Where the Incomprehensible has deigned to write!

8 I have] *Om.* *A* 9 heaven] Heaven *A* face,] ~; *A* 10 And] And I have *A*  
 12 And] ~, *A B* turned,] ~ *A*

1139 THE ROCK IS THY ROCK<sup>1</sup>

Lord, Thou hast pitten me oot on a rock,  
 Thou hast beaten me wi' thy seas;  
 Thy hand has smitten me, bent and bowed,  
 Thy wrath has wringit my knees;  
 Thou hast flung the breath of the win' at me 5  
 Till the darkness covered me over,  
 Yet to the end, to the end of a',  
 Lord, I was still Thy lover.

Thou hast stricken me sore, hast broken me doon;  
 Thou hast left me alone i' the nicht; 10

(27 September 1918) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Wilkinson*1 as YEA! THOUGH HE  
 SLAY ME (*A*) *SV* (*B*)

*Not otherwise recorded:* Wherever copy-text has 'Thou hast', *A* has 'Ye ha'e'.

1 Lord,] God! *A* 2 hast] has *B* thy] Thy *A* seas;] ~, *A* 3 hand] Han' *A*  
 me . . . bowed] an' broken me sore *A* 5 of the] o' th' *A* 7 of ] o' it *A*  
 8 lover.] Lover! *A* (9) stricken . . . broken] pierced my soul, Ye ha'e hammered *A*  
 hast] has *B* doon;] ~, *A* 10 alone] alane *A* the] th' *A* nicht;] ~, *A*

<sup>1</sup> MG wrote to A. G. Stephens on 17 March 1907: 'I have the broad easy mind of the free thinker with the prejudices of Calvin. I keep off the rocks of Calvin as much as possible, yet all my altars are built there' (*Letters* 38). 'Pitten' (line 1) is Scots for put; other Scots forms include 'nicht' (night, 10), 'frae' (from, 11), 'mune-licht' (moonlight, 12) and 'en'' (end, 15).



Thou hast ta'en frae me the stars that shone,  
 Thou hast darkened the white mune-licht;  
 Thou hast flung the spear, Thou hast swung the sword,  
 Thou hast leant like an eagle at hover,  
 And yet, to Thy Face, I stan' at the en', 15  
 For ever and ever Thy lover!  
 Yea, Thou art God! but Thou madest me;  
 The rock is Thy rock; the sea is Thy sea.

11 ta'en] taken *A* stars that shone] sun i' th' noon *A* 12 white] fair *A* mune-licht;] ~, *A* 13 flung] shotten *A* 15 And yet,] Yet— *A* Face,] ~!— *A* stan'] ~, *A* stand *B* 16 For ever] Forever *A* 16-17 lover!/] Yea] Lover.// ~ *A* 17 God!] ~: *A* madest] mad'st *A* me;] ~: *A* 18 rock;] ~, *A*

1140 ONE READ A WORD,  
 AND ANOTHER REMEMBERED

The lightning looped a word across the sky:  
 "I am: and That I am.<sup>1</sup>  
 Jehovah, Jahveh, Buddha, Brahm<sup>2</sup>—  
 Above, and in all Gods am I.

"I am That which perisheth not, nor dies: 5  
 I am: and That I am.  
 I am the mountain and the gramme,  
 The dust, and that which risen flies.

"I am That which hath not been made by hands: 10  
 I am love and death; I am Life;  
 I am the maker, I am strife—  
 The void still waits on my commands.

"Tides pass not over me, nor tempests shake;  
 I am, O man, I am!"  
 And I remembered there a Lamb,<sup>3</sup> 15  
 Which came and suffered for man's sake.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Exodus 3. 14: 'And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Jahveh' and 'Brahm' are alternative forms of Jehovah and Buddha.

<sup>3</sup> Christ the Redeemer, represented as the sacrificial lamb.





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

159

How shall we compass Him whose lightning flies,  
 And writes in words across the skies,  
 When even the word, which instant dies,  
 Blinds as it falls upon the eyes!

20

(22 April 1923) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

I141 TO MAUD R. LISTON<sup>1</sup>

Ah, if to me had never come  
 The adding of the sum  
 Wherein the flower  
 Gave bees their dower,<sup>2</sup>

If I had not watched willows leaf  
 Themselves into a sheaf,  
 Where-through was wrought  
 An unknown thought,

5

Or if that I had never seen,  
 How, from its heavy teen,<sup>3</sup>  
 Life, with each sigh  
 That passes by,

10

Still lifts on high its prayer, its hope,  
 Than the blind things that grope  
 The dark and die,  
 What more were I?

15

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

<sup>1</sup> Maud Renner Liston (1875–1944), author of eleven books of verse and the illustrated children's book *Cinderella's Party*.

<sup>2</sup> Endowment, portion.

<sup>3</sup> See I36 n. 3.



I142 DAVID MCKEE WRIGHT<sup>1</sup>

Thou hadst thy song—  
 Mine was the dream  
 Of one who still must long,  
 Fitly the theme  
 To shape and know it strong. 5

Yet though with grace  
 Song thou did'st make,  
 Left me is still the chase  
 Whose echoes wake  
 My solitary place. 10

Thine was the realm  
 Of words benign  
 In silken fields of vellum;  
 The tempest mine—  
 Whose burst my words o'erwhelm. 15

Thine was the throng,  
 Mine but the dream:  
 Who ever still must long,  
 Fitly the theme  
 To measure with thy song. 20

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

<sup>1</sup> (1869–1928), Arthur Adams's successor as editor of the *Bn* Red Page, editor of Henry Lawson's *Poetical Works* (1925) and a prolific writer of verse.

## I143 THE DEAD SINGER

“Youth came to his face!”  
 They wondering said;  
 But I who had known him living  
 Mourned for him, dead,  
 With his curtained eyes, and his dark hair 5  
 Dank on his head.





## THE WILD SWAN (1930)

161

And grieving I thought of  
 His once quick ways,  
 And of how he had hungered,  
 Defrauded of praise, 10  
 Till the pen from his tired hand fell  
 In his last sad days.

What of youth had he  
 To live in his face,  
 In the poor dead face so cold 15  
 In the oaken case?  
 Only his look of pride he kept,  
 Which naught could erase.

In the stark dignity  
 Of death he lay, 20  
 Austere and calm, while the griefs  
 He had held at bay,  
 Like a summer breath that is blown,  
 Were fallen away.

In the stillness of death, 25  
 Dark pages clean,  
 Like a dreamer in slumber  
 He lay serene:  
 But O, the dropped lids on the eyes  
 Where the tears had been! 30

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Wr*, 19 October 1927, p. 5 (A)

*Not otherwise recorded: A* has 'she' and 'her' wherever copy-text has 'he' and 'his'; these are listed if combined with another variant.

4 Mourned for him,] Thought of her *A* dead,] ~ *A* 5 eyes,] ~ *A* 7-8 of/  
 His once] of her/ Once *A* 9 hungered,] wandered *A* 10 praise,] ~ *A*  
 11-12 fell/ In his] fell in/ Her *A* 13-14 he/ To live] she to/ Live *A*  
 15-16 cold/ In the] cold in/ Its *A* 17-18 kept,/ Which naught] ~, which/  
 Naught *A* 18 erase] abuse *A* 19 In] . . . ~ *A* 20 lay,] ~ *A* 21 calm,] ~; *A*  
 while] and *A* 21-2 griefs/ He had] griefs she/ Had *A* 25 death,] ~ *A*  
 26 Dark pages clean] She lay, serene *A* 27 dreamer in slumber] sleeper who  
 slumbers *A* 28 He lay serene:] Forgetting life's teen; *A* 29-30 eyes/ Where  
 the] ~ where/ The *A*



I144 FRANK MORTON<sup>1</sup>

Whither shall our hunger turn to be fed,  
 Now that he is dead?  
 Snapped is the silver chord that sung so sweet.

When I heard a sound as of running feet  
 Come fleet, and more fleet, 5  
 “What is this woe they bear to us?” I said.

Then the beat of the feet  
 To me said, “He is dead;  
 The singer of songs is dead. . . .”

I heard the echoes repeat, 10  
 “He is dead”;  
 The rocks of the hills repeat,  
 “He is dead”;

And the saddened heart cries,  
 Like a leaf in the wind, 15  
 When the summer-time dies,  
 And the branches are thinned:

“He is dead! He is dead!  
 The singer of songs is dead!”

(17 December 1923) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

<sup>1</sup> (1869–1923), journalist, novelist and contributor to many of the journals in which MG published, notably *Bn*, *Bkfv* and *Tri*. He published three poetry collections during 1916–22.

I145 DOWELL PHILLIP O'REILLY<sup>1</sup>

## IN MEMORY

The leaves fall,  
 I watch them as they fall—

<sup>1</sup> (1865–1923), poet and fiction writer, prominent member of the Sydney literary scene and close friend of MG.



## THE WILD SWAN (1930)

163

A little sound upon the ear  
Only a friend could hear.

The leaves fall, 5  
I watch them as they fall;  
For time, or long or brief,  
I knew each single leaf,  
And each one gave to me  
Some page in memory. 10

The leaves fall,  
I watch them as they fall,  
Marking from year to year  
How few have reached the sere;  
Some fell in early prime, 15  
Finding too sharp the clime,  
Finding too soon the spring  
Had taken wing.

The leaves fall, 20  
I watch them as they fall;  
Some time I, too, shall go,  
And maybe none will know  
How much I loved all these,  
My foresting of trees!

The leaves fall. 25  
I watch them as they fall.

(6 November 1923) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Bn, 22 November 1923, Red Page as MEMORIAL (no subtitle) (A)*

*Not otherwise recorded:* The collation for lines 5, 11 and 19 is identical to 1.

1 fall,] ~: A 2 fall—] ~: A 6 fall;] ~: A 7 time,] ~ A brief,] ~ A  
8 leaf,] ~; A 13 Marking] ~, A to year] ~ ~, A 14 sere;] ~. A 16 clime,]  
~; A 17 spring] Spring A 20 fall;] ~. A 22 And maybe] ~, ~, A  
24 trees!] ~. A 25 fall.] ~: A



I146 THE PALMER<sup>1</sup>

When thou canst no more with the eyes  
 Of one who has loved life gaze on  
 The tender little flower that lies  
 Beneath thy glance, and when is gone  
 The old hot-foot delight that would outstrip 5  
 Time in a rush of comradeship,  
 Turn toward the world thou once did'st know,  
 And in that look prepare to go.  
  
 Put away longing for the old delight  
 That comes not back, and yet nor take 10  
 Thy palmer's scrip readied for flight  
 As one who, though the sun awake,  
 Asks still the moon upon his face;  
 Who cowering huddles in his place,  
 Knowing to waken is to go, 15  
 Last look on all he used to know!  
  
 But fare thou on as one who in  
 The pausing unafraid can stand  
 And wait the call, yet through the thin  
 Voice still can hear life's full command, 20  
 Imperative, though his no more;  
 One who, beside the nether shore,  
 Can toward the world he once did know  
 Turn back, and look his love; and go.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: None*

<sup>1</sup> Pilgrim. The 'palmer's scrip' (line 11) was a small bag or wallet, possibly for the receipt of alms, part of the medieval pilgrim's traditional insignia.



I147 THE SONG OF BILOELA<sup>1</sup>

Long long ago when I was a woman,  
 Then was my heart as the heart of a storm;  
 Then a ray of light in the night awoke me,  
 Or even a dream, unfolded afar.

I was an arrow in flight, and a sword; 5  
 I was a bough in the wind and a flame;  
 I was a tree with a nest of nestlings,  
 And the nestlings all had songs of their own.

I was a harp where the wind blew over,  
 And I was a leaf as I was the dew; 10  
 I heard the sun as he journeyed singing,  
 And I felt earth stir as he called her name.

When life was the quest, and life the treasure,  
 Then I was a house with a thousand fears;  
 I was the quick, and all things were alive, 15  
 In the days gone by when I was a woman.

I who was wild now ever go gently,  
 Though the pulse may leap to a moment's stir;  
 But never it leaps as it leapt and trembled,  
 Long long ago when I was a woman. 20

Now is the stress all fallen to smoothness,  
 And I look abroad as one from a bay;  
 I measure the storm, my storm gone ever,  
 As I ride with the reins in my hand, away.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Bn, 5 March 1930, p. 52 (A) SV(B)*

1 Long] ~, <sup>A</sup> B    3 Then a] <sup>A</sup> A    4 dream,] ~ <sup>B</sup>    6 wind] ~, <sup>B</sup>    10 leaf] ~, <sup>B</sup>  
 13 quest,] ~ <sup>A</sup>    20 Long] ~, <sup>A</sup> B    23 ever] over <sup>A</sup>    24 ride] ~, <sup>B</sup>    hand,]  
 ~ <sup>A</sup>

<sup>1</sup> FROM *biloëla*: white cockatoo (Ridley). See Preface, p. xxxiii.



## 1148 AS THE WAYS DESCEND

I thought of a thousand things as I sat in the place  
 Where of old we sat ere time had wrinkled my face;  
 Now I could lean my cheek on your arm, the storms gone over,  
 My fingers laid on your hand as a friendly lover.

For combat is ended, combat the gesture of youth; 5  
 Old sieges threaten no more with their pitiless ruth;<sup>1</sup>  
 Only is left the heart, by its memories holden,  
 The rose on the far grey cloud, and the sunset golden.

What loomed and shook in the past shakes now no more;  
 Quiet lies on the sea, the rocks are far from the shore; 10  
 The bark is nearing at last the port of ending,  
 The watch called down from the peak, and the sails descending.

To some is given a calm in the younger years;  
 A kiss is only a kiss, not theirs the clamour that fears;  
 They can lean over the fence, safely linger and dally;<sup>2</sup> 15  
 Not theirs the leaping of power at life's revally.<sup>3</sup>

The tame lie free in the paddock; the fierce are chained and  
 barred,  
 Strained by an inward fever, restless, ever on guard:—  
 Then how a touch can stir, or even a look can waken,  
 Till the terrible tides arise, and the house is shaken! 20

Storm is the blazon<sup>4</sup> of youth, the old are quiet;  
 Strange is that blossoming time, the pulses riot;  
 But stranger the calm that comes as the ways descend,  
 When two, who would kiss, can part in peace, combat at end.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Bn, 22 January 1930, p. 50 (A) SV(B)*

3 storms] stress *B* 7 heart,] ~ *A* 14 clamour] clamor *A* 16 revally]  
 reveille *A* quick rally *B* 18 guard:—] ~— *A B* 19 Then] These, *A* or]  
 how *A* 22 pulses] pulses' *A* 24 two,] ~ *A* kiss,] ~ *A*

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps calamity, ruin, mischief (obsolete meaning of *ruth*); otherwise, pitiless pity  
 — the appearance of pity. <sup>2</sup> Cf. E63.

<sup>3</sup> Waking call, variant spelling of *reveille* (military term). Cf. E20.

<sup>4</sup> Coat of arms or banner bearing an identifying heraldic sign.



1149 MEHALAH<sup>1</sup>

I have looked on life, she said, and life has been good;  
 Toil it has held, and the pain that all must suffer;  
 The road has been rough, but in its roughness I stood,  
 With a margin left for a rougher.

Now at last am I come to the end of it all, 5  
 Where the winds have softened, the tempest is quiet;  
 But one pause yet, and I shall pass out at the call,  
 With as little care as a ryot.<sup>2</sup>

I have watered my field, and have gathered my grain,  
 I have looked for night with a harvester's longing; 10  
 But I bound not all, for a sheaf I spread on the plain  
 Where the handless<sup>3</sup> came in their thronging.

Naked I stood, and now shall I grieve for the night?  
 Shall I fear the dark as it clothes me in falling?  
 I have dwelt alone in my tent as an Arab might, 15  
 Where I heard but the cry of the wild thing calling.

I shall not be afraid for the end of the day!  
 Too long have I suffered the dread of the lonely,  
 That I should turn from the last of the sun with dismay,  
 When faces me death, and death only. 20

I have stood neighbour to fear, but I fought the fear,  
 Though the pulses hammered in sudden awaking;  
 But now is the fear all gone as a leaf at the sere,  
 As a thirst that called for the slaking.

[*cont. overleaf*]

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Bn*, 18 December 1929, p. 58 (A) *SV(B)*

*Not otherwise recorded: Lines 29–30 are in italics in A.*

8 ryot] pyot *B* 11 plain] ~, *B* 21 neighbour] neighbor *A*

<sup>1</sup> The source is obscure. S. Baring-Gould's *Mehalah: A Story of the Salt Marshes* (1880) has a proud and defiant female heroine, but no other relevance.

<sup>2</sup> See entry for line 8: a 'pyot' is a magpie or similar bird, a 'ryot' is an Indian peasant.

<sup>3</sup> Inactive, but especially incompetent in or incapable of action (obsolete). Cf. 1151 line 37 and J20 line 1.



There is naught left to be done, for all has been paid; 25  
 I have taken my wage, and look for no guerdon;  
 And now from the heat I have come at last to the shade,  
 Who have borne the day and its burden.

She stood at the threshold, old and gaunt.  
 The Great Unconquered met her with chaunt. 30

29 threshold,] *threshold A* gaunt.] *gaunt; A*

1150 EL CAMPO SANTO<sup>1</sup>

White like an orchard in the frost,  
 Each glistening tree a stone,  
 Deep as a forest is the place  
 Where each must lie alone;  
 Here the loud tongue of clamour dies, 5  
 Here but the winds may speak,  
 The far gull cry, and in the night,  
 The moon come pale and meek.

How many a father of the land  
 Lies here in stately sleep! 10  
 They watched the land, and now the land  
 For them the watch will keep;  
 The strong, the bitter, and the proud,  
 Bides each within his place,  
 Who still, where history turns the page, 15  
 With newer runners race!

Here falls all littleness away,  
 And faults decay as rust;  
 Only nobility withstands  
 The conquest of the dust; 20

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV(A)*

20 dust;] ~. *A*

<sup>1</sup>The Sacred Field (Spanish), referring to Waverley Cemetery, Sydney (see line 43, F126 and J28). The final line calls on the less common sense of *campo* as *encampment*.





THE WILD SWAN (1930)

169

And so, the child of later years  
 Brings reverence, where the sire  
 Cherished an ancient enmity,  
 Nourished a word of ire.

Death gives us immortality, 25  
 'Tis life denies the crown;  
 'Tis life, the old penurious,  
 Is niggard of renown!

We see the man, but seldom see 30  
 Behind the man the flame;  
 And then death comes, and, at a breath,  
 Glows from the ash his name!

Far in his Elban solitude  
 Wentworth broods on alone;  
 Great Parkes, upon his mountain height, 35  
 Speaks from a graven stone;

But old Sir John, companionable,  
 As drum beats o'er him rolled,  
 Came forth amid a people's tears  
 To lie in friendly mould.<sup>2</sup> 40

And here, for many an age to come,  
 The young will tune the string,  
 And in the winds of Waverley  
 Find other voices sing—

Hear Kendall's flute, and Daley's harp, 45  
 And Lawson's lonely horn,  
 Which, from his own dark tower he turned,  
 In sorrow all forlorn.<sup>3</sup>

21 And so,] So here *A*    22 Brings] Will *A*    29 see] ~, *A*    30 man] ~, *A*  
 41 come,] ~ *A*

<sup>2</sup> Sir John See (1845–1907), long-term politician, strong supporter of Federation and Premier of NSW 1901–04, was buried in the Anglican section of Waverley Cemetery, but not two other 'founding fathers' of Australia: Henry Parkes (1815–96, line 35) was buried on his property Faulconbridge, in the NSW Blue Mountains, while William Charles Wentworth (1790–1872), who died in England where he had spent the previous ten years, was buried on his family estate at Vaucluse, a situation likened by MG to Napoleon's exile in Elba (lines 33–4).

<sup>3</sup> Henry Kendall (1839–82), Victor Daley (1858–1905) and Henry Lawson (1867–1922)



And others, too, abide; for, here,  
     A whispering multitude 50  
 Seeks for the laurel in the leaf,  
     Upon the Celtic Rood!<sup>4</sup>  
 And many a dreamer, dream-possessed,  
     Shall see a host go by,  
 And, at a touch invisible, 55  
     Time's ancient feuds shall die.  
  
 Peace be upon this quiet place,  
     Where life forgets its wrongs;  
 Where man's dim sight enlarges on  
     The thing for which it longs; 60  
 Where death denies that it is dark,  
     And holds on high a lamp,  
 To show the Army of the Dead,<sup>5</sup>  
     Stilled for a while, in camp.

51 leaf,] ~ A    55 And,] ~ A

are buried at Waverley. The lyrical music of Kendall's and Daley's verse is contrasted to Lawson's more sorrowful mode, seen as lacking the heroism of Robert Browning's Childe Roland's final lines as he reaches the Dark Tower he has been seeking: 'Dauntless the slughorn to my lips I set,/ And blew' (see I30 n. 5).

<sup>4</sup>The Waverley memorial to the Irish patriots killed in the uprising of 1798 incorporates a Celtic Cross ('Rood'), having a circle behind the four arms. See also J28.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. I38 for a development of this trope.

### I151 THE LAST SHIFT<sup>1</sup>

Each year The Caller at my door  
 Knocks, with his last call, one knock more;  
 "Awake!" he cries and onward flies;  
 Soon I shall cross my floor,  
 And face the dusk of life's last door. 5

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: Wr*, 11 February 1931, p. 5, signed Mary Gilmore, in "The Wild Swan." (A)

2 Knocks,] ~ A    call,] ~ A    3 cries] ~, A    4 floor,] ~ A

<sup>1</sup> Published on MG's final Women's Page in *Wr*: see textual note.



THE WILD SWAN (1930)

171

And so against the years to come,  
 When eyes are blind, and lips are dumb,  
 In leaf by leaf I write my brief—  
 My testament which says  
 Praise be to God for all my days. 10

If in the place to which I go  
 There be no little lamp to show,  
 If in the pit no spark is lit,  
 And no door opes again  
 By which to climb the ways of men, 15

If darkness there must ever fall,  
 Dust be the common lot of all,  
 Still do I say while yet I may,  
 Blessed be God, Whose might  
 Brings day forever out of night. 20

For Spring shall bloom no less that I  
 Deep-mouldering in the earth must lie;  
 So in this hour I bless the flower  
 Whatever flower it be,  
 And grass whose sheaf shall cover me. 25

I bless the bees that shall hang over  
 Garden and heath and bloomy clover,  
 And bless the laughter coming after,  
 Where children's voices rise  
 Higher than wisdom in old eyes. 30

I bless the little birds shall sing  
 "Comes Summer soon, for now is Spring!"  
 As, through the brake<sup>2</sup> where fledglings wake,  
 The dew-bright sun looks down  
 Where life has built its little town; 35

And blessed, too (with rest and peace,  
 Be storm and stress, lest handless ease

11 If] ~, A    go] ~, A    15 men,] ~. A    18 say] ~, A    19 God,] ~ A    22 earth]  
 dust A    23 flower] ~, A    30 eyes.] ~. . . A    31-45 I bless . . . roam.] Om. A

<sup>2</sup> See 159 n. 1.





In sloth betray, to slow decay,  
 All this dear race has won  
 Where nations must their courses run; 40

And blessed be God, that, though men die,  
 The heavenly hosts unchanged reply;  
 That, o'er the hill, the fold-star<sup>3</sup> will  
 At eventide bring home,  
 With every flock, the feet that roam. 45

O friends, when this day ends, and I  
 To the last call must make reply,  
 Think only this of mine amiss:  
 Forgiveness covers all,  
 Where best is naught, and strongest fall. 50

For I have loved my kind; have held  
 None enemy; none have compelled  
 Unwilled to take aught for my sake;  
 None have I bound—lest might,  
 Far set, should fail of utmost height. 55

The hour is come? The Caller knocks?  
 Slip out the bars, unkey the locks!  
 “Awake!” he cries? Now must I rise  
 And face, the last shift o'er,  
 Death's old, oft-opened, battered door. 60

46 O] ~, A    47 the] that A    56 come?] ~! A    knocks?] ~! A    58 cries?] ~. A

<sup>3</sup> Evening star: see F6 n. 1.

### I152 THE TOTEM POLE

Though all should pass with careless look,  
 O book  
 That is my boomerang and spear,  
 It is my heart lies buried here.

(n. d.) *Copy-text: WS Collated states: SV* (no variants)

