

**John Shaw Neilson
The Collected Verse
A Variorum Edition**

**Edited by
Margaret Roberts**

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INTRODUCTION

SECTION 1: The man and the verse

When Neilson died in May 1942, numerous pieces of verse had been printed in newspapers and periodicals, five volumes of verse had been published and a quantity of verse, written in school exercise books for the most part, was left in the care of his executor. His first volume of poetry, *Green Days and Cherries*, went to proof stage in 1914 and was held in type for some months but did not proceed. *Heart of Spring* was published in 1919; *Ballad and Lyrical Poems* in 1923; *New Poems* in 1927; *Collected Poems of John Shaw Neilson* in 1934; and *Beauty Imposes* in 1938. To date, approximately 700 complete pieces of verse have been located, of which about 135 are limericks and humorous quatrains. Of this total, only 197 poems and 31 limericks and quatrains were published during his lifetime.

His verse is an extraordinary mixture of the beautiful and the banal; of idiosyncratic symbolism and crystalline imagery juxtaposed with cliché and imbued with the often hackneyed thought and images of the popular culture of his day. It is peopled with one-dimensional figures, and abounds with detail. It is riddled with allusiveness: with the images, rhythms and verse forms of popular and folk song, and hymn; the Bible and nursery rhyme; contemporary poets and the great English poets. Its vocabulary is limited, simple, and occasionally strikingly literary. Its rhythms are sometimes flat and monotonous, and sometimes counterpointed with great subtlety.

There is a compelling quality about much of Neilson's work just as there is about much naïve painting, a quality that either repels, or attracts and invites. It is certainly a quality that compels us to ask 'what manner of man was he?' What disarms and disturbs Neilson's critics is the seeming paradox of this man, writing this verse: and this is the paradox of the naïves.

John Shaw Neilson was born at Penola, in South Australia, on 22 February 1872, the first of seven children. The inland areas of much of Australia were still sparsely settled in these years following the gold rushes and the accompanying demand to 'unlock the lands' (which resulted in the Selection Acts of the 1860s), and the family moved to the Minimay district in Victoria in 1881 when they left Penola to take up land. Thus Neilson was born into and grew up in an era of development and settlement; a pioneering era, a time of social and economic flux. From 1886, when Neilson left school at the age of fourteen after perhaps two years interrupted attendance, until he left the land in 1916 he and his brothers Frank and Bill worked with their father on various selections in the Mallee and Wimmera regions, taking labouring jobs and working with their father as a contractor as required to keep them going financially.

In between taking up blocks of land, being sold up, or selling out, Neilson and his father wrote verse; and both won first prizes in their sections in the Australian Natives Association poetry competition in 1893. Both had verse published in local newspapers and John Shaw Neilson sent items to the *Bulletin*. A. G. Stephens recognised his talent and encouraged him to keep writing, and when Stephens left the *Bulletin* in 1906 he wrote to Neilson asking him to send pieces for publication and to name him his agent.

Neilson summarised his life in these years simply, and with humour, in a biographical sketch written c. 1910:

I was born at Penola, S.A., a quiet little place with white roads and plenty of gardens. I went to school for about 15 months there. In 1881 I went with my people to Victoria and I remember very clearly that Ned Kelly was hanged in the winter of that year. There was no school at Minimay where my father selected. We did not get [one] till I was over 13 and then I only went to school about a year. In 1889 we left Minimay and went to Nhill. I worked with my father who was contracting round there for about 6 years. In 1895 he started farming again and came up to Sea Lake. I have been working with [him] most of my life since then.

I started writing verse when I left school but never got anything printed till I was about 20. I wrote some very amateurish verses for a Nhill paper. When I was 21 the Editor of the *Australasian* wrote me a very friendly note and actually accepted two of my pieces which I am afraid made me intolerably conceited for a long time afterwards. Somewhere about this time I wrote a few verses for the *Weekly Times* which I am particularly proud of.

In 1896 I tried the *Bulletin* and got a piece on the Red page. I tried several times again but don't remember getting anything printed till 1901 when 'Sheedy was Dying' came out in the Christmas Number. Since then I have written perhaps a dozen pieces for the *Bulletin* and the *Bulletin* people have always treated me very well.

When the *Bookfellow* was alive in Sydney in 1907 I had some verse in it, and Mr Randolph Bedford when he was running the *Clarion* printed everything I sent. He joyfully published some of my worst limericks and [if] I was in a tearful or religious mood he did not turn me down.

Some day I hope to get together some of [my] most decent verse and offer [it] to my beloved countrymen. I rather think of calling my book

The Piper Pays

This for a heading

I am a Piper, though a pleasant craze

Piping's impalpable – the Piper Pays.¹

None of the several editions of Neilson's verse can be considered satisfactory from the point of view of a critic and, now that the full extent of Neilson's work is known, they cannot be regarded as satisfactory readers' editions either.

¹ ML MS A3038/1, 35a (B0146-0150). 'When are the angels nearest' and 'Bob and Dearie' were published in the *Australasian*, 28 October 1893 and 10 February 1894 respectively; 'Minnie's story' appeared the *Weekly Times*, 13 June 1896 and 'Marian's child' appeared in the *Bulletin*, 4 May 1895.

Doubts about unauthorised editorial interference on A. G. Stephens's part remain to be answered and the textual validity of the editions published during Neilson's lifetime is therefore questionable. The *Collected Poems of John Shaw Neilson*, published in 1934, contains some revisions of earlier poems but reprints numerous texts in which earlier unidentified editorial alterations occur. Whilst it may be argued that these texts have authority because of Neilson's acceptance of the work, this is a passive authority at best, and none but the most sanguine could regard this as a satisfactory edition now.

James Devaney was the first to work with the manuscripts, and the results of his efforts are to be seen in *Unpublished Poems of Shaw Neilson*, published in 1947. Devaney's access to the manuscripts was limited by constraints of time, and by suspicion on the part of Neilson's executor, his brother Frank Neilson. Devaney's primary concern was the preservation of the texts, and there is no suggestion that he considered his work to be in any way exhaustive. The work was hurried and a number of lines that he cited as fragments have since been found to be part of complete poems.

A. R. Chisholm did not concern himself with the manuscripts and appears to have been unaware of the quantity and quality of unpublished verse when his collection *The Poems of Shaw Neilson* was published in 1965. The texts in Chisholm's book were taken from earlier published editions, the later revised edition (1973) including material from *Witnesses of Spring* edited by Judith Wright. The arrangement of the poems has been rejected as unsatisfactory since work was done on assigning a chronology to the texts.

The texts in *Witnesses of Spring: Unpublished Poems by Shaw Neilson*, edited by Judith Wright and published in 1970, show signs of undue haste in the preparation and very questionable judgement, for, apart from some misreadings of the manuscripts, Wright conflates versions of some of the poems without sufficient warrant, and sometimes omits stanzas for no good reason.

In *Green Days and Cherries: The Early Verses of Shaw Neilson*, edited by Hugh Anderson and Les Blake and published in 1981, published and manuscript versions of texts are presented with insufficient differentiation to show 'the development of Neilson's poetic talent as well as its growth'; and without any sort of critical apparatus the book is of limited value to any except the casual reader.

More recent editions of the verse similarly disappoint. *John Shaw Neilson: Poetry, Autobiography and Correspondence*, edited by Cliff Hanna and published in 1991, claims to include 'the first textually valid collection of Shaw Neilson's verse', and 'seeks to remove as much as is possible the incursions of other hands'. However, inconsistencies in treatment occur: alterations by Stephens are sometimes removed and sometimes not, and Neilson's revisions are not always accounted for. For example, the edition reprints the texts from *Collected Poems* and *Beauty Imposes*, 'which were supervised by the poet', and which are therefore considered to be the most reliable of the texts published during Neilson's lifetime. However, the text of 'Old Nell Dickerson' printed in the *Sun* is presented in favour of the *Collected Poems* text, presumably because the latter contains several alterations by Stephens — ignoring the fact that Neilson made

further alterations to this text for *Collected Poems* — whilst other texts which contain alterations by Stephens, like ‘The lover sings’ and ‘Her eyes’, are reprinted without comment. The manuscript of ‘Polly and Dad and the old spring cart’ has revised stanzas and a revised line which Hanna has ignored; and what appears to be the final version of ‘The fire unquenched’, which is signed and marked ‘Finis’, is ignored in favour of another version.

The Sun Is Up: Selected Poems, with an Introduction by Richard Keam, published in 1991, reprints texts from *Collected Poems*, thus perpetuating error and the most recent edition of the verse, *Shaw Neilson: Selected Poems*, edited by Robert Gray and published in 1993, merely compounds the problems encountered in previous editions and shows evidence of a too-hasty examination of the manuscripts. Hanna and Gray both seem not to have noticed, for example, that the two lines following line 38 of ‘Barmaid at Binney’s’ (in the ‘1909’ notebook) are separated by a gap in the notebook where three leaves have been cut out, and the lines in question are in fact part of another poem, ‘Love the player’.

Examples like these raise questions, again, about textual validity. The present edition of Neilson’s verse resolves, or at least clarifies, the problems associated with the texts.

The ‘manner of man’ Neilson was remains elusive, still, and the question continues to fascinate. Biographies all draw heavily on a series of letters written by Neilson to James Devaney in 1934, published by the National Library of Australia as *The Autobiography of John Shaw Neilson* in 1978 and in an abbreviated form in Hanna’s book *John Shaw Neilson: Poetry, Autobiography and Correspondence* (1991). However, the letters of the autobiography convey what Neilson thought was the proper stuff of biography, the surface detail of a man’s life and work and his family background, in what Neilson thought was the proper tone of biography. Moreover, it is significant that the autobiography largely deals with Neilson’s years on the land and in the bush, for it was these years of his life that he could make something of in the telling, and in the telling he encapsulates what is now acknowledged to be a very false image. This image of Neilson as a simple ‘navvy poet’ (a phrase coined by the poet himself) who, poverty-stricken and near-blind, had to dictate the bulk of his work after his sight deteriorated in the early 1900s is indeed false. So too is the image of the poet who succumbed to the well-meaning gesture of friends who secured a less arduous job for him with the Country Roads Board in Melbourne, the ‘stony town’ he spoke of critically, where he mistakenly thought he would have more leisure to write. Neilson was a good storyteller and the attraction of myth is acknowledged in Cliff Hanna’s latest book, well-titled as a ‘story’.² Interestingly, this false image was questioned as early as 1948 by Victor Kennedy in an address at the Public Library, Melbourne when he said:

When a legend gathers around a man while he still lives there is a dangerous tendency for it to snowball until the man himself, or the poet as he really was, is lost in the mists and

² Cliff Hanna, *Jock: A Life Story of John Shaw Neilson*, University of Queensland Press, 1999.

miasmas of human fantasy. This is already happening with the memory of John Shaw Neilson.³

John Shaw Neilson: A Life in Letters, edited by Helen Hewson, a selection of correspondence to and from Neilson, and some concerning Neilson, interspersed with narrative comment, goes some way to ‘place Neilson’s life and work in a context which dispels entrenched romantic ideas’, as Hewson intended, but distorts, as selections do, inevitably.

There are approximately 490 items of correspondence extant from Neilson himself to various recipients, excluding the numerous straightforward business letters to Lothians concerning the publication of *Collected Poems*, and including some very slight items – greeting cards and letter cards, and notes confirming or cancelling appointments, for example. Perhaps the most striking feature of the correspondence, in relation to the image of Neilson and his work, is the pattern of dictation. Prior to his move to Melbourne in July 1928, only 17 items are in the handwriting of amanuenses. However, after the move, the pattern is reversed, and only 15 items are in Neilson’s own handwriting – which suggests that the use of an amanuensis was to some extent as much a matter of convenience as of necessity. There are several items in Neilson’s hand (all very short) up until August 1941 and, of far greater significance, there are autograph alterations and insertions in numerous letters up until 29 September 1940. Plainly, Neilson read over at least some of his correspondence after dictation and before sending. There is no doubt that his near-sight was poor, that it deteriorated as he aged, and this at the time when his family were most dependent on him; but the evidence of the autograph items of correspondence over many years contradicts his very numerous comments to the effect that he was unable to read or to write because his eyes were so bad. That his sister Annie and half-sister Lisette were available only at weekends for dictation is also contradicted by the evidence, in Lisette’s case, for dates and handwriting show that she frequently took down dictation during the week, a fact she confirmed when she said that she ‘often went up’ in the evening to take dictation if there was a lot to be done.⁴

We do know that Neilson liked dictating, except to his brother Frank whom the family say constantly interrupted and thought he knew better than ‘Jock’ what to say; and Frank himself said Neilson ‘always preferred Annie or Lisette to write off his verses as they never questioned the lines at all’.⁵ Further, Neilson used to tell Lisette he could think more easily when dictating. The suggestion of handicap in the remarks in the *Autobiography* and letters about the lack of availability of Lisette and Annie to take down material is an exaggeration, in my view, to explain to others his lack of output at any given time. We are mistaken in seeing the dictation process as a burden or limiting factor in Neilson’s life and work. This may have been the case, on occasion, but once he moved to Melbourne it very quickly became his chosen and habitual mode of writing.

³ NLA MS 2765 Harry Hasting Pearce papers. An address given by Victor Kennedy, in the Public Library, Melbourne, 23 February 1948, under the auspices of the Australasian Literary Commemorative Association.

⁴ Personal interview with Mrs E. (Lisette) Doyle 10 December 1981.

⁵ NLA MS 1145/75 Frank Neilson – James Devaney 19 January 1948.

The evidence concerning Neilson's reading seems even more contradictory for, again, he mentions numerous authors in his letters whilst at the same time and in the same letters saying that he can't read (because his eyes are troubling him), and that his knowledge of literature is limited (because he can't read, and because of his lack of education), until one tires of these refrain-like comments. However, it is not that Neilson didn't read but that he assumed a degree of sophistication in reading on the part of his city correspondents, and in case he be thought ignorant, he used poor eyesight, and sometimes the lack of education, as an excuse. This was a psychological defence. Once again, what was exaggerated initially to protect himself from possible adverse comment and to enlist sympathy, was then later exaggerated to explain his disinclination to discuss others' work in all except very general terms. What emerges very clearly from the correspondence is that Neilson, like a good many country people then, and now (or at least until the advent of good roads and telecommunications) read whatever came his way. Nothing, however, suggests he was an avid reader and when one looks at the authors cited and the kind of comments he makes it is apparent that his reading was in no way systematic or studied. His comments are always brief and repetitious — a version of the 'I know what I like' viewer of paintings. What is evident is that he 'dipped into' whatever he came across that took his fancy, and things that were sent to him as he became better known and as his correspondence grew.⁶

Two further points emerge from the correspondence of immediate relevance to Neilson's work. First, as he told Mary Gilmore and later Vincent Kennedy, Neilson did not like 'the monotony of the bush'; and second, the years after he moved to Melbourne were the happiest of his life. He first mentions this monotony to Mary Gilmore in 1912, saying 'the bush is dreadfully monotonous when one can't read'; and to Victor Kennedy he commented that 'the land is alright if you are suited to the monotony of the land'.⁷ A letter to Mary Gilmore in 1922 is revealing:

A few weeks back you wrote something about the value of gossip. There is much truth in it. As one who is not very fond of company, and who has lived in rather lonely places, I think the value of solitude has been altogether overboomed. It is no wonder that people, especially women, crowd into the cities. People who write in praise of the Bush rather hysterically often keep very comfortable jobs in up to date towns. But I mustn't say more. You will think me a heretic. Closer settlement is what we want. Houses about half a mile apart and plenty of natural shelter left for the birds and the lovers.⁸

Heresy this may be, but those who write so romantically or 'hysterically' have probably never lacked water, to say nothing of fresh fruit and vegetables, or ice or refrigeration. Given these statements, one can better appreciate the pleasures that Neilson enjoyed when he finally settled in

⁶ ML MS 4937/5, 499-507, John Shaw Neilson – A. G. Stephens 6 September 1931. The letter suggests Neilson was aware that his references to reading could be misleading for, in response to Stephens's suggestion that he should read Catullus, he wrote 'It is really no use sending me a book at all. Some of my friends send me books at times. I acknowledge their kindness, but I sometimes have to commit perjury when sending my thanks.'

⁷ ML MS 123, J. S. Neilson – Mary Gilmore 13 December 1912.

LaT MS 9419/1237, J. S. Neilson – Victor Kennedy 24 June 1917.

⁸ ML MS A3267, J. S. Neilson – Mary Gilmore 19 February 1922.

Melbourne. Despite the fact that he complained frequently about the want of leisure, one has to take these comments with the proverbial ‘pinch of salt’ for, after the activity of settling in Melbourne, and getting his *Collected Poems* published in 1934, if Neilson wrote much less after this it may have been because other things were now equally or more interesting.

Melbourne was heady wine for Neilson, and I give the greatest credence to his comment that ‘I do not seem to want to [write]. I’m afraid I have exhausted myself – no more inspiration’.⁹ Neilson’s writing, in my opinion, was born of frustration; it was, in psychological terms, a compensatory process. He was happier in these later years than ever before. Living with his sister and her growing family meant it wasn’t always convenient to write: more importantly, away from the ‘monotony of the bush’, Neilson no longer had the same need to write.

Far from having everything against him as Chisholm argued in 1965, Neilson had more going for him than many before or since. His father wrote verse; his family encouraged him from the time he first commenced writing; and writing – both verse and short stories – was widely accepted as an activity. Looking at the press of the day, it seems as though ‘every man and his dog’ had a go at writing. None, however, wrote quite like Neilson.

The bulk of Neilson’s manuscripts occur in 28 exercise books (commonly referred to as ‘notebooks’) held by the Mitchell Library, with the exception of one, which is held by the National Library of Australia. These are listed further on. Other manuscripts occur as loose pages, many of them as fair copies of poems (often on pages from writing pads) attached to letters.

None of the notebooks is entire, and it is obvious that pages were often removed before poems were recorded in the books, or drafts written. Further mutilation occurred after Neilson’s death when his brother Frank assigned dates to the notebooks and removed pages, and part-pages, some of which were then pasted into a ledger (or stuck in with sticking plaster in some instances): ML MS A3038/1. Staff at the Mitchell Library ‘floated’ these off, and the extensive work involved in piecing together the manuscripts is described in articles by Ruth Harrison, John Burrows and Cliff Hanna in *Southerly*.¹⁰ The notebooks contain household accounts, some drafts of letters, lists of titles, lists of pieces to complete and in some, the outlines of poems, in addition to texts in various stages of composition and it is now obvious that the books were used both as a document of record of completed poems and as work books. I believe that prior to 1928 Neilson often worked on loose paper when away from home, and then transferred the work to the notebooks, either himself, or by dictation. When at home, or at his home base at the time, he either continued in this way, using the notebooks as a document of record, as work books, or both. In support of this idea, it should be noted that in a note of expenditure Neilson lists the purchase of foolscap; moreover, numbers of leaves removed from the notebooks were clearly removed for independent use, for the texts recorded in the books frequently cross the place of the removed leaves without

⁹ *The Autobiography of John Shaw Neilson*, p. 11.

¹⁰ R. Harrison, J. F. Burrows & C. Hanna, ‘A gathering of fugitives: An account of some Neilson manuscripts’, *Southerly*, 3, 1973, pp. 313-322 and R. Harrison & J. F. Burrows, ‘More of Neilson’s fugitives’, *Southerly*, 3, 1975, pp. 276-293.

interruption. Lists of titles of ‘pieces to finish this year’ certainly suggest use of this kind, as do the poem outlines that occur several times and which clearly served as an *aide memoire*.

I think it highly unlikely that Neilson carried any of the notebooks around with him when working away from his home base. In the first place, the books are in remarkably good condition for their age, apart from the fact that the covers are worn and spines are loose — the result of pages being torn out. In the second place, and more tellingly, the sequences of handwriting counter any suggestion of that use. One after another, texts occur with no change in the hand at all, irrespective of the hand, and this suggests the writing up, or taking down, of work already accomplished. However, the handwriting rarely has that degree of evenness that usually occurs when copying directly and it would seem that where earlier drafts were written they were used mainly for referral, if at all.

It follows then that the date of use of a notebook needs to be handled cautiously in discussion of Neilson’s poetic development, for a chronology of use (as established by Harrison and Burrows) is different altogether from a chronology of composition. It should be noted too that a number of the books were in use at the same time, and some appear to have been in use over a period of three or four years or more. Further, the likelihood of a later-written poem being recorded in a book of earlier use (as happens) must increase exponentially. Where close agreement is lacking between the date of use of a notebook and the composition of a text, and given the likelihood of a later-written poem being recorded in a book of earlier use, an edition, to be of value, must place the texts in broad chronological groupings which acknowledge uncertainty in the dating, but enable a reasonably objective assessment of the verse and the tracing of development, broadly considered.

On this basis, the verse is divided here into four periods which reflect the major events in the poet’s life, namely, his association with A. G. Stephens and the changes in his working life — from landowner and labourer to itinerant labourer, and then from rural worker to city dweller in a fixed occupation. Period 1, 1890 – 1906, covers the years from the date of first publication of his work, up to the commencement of the relationship with A. G. Stephens as his editor. Period 2, 1907 – 1916, covers the early relationship with Stephens and his influence, and the end of Neilson’s ownership of land. Period 3, 1917 – 1927, covers the period of itinerant work. Period 4, 1928 – 1941, marks the commencement of his life as a city-dweller in a fixed occupation, the end of the relationship with Stephens (who died in 1933) and covers the association with Robert Croll and James Devaney as editors.

Neilson had twenty pieces of verse published in periodicals between 1893 and 1896. Most of these were printed in the *Nhill and Tatiara Mail* but one, ‘Marian’s child’, was printed in the *Bulletin* in 1895 and another, ‘Polly and Dad and the old spring cart’, in 1896. However, nothing appears to have been printed and very little written between 1896 and 1905.

The late 1890s and early 1900s seem to have been particularly difficult years for Neilson. He referred to these years in his *Autobiography* as his ‘very discontented period which lasted for

several years' and the end of 1896 as 'the start of the Set Back'.¹¹ He was temperamentally unsuited to pioneering life, as he acknowledged many years later, unlike his father whom he said 'could never see any difficulties'; and he preferred 'working for a boss', unlike his father, who preferred the independence of working for himself as a contractor.¹²

Because the family lacked capital they were dependent on outside employment but there were very worrying periods when one or another of them couldn't work because of injury or illness. Neilson's father seems to have been remarkably robust and lucky in this respect, but Neilson himself was unable to work, or to do more than occasional light work, for periods of several weeks at a time because of injury. Additionally, two prolonged periods of ill-health occurred when he could do very little for months on end because of what sounds like a depressive illness.¹³ This occurred first in 1897, when he was 25 and then again in 1903, when he was 30. During all this his mother died; his sister Maggie became ill, and died after a long illness; and his brother Frank had problems with his health and went to live with an uncle for about 6 months.

Neilson said he attempted to write verse again between 1901 and 1903, but only three pieces were printed. 'Sheedy was dying' was published in the *Bulletin* in 1901 and this, together with a letter from someone at the *Bulletin*, increased his confidence. However, only two other pieces appeared: 'The child we lost' in 1902 and "'Twas in the early summer time' in 1903, both in the *Bulletin*.

The years 1905-1906 marked a watershed in Neilson's life, in terms of his verse. Twenty-two pieces of verse were published between 1893-1904 and then, following a return to health, Neilson reported a tremendous urge to write in mid-1905.¹⁴ Stephens wrote in late 1906, after he left the *Bulletin*, with a proposal to act as Neilson's agent with first offer of any of his verse. Neilson accepted this offer and it is clear that being published by the *Bulletin* and then being taken up by Stephens confirmed him in his own mind as a poet. Both A. G. Stephens and Bertram Stevens approached him in 1907 about the inclusion of some verse in proposed anthologies and this further affirmed his perception of status.

A significant increase in poetic activity and experimentation and a marked development in technical skill occurred from 1906 onwards and the years 1907-1916 may fairly be regarded as the period of Neilson's coming to maturity in creative terms. Stephens printed ten of Neilson's pieces in the *Bookfellow* in 1907 before he left suddenly for New Zealand after his business ventures failed, and of particular interest is the poetic activity and the quantity of Neilson's verse published in the *Clarion* before Stephens returned to Australia and resumed activity with his *Bookfellow* column in the *Sydney Sun* in 1910. Randolph Bedford printed fifty pieces of Neilson's verse in the *Clarion* and as Neilson said, he didn't worry at all about what he printed.¹⁵ Neilson's newly-found penchant for light verse was given a ready reception, along with about

¹¹ *The Autobiography of John Shaw Neilson* p. 33 & p. 46.

¹² *The Autobiography of John Shaw Neilson* p. 54, p. 43 & p. 34.

¹³ *The Autobiography of John Shaw Neilson* p. 50 & pp. 65-67.

¹⁴ *The Autobiography of John Shaw Neilson* pp. 68-69.

¹⁵ ML MS A3038/1, 35a, biographical sketch.

eighteen limericks, and lyrics including ‘To a lowan’, ‘The time of tumult’ [1], ‘The wine’ and ‘The smoker parrot’ [1], among others.

Stephens devoted a substantial article to Neilson’s work in the *Bookfellow* on 1 October 1912 and announced Neilson’s first book, *Green Days and Cherries*, as ‘presently to be published’. The book went to proof stage and the Stephens inscription in one of the bound copies states that the book was announced for publication in 1914. However, printing did not proceed. War was declared in August and Neilson says in his *Autobiography* that ‘1914 was a terrible year’.¹⁶ The year following was no better.¹⁷ The family had been concerned about Neilson’s brother Bill for some time: he suffered a nervous collapse and had to have six months in Melbourne. Neilson, who had sent £25 to Stephens towards the cost of printing *Green Days and Cherries* in (he thought) 1911, now had to ask Stephens to return £15, and by this time he had had enough of the land.¹⁸ The lack of capital, severe droughts and the vagaries of the Wheat Board finished the brothers as landowners, and in March 1916 they left the land.

From 1916 when he was forty-four until 1928 when he was fifty-six, Neilson worked as a casual labourer. He seemed not to worry unduly about money and in fact left numerous jobs of his own accord before the work ran out. He was able to help his father and brothers financially occasionally and to keep himself satisfactorily working this way until the onset of the depression in the mid-nineteen-twenties. Neilson’s first book of verse was finally published in 1919, as *Heart of Spring*, and a second book, *Ballad and Lyrical Poems*, was published in 1923. He was granted a literary pension in 1923, and from 1924 he began getting about and meeting people in Melbourne. His third book, *New Poems*, was published in 1927 and the reception given for him by the members of the Australian Literature Society in Melbourne following this marked his acceptance as a poet of note.

In 1928 he was offered and accepted a job as a messenger ‘boy’ with the Country Roads Board in Melbourne and he settled finally in Melbourne with his sister Annie and her family. This last period, 1928-1942, again marks a significant change in Neilson’s life. Three factors combined to account for the move: his age and the fact that he had been finding the environment of work camps increasingly trying; the worsening economic conditions; and the fact that he was now being sought out as a poet. The offer of the job with the CRB was providential: it placed him in an environment he enjoyed, apart from the noise, amongst people he liked, and with an assured income. He was pleased indeed by his luck in getting a ‘blue-collar job’ and very pleased indeed with this ‘easy job’ and his ‘office address’.¹⁹

¹⁶ *The Autobiography of John Shaw Neilson* p. 84

¹⁷ *The Autobiography of John Shaw Neilson* p. 85.

¹⁸ JSN – AGS 17 October 1927, NLA MS 2037.

¹⁹ *The Autobiography of John Shaw Neilson*, p. 145 & ML MS 123, J. S. Neilson – Mary Gilmore 26 August 1928.

The Country Roads Board was in the Carlton Gardens. Neilson was one of three people at the reception desk and his job was to direct visitors to the right address.

Undoubtedly at least some of the texts Neilson chose to preserve were lost after his death and others, inadvertently, before his final move to Melbourne.²⁰ Uncertainty about the dates of composition further complicates matters. Nevertheless, the texts extant, when considered in these four periods, reflect a pattern related to periods of significant change. Excluding fragments and pieces that cannot be assigned a date, approximately one hundred and thirty-four pieces, of which thirty-five are limericks, occur in Period 1; two hundred and ninety-six, of which seventy-six are limericks or humorous quatrains, in Period 2; one hundred and forty-five, of which four are limericks or humorous quatrains, in Period 3; and one hundred and eighteen, of which sixteen are limericks or humorous quatrains occur in Period 4. The figures certainly support Neilson's comments about the environment he liked to work in, and also the view that the Melbourne environment was inimical although, as I have said, there are other, more cogent, reasons for the decline in Period 4.

With regard to the composition of Neilson's verse, it seems clear that a fair amount of his composition was done in his head, so to speak — not because he couldn't see well, or write well, but because, at least initially, this activity filled the time. This approach to writing seems to have stayed with him all his life, for, in a letter to Devaney, Neilson writes that he has 'started so many fresh pieces lately. Half of them I suppose will not be worth persevering with. Some of them I haven't got down on paper yet.'²¹ Writing to Devaney in October 1934 Neilson described his early approach, saying 'my way of writing say thirty years ago was very different to what it is now':

From 1905 up until about 1915 the conditions were generally more favourable with me for verse making than they have been since. During these years practically all the verse was made up out of doors. I had a good deal of riding and driving to do. The nearest town was about 20 miles away and later only about 10 miles away. I got on best I think when I was riding, driving stock to water or at a dozen different jobs where a man had to use a hack.

Trying to compose verse in the evening surrounded by four walls and other people has always seemed an impossibility to me. A holiday after a man has been working hard is a favourable time. Responsibilities, debts and plans to make a living are all big enemies.

Sunlight and nothing particular to bother one help the urge. At the start I usually feel inclined to hum some tune that I know. I have not a very good ear for music and I have no voice. Riding along slowly on a quiet hack I would try to hum the tunes I knew. I would become dissatisfied with these. I would try to hum tunes of my own. This vanity I believe has been a great help to me. In a quarter of an hour or so I would find out that I was quite powerless to compose a tune of my own. Then as a sort of consolation to my wounded pride I would start to make a rhyme.

²⁰ Personal conversation with Hugh Anderson November 1999: Frank Neilson gave Hugh Anderson some pages of holograph MS, now in the National Library of Australia, and he is believed to have given other pages to other people.

²¹ NLA MS 1145/68, J. S. Neilson – James Devaney 10 August 1935.

I usually found a stanza suitable at once. It is rarely that I have had to alter a verse form. When I do so, it is usually in a poor piece that is not worth printing. When I got a stanza out I felt confident that I could finish the thing sometime or other. The stanza might be the first, last, or a middle one.²²

Not only was a considerable amount of Neilson's composition largely mental, it would seem that he sometimes visualised the completed form of his pieces before he started composing them; or perhaps, having made a stanza, the completed form then was visualised, for, as mentioned, there are several instances of lists of pieces with descriptive annotations in the notebooks. These too are obviously *aides-memoire* listed to help him recall his original intention. For example a list in the '1906' notebook has:

The tree and the woman	Ballad metre
At thirty-seven	Parody
The young man in his strength	2 long 2 short

The '1907' notebook has:

His heart will know	40 lines
The white boat at midnight	40 lines

And another from this date has:

The strangers	4 lines long
The drive	5 lines long
Mill Warren	Ballad
The mercy of Martin's mother	Ballad
Among the corn	4 lines long
The wedding & the Spring	4 lines long
The voice of the helpless	4 lines irreg.
The hidden friend	4 lines irreg.
Celia	7 lines short.

The outlines for poems that occur in the notebook at the National Library of Australia, comprising numbering for stanzas and two or three words for each line (usually beginning and end words), obviously serve this purpose and support this view.

Four titles from other such lists are interesting as an illustration of literary influences and the way Neilson thought of metre; that is, in terms of other work [ML MS 3354/2-5, 25a]:

Birth	7 Dante
His	4 lines <com>
Memory	Omar 4 lines

²² NLA MS 1145/68, J. S. Neilson – James Devaney 21 October 1934.

No texts have been found for many of these, so either they were never put down on paper or the texts have been lost. The fact that some exist, for example ‘The drive’, from the ‘1907’ list above, and ‘Of strawberries I tell’, from a long list in the ‘1925’ notebook, suggests the loss of at least some others.

Neilson did not elaborate on his comment to Devaney that his ‘way of writing say thirty years ago was very different to what it is now’ and it is difficult to know in what way it differed, given his other comments. One can only conclude that, given the availability of amanuenses after he moved to Melbourne, he was referring to a near-total reliance on dictation, and more of his thinking being done through the medium of his amanuenses and paper. Certainly vastly more revision and alteration shows in the later notebooks in use in the year or so before he moved to Melbourne permanently and the years afterwards, and Mrs Doyle [Lisette] said that he ‘used to ask me to read his writing back to him on different occasions, perhaps to correct a word or line’.²³

Neilson ‘heard’ his verse as much as saw it, or saw the shape of it in his head, and his comment about attempting to make a tune is revealing in this context. In another letter to Devaney, in relation to what I take to be the poem ‘Nine moons in a song’, he says ‘Some years back I remember reading what a musical man wrote about song making. He divided each song into three parts. The question, the answer and the echo. I don’t think he is always right, but of course it is the chorus, the echo that always lives.’²⁴ The circularity of much of Neilson’s verse has frequently been remarked. I would suggest the reason for this is to be found in his reliance on memory and sound, on ‘music’, in composition to a very high degree. Moreover, given this degree of mental composition and his strong reliance on auditory processes to fix the lines, the move to dictation is better viewed as a relatively easy accommodation rather than a handicap to his writing and composition.

One further point to note in relation to method is that Neilson’s vocabulary is marked by the near-absence of technical terminology. One is reminded forcefully of his lack of formal education and of sustained reading, and his comments strongly support the view of him as a naïve.

Most of Neilson’s comments about method occur in two groups of letters: those to Victor Kennedy in 1916, and those to James Devaney, his ‘autobiography’, in 1934-35, already referred to. There is no change in terminology at all, and nothing to suggest an increase in sophistication or the critical faculty. Writing to Kennedy, Neilson comments on Kennedy’s ‘5 line stuff’ and advises him to ‘keep to level fours, or sixes, or eights for a while, adding, ‘when your ear becomes keener then you could tackle what I would call fancy work’.²⁵ Then a month later he says:

Repeat your lines over and over till you get [the] weight in the right places. If you listen to a band you will get some notion of this. Instruments must chord. You must avoid

²³ Letter from Mrs Betty Doyle to Margaret Roberts 8 November 1981.

²⁴ NLA MS 1145/67, J. S. Neilson – James Devaney 26 April 1936.

²⁵ LaT MS 9419/1236, J. S. Neilson – Victor Kennedy 21 July 1916.

monotony . . . note the difference between the Marseilles Hymn and Rock of Ages or between an Irish jig and a tune like Annie Laurie – but I can't make myself clear.²⁶

Neilson couldn't make himself clear because he lacked the critical idiom necessary for sustained discussion of method.

Refraining from printing pieces not published during Neilson's lifetime on the ground that these pieces are not finished is not defensible. Some, clearly, are first drafts: others, equally clearly, are finished pieces in a state comparable to many of the fair copies and ready for an editor's appraisal. That Neilson chose not to send them to an editor at the time in no way suggests that he considered them private pieces and not for publication. Neilson was not a good judge of his own work. Quite possibly he undervalued many of the unpublished pieces. Quite probably he based his actions on his judgement of Stephens's, and later Devaney's, taste. (He remarked to Devaney that 'Up to 1914 I sent a good deal of rubbish at odd times to A. G. During the war I wrote scarcely anything, and after '19 I was more particular as to what I sent.')²⁷ Whatever the reason, there is no doubt that Neilson wanted to be published and accepted publication as his due.

Acquaintance with the *Bulletin* and the *Bookfellow* had a very strong liberating effect on Neilson: on his thought and style, and on his psyche. On the one hand he was stimulated to question received truths about man, God, and society: and on the other, he was liberated from the kind of 'proper' seriousness we see in his very early verse, to fun, and play. Many commentators dismiss Neilson's light verse. At most it receives token attention. Certainly it lacks literary merit and it is often schoolboyish and frequently inept. However, it seems to me that the element of fun in this verse is refined in the process of playing with limericks, quatrains and parody, to become manifest in often very delicate irony, fantasy and whimsy in other verse, to become, in my opinion, an essential element of Neilson's idiosyncratic style. In playing with words Neilson discovered language, ambiguity and paradox.

Neilson several times comments in his letters that writing light verse lifted his spirits, and for the man bored by the 'monotony of the bush' one can see that the verse is indeed, as he suggests in 'The flight of the weary', an escape into a world where he could play with all sorts of ideas in all manner of ways as the fancy took him. That he knew what he was doing accounts for the often quizzical, childlike tone and the sometimes surprising exuberance of the rather limited language of the verse. Images of 'moods of unmeasured magenta', a 'ghost' in a 'curled up lolly-tin', and a poet who would 'walk upwards into enraged rhyme', certainly suggest to me the stance of one stepping out of himself, so to speak, to play awhile.

Neilson's unsophisticated approach to writing, with his delight in the child's world, evidenced in poems like 'The hungry players' and 'Green lover' (based on nursery rhymes) suggests real pleasure in imagination, although he was ever a realist. In his formative years and until he moved to Melbourne, the influences beyond Neilson's immediate environment, including contact with

²⁶ LaT MS 9419/1241, J. S. Neilson – Victor Kennedy 13 August 1916.

²⁷ NLA MS 1145/68, J. S. Neilson – James Devaney 13 January 1935.

Stephens, were fragmented and intermittent. These influences were sufficient to stimulate and free the imagination, but not to envelop it.

SECTION 2: The poet and the editors

Neilson came to A. G. Stephens's notice when Stephens was sub-editor of the *Bulletin*. Stephens was the creator and editor of the Red Page from its beginning in 1894 until he left the *Bulletin* to work for himself in 1906, when he wrote to Neilson and offered him his services as an agent. Small wonder that Neilson later wrote to Victor Kennedy boasting of 'my friend A. G. Stephens' for Stephens was the most influential figure in the Australian literary sphere in the late 1890s and early 1900s.²⁸

Stephens regarded the creation of a text as a cooperative process, as his letter to Neilson indicates, and Neilson had no quarrel with this:

Dear Mr Neilson

I received verses 'The lover sings', but have been so busy setting up my bookshop that I deferred reply. 'It is the last' I received this morning. Both these pieces are truly poetic, but they are very imperfect, and often your meaning is not visible through the words. I shall have to spend considerable time in revision, and will then submit to you the revised version for approval. At present they are worth 12/6 — enclosed — but I hope to allow you a little more on publication.

On 3rd January next I shall issue *The Bookfellow*, a new weekly magazine and Australasian literary review. I shall have pleasure in sending you a copy regularly. It is in this paper, which will be a substantial thing, very well turned out, that I shall print your verses. But I can do more for you than this. I shall have a chance to review and praise your work, (which I believe entitled to praise and notice), and with my back lifting under you I hope you will presently get the credit to which you are entitled. I should like you to make me your agent for the disposal and publication of all literary work that you may do, and to offer me in the first instance any of your verse. Will you do this? This is the relation in which I stand to Will Ogilvie and others whose books I have published, and for whom I hold powers of attorney. I look forward to the time when you will have enough material of good quality to enable me to publish a little book for you.

Trusting you are well
Faithfully
[Signed]²⁹

Neilson accepted this arrangement and his three books, *Heart of Spring* (1919), *Ballad and Lyrical Poems* (1923) and *New Poems* (1927) were edited and published by Stephens. The relationship between the two was amicable, and sustained by respect, apart from a disagreement

²⁸ LaT MS 9419/1244, J. S. Neilson – Victor Kennedy 1 September 1916.

²⁹ ML MS 3354/1, Item 1, A. G. Stephens – J. S. Neilson 7 December 1906.

over a new publishing agreement in 1931, relating to a proposed collection of Neilson's verse and ownership of copyright.

The extent of Stephens's contribution to the texts, and the extent of his influence on Neilson as a poet, have been questioned since the mid-1930s and these questions remain to be answered. A major requirement of an edition of Neilson's collected verse is to present the texts in such a way as to facilitate assessment of these questions.

Devaney asked Neilson about Stephens's contribution to the texts in either late 1934 or early 1935 and Neilson replied to him at length in a letter dated 27 January 1935:

Question No. 1.

How many lines did A. G. Stephens supply for your verse?

I should say of the one hundred pieces in the books [and] the collected Works, he did not supply more than twenty full lines and perhaps as many half lines or parts of lines. Occasionally he would put in a word of his own instead of my word.

The last night when I was in Sydney and said goodbye to A. G. and Chris Brennan, Brennan walked a part of the way home with me. I remember that when we were walking close by St Mary's Cathedral he told me that A. G. confessed to him that when he, Stephens, had altered my verse himself he found out that very often it was not a success. I don't remember ever A. G. saying the same to me in writing but he did not make it a practice of putting in a line or half a line of his own till about 1927. From that date on he seemed to think that he knew better than I did sometimes after I had sent the alterations. This was particularly noticeable in the case of 'The Irish welcome' 1927 and 'The good season' in 1929, and 'Song for a honeymoon' 1930. In the Irish piece I found it difficult to compromise with him. In it there are two or three lines which are his and which I believe I could have bettered myself. The line about the fairies dancing, is his.

A. G. had a genius for knowing when a thing was wrong when he first saw it. When he pointed the defects out to me I usually fixed it up in a few weeks to his satisfaction. I could usually do it at the second try. In odd cases where there were a good many faults I abandoned the piece altogether. In 'The good season' there are one or two lines of his, put in which I could have easily beaten; but I owed him so much and I could see that his judgement was beginning to fail slightly. I had to give and take a little.

We wrote to each other a good deal over 'Song for a honeymoon'. I owe A. G. a great lot in this piece. At first it was very slow and I had to cut out a good many verses on his advice. I don't suppose there are more than two or three lines of his in it, but the value of his advice made the piece.

At times when he was in New Zealand [1907-1909] or when I was kicking about after the War [1914-1918] we did not correspond regularly and he might take the liberty of putting

in a word or a phrase to make a thing printable; but generally speaking he gave me an opportunity to alter everything. I think it was about ten years ago that he complained that one stanza in ‘Sheedy was dying’ needed alteration. I pointed out that the last four lines in the eight line stanza belonged to him. He admitted this but said that when it was sent to the Bulletin in 1901 he thought that I might not bother replying if he wrote to me. A.G. was evidently in a rather vexed mood when he spoke of some of the lines belonging to him [12 October 1932]. Of course any editor will suggest a word or a line to a rhymer in difficulties.

From about 1909 till 1925, I wrote for A.G. without any payment. Had I been paid 10/- for each verse I gave him I don’t suppose the whole lot would have run into £20. The critical work that he did in looking after my verse in those years would I think be worth well over £100. The best line of his that he put into any verse of mine was :-

Lifting the eyes of the heart to the height of the sky.

This is in ‘The birds go by’ in 1926.

[Signed]³⁰

The letter reveals as much about Neilson as it does about Stephens’s editorial practices and close examination of the correspondence and the texts shows that Neilson’s various statements are in fact misleading. Not only did Stephens contribute more to the texts than has been thought, his editing of some texts detracts from them. What emerges quite clearly is that Neilson not only accepted alterations to the texts, but that he invited cooperation in the texts from his editors: as Stephens rather tersely pointed out on 12 October 1932 (with some justification, one might add), he had ‘much overpassed the line of merely editorial duty: with the result that a number of lines in your published works belong to me and not to you’.³¹ Moreover, it is doubtful if Neilson even recognised alterations to the texts. Certainly, he only questioned two alterations of Stephens’s in published texts, and those are the two cited: ‘Sheedy was dying’, about which he was confused, and ‘The birds go by’. Furthermore, it is doubtful that he would have questioned ‘Sheedy’ if Stephens had not criticised it in the *School Magazine*.³²

In the case of the poems mentioned in his letter to Devaney above, in ‘The Irish welcome’ the ‘line about the fairies dancing’ is in fact Neilson’s own line; one other line is Stephens’s; one line is a Stephens alteration of a line revised by Neilson on Stephens’s suggestion; one part-line is Stephens’s; two lines are substitutions of earlier Neilson lines for later ones; and one word in another line is a Stephens alteration. In ‘The good season’ Stephens substituted one word in each of four lines; retained only the last three words in another line and at the same time acted on

³⁰ NLA MS 1145/64, J. S. Neilson – James Devaney 27 January 1935.

³¹ NLA MS 1145/74B, A. G. Stephens – J. S. Neilson 12 October 1932. That Neilson accepted this as normal practice is seen in a letter to James Devaney in 1938: ‘Frank and I have been working at some old pieces of my father’s . . . I have been doing alterations and Frank is doing the writing. A few of the rhymes were wrong and I set them right and I have made the sense clear in places where it was vague. I have tried to stick pretty close to what my father wrote.’ NLA MS 1145/4, JSN – J. Devaney 7 August 1938.

³² *School Magazine* (Sydney) 1 February 1901.

Neilson's instruction to retain his original word in a line that Stephens had suggested as an alternative. However, in 'Song for a honeymoon', presented here in three discrete versions, despite the fact that Stephens made numerous suggestions for changes to words, phrases and whole lines (many of which Neilson accepted), when it came to the point of Neilson's final intentions, Stephens acted on these, adding only the word 'the' at the head of one line. Interestingly, Stephens did not see the first version of this poem and, as was typical of Neilson, further rewritings were not an improvement on the first version.

From the evidence available, it looks as though Stephens's advice to Neilson and his involvement with the texts depended as much on what he was involved with at the time as on the texts themselves. Although there are manuscripts of poems with requests for revision marked and with suggestions for rewording, some of which like the above have attracted a lot of attention, these are in fact only a small percentage of what passed through Stephens's hands. Stephens's usual practice was to make a typed copy from the fair copy, add comments to the typescript if he thought the piece required change and then send this to Neilson for action. A letter to Nettie Palmer in 1940 implies that many of Stephens's letters (and presumably editorial suggestions) were lost in the mouse plague of 1917, or were lost or burnt while he was 'kicking about navying and etc. for about 9 years after the war'.³³ It is also likely that the correspondence with Stephens was in fact spasmodic and slight, until the 1920s, when Stephens's circumstances had changed. Whatever the case, Stephens certainly suggested alternative lines for some of the poems; but the lines contributed are only ever occasional lines, or part-lines. However, alterations of a different order occur much more frequently.

The manuscript of the early poem 'Sheedy was dying' shows the addition of Stephens's lines; and it also shows the substitution of occasional words. The latter is a frequent occurrence throughout the texts, usually being a change from an idiom that has some vitality to one that is less colloquial and more correct, with a consequent loss of tone and immediacy. For example, in 'Sheedy', the plain, direct line 'That he shall rest' becomes 'So — to his rest —'; and again, the colloquial 'Straight to his fellow-men' becomes 'Truth to his fellow men'.

In a similar way, and with the same effect, Stephens frequently substituted a more obviously poetic word for something simpler and more direct, as in the substitution of 'prance' for the more precise and idiomatic 'baulk' in the line 'They had silver manes and we make them baulk' in 'The land where I was born'. We see the same thing again in 'As far as my heart can go' where 'Or the mountains' becomes 'O'er the mountains', and 'The mouth of my little lady' becomes 'The mouth of my little sweetheart'. Stephens's punctuation adds to this effect too. 'As far as my heart can go' is a quiet, reflective piece, and in the first two lines of stanza three the stresses fall on 'me' and 'my'. Stephens adds exclamation marks after 'city' and 'me', and by making a sharp break after 'city' Neilson's emphases and the quiet, reflective tone are lost. In this case, Stephens has missed the point of the poem (or chosen to ignore it), and tried to give importance to what is a relatively slight piece by means of the punctuation. This kind of thing occurs frequently.

³³ NLA MS 1174/1/5790, J. S. Neilson – Nettie Palmer 14 July 1940.

In ‘The hen in the bushes’ Stephens transposed the end words in lines 1, 5, 9 and 11 to overcome the slightly awkward line endings. But this changes Neilson’s emphases again and makes the rhythm monotonous. Similarly, in ‘Song without wine’, the change from four-line stanzas to two-line stanzas creates monotony that is avoided in the original by the effect of the slight emphases created by the shorter lines. One sees again the result of hasty reading in this poem where, despite his frequent admonitions to Neilson to ‘make his meaning visible through the words’, Stephens cancelled the third stanza of the poem which contains the point of the piece and makes sense of the title.

Stephens almost invariably returned to the fair copies of poems or his initial typescript of previously published poems when preparing work for publication in book form and the effect of a subsequent reading of the text can be seen in ‘Those shaded eyes’. Stephens re-ordered the stanzas and dropped two stanzas from the poem for publication in the *Bookfellow* (adding one of two additional stanzas), and then printed the piece in *New Poems* as he had originally typed it, in this case one assumes from the now missing fair copy.

The result of his various changes is always a more polished product, with a more conventional and more obviously poetic idiom, but the cumulative effect is a flattening of tone, with a loss of immediacy and vitality. Changes of the kind cited were never questioned by Neilson. It should be noted too that Neilson nowhere questions punctuation, or alterations made by Stephens except as I have said. Only one instance exists where Neilson justified his decisions at any length, and that is in the case of ‘Song for a honeymoon’. The ramifications of Neilson’s attitude to these editorial practices are of critical importance and these are discussed in Section 3.

Whilst Stephens often made a too-hasty reading and tended to inflate pieces by revisions which are more overtly poetic, Neilson’s judgement of his own verse was not good, the quality of his verse remained uneven throughout his writing life and, as Stephens came to see, if Neilson didn’t get a piece right quickly, the quality suffered.

On 13 May 1927 Stephens wrote:

. . . Sorry — but I have to push three pieces back to you: see no chance of sale; and would not use them for book as they stand [*New Poems*]. They want your strong pulse and your magic touch. They look like a sick man’s work: if you are worrying, give it up and go round the friends; they will do you good. If your savings are running short, go and see Serle: he can find you some gardening jobs: stop you moping and set the blood circulating. Put away the verses till Spring or better time; no use flogging an unwilling head.

There is a useful idea in all, and occasional worthy lines; but the wholes, as they stand, are below your recent level of work.

Song of the Yellow. — I do not know why the birds should sing yellow rather than red; and you do not show me. Stanza 1 line 3 is not clear. Do birds pipe competing with young Love? or do they, possessing Y.L. come to pipe yellow? Too many yellows unless carried

on a stronger current of thought or feeling. Look at the word in itself — the repetition itself suggests a ribald commentary. Second stanza is alright — gets over.

Stanza 3 is dull and comes in bits — no flow.

Child Being There. Good idea; not enough strength in treatment. You have the frame and the picture; but not the emotion. Spinner would take it if you fancy it; and some people would praise it; but seems a pity to waste the real intrinsic value. Keep it for a hot mood, and rewrite with force.

Quarryman is too long for motive, merit, and possible effect; and some parts are near bathos. Look at stanza 14, The Walrus and the Carpenter come very close. Look at line 1 of this stanza — with Saddle-er. Cut the piece to half present length; banishing repetitious lines and picking the strongest to survive. But wait till you can grip it firmly; this is too laxly held.

The lot suggest to me that, for some reason or other, you are not fit to write at present; then do not try. Rest your head; keep your body healthy; divert your thoughts.

Green lover is out with Aussie — no answer yet; Days of October — give me a reminder in Sept. for Worker; Hen in bushes looks too fine for the editors.

What's the matter? Are you really ill? Got no cash? You left Sydney well. Why the fall?

Cheer up Jock. All things pass.³⁴

Neilson's reply to this letter is missing, but Stephens was reassured, as his next letter indicates.

Yours 18th. I also returned the Peter ballad which you do not acknowledge — asking some revision.

Send back Song in Yellow — Worker might take it — it is good in kind but not in purpose — and much better than the rubbish they print. You see, now you have a good name I do not like printing anything below your quality or your credit. Noblesse oblige — which means that fame has its responsibilities.

Keep 'em short, unless they insist on being long. Meat off the blade at every cut. The long drawling drone of the 'come-all-ye' is good for the voice, but not for the modern pen.

³⁴ NLA MS 1145/74B, A. G. Stephens – J. S. Neilson 13 May 1927.

Percival Serle was involved in literary research and edited *An Australasian Anthology: Australian and New Zealand Poems* (London, Collins, 1927), with the assistance of R. H. Croll and Frank Wilmot. *Aussie* ran in Sydney between 1918 and 1931; *Spinner*, a small verse magazine, ran in Melbourne, 1924-7; and the *Australian Worker*, commonly referred to as the *Worker*, was the official journal of the Australian Workers Union (Sydney, 1913-93).

Also dodge the hypothetical — the ‘if’ poem — the wail poem — the man I might have been or the poet I would like to be. Direct action. Subjects outside yourself.

CheerO — glad you’re all right — was beginning to worry when I read those unfortunately ancient wails.³⁵

It is to be doubted if Neilson was capable of acting on advice given in the terms Stephens used in his letter of 13 May 1927: and he blithely disregarded the advice in the letter of 21 May 1927 and continued to write, as he had always done, the same peculiar mixture of verse, in the same range of voices, all the time circling around the same narrow range of themes.

Stephens’s criticisms of his verse, and the alterations that he made to wording, line length, and stanza length, influenced what Neilson first wrote not at all. What Stephens did influence was Neilson’s revisions and Neilson’s perception of what was proper for publication.

There is absolutely no doubt that until he moved to Melbourne in 1928 Neilson was more than content to accept Stephens’s advice about individual poems. What is equally clear is that Neilson was curiously ambivalent about his verse. Stephens’s advice was that the books wanted more bulk: Neilson’s response was that he had ‘stuff in old books’ that he would look at, or pieces that he was working on, that he might be able to send, as requested. These were rarely forthcoming. Moreover, whilst recognising that Neilson’s itinerancy and family problems must have made things difficult for him, his reluctance to expend any effort in this respect seems almost perverse. There is a teasing quality apparent in Neilson’s dealing with both Stephens and Devaney when the correspondence is viewed as a whole that gives weight to remarks made by Devaney’s unnamed correspondent who wrote that Neilson was ‘a gentle soul who wouldn’t contradict anyone for the world . . . but [who had] a sort of simple cunning for all that’.³⁶

Stephens sent Neilson proofs for his books and the correspondence shows that he consulted Neilson about the content of the books. The only extant proof marked by Neilson is that of 1914, for *Green Days and Cherries*, where he indicated poems, or parts of poems, that he thought should be altered by means of encircling the part of the text and placing large crosses in both margins. Thereafter, he communicated alterations he wanted to make to particular texts in correspondence. Similarly, advice about content was conveyed in correspondence. The idea of publishing *Green Days and Cherries* was abandoned, but discussion concerning publication of another volume continued spasmodically. Neilson made a suggestion for the title in 1916 and Stephens either asked him about the contents, or Neilson raised the matter, for in February 1919 he wrote:

About my own verse. I quite forget what suggestion[s] [I made]. I think they were chiefly about ‘Little milliner’ which I shortened. Some were about pieces you have left out. I would like you to alter [the] title of ‘To a nesting mallee bird’ to the old style ‘To a

³⁵ NLA MS 1145/74B, A. G. Stephens – J. S. Neilson 21 May 1927.

³⁶ J. Devaney, *Shaw Neilson* p. 17.

lowan'. Lowans are sometimes called Mallee Hens but hen is of course impossible. I don't feel fit to try and alter [any] of the amateurish pieces such as 'Heart longs' and 'Day is thine'. They will have to take their chance and the Milliner too . . . I will send the proof on if I can think of anything to suggest but I don't feel very strongly about the verse except 'Heart longs' and 'Milliner'. But you ought to know. They will pass in a crowd.³⁷

Then, following publication of *Heart of Spring* in 1919, he wrote:

I am glad you put in 'Scent o'the lover' and 'The wedding in September'. I never thought the Wedding would be so readable . . . I'm not very keen on noticing mistakes. My brother Frank spotted the accident on page 40. I notice blend instead of blind in last stanza of 'Inland born'. Whenever I drop into my worst and weakest you seem to be able to lift me out nicely.³⁸

In a letter to Stephens 15 October 1922 concerning future publication Neilson expressed concern about 'a few worthless pieces' in *Heart of Spring*, saying:

Re the publication of another book. Of course the old agreement will do us. What I am most anxious about is a few worthless pieces in *Heart of Spring*. I think the Milliner is altogether abominable. It is not such bad verse but it's slobbery. You have heard a drunk man crying about his mother. Well that's what it put me in mind of. I want it effaced. I would also like to see Day Is Thine and The Heart Longs cast out but of course they are more harmless. They are both very raw but don't attract so much attention. The Milliner gives people a chance to peck at me. As to new title. I can't think of anything at present except 'The Eleventh Moon & other verses'.³⁹

When it came to publishing *Ballad and Lyrical Poems* Neilson states that the book 'was born in a great hurry' and that 'A. G. did not have much chance to make a book of it'.⁴⁰ Stephens, however, acted on Neilson's advice by dropping 'This little milliner', but retained the other two pieces which Neilson felt less strongly about. There is no correspondence discussing the actual content of *New Poems*, published in 1927, but Neilson was obviously consulted because Stephens wrote saying, 'Yours 11th with list; useful . . . there is ample for a booklet'.⁴¹

Certainly, Stephens did seem on occasion somewhat irascible, and particularly, as Neilson said, in the late 1920s – as the previous letters show. What must be remembered, however, is the quality of the verse sent to him in the first place, as well as his own altered circumstances, which

³⁷ ML MS 4937/4, 505-506, J. S. Neilson – A. G. Stephens 5 January 1916; ML MS 4937/4, 617-622, J. S. Neilson – A. G. Stephens 15 February 1919. ['To a lowan' was entitled 'To a mallee bird' in *Green Days and Cherries* and retitled 'Lowan's nest' in *Heart of Spring*.]

³⁸ ML MS 4937/4, 673-677, J. S. Neilson – A. G. Stephens 17 August 1919.

³⁹ ML MS 4937/4, 865-877, J. S. Neilson – A. G. Stephens 15 October 1922.

⁴⁰ *The Autobiography of John Shaw Neilson*, p. 121.

⁴¹ NLA MS 1145/74B, A. G. Stephens – J. S. Neilson 13 May 1927.

had deteriorated sadly in personal, financial and social terms. Neilson's altered circumstances too have to be considered as these impacted on his dealings with Stephens in these later years.

By 1924 Neilson was meeting people in Melbourne who were interested in his work, and, one suspects, interested in his dealings with Stephens, and by 1926 these meetings were occurring quite frequently. Opinion may have been sought and given that influenced Neilson's attitude to his verse for this was talked about.⁴² Devaney, and others after him, have referred to Neilson's disagreement with Stephens over publishing agreements after Neilson moved to Melbourne in 1928, and it was Devaney's opinion that Stephens 'drove too hard a bargain with the simple poet'.⁴³ However, the poet was not as simple as Devaney thought, and what emerges from the correspondence at this time is a strong feeling on Stephens's part, with some justification, that he was being used by Neilson who was not prepared to act for himself or to jeopardise his developing friendships with the Melbourne literati by asking them to act on his behalf, as Stephens suggested he do.

Review of existing agreements began in 1927 and relations between the two men became strained when discussion about publication of Neilson's collected verse began in earnest in 1930.⁴⁴ At this time Neilson's habit of stringing his editors along with promises of work takes on a marked teasing quality. Certainly, at one stage during the toing and froing about agreements, Neilson acknowledges this, saying to Stephens 'I have been in the habit of writing and promising to finish things but I find it is not much use doing so any longer'.⁴⁵ He then goes on to do exactly the same thing, saying, 'if you are not getting the book out till say, next Easter, I might get 2 or 3 pieces out before Xmas time and you could have them for the book'! Small wonder Stephens became terse. Stephens and Neilson had agreed, apparently without dissension, about the content of the proposed collection of verse but the dispute about agreements remained unresolved.⁴⁶

Stephens died in 1933 and Neilson's Melbourne friends apparently took the initiative on his behalf for Neilson received a letter from the Lothian Publishing Co. saying 'The suggestion has been made to us by some of the Melbourne booksellers that a volume of your verse would be much appreciated'.⁴⁷ Thomas Lothian had previously indicated to Stephens that he might be interested in publishing Neilson's collected verse and *Collected Poems* was finally published by the Lothian Publishing Co. in 1934.⁴⁸ Neilson, however, remained wary and difficult about agreements to the point where Arthur Greening, of Lothian's, remarked to Stephens's daughter,

⁴² ML MS 4/7 1902/41, 11-14, J. S. Neilson – Frank Wilmot 26 May 1929; ML MS 4937/5, 465-470, J. S. Neilson – A. G. Stephens 2 August 1931; ML MS 4937/5, 629-639, J. S. Neilson – A. G. Stephens 22 September 1932.

⁴³ J. Devaney, *Shaw Neilson* p. 53.

⁴⁴ NLA MS 2037, J. S. Neilson – A. G. Stephens 17 October 1927.

⁴⁵ ML MS 4937/5, 627-642, J. S. Neilson – A. G. Stephens 22 September 1932.

⁴⁶ Underlying, and complicating, the discussion was Neilson's concern for copyright in other published verse and a deep and long-standing anxiety that his light verse might give offence and jeopardise his literary pension, and then later, his job with the Country Roads Board.

⁴⁷ LaT T LP Box XV, Lothian Publishing Co. – J. S. Neilson 18 May 1933.

⁴⁸ LaT Lothian Box XIII/3/S, Thomas Lothian – A. G. Stephens 30 September 1927 & Fryer Library 2/1585, A. G. Stephens – Thomas C. Lothian Publisher 16 May 1928 (advises that 'the permanent book . . . wanted for Neilson must bulk more').

Constance Robertson, that he was ‘rather surprised he [Neilson] should raise so many difficulties over the publication of his poems’.⁴⁹

Robert Croll was engaged to edit the book and to write a short preface. As editor he acted solely on Neilson’s expressed wishes, offered no advice about revisions, and accepted Neilson’s suggestions without query. Neilson submitted a ‘list of suggestions’ in a letter dated 19 November 1933 and Croll responded to these without comment.

I am enclosing a sheet containing some suggestions which I have numbered which will be a help to you when you start to go over the pieces. I could not get ‘The Whistling Jack’ which was published five years ago in the *Australasian*. My stepsister looked through a lot of old files but could not find it. Any how I am going to try Mrs Fowler, she may dig it up. I don’t know that you would care to use it, but I would like you to see it. A.G. always said that I was short of nature pieces. I am going to get three pieces written off out of some old books. Each of these was criticised rather severely by A.G. He was very hard to please at times. I feel sure that he would have printed them all if he had been making a collection himself. Mrs Robertson tells me that he left a typed list which contained many pieces much inferior to them. One of them, ‘The poor country’ is a nature piece. I am sending two fresh stanzas for ‘Sheedy was dying’. I think the fourth one is very unsatisfactory as it is. A.G. thought so too. When it was printed years ago, he altered it without asking me, and he didn’t do the job very well.

I left with you my brother’s letter which suggests one or two slight alterations. There are two others in the ‘Flowering almond’ and ‘Her eyes foretold of happiness’. I may be able to pass them to you on Monday along with the MSS. I have found ‘Marietta’ (Mrs Gibson) and will be able to get a photo on Monday. I am sending these things along because if I don’t I will probably forget half of it when I see you.

Yours faithfully
[Signed]

Enclosure with letter:

LIST OF SUGGESTIONS

That ‘The gentle water-bird’ be the last piece in the book, and that ‘For Mary Gilmore’ should be printed over it, as it was originally written for her.

That the name of ‘A bush scene’ should be altered to ‘Along a river’. This is what it was first called.

⁴⁹ LaT LP & NLA MS 1145/71, Arthur Greening, Lothian Publishing – Constance Robertson 9 October 1933.

That ‘The little milliner’ which was in *Heart of Spring* but was left out of Mrs Dyer’s book [*Ballad and Lyrical Poems*], be left out of the Collected Works.
That the poem ‘He was the Christ’ be left out and the ‘Good season’ be put in, in lieu of it. A.G. agreed to this. I can explain better the reason when I see you.

That I wish to give [permission to] Mrs Robertson’s suggestion for what it is worth, namely, that there should be a big change in the placing of the pieces, so as to avoid monotony. Also that Mrs Robertson be allowed to read the Proofs.

That the little unnamed piece at the front of *New Poems* be called ‘The magpie in the moonlight’. It is generally called ‘The song without wine’ but that is too vague. It is the male song to the female when she is on the nest in the moonlight.⁵⁰

There can be no doubt that Neilson was anxious that the collected poems should be a success, and he appears to have ‘read’ the proofs of the *Collected Poems*, and *Beauty Imposes*, more carefully than he did those of his other books. (His sister Annie read the proofs aloud to Neilson.) However, the comment by Hanna that ‘Neilson was allowed to choose and alter whatever he wished’ (for *Collected Poems*) implies that he had *not* been allowed to do so previously. This is not so.⁵¹ Stephens respected Neilson’s expressed wishes, which were very few.

Stephens wrote in July 1931 asking Neilson about the content of the proposed book, saying ‘I gather you want a new book to include two printed books—and nothing else? No others? Give me a list of others to include in a new agt. and a list of what you wish to strike out of books’: and wrote again, later in the month, saying,

But the first thing is to settle what poems you wish omitted. Will you send me your list? If you cut out too many, I doubt there may be too few to have a chance of profitable sale. A good price cannot be obtained for a very small book; the public wants bulk. I believe you know I favour a book of everything good, and fair, to tolerable—not bad; and let the public see the whole man at work. People like to pick for themselves . . .⁵²

Neilson replied with a list of pieces he wanted to drop, his ‘black list’, and the list shows how sensitive he was to criticism:

I have made a list. It is not quite so long as I thought it would be. There are one or two pieces which I daresay you will query. One of these is ‘He was the Christ’. It is right enough, but it does not represent my present out look. It was written probably thirty-five years ago. I thought for a while that my eldest sister had sent it to you. Frank however says

⁵⁰ NLA MS 605/43, with enclosure at NLA MS 605/30, J. S. Neilson – R. H. Croll 19 November 1933. (The name Mrs Gibson occurs in a list of names in the ‘1940’ notebook.)

⁵¹ Cliff Hanna, *John Shaw Neilson: Poetry, autobiography and correspondence*, University of Queensland Press, 1991, p. 3; and Cliff Hanna, *Jock: A life Story of John Shaw Neilson*, University of Queensland Press, 1999, p. 256.

⁵² NLA MS 1145/74B, A. G. Stephens – J. S. Neilson 5 July 1931 & ML MS 4937/5, 455, A. G. Stephens – J. S. Neilson 23 July 1931.

he remembers writing it for me. You will notice that I have also marked the eleventh moon. This is because you told [me] a certain Professor told you that it contained some indecent hidden meaning. These Professors are rather remarkable at finding mares' nest[s], but I don't want to shock them at all. I have also put the 'Green Lover' on the black list. So many people object to the word Lolly tin. I know you objected very much yourself to it at the start . . . I think that you will agree that most of the rest of the fourteen are trivial and faulty. I daresay you will think that some I have left in are not as good as those I have cast out. I will be glad to know what you think of them generally . . . ⁵³

Hanna may be alluding to Stephens's reaction to Neilson's 'black list' of poems he wanted to drop from the collection when he remarks that 'Neilson was allowed to choose and alter whatever he wished' after Stephens died, for Stephens response to the black list was predictable.⁵⁴ However, the correspondence shows that confusion about the place of publication and regard for comments made by Stephens in the past, and more latterly Melbourne friends, gave rise to the initial black list. Neilson wrote to Stephens:

I have got both your letters. I have had them both read over once and I remember most of what is in them. I note that you have abandoned the idea of trying the Oxford Press people again. You think there might be some chance of a Subscription Edition . . .

What were you thinking of trying? Was it something in paper cover or boards? I do not know of anybody who would be likely to take on the canvassing here. Mrs Fowler I have not seen for a couple of years now, and Kate Baker is a very old lady now, but I believe she still goes to literary meetings. About the list which I sent. I think you may have the impression that my friends may have had something to do with this selection. That is not the case. They are mainly pieces which I have always disliked, and a few which I thought were more suited to a collection of light verse. Of course I know that you do not take me very seriously as a critic of my own work. When you and I disagree about my verse you are usually right. In fact I think you are right 95 times out of 100.

I had the idea that as the thing had to be sent to London it was better only to send the best. I thought first of all that 65 would be enough. Annie of course had no time to read them over to me. I had merely to try and remember them as Annie recited the index. Of course I remembered something of what you and other critics and my friends said about them. About the only two pieces that I had pangs at heaving overboard were the froggy piece and Julie Callaway. I finished up by leaving in 77.

⁵³ ML MS 4937/5, 457-461, J. S. Neilson – A. G. Stephens 26 July 1931. The list reads: 'All the World[']s] a Lolly Shop; Dear little Cottage; Heard at Mulcahy's; Her Eyes; He was the Christ; Julie Cal[l]away; O Lady of the Dazzling Flowers; The Day is Thine; The Eleventh Moon; The Girl with the black hair; The Heart Longs; The Luckless Bard to the Flying Blossom'. And 'From New Poems: The Green Lover; Half a Life Back'.

⁵⁴ NLA MS1145/74B, A. G. Stephens – J. S. Neilson 26 July 1931 ('Now I know you need me. I wouldn't hear of cutting out so many good things from your work').

I take it that you would not object to 1/2 dozen of the poorest pieces being put out if you had 1/2 dozen to replace them . . .

I think you are right when you say that none of our Melb[ourne] friends have a very keen sense of right and wrong in verse except of course Hubert Church. He stands out on his own. Next to him, I think, is Blamire Young. When I sent Blamire a copy of *New Poems* he picked out for praise almost the same pieces that you did. He does not seem to care much about light verse although he had a good sense of humour [sic]. One must take some notice of Croll and Kenna. I think it was Kenna who said once ‘what is Neilson’s verse all about’.

⁵⁵

The list was reduced to 6 pieces from the original 14 and it does seem as if Neilson was using his poems as a lever in the negotiating process with Stephens. The major issue for Neilson was the terms of a proposed financial agreement and the ownership of copyright: he subsequently proposed ‘The Publisher to have the right to publish all poems in the two books except five poems to be agreed upon’ (22 September 1932); then, as the negotiations continued, said he ‘would be very pleased to exchange *The good season* for *He was the Christ*’ (9 October 1932 and 6 November 1932).⁵⁶ Moreover, there is no evidence of any discussion, or dispute, about further revision to any of the poems being considered for inclusion in the collected poems (or any of the other published books), beyond that agreed on as poems were sent to Stephens for his initial approval.

If Neilson took greater pains with the proofs of *Collected Poems*, as in fact he did, it is more than likely that he felt it was incumbent on him to do so! It should be remembered that he was at this time accepted as a poet of note and that he was in close contact with people in Melbourne involved in publishing and editing, some of whom were critical of Stephens. It is ironic that *Collected Poems* reflects more closely the kind of collection that Stephens wanted than that which Neilson finally proposed to him. Stephens’s advice was that the collection should be a decent-sized book which would ‘let the public see the whole man at work’, and, by implication, more than the two volumes referred to: Neilson’s final suggestion was that the book contain ‘the last two books published’, that is, *Ballad and Lyrical Poems* and *New Poems*, substituting ‘*The good season*’ for ‘*He was the Christ*’.⁵⁷ *Collected Poems* finally dropped only four pieces from *Ballad and Lyrical Poems*, none from *New Poems*, and, importantly, included twelve additional poems.⁵⁸ One can only regret that Stephens never in fact did see the ‘whole man at work’.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ ML MS 4937/5, 465-470, J. S. Neilson – A. G. Stephens 2 August 1931. Francis Kenna (1865-1932) wrote poetry and articles and contributed poetry to the *Bulletin*. Hewson notes that he challenged Stephens about Neilson’s work in the *Bookfellow*, 30 November 1921, p. 65, saying ‘Re Shaw Neilson — What is it all about?’ (Hewson, *John Shaw Neilson*, p. 448.)

⁵⁶ ML MS 4937/5, 627-642, J. S. Neilson – A. G. Stephens 22 September 1932; NLA MS 1145/74B & ML MS 4937, 643-645 [one a carbon copy], 2 October 1932; NLA MS 2037, J. S. Neilson – A. G. Stephens 9 October 1932; ML MS 4937/5, 647, A. G. Stephens – J. S. Neilson 12 October 1932; ML MS 4937/5, 649-657, J. S. Neilson – A. G. Stephens 6 November 1932.

⁵⁷ NLA MS 2037/13-16, J. S. Neilson – A. G. Stephens 9 October 1932.

⁵⁸ The poems dropped were ‘O lady of the dazzling flowers’; ‘The day is thine’; ‘The heart longs’ and ‘Heard at Mulcahy’s’. (‘He was the Christ’ did not appear in *Ballad and Lyrical Poems*.)

Neilson began a correspondence with James Devaney, a Brisbane journalist with a keen interest in literature who also wrote poetry, when Devaney wrote to him in 1930; and when Croll declined to assume the active role A. G. Stephens had played Neilson turned to Devaney for advice. He sent Devaney ‘The ballad of remembrance’ in September 1933, saying ‘it opens too suddenly’, and adding that he ‘could easily write a few other stanzas to slow it off a bit’.⁶⁰ He then asked Devaney to act in the same way as Stephens had done in a letter dated 13 January 1935 when he sent ‘The poor can feed the birds’:

I would like you to mark ‘the birds’ where you think it could be altered to advantage. Send it back to me and if we can get it into any shape we might have a try with some of the papers.

The arrangement that I had with A.G. was that he was to have a third of what an editor paid. That would be seven shillings to him if we got a guinea. This would go to pay expense of typing and posting etc. He might have to try it on several papers. It is not so easy to get my verse into papers as some people think. I would be very pleased if you fall into this arrangement. I don’t want you to be spending your own money on it. All I could sell of course would be the right to publish, not the copyright. This would have to be explained when verse was sent. I would like if possible to dodge Fink’s people. They are so dreadfully vulgar in every way.⁶¹

It is interesting to see how, after Stephens’s death, and once the relationship with Devaney became established, Neilson never once hesitated to push Devaney to act on his behalf. At one stage when *Beauty Imposes* was being prepared for publication Neilson even had the effrontery to write to Devaney, whose wife had a history of chronic illness, ‘I trust this interest in rhyming will keep you from thinking too much of the sad trouble in which you have been so long’!⁶² Devaney sent two of Neilson’s pieces to the *Sydney Morning Herald* for him, and edited his last book, *Beauty Imposes*, containing fourteen pieces of which three were copies of earlier poems. Devaney

⁵⁹ NLA MS 1145/30, Constance Robertson – J. S. Neilson, n.d., ‘Sunday’ with covering letter, n.d., ‘Monday’ [c. October 1933]. In correspondence concerning the agreement for *Collected Poems*, and the content, Stephens’s daughter told Neilson that she had been going through ‘all the portfolios and folders in which A. G. had kept your letters and manuscripts’ and provided Neilson with three lists of verse which she thought ‘must be fairly complete because A. G. had apparently started to sort it out.’ One hundred and eighty titles are listed: some poems are listed more than once (under different titles or title and first line) and confusion about titles, together with the omission of 4 titles from one of her sources (ML MSS 4937/9-10), suggests haste in the compilation. A total of 172 poems are listed. At least one of these is John Neilson’s. Six have not been traced and correspond to no known titles in Neilson’s various lists of titles. Limericks and quatrains were excluded from the lists. Excluding limericks and humorous quatrains, and including the four known, unpublished poems omitted and approximately 32 other published poems not listed by Constance Robertson, a total of approximately 200 pieces of verse seems a more likely figure to constitute Stephens’s collection of Neilson’s poems. On the basis of the available evidence, it seems likely that Stephens saw perhaps only one-third of Neilson’s known output of complete poems.

⁶⁰ NLA MS 1145/66, J. S. Neilson – James Devaney 4 September 1933.

⁶¹ NLA MS 1145/66, J. S. Neilson – James Devaney 13 January 1935. Theodore Fink (1855-1942) was for many years chairman of the *Herald* press group.

⁶² NLA MS 1145/68, J. S. Neilson – James Devaney 10 October 1937.

offered advice, as asked, and though the tone of his advice stands in marked contrast to Stephens's, he did not hesitate to give it, as one of the few extant letters shows:

My congratulations on your three new pieces. They are the real thing, well up to standard. I'm sending typed copies of them back with a few remarks.

There are lines enough here in the best Shaw Neilson vein like:

It has no wisdom that the wise man knows

and

And the waves are as thoughts coming out to the edge of a dream

— though the word 'waves' here made me wonder a little. I have always associated these stately, dignified, aloof water-birds with calm waters. I like 'The crane is my neighbour' the best of these three. There's one small point I might mention. In Australia there is only one crane, the brolga or native companion. All the other birds commonly called cranes in this country are really herons. The bird you mean is no doubt the one which everyone calls the blue crane (the ornithologists call it the white-faced or white-fronted heron). I don't consider this matter at all important, but perhaps you could have a brief foot-note to the poem something like this: [The white-faced heron, known to country folk as the blue crane]. What do you think? You must remember that after many years the old popular names will be dropped and every heron will be called a heron. This sort of thing is a nuisance, but there it is.

The jig piece is decidedly a success and full of delightful lines. The one about sleepy children coming back home in the trains on Sunday evenings is one of the things only you can do — all the old delicacy and keen insight and sympathy. I think 'Sunday evening' a better title for this than 'On Sunday evening'.

Your poem 'The time of tumult' is such a perfect little lyric that you must really be patient about rounding it off. I don't think you realise yourself what a splendid lyric this one is! It seems to me now in final form except that one word 'ruddy'. The phrase 'ruddy Spring' is perfectly good, but it is not the best for your whole line:

Tempest of all the colours, ruddy Spring

A three-syllabled word there instead of a two-syllabled one would be exact. Besides, that word 'ruddy' suggests more an overseas Spring than ours. Your ear is right as usual about the clash of R's in

'hovering Spring'.

Other words you suggest are: Sovereign, and Circling. The original word 'whispering' brings in I-N-G twice, 'whispering Spring'. Therefore I don't think the word we are after should end in I-N-G. I daren't suggest anything. And yet, what about:

Tempest of all the colours, carnival Spring

or 'jubilee' or 'revelry'.

But you will find the one perfect word; perhaps something with 'of' after it.

Yes, I'll get all the 15 pieces [for *Beauty Imposes*] in order now, and you'll hear from me soon.⁶³

One can only speculate about what Stephens would have thought of the pieces that Neilson chose not to send to him. We do know what Devaney thought, for he ends the Introduction to his edition, *Unpublished Poems of Shaw Neilson*, saying:

After living with [the note-books] for some months I am convinced that here is buried gold well worth the digging. It has been a labour of love, on behalf of a poet notoriously careless about his work and curiously uncritical as to best and worst.⁶⁴

⁶³ McKimm MS, James Devaney – J. S. Neilson 17 April 1936.

⁶⁴ James Devaney, *Unpublished Poems of Shaw Neilson*, p. xii.

SECTION 3: The edition

The purpose of the edition is two-fold: firstly, to enable readers to see Neilson's work as a whole; and secondly, to enable readers to make informed judgements about the process of composition and transmission. In so doing, the work may provide a sound basis for both critical judgement and about the influence of his editors and their contributions to the texts, in particular, A. G. Stephens. The edition includes all the known verse, published and unpublished, including limericks and humorous quatrains.

The edition aims to be textually inclusive and to show the works as both process and product. For this reason, this edition eschews the principles of 'copy-text' which have dominated scholarly editing since the turn of the 20th century and which result in an eclectic, or ideal, text. Instead, the edition adopts as a guiding principle the concept of textual versions, a concept that nevertheless puts the editor in the position of 'mediator and restorer', as Shillingsburg so aptly puts it, 'doing better what the originating production crew did poorly'.⁶⁵

The edition treats as authorised those manuscripts which the author worked on himself or which were demonstrably commissioned by him, and those texts published at his behest and which he influenced by personal revision, or by revision undertaken at his request during the printing process. (Texts for which the author supplied printer's copy would be included: however, there are none extant.) On this basis, one would expect the texts having the greatest authority to be the holograph manuscripts; the proofs of *Green Days and Cherries* marked by the author; *Collected Poems*, edited by Robert Croll; and *Beauty Imposes*, edited by James Devaney. However, the proofs of *Green Days and Cherries* were not corrected or revised by the author for printing: rather, whole blocks of texts were marked to indicate dissatisfaction with the text and the need for revision; in which case, holograph manuscripts must be regarded as being more authoritative. Most of the texts in *Collected Poems* are reprinted from earlier editions or other printed sources and contain transmissional errors and non-authorial changes, which we must assume the author 'registered', and clearly accepted, because the proofs were read to him by his sister and he said he listened to them carefully. However, whilst these texts may be regarded as authoritative, this is a passive authority only, authority by default as it were, and these texts do not satisfy the aims of the edition as well as manuscripts in this case. The texts having greatest authority, therefore, with some few exceptions from *Collected Poems* and *Beauty Imposes*, are the manuscripts.

Accordingly, one textual version of a poem is chosen as the edition base-text and this is presented as the preferred text, or reading text. Frequently there is only one textual version of a poem and, hence, no choice to be made. A text is regarded here as a different version if alterations in wording were made by the author, or at his behest. Authorial revision of a text, or revision that can be seen to be authorised by him is not regarded as creating a new version if part of the original impulse of composition (or the same, one impulse of composition). Since a single authorial revision subsequent to the one impulse of composition creates the possibility of a new

⁶⁵ Peter Shillingsburg, 'The autonomous author, the sociology of texts and polemics of textual criticism', in *Editing in Australia*, ed. Paul Eggert, English Department, University College ADFA, Campbell ACT Australia, 1990, p. 46.

version, a decision about presentation must be made in each case. Clearly, it is neither possible, nor necessary, to present every version as a separate entity and for practical purposes multiple versions are presented in the edition only when there is a significant shift in meaning or emphasis, or some other compelling reason, in which case they are considered as discrete versions, as opposed to theoretic versions.

The text chosen as the preferred text (or preferred version) is, in order of preference, the fair copy (or the last of these if there is more than one of the same, discrete version) or editor's initial typescript when no fair copy exists, on the basis that these texts are most likely to contain the least number of instances of editorial intervention, and so best meet the aims of the edition. However, this is not always the case, and a fair draft or draft, a further editorial typescript or a printed text may be taken as the preferred text in preference to a fair copy, depending on the circumstances of the text.

Emendation

The preferred texts are here emended, particularly in regard to punctuation, to take account of the circumstances under which the poems were composed and produced. Problems are caused by the taking down of the poems by amanuenses and by Neilson's own handwriting, spelling and punctuation, or more properly, the lack of it. Mishearing occurred fairly frequently and errors crept in at the dictation stage. Most of these are readily identifiable, but complications can occur, and present a problem to the editor, because of Neilson's occasional use of words in a sense that is archaic (but apposite), or merely unusual. The editor may assume a mishearing where none occurred: for example, the use of the word *hallow* in 'Melbourne in the gloom' (line 13), and the word *favour* in 'The insolent landsman' (line 7).

The size of Neilson's handwriting varies greatly and size appears to be related less to age, or time, than to his health and general state of well-being at any given time. Physical location may also be a factor: it is likely his writing varied depending on whether he was writing at a table or with paper on his lap. Drafts occur in both pen and pencil, often in the same manuscript, but what he was writing with has little effect on the writing. Some peculiar letter formations can present problems, and these peculiarities are exaggerated by what is often obviously hasty writing. For example, *—ing* at the end of a word frequently tails off into a scrawl, particularly if it is hard up against the right-hand edge of a page, and this formation can easily be mistaken for a *y*. Similarly, an *s* at the end of a word, particularly if it falls towards the right-hand edge of a page, can easily be mistaken for a *y*. Neilson habitually wrote a capital *k* irrespective of context. He failed to cross the letter *t* as often as not, and also often failed to dot an *i*, and a hasty reading can easily confuse these letters with *l* and *e*. These idiosyncrasies can cause confusion, especially when the habit is coupled with a misspelling, or the omission of a letter, as in the case of *impetuous*, which appears as *impeleous* and *impetious*. Again, close examination of the writing in a given context is usually sufficient to work out what is meant, and consideration of rhythm and rhyme may resolve doubt. The handwriting of Neilson's amanuenses is fortunately clear and easy to read except, sometimes, for the capitals *l* and *s* in Annie Neilson's hand. Handwriting and typist are identified in the edition's notes by initials in square brackets.

Occasionally Neilson's writing sprawls over the pages with sometimes only two or three words to a line and his intention in relation to line length can take some unravelling. Sometimes he is clearly undecided about line length and stanza form. In the first case the difficulties can usually be resolved by attending to rhyme and by close examination of the handwriting and his formation of capitals in a given context (for this is variable); and in the second case, judgements have been made within the context of individual poems. A further complication occurs when an amanuensis is in doubt about line length and stanza form. Neilson often read over poems that he dictated, or had them read back to him and made corrections that overcame this particular problem. However, poems occur where this practice was not followed and these instances are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, as for those above.

Neilson's own spelling was generally good and the errors that occur in his hand are usually errors of haste — letters left out, rather than misspelling. His misspellings are shown in the notes for these frequently indicate his pronunciations, understanding of etymologies, and possible neologisms. Differences in the use of *goodbye/ good bye*, for example, affect the rhythm and sense; and the spelling of *grey* to rhyme with *may* or *day*, for example, is an intended feature of the graphic text. For this reason these features are retained. Neilson almost invariably used an ampersand: this use is emended silently and spelt out in the reading text and the notes. He frequently abbreviated place names as a kind of shorthand and these names are spelt out unless the abbreviation is clearly intended otherwise. Similarly, he occasionally abbreviated personal names. In relation to names, rhythm is a reliable guide to his intention for a finished text and abbreviated names in all holograph manuscripts are treated in the same way. All other abbreviations in the hands of amanuenses are spelt out unless the rhythm indicates that an abbreviation was intended.

Neilson used capitals freely, and quite clearly to indicate emphasis in many cases. Capitals in his hand are retained with the exception of the letter *k*. He habitually wrote a capital *k*, as mentioned above, and judgement has had to be used in many instances. Capitals in the hands of amanuenses are retained unless the context, in terms of meaning or a pattern of occurrences, suggests that a lower case letter is more appropriate. Slips of the pen made by amanuenses are not shown. Neilson's own such slips are shown in the notes.

Problems of far greater magnitude are encountered in reconciling the aims of the edition with the manuscripts, which lack the punctuation which Neilson expected his editors to supply, and which lack the finish, in terms of line indentation, which he accepted from his editors. Neilson used very little punctuation and after about 1910 virtually none. He used an occasional stop, very occasional parentheses, and most often a dash. He rarely used apostrophes and these are added. Neilson's own punctuation is always shown in the notes. The punctuation of amanuenses, for the reasons given above, is shown only if it is considered to be of particular relevance. Only some autograph manuscripts have lines indented, and in some it is extremely difficult to discern intention because he was writing quickly and the writing sprawls badly. Some of the manuscripts in his sister Annie's hand are indented and some not, and the verse in Lisette's hand (the least number of the scribal manuscripts) is laid out with indented lines.

A number of options were considered. The editor might supply the punctuation, as Neilson expected of his editors, and line indentation, which he accepted, in a style in keeping with the published texts. Alternatively, the editor might supply punctuation and line indentation where this is absent in the manuscripts and re-punctuate those published texts presented as preferred texts if the existing punctuation is considered unsuitable. However, apart from the obvious difficulties of trying to punctuate texts to styles which vary according to the source of publication and which also vary over time, the first approach perpetuates the interventionist and highly conventionalising presence of A. G. Stephens; and the second merely introduces confusion. It might reasonably be assumed that the punctuation in the hands of amanuenses would reflect the poet's own distribution of pauses at least, and on this basis it might be argued that this punctuation should be retained. However, very few of these manuscripts are fully punctuated and many, especially those in Annie's handwriting, only very partially. Moreover, Annie frequently had difficulty in distinguishing between a pause that related to structure and a pause that occurred when Neilson was thinking, and the punctuation in most of them (which are the bulk of those in the hands of amanuenses) is certainly not a reliable guide to structure. Nor did Neilson leave any directions concerning the state of his texts, published or unpublished, in any future printed form.

Consideration was given to presenting unpunctuated reading texts because in many of Neilson's texts the absence of punctuation does not affect the reading of the poem: the reader compensates by using the line endings as the equivalent of punctuation and Neilson's lines are for the most part syntactical as well as metrical units. However, his rhythms are sometimes quite subtle and punctuation in some instances can be critical to understanding. An unpunctuated text, in some instances, may be a decided hindrance to reading. Consideration was also given to presenting only Neilson's own punctuation in the reading text but this very partial and very scattered punctuation could equally be a distraction to the reader.

Because very nearly two thirds of Neilson's texts remained unpublished at the time of his death, and because he expected published verse to be punctuated, the texts in this edition are presented with punctuation. Texts are presented with the lines left-justified, in the manner of the greatest number of the autograph manuscripts, except for short end-lines where an intention of indentation is clearly discernible, in the interests of presenting a homogenous whole. Because Neilson left the punctuation of published texts entirely in the hands of his editors, and because the punctuation of amanuenses is either lacking or frequently an unreliable guide to Neilson's intentions, all punctuation except Neilson's own is ignored. The exception is those few cases when the preferred text is a printed text and the punctuation is considered to be entirely appropriate. In these cases the punctuation is reproduced in its entirety, and this is always stated.

Variants, ordering of poems and annotation

All authorial variants of any kind are shown. Those of amanuenses are treated differently. Misspellings in the work in scribal hands are corrected silently, unless these might conceivably be open to doubt or of significance in some other way; for example, indicative of pronunciation. Inconsistent spellings in the work in scribal hands and printed sources are regularised.

Limericks and humorous quatrains are included in the body of the work in keeping with the purpose of the edition but they are treated differently because they are of no literary merit and of only the slightest textual interest. The first fair draft, or first published text if no fair draft occurs, is taken as the preferred text. Variants are not shown unless these are in Neilson's own hand, or judged to be of particular interest.

A strict chronological order is not possible because the precise date of composition is rarely known. Approximate dates can be assigned to groups of the manuscripts however, and the verse has therefore been grouped in periods on the basis of the work of Harrison and Burrows referred to previously. Texts are arranged within these periods in alphabetical order by title, or first line when there is no title. Incomplete texts are shown in the body of the edition, as are unfinished pieces, unless these are very fragmentary, again, to satisfy the purpose of the edition. Poems of doubtful attribution and those that cannot be assigned an approximate date are shown separately at the end, as are small fragments.

Annotation in this edition is highly selective and governed by the presumption of a wide general knowledge in the assumed readership. No gloss is provided for terms which, though applied by Neilson in an unusual sense, may be easily located in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* or for terms which have a distinctive Australian usage and which may be located in the *Macquarie Concise Dictionary*. Slang or colloquial expressions which are not easily located in generally available reference sources are glossed, as are terms which are local or personal corruptions of other names. References to the names of persons are discussed briefly in notes and these are noted in the first instance only. Full names and dates only are given for the more well-known authors cited in a text. References to events or places are discussed only if these are of largely local significance, and therefore judged to be obscure.

Consistency in presentation has been aimed for but has been sacrificed in favour of clarity if considered necessary. The title is given first, then headnotes, reading text and footnotes. The wide range of variants in the texts is shown by various means ranging from lemmata, notes and reproduction of full texts as appropriate. The order of headnotes is as follows: holograph manuscripts, with notebook locations given first and the frame numbers of Mitchell Library microfilm (where applicable) and the hand; other holograph manuscripts; typescript and the originator of this; and publication, each in chronological order. These locations are followed by receipts and correspondence, and then comments. Manuscripts are designated A, B, C, D, and so on for ease of identification in the notes, and the preferred text is identified.

Manuscripts are identified as 'incomplete' if part of the text is missing because of mutilation; that is, if a leaf has been torn or cut. (In these circumstances completion of the text is a possibility if the missing part of the leaf is recovered.). Verses apparently never completed are identified as 'unfinished'.

Published texts are identified mnemonically using the first letters of words, or the first three letters in the case of a title of one word; for example, *Boo* for the *Bookfellow*, and *SMH* for the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

MANUSCRIPTS

The notebooks are listed below, with the date assigned by Frank Neilson given in inverted commas first, and the ‘conjectural dates’ assigned by Harrison and Burrows given next, in brackets. The McKimm manuscripts referred to in the articles cited have since been purchased by the Mitchell Library and both the former McKimm manuscript number and the Mitchell call number are given. Some of the notebooks were given the same dates by Frank Neilson. Books with the same date are identified here (and throughout the text) by the letters A, B, C and so on after the date given by Frank Neilson. It should be noted that these letters reflect the order in which the notebooks were first examined and do not reflect chronology.

Some of the notebooks contain records of rainfall, on the inside covers, and most contain records of personal and household accounts, usually on the pages at the back of the books. These are noted here if they indicate the period in which a notebook was in use.

1. A part-notebook (c. 1892), ML MS 3354/2, Item 1.
Formerly McKimm MS 1.
2. A part-notebook, (c. 1893-1894), ML MS 3354/2, Item 2.
Formerly McKimm MS 2.
3. ‘1895’ notebook, (c. 1893-1894), ML MS A3036.
ML MS 3354/2, Item 3, formerly McKimm MS 3, is part of this book.
Annotated inside front cover, ‘all verse in this book written by John when in ‘teens’: about 1895 verse’ [FN].
4. A twenty-six leaf fragment of a notebook (c. 1893-1896), ML MS 3354/2, Item 4.
Formerly McKimm MS 4.
5. ‘1906’ notebook (c. July 1906-July 1907), ML MS A3036.
With date ‘1906’ on front cover [FN]: inside front cover has ‘July 29/06’ and ‘1906’ added above [JSN]; rainfall recorded ‘17/4/07’, inside front cover [FN], and ‘Rainfall 1907’, with figures [JSN], inside back cover.
6. ‘1908’ notebook (c. 1907+), ML MS A3036.
Inside front cover has ‘about 1908’ [FN], and records of rainfall [JSN], n.d.
7. ‘1907’ notebook (July 1907-), ML MS A3036.
Inside front cover has ‘1907’ [FN]; rainfall figures for 1907, July-November [JSN]; and an account ‘9/11/1907’.

8. '1915'E notebook, white covered (1908), ML MS A3036.
Has '1915' written on leaf 1a [FN].
9. A reconstruction of a notebook (1908-1909), ML MS 3354/2, Item 5, an amalgamation of what was formerly McKimm MSS 5, 6 and 7 with the addition of some separate leaves from McKimm MS 8.
10. '1909' notebook (c. May-December 1909 [mid-1910?]), ML MS A3036.
On front cover '1909' and annotation 'only some of Shaw Neilson's handwriting' [FN]; inside front cover has date '1909' [FN]. Accounts with dates occur at 19b ('McKimm and his 2 mates started work for us June 6th/1910 at 25/- a week' [JSN]; at 20a, 'Paid May Browney up till Wed evening June 22nd, 1910' [JSN]; and reading from the back of the book, columns ruled in ink and headed 'July 09' [FN], at 20b; and 'Francis Neilson . . . 1909 March . . . In Current account with Corn Bank Sea Lake', at 22b.
11. '1915'C notebook (c. 1910-1911), ML MS A3036.
A blue, marbled cover, with date '1915' on front cover [FN].
12. '1910' notebook (c. November 1910-early 1911), ML MS A3036.
Inside front cover has date '1910' [FN] and inside back cover has 'about '1910' [FN]. Accounts, reading from back of book; 21b has an entry 'balance owing Jan 3/1911' [JSN].
13. '1912' notebook (c. 1911-1913), ML MS A3036.
Has '1912' on front cover and '1912' verse' written on inside front cover [FN]. Accounts occur throughout this book, with dates: at 12a, 'Balance Feb 8/1913' [JSN]; at 20a, 'July 16/13' [JSN] (includes purchase of foolscap); at 23b, 'Feb 28/13' [JSN]; at 28b, 'April 23/12' [JSN].
14. Notebook at NLA MS 1145/60, the book bound and the original covers lost (- 1913).
15. '1915'B notebook (1913), ML MS A3036.
Front cover has date '1915' and inside front cover has 'about 1915 verse' [FN]; inside back cover has accounts, n.d.
16. '1915'D notebook (1917), ML MS A3036.
A pink covered book, with '1915' written on leaf 1a and annotation on inside front cover, 'Shaw Neilson's own writing in this book: some value as curio. 1915' [FN].

17. '1915' A notebook (1921), ML MS A3036.
A maroon coloured cover, with date '1915' on front cover and annotation on inside front cover, 'Farm Green' [and] 'On One String' about 1915' [FN].
18. '1930' notebook (c. 1924 - May 1925), ML MS A3037.
Inside front cover has date '1935', overwritten '1930s' [FN]. Accounts at back of book, with notes at 36b [FN & JSN], 'started work 6th May/25'.
19. '1925' notebook (16 May 1925-), ML MS A3037.
The cover and inside front cover have the date '1925' [FN], and the leaf at 1a has a place name and date, 'Kiamil, May 16/25' [JSN], with '1925' [FN] above. Accounts dated '22.8.25', 'Aug 30/25', 'Sept 5' and '11/9/25' [JSN] occur at the back of the book at leaf 31.
20. '1927' B notebook, with label 'Southern Cross' and '26' pencilled on label (mid-1927-), ML MS A3037.
With date '1927' on front cover [FN].
21. '1927' C notebook, with label 'Victorian Exercise' (c. September-December 1927 -), ML MS A3037.
Inside front cover has '1927' verse [FN].
22. '1927' A notebook, (1927) with label 'Southern Cross Exercise Book', ML MS A3037.
This has date '30/12/27' [A] in name space, and an address [A] and date 'about 1920' [FN] on inside front cover.
23. '1929' notebook (December 1929 -), ML MS A3037.
Inside front cover has date '3/12/29' [A], and date '1929' [FN].
24. '1939' notebook (1931-1934), ML MS A3037.
Inside front cover has date 'About 1929' [FN].
25. '1940' notebook (April-November 1934), ML MS A3037.
Cover has name and date on front cover (pencilled faintly in shield space) 'J S Neilson, Footscray, 8/4/34' [JSN], and date '1940' superimposed [FN]. Inside front cover has annotation 'I have gone over all this copy; some of it in <final> copy' [FN]. 'About 1940' [FN].
26. '1934' notebook (November 1934-October 1935), ML MS A3037.
Inside front cover has 'Footscray, November 18th, 1934' [L], and the date '1934' [FN]. James Devaney's address [in 1936] is written on the inside back cover [L].

27. ‘1935’ notebook (1935 May +), ML MS A3037.
The front cover has ‘Footscray, 21.7.35’ [L] and inside front cover has ‘1938 to 40’ [FN].
28. ‘1936’ notebook (1936-), ML MS A3037.
The front cover has name and date ‘J. S. Neilson, Footscray, 4-1-36’ [L], and inside front has James Devaney’s address [in 1936].

Manuscripts located since research was undertaken may be placed within notebooks at some future date.

Numerous leaves, not part of known notebooks, are located at other call numbers.

ML MSS 4937/10, Item 1 (formerly ML MS A821N)

This is a bound volume, typescript (carbon copies), which contains verses by John Neilson, John Shaw Neilson, and Lois Ridge.

The pieces by John Shaw Neilson have an Introductory comment: ‘This collection includes verses published and unpublished which do not appear in either of the two printed collections’, and a further comment in Stephens’s hand, ‘Author of “Heart of Spring”, Sydney, 1919’.

The typed comments at the end of pieces indicate that the copies were made at various times and that the pieces were gathered together prior to publication of *Heart of Spring*. Stephens’s later annotations indicate that the comments were made after *Green days and Cherries* was set in type and that none of the texts are later than c. 1916. This conclusion is further supported by the address of the binder; he moved from that address in 1916. On this basis these texts are placed in period 2 (1907-1916), unless an earlier date is known.

‘The fable and fantasy dialogues. A book for teenagers’, by Frank Neilson. McKimm MSS.

This is an unpublished prose work, referred to as a novel by Frank, and written during ‘the Great War’ [1914-1918]. The prose work contains a number of light verses attributed to the pen-name ‘Alexander Kirkwood’. Several of these are in fact versions of texts by John Shaw Neilson and it is likely that Frank revised them for his own purposes.

GREEN DAYS AND CHERRIES: A NOTE

Hugh Anderson gives details of one copy of this item, held by the State Library of Victoria (LaTrobe Library), in *Shaw Neilson; An Annotated Bibliography and checklist. 1893-1964 (Revised edition 1964)* and cites the inscription by A. G. Stephens:

This is No. 1 of three copies thus bound from proofs of book set in type for J.S. Neilson in 1914. After being proved and held in type for some months the edition was cancelled and type was distributed without publication. Black ink revisions are the author's.

[Signed].

Confusion has arisen because there is a fourth, unbound copy at the Mitchell Library, divided between MSS 4937/7, Item 4 and Item 5, which also includes some pages of the proof of *Heart of Spring*. These sheets of proof from the two different sources have been cut and pasted onto light card. These, in turn, have been glued to heavier card which was at some time bound, and have now been removed from the [library] binding and are loose in the packets with other materials.

The inscriptions in the three bound volumes vary in content and length; the contents of copy 3 differs from the contents of copies 1 and 2; the order in which the poems occur is the same in copies 2 and 3 but different in copy 1; and Stephens's corrections to the copy vary.

The second bound copy is held by the Mitchell Library, ML MSS 4937/29, Item 4 (formerly classified at ML A2305, pp. 235-63), and the third copy is held by the National Library of New Zealand at the Alexander Turnbull Library, at MS Papers 2842.

The inscription in Copy 3 is the most detailed:

Shaw Neilson's First Book, 1914

A book of collected verses, published and unpublished, by J. Shaw Neilson, of Victoria, Australia, was announced for publication in 1914, under the title 'Green Days and Cherries'.

The verses supplied by the author were put in type and three sets of proofs were pulled in galley form. One set was revised by the undersigned; one set was supplied to the author for revision; and one set was held in reserve.

The author at this time was suffering a partial loss of eyesight, and he was also dissatisfied with the quality of some of the pieces, which he proposed to rewrite. This rewriting he could not accomplish to his satisfaction, and, after nearly a year,

it was agreed between the author and the undersigned as publisher that it would be better to publish a varied and enlarged book, with some omissions, in a form different from that originally designed.

The standing type was then distributed.

The three sets of proofs have been bound into three books of uniform style of which this is No. 3 and last — on behalf of the first and finest Australian poetical writer past or present.

3 Jan., 1915
[Signed]

Copy No. 1 is undated, and has a fair copy of ‘The girl with the black hair’ (in Neilson’s hand) bound in. Copy No. 2, which is dated ‘Sydney, Dec. 1, 1915’, has a fair copy of ‘Her eyes’ (in Neilson’s hand) bound in.

Copy No. 1 contains poems not in the other copies. Additionally, this copy has comments, and suggestions for revision in Stephens’s hand, and texts marked by Neilson for further attention.

All references in notes in the edition are to Copy No. 1, unless otherwise stated, and variants are noted.

EDITORIAL SYMBOLS

- | to indicate a break in a line of verse
- || to indicate the end of a line of verse
- [] to enclose editorial interpolation
- < > to enclose a conjectural reading
- [. . .] to indicate an indecipherable word of approximately the same number of letters as there are dots
- [] to enclose cancelled letters, words or lines
- [] to enclose letters or words changed by writing over them
- « » to enclose letters, words or lines inserted above or below the preceding letters, words or lines
- / to indicate that words to the left of the slash have been added in the left-hand margin
- // to indicate that words to the right of the double slash marks have been added in the right-hand margin
- = to indicate that stanzas or lines are exactly the same, substantively. When followed by numbers, the numbers indicate the stanza numbers or line numbers and the location of the stanza in the source cited.
- ≠ to indicate that stanzas or lines are similar in meaning, but not exactly the same substantively. When followed by numbers, the numbers indicate the stanza numbers or line numbers and the location of the stanza in the source cited.
- ¶ to indicate a poem without a title, and to indicate a fragment
- to separate multiple variant readings
- ∅ indicates the lines or stanzas numbered do not occur in the source cited, as opposed to lines or stanzas omitted in subsequent texts

ABBREVIATIONS

GENERAL

MS	manuscript
MSS	manuscripts

BOOKS OF POETRY

<i>BLP</i>	<i>Ballad and Lyrical Poems</i> , 1923
<i>BI</i>	<i>Beauty Imposes</i> , 1938
<i>CP</i>	<i>Collected Poems</i> , 1934
<i>GDC</i>	<i>Green Days and Cherries</i> , c. 1914 [proof]
<i>GDC (A&B)</i>	<i>Green Days and Cherries</i> , edited by Anderson & Blake, 1981
<i>HS</i>	<i>Heart of Spring</i> , 1919
<i>JSN</i>	<i>John Shaw Neilson: Poetry, autobiography and correspondence</i> , edited by Cliff Hanna, 1991
<i>NP</i>	<i>New Poems</i> , 1927
<i>PSN</i>	<i>The Poems of Shaw Neilson</i> , Revised and enlarged edition, edited by A. R. Chisholm, 1973
<i>SN</i>	<i>Shaw Neilson: Selected Poems</i> , edited by Robert Gray, 1993
<i>UP</i>	<i>Unpublished Poems of Shaw Neilson</i> , 1947
<i>WS</i>	<i>Witnesses of Spring</i> , 1970

OTHER BOOKS

<i>AV</i>	<i>The Holy Bible</i> . Authorised King James Version
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INDEXES

HI	Untitled [Harrison Index]. Unpublished index, n.d., [1972 - pre-1980] compiled by Ruth Harrison
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LIBRARIES

LaT	LaTrobe Library, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne
ML	Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney
NLA	National Library of Australia, Canberra

HANDWRITING

People whose handwriting occurs in the manuscripts, or who made typescript; and people with whom Neilson corresponded frequently.

A	Annie McKimm (née Neilson), sister
AGS	A. G. Stephens
EN	Elizabeth Neilson, step-mother
FN	Frank (Francis) Neilson, brother
J	Jessie Neilson, sister
JD	James Devaney
JN	John Neilson, father
JSN	John Shaw Neilson
L	Lisette (Elizabeth) Doyle (née Neilson), half-sister
MG	Mary Gilmore
RHC	Robert H. Croll
W	William Neilson, brother
WN	William Neilson, cousin

Neilson (John Shaw) is abbreviated to ‘N’ in passages of commentary in the notes.

The page numbers of the poems in published editions are given in numerals, following the abbreviation of the edition, without further identification in the notes.

CHRONOLOGY

John Shaw Neilson's age on 22 February of a given year is given on the right of the page.

Neilson's father, John Neilson, came to Australia from Scotland when he was 8 years old. He married Margaret Mackinnon who was Australian-born, of Scottish parents, at Penola, South Australia in 1871. They lived at Penola until 1881, John Neilson doing contracting and labouring work in the district.

Pressure for land laws to open smallfarm areas led to government Acts in 1860 and 1869 opening land for settlement in Victoria.

- 1872 John Shaw Neilson born 22 February at Penola, South Australia
Sisters Margaret [Maggie], Jessie and Annie and his brother William [Bill] were born at Penola
Neilson attended school in Penola for 15 months

The family left Penola for Minimay in Victoria in 1881 to take up a selection in the Minimay district.

- 1881 Brother Francis [Frank] born 9

John Neilson was an optimistic, hard-working man who took up other selections of land after 1881, the family following suit when John Shaw, Frank, Bill and Annie each got blocks in 1900. The family always lacked capital and holdings were never well managed, in part because of frequent absences to take labouring jobs and contract work to earn money to live on. They were never able to make a success of farming and financial difficulty dogged them as John Neilson took up and lost selections and leases. This was the pattern of John Shaw Neilson's life until he and his brothers gave up farming and left the land in 1916.

- 1885 School established at Minimay in May 13
1886 Neilson left school 14
1889 Family moved to Dow Well in the Nhill district
Brother Neil born and died a few days later
Working with wheat (harvesting) caused some eye trouble

There was a shearers' strike in 1890 when Neilson and his father didn't shear and in 1891 an economic recession hit Melbourne.

- 1893 Neilson and his father both won prizes in the Australian Natives Association poetry competition 21
'The tales we never hear' printed in the ANA publication:
seven other pieces printed in periodicals
Family moved into Nhill
1894 Family moved to Sea Lake area 22
Eight pieces of verse printed in periodicals
1895 'Marian's child' printed in the *Bulletin* 23
1896 Three pieces printed in periodicals, including 'Polly and Dad and the old spring cart' in the *Bulletin* 24

- 1897 Neilson had trouble with his health; lost 2 stone in weight
and couldn't work. Illness persisted for 18 months
Mother died

1899 – 1902 Boer War

- 1899 Family moved to Kaneira [a settlement halfway between
Sea Lake and Wycheproof] 27
1900 Neilson got a block near Sea Lake in Parish of Eureka 28

The Commonwealth of Australia was formed on 1 January 1901 and parliament was formally opened 9 May 1901.

- 1901 'Sheedy was dying' printed in the *Bulletin* 29
1902 'The child we lost' printed in the *Bulletin* 30
1903 Sister Maggie died
Neilson ill again, problem with 'nerves'
''Twas in the early summer time' printed in the *Bulletin*
1905 Neilson now recovered and had a good period of writing 33
Problem with his eyesight
Six pieces printed in periodicals, including five in the
Bulletin
1906 Three pieces printed, all in the *Bulletin* 34
A. G. Stephens offered to act as Neilson's agent [December]
1907 First issue of the *Bookfellow* published [January]: Neilson 35
subscribed to it from the start
Sister Jessie died

Numerous verses printed regularly in periodicals from this point onwards.

- 1909 Neilson had a holiday in Bendigo 37
Eyesight deteriorated and went to Bendigo for glasses
but that didn't help the problem
1911 John Neilson [aged 67] married Elizabeth Macfarlane 39
[28]
1912 Neilson went with his father and step-mother to Melbourne 40
for glasses for reading, but problems with sight continued
despite two further visits
Sister Annie married William Peter McKimm
Neilson received a letter from Mary Gilmore commencing
a long period of correspondence
Neilson ill again and to Bendigo for a week

1914 – 1918 World War I

- 1914 *Green Days and Cherries*, his first book of verse, to proof 42
stage but did not proceed

- | | | |
|------|--|----|
| 1915 | Half-sister Elizabeth [Lisette] born
[Another sister, Lily, born after Lisette, n.d.] | 43 |
| 1916 | Neilson brothers left the farm
Further eye trouble and another visit to Melbourne | 44 |

From 1916 until he commenced work in Melbourne with the Country Roads Board, John Shaw Neilson worked solely as a casual labourer in a variety of jobs, returning from time to time to his father's home or to his sister Annie's home.

- | | | |
|------|--|----|
| 1917 | Mouse plague and some of his workbooks reputedly lost
To Bendigo for few weeks holiday: met Victor Kennedy
Annie bore a daughter who died when six weeks old | 45 |
| 1919 | <i>Heart of Spring</i> published
One of Annie's sons died | 47 |
| 1920 | Annie bore a son, Allan | |

John Neilson's last block at Chinkapook sold and John, his wife and the two half-sisters now at Hallam, near Leongatha.

- | | | |
|------|---|----|
| 1921 | Neilson now trying to help his father financially and father
agreed to apply for pension | 49 |
| 1922 | Father died
Neilson granted a literary pension of £1 per week by the
Commonwealth Literary Fund | 50 |
| 1922 | <i>Ballad and Lyrical Poems</i> published | 51 |

Between 1923 and 1924 Neilson was now in and out of Melbourne between jobs and meeting people, amongst them J. B. O'Hara, Mrs Louise Dyer, Kate Baker and Beatrice Fowler. He met Mary Gilmore for the first time in June 1924 at a gathering organized for the occasion by Beatrice Fowler and attended by a number of Melbourne literary figures.

- | | | |
|------|---|----|
| 1925 | Neilson went to NSW [to Lockhart] looking for work | 53 |
| 1926 | Working at Cadia [near Orange]
Neilson went to Sydney: met A. G. Stephens, Mary Gilmore
again, and John Le Gay Brereton, Christopher Brennan and
John Quinn amongst others | |

By 1927 the economic depression was beginning to be felt. There was less work available and Neilson was unemployed in Melbourne for a few months. (His sister Annie and her family were now living at Footscray, a suburb of Melbourne). His financial plight led Blamire Young and others to organize the raffle of a painting to raise a testimonial fund for Neilson.

- | | | |
|------|---|----|
| 1927 | <i>New Poems</i> published
A reception given for him by the president of the Australian
Literary Society in Melbourne | 55 |
|------|---|----|

Neilson was offered a job with the Country Roads Board in Melbourne and he commenced full-time work in July 1928, when he was 56. He lived with his sister Annie and her family at Footscray.

Between mid-1929 and late 1932 Neilson was corresponding with A. G. Stephens about a proposed collection of his verse and about publishing agreements.

1930	Began correspondence with James Devaney	58
1933	A. G. Stephens died	61
	Lothians took up negotiations with Constance Robertson (Stephens's daughter) in re. publishing Neilson's collected works	
1934	<i>Collected Poems</i> published	62
	First meeting of Neilson and Devaney	
	Proposed new booklet of verse with Devaney as editor	
1935	Lothians decline to publish booklet	63
1938	Attended inaugural meeting of the Bread and Cheese Club (but none thereafter)	66
	<i>Beauty Imposes</i> published by Angus & Robertson	
1938	Neilson and his brother Frank editing some of their father's verse with view to having a booklet printed for the family	
	Neilson's health failing: now on extended sick-leave	
1941	Went to Queensland to visit James Devaney	69
	Late 1941 to Casino to visit Victor Kennedy and to Sydney to visit Phil Whelan	
1942	Returned to Melbourne early in the year	70
	Died May 1942	

John Shaw Neilson: The Collected Verse Period 1: 1890-1906

Edited by Margaret Roberts

**Australian Scholarly Editions Centre,
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A BRILLIANT IDEA

‘1906’, 32a (A0070) [JSN]. ‘1908’, 5b (A0159) [A]. ML MS 3354/2, Item 6, 13a [JSN], entitled ‘The resourceful physician’. ‘1929’, 46a (A0635) [A], entitled ‘Another miracle of modern medicine’. ML MS 3354/3, Item 2, 15b [EN], transcription entitled ‘Another miracle of modern medicine’. LaT MS 9419/3677, transcription.

The Clarion 1 July 1909, p. 3, entitled ‘A resourceful physician’.

‘1906’, 32a is the preferred text.

An old woman at Tarranginnie
Took her son, who was frightfully skinny,
To the local M.D.
Who said, let me see –
Feed him up a bit, Ma’am – half a guinea.

5 up] [up]. The line is deficient and is corrected in MS 3354/2, Item 6, 13a.

A BUTTERCUP IN JUNE

‘1906’, 30a-30b (A0068-9) [J?], draft, 5 stanzas numbered 1-5, stanzas 1 & 5 cancelled and the remaining stanzas renumbered 1-3.

All the blue of the skies,
The light of white flowers
Is in my sweetheart’s eyes.

All the blaze of the sun,
The lightnings of the storm
Is with my little one.

The moving joys of day,
The bird’s intrepid songs,
Are with my love always.

7 moving] [clarion] «moving» [JSN] *MS*

8] The birds [quiet sleepy] «intrepid» songs [JSN] *MS*

Cancelled stanza 1 reads:

[Tell me blithe buttercup
What in the world doth wake
The blood of life is up]

Cancelled stanza 5 reads:

[Oh baby buttercup
Child Joyous of gray June
The blood of life is up]

A DIFFICULT MATTER

‘1906’, 27a (A0065) [A]; 31a (A0069) [A], entitled ‘An anxious seeker’. ‘1908’, 5a [A], entitled ‘The seeker’ [1].

‘1906’, 27a is the preferred text.

A girl in a choir up at Brim
Said I know that the church lights are dim,
But there’s not enough chaps –
That’s the reason perhaps
I am so long in finding a hymn.

A FACE IN THE CROWD

ML MS 3354/2, Item 2, 9a-10a [JSN], a draft, and a fair draft. This is unusual in having the piece written continuously as a draft with no stanza divisions, and then rewritten, immediately following with revisions and stanza divisions. The fair draft is the preferred text.

The draft is given separately as notes.

A crowd, a mighty crowd.
 A face, a pretty face.
 The years make all things dim,
 But cannot yet efface
 Some of the sweeter things,
 Some of the cruel stings.

A look, a gentle look.
 A smile, a kindly smile.
 A face that told a tale
 In a strange heart-touching style,
 A face that might have been
 In fairer regions seen.

Oh, in whatever land
 The owner of the face
 Tarries a little while
 To run the little race,
 May God's good angels stay
 Beside her all the way.

The draft reads:

[A face in a pretty face]
 A crowd [in the] a mighty crowd
 All I remember now
 Time never can efface
 That one soft gentle look
 That sad yet kindly smile

The years the long years go
 I'm lonely all the while

A line 8, is repeated in error, from the bottom of 9a to the top of 9b

But there are thousand[s] more
 Whose hopes were bright as mine
 Whose hearts are just as sore

Continued overleaf...

A Face in the Crowd (cont)

[The owner of the face]
I pray she may be glad

And in whatever land
The owner of the face
[She] Tarries a little while
To run the little race
May God's own angels stay
Beside her all the way

¶ 'A friendless youth he was but full of hope'

ML MS 3354/2, Item 1, 3b-4a [JSN], draft, incomplete, 1 x 11-line stanza, 1 x 5-line stanza, and an incomplete stanza, untitled. The poem follows immediately after another that is ruled off, and the leaf is torn off. Two stanzas of uniform length seem an appropriate arrangement.

A friendless youth he was, but full of hope,
 And hope is strong, a blessed thing is hope:
 It leads us on through many toilsome years
 And shows us through the mists the bright blue sky.
 And he was young and very prone to rage
 Against all kinds of vile iniquities:
 Such wrongs as doom our fellows to a life
 Where purity and goodness starve and die.

If he had faults they were most lovable
 And of that wild impetuous kind which are
 The simple outburst of an honest soul.
 So at the outstart of his life he said
 My search will be for Truth —
 And come what may let Fortune frown or smile.
 God helping me I shall not turn aside
 Until I solve these mysteries.

Then there arose on every side great men
 In their own minds who boasted

[*Incomplete*]

- 2] And hope is strong[er to conquer] [...] that kills || A blessed thing is hope *MS*
 10 impetuous] impeleous *MS*, a consistent misspelling
 13 Truth] Truth and Truth *MS*
 16 I solve these] I solve of these *MS*
 17 there arose] there are arose *MS*

A PROTEST AND A PROTEST

‘1906’, 27b (A0066) [A]. ‘1908’, 6b (A0160) [A].
‘1906’, 27b is the preferred text.

A certain old maid at Port Victor
Had many strange pets to afflict her.
Her kangaroos fought
With the emus she caught
And when she protested, they kicked her.

A REMARKABLE LAMB

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], with comment ‘Printed’ and ‘Nine Mile’ written in the bottom left hand corner, and with an additional verse headed ‘Verse 4, alternative’.

The Weekly Times ‘ 1 /06’, *HI*, signed Shaw Neilson, Nine Mile.

FN - JSN 16 November 1941, ML MS 3354/1 (‘will search next Sat[urday] in Library for “Remarkable Lamb”).

There is an illegible comment beside stanza 4 of the typescript and the stanza has a vertical line drawn through it [AGS]. The cutting of the poem in the H. Pearce collection (n.d.) is marked with a large cross beside stanza 4, and has a correction to stanza 13 (‘school days’ to ‘school days’) [?]. The 1906 publication date and the additional stanza with the typescript suggest that the typescript may post-date the *Weekly Times* text, which is therefore taken as the preferred text.

The poem is a comic parody of the nursery rhyme ‘Mary had a little lamb’.

There is no mention of its sire,
Nor aught about its dam;
The author merely states the fact
That Mary had a lamb.

This little lamb that Mary had,
It had a snow-white fleece;
But nowadays it always pays
To shear them in the grease!

This little lamb that Mary had,
It had a curious knack
Of always following Mary round
And keeping on her track.

It followed her to school one day –
That hardly was the thing –
The teacher missed it with the cane
And gave himself a sting!

8] The reference probably relates to practice in the 1800s when sheep were sometimes put through the creek to clean the wool a bit: when shorn unwashed the wool contains more grease (and is cream in colour), and hence weighs more. Wool was commonly washed in England too, hence the lamb with a ‘snow-white fleece’.

Continued overleaf...

The teacher said unpleasant things
About that little lamb,
Until he got it out the door
And gave the door a slam.

That lamb, it didn't hurry home –
Why no, it hung around;
A very foolish thing to do –
It might have got in pound.

The teacher was a learned man,
And yet he was a fool;
He could not with his puny arm
Keep that lamb out of school.

He merely was a mortal man
And soon his eyes grew dim;
But Mary's little lamb lived on
To have the laugh at him!

The teacher now is in his grave
And no one seems to care –
But Mary's snow-white little lamb
Is famous everywhere.

Wherever Britain's sturdy sons
Unfurl the Union Jack,
There Mary and her little lamb
Have got a beaten track.

There's not a pretty little girl
Of four years old or so
But knows that Mary had a lamb –
And that 'twas white as snow.

There's not an English-speaking boy,
Unless he be a fool,
Who knows not Mary's little lamb
And how it went to school.

How swift the boy becomes a man,
The school days, how they run.
The pretty girls grow up and wear
Their tresses in a bun.

Continued overleaf...

Then other toddlers take the seats,
Old teachers pass away –
But Mary and her little lamb
Come trotting every day.

The teacher always turns it out
And yet it hangs around –
And, what a most surprising thing,
It never gets in pound!

It never grows to be a ewe,
Or yet to be a ram:
Immortal as the Wandering Jew
Is Mary's little lamb.

63 the Wandering Jew] Supposedly the man who offended the Son of God on his way to the crucifixion and therefore cursed by Jesus to walk the earth alone until the world ends.

MS 4937/10, Item 1, 'Verse 4, alternative' reads:

It followed her to school one day
Well – that was rather strong
The teacher raged – he almost swore
It would not move along.

A SAFE TREATMENT

‘1906’, 26b (A0065) [A]. ‘1929’, 43b (A0633) [A], entitled ‘Interesting personality interviewed’. ML MS 3354/3, Item 2, 6/11a [EN], transcription, entitled ‘Interesting personalities interviewed’. LaT MS 9419/3678, typed transcription, entitled ‘New treatment for mysterious foot trouble’.

The Clarion 1 July 1909, p. 3, entitled ‘The business instinct’, under heading ‘Our Medical Column’.

‘1906’ is the preferred text.

The devil he sat on Mt Wycheproof
He said, I am bad with an itchy hoof.
But I’ll rub it with granite,
It can’t hurt it can it,
It’s as hard as the granite at Wycheproof.

The *Clarion* reads:

The devil he sat on Mount Wycheproof
He said, “I am bad with an itchy hoof.”
Then a young chemist cried,
“Dear sir! Have you tried,
Our anti-itch sold here in Wycheproof?”

A VEXATIOUS DELAY

‘1906’, 20a (A0058) [A].

My friends, said the Chief, ere we scatter
I think that the most urgent matter
That calls for comment is
This new chap they sent us –
He don’t seem to get any fatter.

4 This] [the] this [JSN] *MS*

AFTER THE CAMPAIGN

‘1906’, 19a (A0057) [A], fair draft. LaT MS 9419/3678, transcription, untitled.
The Bookfellow 7 March 1907, p. 7.

‘1906’ 19a is the preferred text.

The General who had been commanding
Was cheered by the troops when disbanding;
But he said I must beg
That you won’t pull my leg,
For it might interfere with my standing!

1] The General Field Marshal commanding *Boo*

AS THE YEARS GO BY

‘1895’, 1b-2a (A0007) [JSN], fair draft.

When the songbirds all were singing
 Just as if they had been trained,
 And the skies were blue and lovely
 Just as if it never rained,
 Then a stalwart youth and handsome
 And a maid who wore a smile,
 Slowly walked and softly whispered
 In a very loving style.

Years have passed and there are changes
 North and south and west and east:
 Time is grim – man’s lamentations
 Do not trouble him the least.
 Where are now that youth and maiden?
 Other lovers bill and coo,
 Other songbirds now are singing,
 But the same old skies are blue.

2 as if they had] as if «they» had *MS*

4 as if it never] as if «it» never *MS*

11 grim – man’s] grim – man’s *MS*

AT THE END OF SPRING

ML MS A2471-1, typescript (Bertram Stevens papers).

The Bulletin 4 October 1906, p. 2, *HI*, not in this issue and not located; *GDC*; *HS* 91; *BLP* 21; *CP* 80.

The typescript is the preferred text.

Put down thy bonny head,
This is the end.
Thou wert a pleasing love,
Thou wert a pleasant friend.
Soft, silken, is the grass
Where twinkling colours blend.

Bend low thy bonny head
This last sweet morn.
An eager amber child
Smothered in flowers and corn
Waits for thy death to wear
The glories thou hast worn.

Bend low thy sunny head
Upon the wing.
The tender tinted hours
Make merry journeying.
The tyrant Sun who slays,
He waits for every Spring.

Bend low thy weary head,
Kiss all good-bye.
Thy life, it was a time
Of love for lip and eye.
The grief is at our hearts
That our beloved should die.

3 pleasing] joyous *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

4 pleasant] pleasing *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

6 Where twinkling] Where the twinkling *GDC* • Where thy twinkling *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

9 An] And *MS*

BABY'S ASLEEP

NLA MS 1145/76, p. 13, typescript, transcription [FN], *HI*, not at this location. McKimm MS, typescript, transcription [FN].

Nhill and Tatiara Mail 22 April 1893, p. 3, verse dated 'Nhill, April 20, 1893'.

FN – Hugh Anderson 11 June 1950, NLA MS 6946/21 ('John wrote it about the death of the little baby boy who died 1890. The poem was also printed by Nhill Mail on an "In Memoriam" card surrounded by black lines; all copies of this are gone.')

The preferred text is the *Nhill and Tatiara Mail*.

Baby's asleep. His little life is o'er
 And grievous pain will trouble him no more.
 Short was his stay in this strange world of ours,
 Now we shall deck his little grave with flowers.
 Baby's asleep.

We loved him fondly. Who can measure love,
 The purest thing that comes from God above?
 We loved him fondly. Ah, we miss him now.
 Cold are his little hands, cold is his brow.
 Baby's asleep.

One thought alone can lessen the sharp pain:
 Though parted now, we soon shall meet again.
 This treasured thought within our hearts we keep:
 He is not dead — he only is asleep.
 Yes, baby's asleep.

Anderson & Blake, in *JSN* (1972, p.46), refer to this as being in 'one of the first of his numerous exercise books', and as 'verses that he titled 'Lines Written to Baby Neilson – died in 1889''. No holograph MS has been located.

BABY'S PRAYER

ML MS 3354/2, Item 2, 11a [JSN], fair draft.

Baby is very bright,
 She will not sleep tonight.
 She prattles all the while
 In her own sweet bird-like style.
 'Go to sleep my dear':
 She answers, soft and clear,
 'I'm doan to tay my pay'rs'.

And what was baby's prayer?
 I cannot let you know.
 'Twas all that baby knew,
 'Twas very sweet and low.
 After a day of care
 'Twas music to my ear
 To hear my baby's prayer.

We grow and we forget
 That God our father knows
 The things that make us fret.
 The same of all our woes:
 We struggle on, and we
 At last begin to see
 That life, though made of cares,
 Is lightened much by prayers.

7] 'I'm doan to tay my pay'rs' *MS*

19] This line is repeated in the *MS*, presumably unintentionally.

21 life though made] life [is] «tho» made *MS*

22 Is] [But] Is *MS*

BEARS A DRUG

‘1906’, 27a (A0065) [A], with alteration [JSN].
The Bookfellow 7 March 1907, p. 7.

There was a young lady of Clare,
She thought she would like a pet bear –
But her old mother said
Just wait till you’re wed,
Like enough you’ll have one to spare.

5] [There are plenty of them to spare] | «Like enough you’ll have one to spare» [JSN] *MS*
• Like enough that you’ll have one to spare *Boo*

BEFORE THE LOOKING-GLASS

ML MS 3354/2, Item 1, 5a [JSN], fair draft. ‘1895’, 1a-1b (A0006-7) [JSN], fair draft. McKimm MS, typescript, transcription [FN].

Nhill and Tatiara Mail 9 May 1894, p. 3. Printed in the *Border Watch* 11 May 1943 as ‘believed hitherto unpublished’.

The *Nhill Mail* text differs from the MSS in having different lines 3 & 4 and a new stanza 3. It is unlikely that the editor would have altered the text to this extent and this is assumed to be authorial revision and part of the one process of composition.

3354/2-1, 5a = A; ‘1895’, 1a-1b = B

The *Nhill Mail* is the preferred text. Stanza 3, A and B, is shown separately in the notes.

When Jenny was a little girl,
Not more than ten years old,
The sun shone on her sunny hair
And it was all like gold.
She looked within the looking-glass
And there she did espy
A pretty face, and so she said
‘What a pretty girl am I!’

When seven summers passed and found
Sweet Jenny seventeen,
In all the country near and far
No fairer girl was seen.
She looked within the looking-glass
And there she did espy
A pretty face, and so she thought
‘What a pretty girl am I!’

The Jenny of old time is gone,
She vanished from our view;
A woman stands before the glass
As Jenny used to do.
No pretty blush is on her face:

3] Her eyes were like the bluebells *A, B*

4] Her hair like unto gold *A, B*

7 and so] and [and] so *A*

Continued overleaf...

I hear her slowly say,
In steady, half-complaining tones,
'My hair is growing gray.'

Stanza 3, lines 17-24, *A & B* reads:

Jenny has seen the seasons pass *A*
Jenny has seen the summers pass *B*
Her girlish glee is gone *A, B*
And early hopes and early friends *A*
And early friends and early hopes *B*
How few are living on *A, B*
She stands before the looking-glass *A, B*
What do we hear her say *A & B*
She says in low and sober voice *A, B*
My hair is going gray *A, B*

BOB AND DEARIE

ML MS 3354/2, Item 1, 9a-9b [JSN], draft, incomplete.
Australasian 10 February 1894, p. 256.

The MS is in a part-notebook and the leaves following (which should contain the final line of the poem) are missing. The draft differs substantially from the published version which drops two stanzas and adds two new stanzas. The printed text is taken as the preferred text. The draft is shown separately as notes.

She was a charming little girl,
 Brown-haired, blue-eyed, and very pretty.
 Her proper name was Catherine –
 They should have called her Kate or Kitty –
 But no, they chose another name
 And why they did so is no query;
 She was a pet, an only child,
 They naturally called her Dearie.

There were few children in the bush
 And we were much alone together.
 We loved to play and plan and dream,
 We loved the bright sunshiny weather.
 Then dreaming did not make us sad,
 Then laughter did not make us weary:
 Those were the days, the glad old days,
 When I was Bob and she was Dearie.

A little thing may change our lives –
 It may be but a kind word spoken,
 A book, a look, an idle thought,
 A slight mistake, a promise broken.
 And so it was a little thing
 That caused us playmates to be parted –
 She to the city went, and I
 Lived on where first our friendship started.

As years advanced the dreaming ceased
 And with it hopes that were the brightest,
 For men may have their sober joys,
 But youthful hearts are ever lightest.
 Life had realities for me,
 Of griefs and troubles I had plenty.
 I learnt what good and evil meant,
 And so I reached the age of twenty.

* * *

Continued overleaf...

And now I have a bushy beard,
 My skin is brown as any berry.
 I laugh and joke among my mates,
 I have the name of being merry.
 But oh, they know not this poor heart,
 They know not of the inner sorrow –
 The bitterness of wasted years,
 The anxious look-out for the morrow.

I lead a reckless rambling life
 All full of devilry and drinking,
 But often on a quiet night
 When all the little stars are blinking,
 I grow ashamed of what I am,
 Of all my gay companions weary –
 A brown-haired, blue-eyed vision comes,
 And I am Bob, and she is Dearie.

ML MS 3354/2-1, 9a-9b reads:

She was a charming little girl
 Brown haired blue eyed and very pretty
 Her proper name was Catherine
 They might have called her Kate or Kitty
 But no her parents [rather chose] chose a name
 And why they did so is no query
 She was so fair they were so fond
 They naturally called her Dearie

There were few children in the bush
 And we were much alone together
 In Spring time when the wild flowers came
 Our lives were sunny as the weather
 I will not tell our childish romps
 Perchance 'twould make the old folks weary
 But we rejoiced and that's enough
 And I was Bob and she was Dearie

But everything is full of change
 Upon this planet which we travel
 And it contains some mysteries
 Which wise men cannot well unravel
 And so it came to pass that we
 Two little playmates must be parted
 She to the city went and I
 Lived on where first our friendship started

Continued overleaf...

I dreamt the dream all young folk dream
I cut a figure great and splendid
[And every time I gained a throw
My Queen no other was than Dearie]
I often dreamt I was a Rug
By many a knight and page attended
In picturing pageants wondrous grand
My fertile brain grew never weary
And every time I gained a throne
My Queen no other was than Dearie

Oh what is life without its dream
A very tiresome sorry matter
Oh grudge not Youth it[s] airy things
Nor [drowned] drown them with sordid clatter
How soon we learn that ev'ry life
Is full of paltry Care and scheming
And bitterly we then do preach
Against this harmless thing called dreaming

[1] As years advanced the dreamings ceast
And with many boyish notions
I found what good and evil meant
I lived a life of wild emotions
The joy was always mixed with pain
The cares were heavy thick and plenty
But still I thought of other days

[Incomplete]

DARBY'S DREAM

'1895', 12b-14a (A0018-9) [JSN], fair draft. McKimm MS, typescript, transcription [FN].
'1895' is the preferred text.

Old Darby was a-sleeping, but wide awake lay Joan –
And Darby heaved a heavy sigh, but not to say a moan.
Old Joan said he's a-dreaming – his dreams are bad I fear;
 Hi, what's the matter Darby?
 Hi, wake up Darby dear!

Old Darby woke up quickly and lifted up his head;
Could you not let me sleep Joan? he rather tersely said.
Why, you were dreaming Darby, your dreams were bad I fear;
 I thought that you were troubled
 So I woke you Darby dear.

Ah, yes, he answered slowly, strange thoughts were in my brain,
For all the trees had blossomed to welcome me again,
And all the flowers were blooming and all the sky was blue,
 And I was young and lusty
 And all my body new.

My father and my mother, they greeted me with joy;
My mother fondly kissed me, I was her favourite boy;
My sisters and my brothers came crowding to the door,
 And all was noisy laughter
 As in the days of yore.

And I still dreaming, wandered to a lovely little dell,
And there I met my sweetheart, she whom I loved so well:
She was so like an angel, she was so sweet and shy,
 And I was very lovesick,
 I could but only sigh.

7 Could . . . said] "Could . . . said" *MS*

12 For] [And] For *MS*

20 yore] [year] yore *MS*

21 And I still dreaming] And I dreaming «still» *MS*

22 And there] [Where I was] And there *MS*

Continued overleaf...

At last love made me bolder: I took her hand in mine
 And growing bolder, kissed her – she blushed and looked divine.
 I told her that I loved her, I claimed her for my own;
 I waited for her answer,
 And then – you woke me Joan!

Joan was as good a wife I think as any wife could be,
 But she was sorely troubled with the pangs of jealousy.
 A man the age of Darby! how shocking did it seem
 That he for some old sweetheart
 Should be sighing in a dream!

So she began severely – I'd really like to know
 Who was the angel-sweetheart that you loved so long ago?
 For, though we have been married now nearly 40 years,
 I've never had a secret –
 You've had one it appears!

Old Darby answered sweetly, in a cheery kindly tone,
 Why, were you really jealous like a lovesick maiden Joan?
 The sweetheart that I love now and dreamt of dear was you,
 For tho' I'm growing older
 Still my love is always new.

30 then – you] then – you *MS*

31 any wife could] any [wife] could *MS*

DIED ON SERVICE

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS] with comment ‘Used for postcard’ and ‘This was sent *Australasian* some years ago, it may have appeared there’. ML MS A821/N414/B A 1, postcard, entitled ‘Died of other causes’.

It is likely that this was written with reference to the Boer War and revised by Stephens for publication during the period of World War 1. The typescript is the preferred text.

’Twas there he found his rest,
Under strange earth and skies,
In a land of cruel crimes
And many tears and sighs.
But why he fought or fell,
It is not mine to tell.

A soldier – so he died,
As truly slain as they
Who in the headlong charge,
On some mad glorious day,
In one sharp moment fell,
The great world growing grey.

We knew him at his toil,
Lusty and full of cheer,
A brave and buoyant soul,
His laugh was good to hear.
His merry face we’ll miss
In the morning of the year.

Still to us does he live,
Warm-hearted, young and keen.
Now he has taken ship
Out to the world unseen –
The lights are all Beyond,
The mists are all between.

1 ’Twas there] In France *card*

5] Ready to fight he fell *card*

6] There is no more to tell *card*

11 fell] feel *card*

EMILY WYNN

‘1895’, 22a-23a (A0027-8) [JSN], draft, 5 stanzas, 6 lines cancelled in stanza 5 and the poem continued. ML MS 4937/5, typescript [AGS], 7 stanzas, annotated ‘This appeared in *Nhill Mail* a good few years ago’. McKimm MS, typescript, transcription [FN]. *Nhill and Tatiara Mail* 4 July 1894, p. 3, 5 stanzas entitled ‘Emily Winn’; *GDC*, 7 stanzas, annotated [AGS].

AGS - JSN 23 May 1931. JSN - AGS 7 June 1931.

Stephens suggested N revise this piece for a projected collection: he liked the poem and said that ‘three-fourths of the frame and the refrain are good, and she has an individuality’. He advised N to eliminate the ‘tall shining dandy’ and to give ‘some of the lines a better run’. N replied that he didn’t think he could do anything with it since he wrote it so long ago. The *Nhill Mail* text has lines not in the holograph MS, and the typescript and *GDC* differ from both the holograph MS and the text in the *Nhill and Tatiara Mail*. The typescript and *GDC* have a different stanza form, different stanza arrangement, new lines and rewritten stanzas and it is likely N revised this poem for Stephens, possibly for inclusion in *GDC*. Stephens wrote ‘wants something like grieve for this’ to the left of stanzas 1 & 2 of *GDC* and N encircled the text and marked it with large crosses in the margin to indicate dissatisfaction. It is unlikely Stephens would have added new lines in the typescript but very likely he altered the stanza form and made other alterations at some stage.

‘1895’, 22a-23a = A

The *Nhill Mail* text is the preferred text. The typescript ML MS 4937/5 is shown separately in the notes and the punctuation is reproduced. *GDC* variants are noted under the transcription of the typescript.

Emily Wynn

Is old and decrepit and haggard and thin;
Little is left of her save bone and skin,
And a small bitter soul
And a terrible temper she cannot control.

In the days that are gone,
A long time ago,
Then Emily Wynn
Had many a beau;
For her face was so fair;

Title Wynn] Winn *NTM* (and throughout). N’s spelling is reproduced
1-5] = A stanza 1 (lines 1-8)
5 cannot control] cannot [bro] control A
6-12] = A stanza 2 (lines 9-15)

Continued overleaf...

She had glossy black hair
 And a lily-white skin.
 Her feet were so light
 When she danced all the night,
 And her heart was so gay
 That she sang all the day,
 And petted and courted
 Was Emily Wynn.

From the big busy town
 To the quiet little village
 Her lover came down.
 You never could find
 A man with such polish,
 So smooth and refined.
 He had elegant clothes
 And a clean-shaven chin,
 And he soon won the heart
 Of sweet Emily Wynn.

But his speeches were false
 And his love was a lie,
 And what could she do
 But sit down and cry?
 So she sat down and cried,
 And her sweet nature died,
 And her features grew thin
 And the lily-like beauty
 Went out of her skin,
 And never a lover
 Had Emily Wynn.

13-16] new lines in *NTM*

17-18] = *A* stanza 2 (lines 16-17)

19-21] = *A* stanza 3 (lines 18-20)

22-24] = *A* stanza 3 (lines 21-22)

A 21] He was handsome and kind

A 22] And he looked so refined

27 And he] He *A* 25

29-39] ≠ *A* stanza 4 (lines 27-37)

36 lily-like] lily white *A* 34

Continued overleaf...

Old Emily Wynn,
 She sits at the window
 As people pass by.
 She shakes her old head
 And she says, as she sighs,
 'All men are the same –
 They are full of smooth lies,
 And women are foolish
 And cannot be wise.'
 So says this old dame
 Who is haggard and thin,
 Of whom there is little
 Left save bone and skin:
 And yet she was – one time –
 Sweet Emily Wynn.

40-49] ≠ *A* stanza 5 (lines 38-47)

43 She shakes] And she shakes *A* 41

44 And she says] And says *A* 42

49-54] = *A* cancelled lines following line 45

51-54] = *A* stanza 5 (lines 48-51)

Line endings *A* stanza 1 (lines 1-5 of reading text):

1 Wynn|| 2 decrepit|| 3 thin|| 4 her|| 5 skin|| 6 soul|| 7 temper||
 8 control||

ML MS 4937/5 reads:

Old Emily Wynn,
 She sits at the window as people pass by,
 She shakes her old head, and she says with a sigh;
 All men are the same, they are full of smooth lies,
 And women are foolish, they cannot be wise.

Old Emily Wynn,
 Is stiff and decrepid, and haggard, and thin.
 Little is left of her save bone and skin,
 And a small bitter soul;
 And a terrible temper she cannot control.

7 decrepid] decrepit *GDC*

Continued overleaf...

In the days that were golden; in the hours that have passed,
 She gathered the manna, and dreamed it would last,
 Her face was delightful
 Her lily-white skin
 Was a joy and a beauty to Emily Wynn.

To her quiet little home from the big busy town,
 A tall shining dandy to court her came down.
 He'd elegant clothes and a clean shaven chin,
 Oh! he soon won the heart of sweet Emily Wynn.

* * *

But his speech it was false, and his love was a lie
 And what could she do, and sit down and cry
 Oh! weary is waiting; we find to our cost,
 So many have waited; so many have lost.
 The tears trickle down on the lily white skin;
 No more did they court her poor Emily Wynn.

Oh what could she do when her lover had gone;
 She talked about dying, but still she lived on,
 Her sweet voice grew harder, her sweet face grew thin,
 The lily like beauty went out of her skin;
 And never a lover had Emily Wynn.

Old Emily Wynn

She sits at the window as people pass by,
 She shakes her old head, and she says with a sigh,
 All men are the same; they are full of smooth lies
 And women are foolish they cannot be wise.

13-14] written as 1 line in *GDC*

16 little] old *GDC*

21 and] but *GDC*

29] omitted in *GDC*

ETIQUETTE AT LAH

‘1906’, 31a (A0069) [A]. ‘1907’, 1b (A0091) [A], under heading ‘Lah’. NLA MS 1145/76, typed transcription [FN], entitled ‘Dining etiquette at Lah’. ‘The fable and fantasy dialogues’, by Frank Neilson, p. 93, entitled ‘Table etiquette at Lah’, attributed to ‘Alexander Kirkwood’.

‘1906’, 31a is the preferred text.

Said a stylish young lady at Lah,
Whatever shall we do with Pa?
He eats with his knife
And he calls Ma the wife,
Just as if she was anyone’s Ma.

FATHER O'CONNOR

ML MS 3354/2, Item 2, 3a-4a [JSN], fair draft, 1 x 6-line stanza numbered 1, followed by 24 lines numbered 2. Five x 6-line stanzas were clearly intended.

He's a little old man and his hair's snowy white,
His voice still is cheery, his eyes still are bright.
Those old feet of his cover many a mile –
He walks and he talks and he prays all the while –
And if there's a man that I'm willing to honour
It's surely no other than Father O'Connor.

About his ancestors I'm not very sure,
They must have been honest, they might have been poor.
He's been in the city this many a year –
All sorts and all sizes admire him here –
And if there's a man that I'm willing to honour
It's surely no other than Father O'Connor.

He's not very famous, his rich friends are few,
He won't stoop to flatter as other men do.
The gospel he preaches is always the same –
There are folks who reckon it narrow and tame –
But if there's a man that I'm willing to honour
It's surely no other than Father O'Connor.

'Twas down in the slums and a woman was dying,
A girl and a bit of a boy were crying,
The good Father prayed in his kind earnest way
('Twould soften a devil to hear that man pray)
She died – may the good God have mercy upon her
Was all that was said by old Father O'Connor.

I met a young Methodist parson one day,
And these were the first words that I heard him say,
The priest, though a good man, is still in the dark.
Says I, look ye here, you young Methodist spark,
Now if there's a man that I'm willing to honour
It's surely no other than Father O'Connor.

6 surely] sureley *MS*

8 been honest they might] been [honest] «[poor]» they might *MS*

9 He's been in] He's [lived] «been» in *MS*

12 It's] It['s] *MS*

13 He's] He['s] *MS*

18 It's] It['s] *MS*

23 She died] She [did] died *MS*

25 Methodist] methodist *MS*

28 look ye here] look [you] ye here *MS*

FATHER O’HOOLIGAN’S WALKING STICK

ML MS 3354/2, Item 6, 3a [JSN], fair draft, unfinished. The MS is annotated ‘This poem was afterwards finished and lengthened by Frank’ [FN], and this second version appears in ‘The fable and fantasy dialogues’ by Frank Neilson, pp. 135-136 (McKimm MS), with 9 x 6-line stanzas.

When Father O’Hooligan’s end was near
He called the friends that he held most dear,
For the Father’s eyes were growing dim
And the blessed saints were a’calling him.

Last of all to his presence came
His favourite nephew, Mick by name.
The Father says with a smile to Mick
I give you my blessing and walking stick.

The stick was knotted and very rough
And very heavy and very tough,
And greatly differed in many ways
From the walking sticks used nowadays.
A very lucky fellow was Mick
To be possessed of that walking stick.

When Father O’Hooligan’s end was near
There was many a sigh and many a tear,
For the Father’s eyes were growing dim
And the blessed saints were a’calling him.

[*Unfinished*]

FITCHETT THE FINDER

‘1906’, 6a-7a (A0044-5) [A], draft.

The great Horatio, how I dearly love him,
 Though some would still bespatter him with mud;
 The great iron Duke only I place above him,
 For he slew more, and what I want is Blood!
 Warm, thick and red, spurting and splashing, rushing,
 ’Tis best of all to set the people gushing.

Blood! let me have blood! I ask no other favour.
 ’Tis sweet in blood to dapple and to find
 The things men write of, every sort and flavour
 Deep hidden are. I am the giant Mind!
 To brush them up, to show them to the masses,
 I am the man – and no one me surpasses!

I take a spicy joke, a rousing sermon,
 (I am so Catholic I have no fear),
 Bishops and bombs, ventriloquist and vermin,
 I note them all and with my good Friend share.
 Ay, never once the good old path forsaking
 I take and take and take, and keep on taking!

I am so wearied with this great research,
 This strong, remorseless, unrelenting finding;
 I write still for my country and my church,
 The Motherland and Us I still am binding.

Title] Fitchett, William Henry (1841-1928), clergyman, writer and educator ‘admitted to a memory, loose-fibred and inexact as to dates and details of facts’. He became a household name through authorship of ‘commemorative sketches of notable events in British History . . . published as *Deeds that won the Empire* (1877).

1 how I] how «[ah]» I *MS*

1 Horatio] Publius Horatius Cocles was a Roman who at first with two companions and then alone opposed an army at the head of the bridge leading into Rome.

3 The great iron Duke] A popular name for the Duke of Wellington (1769-1852).

5 rushing] [g]rushing] *MS*

9 things men write] things «men» write *MS*

10 are I] are [only a] I *MS*

16 share] shear *MS*, a mishearing by Annie

17 Ay, never] [But] Ay never *MS*

Continued overleaf...

Thank God my scissors are both stout and trusty!
Far be the day when they grow stiff and rusty!

Great is the sword, and yet the pen is greater!
Surely the scissors beat them in a test?
Of all the gifts bestowed by the Creator
On me the right to use them seems the best!
All petty codes of Man in one swoop sinking,
I take from all who write and do the thinking!

I'm fond of fishing – just for recreation –
Strange that Our Fish have such a horrid smell.
Much would I like to welcome that Great Nation
Japan to come and live with us, but truth to tell
It grieved me when I tried to write up Tokyo –
Blood! Blood! I cried, and yet I found it no-go.

Also it grieves me much that Our dear Brother
The Black Man should be shipped from Our Protection
Over the seas. (They have to eat each other).
The whole thing is a crime – unique, stupendous –
I heard somebody say so last election.
In this one Cause alone my Work's tremendous.

All Petty Theft and Meanness still abhorring,
All Sham exposing with a fervent heart,
Knee deep in mouldy magazines exploring,
I add to Life and Literature and Art!
Strong as I am, I have no paltry bias,
I smile on Satan – also Ananias!

37 it grieves me] it [grievous] «grieves» me *MS*

39 seas. (They . . . other).] seas. (They . . . other) *MS*

40 The whole thing] The [wrong] «whole» thing *MS*

41] = line following stanza 7, under heading '4th line 7 [th] verse'

48 also Ananias] also «[on]» Ananias *MS*. Cf. Acts 23: 2: Ananias, the Jewish high priest before whom Paul was brought and who caused him to be smitten on the mouth. *AV*

FROM E TO C

‘1906’, 34b (A0075) [JSN], 1 stanza numbered 11 under title ‘From ‘E to C’, 7 short lines; 37b-38a (A0078) [JSN], 5 stanzas and a part-stanza, entitled ‘From E to C’, the first stanza unnumbered and subsequent stanzas numbered 2-6, 4-line stanzas ; 40a-41a (A0080) [JSN], 4 stanzas and a part-stanza entitled ‘From E to C’, the part-stanza a continuation of 6 from 38a and the others numbered 7-10, with the number 11 following, 4-line stanzas. ML MS 3038/1, 4b [JSN], a stanza, untitled, a 4-line stanza. The MSS together make a complete poem, draft. ‘1906’, 34b is printed here as a 4-line stanza.

Really, dear Charles, I owe you one more letter:
I loved you fondly with a warm young heart –
But after all, I think that it is better
That you and I should part.

Since you wrote last, often I have been thinking
About that parable of casting pearls
To pigs – and that time I got you winking
At one of Murphy’s girls.

Also one time, poor, dear old Jane McCarty
She said it’s true – so strike me dead –
I heard him say it at an evening party,
Her hair is nearly red.

They say you said my youngest sister squinted,
That father’s feet were big and mother’s flat;
They even said that you distinctly hinted
That I was getting fat.

Time after time your conduct has been shocking:
You mind that day in Aunty’s summerhouse,

5 since] sin[c]e *MS*

6-7] Cf. Matthew 7: 6: Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. *AV*

7] To pigs, and that «time» I got you winking *MS*

11 I heard] [sh] I heard *MS*

12 hair] he[a]ir *MS*

14 father’s] father[‘s] *MS*

16 fat.] fat. *MS*

Continued overleaf...

Because I screamed, you smiled (your smile was mocking)
It was a horrid mouse.

And then again, you know that ring you gave me –
I always thought it was a real gold ring –
It's only washed, but Aunt says she will save me
From all that sort of thing.

I think it is my duty now to tell you
I am engaged to Mr Geasie-Wohl:
You were too slow and I could not compel you –
In fact, you were a fool.

Dear G, he's got a rather narrow forehead,
Aunt tried her best to put me in his way.
To quarrel with Aunt of course would be too horrid –
Besides, it wouldn't pay.

He said the first night we walked out together,
My little ewe lamb, I'm in love with ewe.
Oh are ewe, said I, but how do I know whether
The things you say are true?

We pastoralists are truthful – but of course dear
At times we let imagination play,
As a horse dealer when selling an old horse dear
Don't give the show away.

19] Because I screamed you smiled (your smile was mocking) *MS*

23 washed,] washed, *MS*

28 you were a] you [were] a *MS*

29] Dear [Mr] G [was] «he's go[t]» | [introduced to me] | [last summer] | «a rather narrow forehead» *MS*

31 be too] be [two] too *MS*

33 He said the first] He said 'the first *MS*

34 with ewe] with «ewe» *MS*

35] Oh are you «ewe» said I but [how do] I know whether *MS*

36 the things] the thing[s] *MS*

37 We pastoralists] [He said] [we] pastoralist[s] *MS*

Continued overleaf...

Now don't be cross, I've had too many crosses.
My first cross was when I came over here,
Then when the Bank's curs had tremendous losses
It made me worse my dear.

But all my various crosses are as nothing
When I beheld your lustrous eyes of blue.
No matter where I went or what my losses
I'd come back dear, to you.

41 be cross, I've] be cross [dear] I've *MS*

Line endings '1906', 34b (lines 41-44 of reading text): 1 cross [dear] || 2 crosses ||
3 was || 4 here || 5 Banks || 6 losses || 7 dear ||

FROM THE CRADLE TO THE GRAVE

ML MS 3354/2, Item 1, 3a-3b [JSN], fair draft, 3 stanzas, untitled, 2 stanzas numbered 1 & 2 and a third unnumbered. '1895', 4a (A0009) [JSN], fair draft, 2 stanzas.

3354/2, Item 1 = A; '1895' = B
The preferred text is '1895', 4a (B).

The baby came with trouble
And sorrow to the earth –
While some with sin were saddened,
And some were mad with mirth,
The infant life was misty,
The child life half a dream –
It had its little sorrows
And bitter did they seem.

And many, many lessons
It quickly learnt and still
One blunder brought another
And multiplied until
The downhill journey started,
The tired feet grew lame –
The road was hard to travel
And then the Reaper came.

- 1] A soul came out Heaven *A*
- 2] And lit upon the earth *A*
- 3] The great world hardly noticed *A* •
- [The great world hardly | And] While some with sin were saddened *B*
- 4] Twas but an infant's birth *A*
- 5 The infant] Its infant *A*
- 6 The child-life] Its child-life *A*
- 7] It had its own wild sorrows *A*
- 8] As mountains did they seem *A*
- 9] And many [many] «bitter» lessons *A*
- 10] It [learnt] quickly learnt and still *A*
- 11] The blunders still grew bigger *A*

Discarded stanza *A*, lines 17-24, reads:

We daily meet each other
We kiss and say we love
We dimly dream of good things
Good things that are above
We feel a strange heart bursting
But tis a mystery
For no one yet has written
His own soul's history

GOOD TIMES AHEAD

'1906', 28a (A0066) [A].

There was a young lady of Morgan,
She practised all day at the organ;
One day she seemed crook
And they said, if she's took
We'll have a great time here in Morgan!

¶ **‘Had I but know the darkness, the guile and the art of thee’**

‘1906’, 12a-13a (A0050) [A], fair draft.

Had I but known the darkness, the guile and the art of thee,
The house of my father never had opened to thee:
Now doth he wait with a sword to cut out the heart of thee –
Why, why, Hamish McGillivay, have you been cruel to me?

I listen alone in the dark to the sobbing of waters,
The hours are slow and each one I know by its chime:
I am forsaken, I the proudest of all the chief’s daughters –
Why, why, Hamish McGillivay did you not tell me in time?

Weary with tears, often I prayed for the life of thee
In the black storms when the wives of the fishers were crying,
Dreaming that I so soon should be the well-loved wife of thee –
Why, why, Hamish McGillivay, have you been dark with your lying?

When the red sun spreads over the hills, faint is the breath of me,
All the bright stars in the heavens can please me no more:
Black is my life and, oh, I dread the dark death of me –
Why, why, Hamish McGillivay, did you not tell me before?

8 McGillivay] McGavellay *MS*

12 McGillivay, have you] McGillevery | [You] have you *MS*

16 McGillivay] McGillevery *MS*

HARRY AND ME

ML MS 3354/2, Item 4, 18a-19b [JSN], draft, 11 stanzas numbered 1-11, stanza 5 encircled and with a line drawn through it, entitled 'No 3'; 20b JSN], a revised stanza 5 and a new stanza numbered 6, under title 'Harry and me'; 22b [JSN], 2 new stanzas numbered 7 & 8 and ruled off after the last line.

N may have intended a second, shorter version of the poem: however, his intention is not clear. The draft from 18a-19b is therefore taken as the base text and the revised stanza 5 from 20b is incorporated.

18a-19b = A; 20b = B; 22b = C

Harry was always a careful chap, and some folks reckoned him mean,
 But no one ever said that o'me, whatever I might have been.
 The block that I had was as good as his, the very same kind of ground,
 But he thought more of a threepenny bit than ever I did of a pound.

I was one of the careless sort and I muddled things at the start,
 But Harry always fallowed his land and kept it in good heart.
 And me, I had to potter along the best way that I could,
 For the less you have, the more you are robbed – that's easily understood!

Lizzy my wife was a delicate girl, but a good wife all the same,
 And if ever I failed in any one thing – well, she was never to blame.
 But doctor's bills are terrible things, and you know, when a man's in debt,
 The more he tries to get out of it the further in he'll get!

Harry, he married a stylish girl – she came from the Big One flat;
 Her father was a Peninsula man and a jolly poor one at that.
 He hadn't much when he left South Aus, but he struck the seasons fair –
 And didn't he put on lots of style when he got a buggy and pair!

1 reckoned him] reckoned [them] him *A*

3 kind of ground] kind of [lan] ground *A*

4 than ever] that ever *A*

9 wife was a delicate girl] wife [was] a delicate [gele] girl *A*

10 well she] well – she *A*

14 Her father] [Harry] Her father *A*

15 South Aus] South Aus[tralia] *A*. 'Peninsula man' in the previous line is therefore probably a geographic reference.

Continued overleaf...

I never saw much o'Harry's wife and he never saw much o'mine;
 We never mixed or visited for I was always afraid of a shine.
 I mortally hate all family rows – I been dragged into a few –
 And women's tongues are dangerous things, and that I very well knew!

Often on Saturdays I'd go into the town in my old Spring dray,
 And Harry would pass with his buggy and pair and'ud hardly say good day!
 And tongues that waggled would waggle again, and generally all agree
 What a well-doing chap that Harry was, what a different man to me.

I mind the time when our youngest died – I was extra hard-up too –
 So I made the coffin and painted it black and reckoned that it would do –
 I went to Harry to borrow his trap, though I didn't feel much inclined,
 And I'm dashed if he didn't hum and haw till I told him he needn't mind!

I tell you, I felt it pretty hard when that poor little baby died.
 I was worn out with the worry and that, and with sitting up nights beside,
 And I hadn't a shilling to bless myself and Harry he knew it well –
 But there are things that money won't buy and things that a man won't sell.

Lizzy died with her old complaint – and then my trouble began;
 'Mong half a dozen o'helpless kids – well what is the good of a man?
 I couldn't get on without a wife – I married in less than a year –
 And then the Bank got hold of my land and I never could get it clear.

17-20] ≠ 17-20 *A*

17 I never saw much] I never [saw] much *A*

18 always afraid of] always «afraid» of *B*

18] We never mixed or visited much I was always afraid of a shine *A*

19] Lizzy was jealous as women are and what d'ye think I'm blest *A*

20] If she'ud send the kiddies to Sunday School where [ther] their cousins were better
 dressed *A*

21 go in to] go[e] in to *A*

23 generallly] generlee *A*

30 and that and with sitting] and that «and» with sitting *A*

32 money won't buy] money won't [buy] *A*

34 'Mong . . . well –] Mong . . . well – *A*

37 at last as I thought] at last [as] at last as I thought *A*

38 manage] [ma...age] *A*

Continued overleaf...

It came at last as I thought it would – they took and turned me out;
 I had to manage as best I could and worked for the ‘cockies’ about.
 I don’t care a bit what any one says – I worked (and I’m pretty tough)
 And struggled and tried to keep the farm – but I wasn’t clever enough.

*

*

*

I’m not as strong as I used to be and I feel it every day,
 But I’m bound to work in rain or shine for to keep the wolf at bay,
 And I tell you what, in these hard times it’s a pretty difficult job
 When you have to work the whole week through for a miserly fifteen bob!

43 I tell you what] I [tell] you what *A*

Discarded stanzas

B stanza 6:

Lizzy was jealous of Harry’s wife and [she’ud] show it every day
 In many a little thing she’ud do and many a thing she’ud say
 One of our lads [had] was a bit cross-eyed and they had a red-haired child
 And their mothers were always passing remarks for to make each other wild

C stanzas 7 & 8:

We often heard how Harry[’s] wife would say with a pitiful air
 That to have such a queer-looking cross-eyed boy was a terrible sad affair
 And Lizzy [she often made] remarked the red-haired girl and gammoned she thought it sad
 She said if a girl of hers was red she thought it’ud drive her mad

Harry and his wife always dressed in the very best of clothes
 Envy’s a thing we all have got and it’s wonderful how it grows
 We have kept our [ones] «lot» from the Sunday School out of real pure jealousy
 Because their cousins were better dressed than ever our ones could be

HE WAS THE CHRIST

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], annotated ‘This was sent ‘Australasian’ some months ago. It may have appeared.’

Australasian 8 April 1905, p. 832; *The Bookfellow* 31 March 1922, p. 32.

JSN - AGS 7 June 1931; 26 July 1931; 2 August 1931; 22 September 1932; 9 October 1932. AGS - JSN 26 July 1931. JSN - RHC 19 November 1933. The poem is cited as one that N wanted to drop from a collection of his work. He said first that it was one of ‘2 or 3’ he now ‘disliked very much’, and then that he thought it was ‘right enough’ but did not now ‘represent [his] present outlook’, and Stephens agreed to drop the piece. This was published in the *Australasian* several months before Stephens offered to act as N’s agent and the typescript is therefore most likely a transcription of that text.

The *Australasian* is the preferred text.

Our laws, the wisest haste to die.
Our creeds, like idle tales are told.
The loving heart, the lips that bless,
The shadowy centuries make not old.

This life that ever runs to pain,
He felt it all – its rise and glow,
The bitterness, the ache and toil –
All that the moving myriads know.

He drew no sword, yet all men’s swords
Grew bloodier in the blood-red years –
Only the hope that would not die
Shone trem’lous in a world of tears.

The white mist dances in our eyes
And still, in every age and land,
His heart beats for the little child,
He writes of mercy on the sand.

7 and toil] the toil *MS, Boo*

9 yet all] but all *MS, Boo*

10 Grew bloodier] Grew redder *Boo*

12 trem’lous] tremulous *MS, Boo*

14 And] But *Boo*

16] Cf. John 8: 6 & 8: 8: But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground . . . And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. *AV*

¶ **‘I sat for hours a’thinking on’**

ML MS 3354/2, Item 2, 10b [JSN], draft, unfinished, 3 stanzas, 2 numbered, with a change in line length after the first stanza. The shorter lines of the second and third stanzas have been adopted throughout.

I sat for hours a’thinking on
 The great and grievous wrongs
 Of the people, and the tenor of
 Their melancholy songs;
 And I read a Book wherein was
 Wisdom, more than man can know,
 Of a man who lived and suffered
 Many hundred years ago.

And I went to bed a’thinking
 As I never thought before
 Of the troubles and the sorrows
 That have spread the wide world o’er;
 And presently I slumbered
 And dreamed a wondrous dream –
 I dreamt that Heaven was opened
 And Christ had come again.

I had forgotten half
 That God is still the same
 As when in early years
 I learnt to lisp His name;
 In a bewildered way
 I prayed to God each day –
 My prayers

[*Unfinished*]

1-2 on || The great] on the | [the] great *MS*
 5-6] [And I read with care and | gladness in an old and much loved [book] Book]] *MS*
 12 o’er] ’oer *MS*
 16] This line cancelled in the *MS*
 19 As when] As [in] when *MS*
 23] My [heartless hopeless] prayers *MS*

Line endings, stanza 1: 1 wrongs || 2 songs || 3 know || 4 ago ||

IN OTHER YEARS

ML MS 3354/2, Item 2, 7b-8a [JSN], draft with several lines and 3 stanzas cancelled, entitled ‘The first dream’; 8b-9a [JSN], draft, with 2 stanzas cancelled.

7b-8a = A; 8b-9a = B

The second draft (B) is the preferred text.

When I was just a little fellow,
Not more than five years old,
In weather mild and mellow
I saw the sun set yellow
And thought it was of gold.

I saw the beauteous rainbow bending
Across the thundery sky,
Its brilliant colours blending,
I could not see their ending
And wondered greatly why.

I loved to see the big moon beaming
And making all things clear,
While all the stars were gleaming
To set my soul a-dreaming,
Dreams fanciful and queer.

1-5] ≠ A 1-5

1] [I often try] A, a false start

2 five] four A

6-10 ≠ A 6-10

6 beauteous rainbow] rainbow beauteous A

7 the thundery] the great black A

11-15] ≠ A 11-15

11] [I saw the white moon growing bigger] •

[I saw the white moon glistening gleaming] •

I loved to see the moonlight streaming A

12] [On frosty nights and clear] •

On frosty nights and clear A

13] The little stars were gleaming

14 To set] They set A

Continued overleaf...

I loved to hear the thunder mutter
 Up in a great black cloud,
 Like a giant prone to stutter
 The words he could not utter,
 Nor dared to speak aloud.

Oh, how I wished my boyhood over
 That I might be a man,
 That I might play the rover,
 Ah – I was then in clover –
 'Twas ere my cares began.

16-19] ≠ *A* stanza [4] *A*

16-20] = *A* stanza 4 (lines 16-20) under *A* stanza [4] (lines 16-19) with cancelled lines lines

16] [I loved to hear the thunder mutter] *A*

17] [When all the sky was black] *A*

18] Like [some] «a» [great] giant prone to stutter *A*

19] [The words he could not utter] *A*

24] Ah [yet] I was «then» in clover *B*

25] [My cares had not began] || 'Twas ere my cares began *B*

Discarded stanzas

A cancelled stanza 5:

[I will conclude these verses lest you
 Should weary of the theme
 The things «That» I loved best too
 Would scarcely interest you || 'Twas b]

A, lines following cancelled stanza 5:

[The years have passed I'm growing older
 Although Im still called young
 The sky seemed fairer then and brighter
 At least I think twas so
 I lived but what's the use of writing «talking»
 I loved a thousand things
 My head was filled with many a notion
 Forgotten long ago
 I'll sail with gentle motion
 Back o'er the same old ocean
 While gentle breezes blow]

B cancelled stanza 5:

[My head was filled with many a notion
 Forgotten long ago
 I'll sail with gentle motion
 Back o'er the same old ocean
 While gentle breezes blow]

Continued overleaf...

B unnumbered stanza, cancelled, following cancelled stanza 5:

[But Ah the things that used to gladden
Seem to me now less fair
A thousand wrong things madden
A thousand others sadden
And life is full of care
I loved to spend my time in thinking
That I should be a man]

IN THE CITY OF REST

‘1906’, 30b (A0069) [A], fair draft. A 5-line version occurs under the title ‘No fear of death’, q.v.

Said a poor dying girl in Geelong,
Oh mother dear, what is a throng?
The mother said, dear,
I can’t explain here –
There never was one in Geelong.

A parson one day came along,
Had you never done anything wrong
Death’s debt still unpaid –
But sir, said the maid,
I paid it – I lived in Geelong!

7] Had you never done [anything] wrong *MS*

IN THE STREET

NLA MS 1145/73 [?], fair copy, annotated ‘Published as written: without alteration’ [Harry Chaplin?].
The Bookfellow 4 April 1907, p. 4; *The Bookfellow* 15 August 1914, p. 173 (in an article); *GDC*; *HS* 59;
BLP 71; *CP* 53.

Receipt dated 11 September 1906, NLA MS 1145/20.
 JSN - JD 21 October 1934 (this was one of ‘a great many verses . . . I turned out one winter’).

The fair copy is the preferred text.

The night, the rain, who could forget
 The grey streets glimmering in the wet:
 Wreckers and ruined wreckage met.
 There was no dearth
 Of all the unlovely things that yet
 Must plague the earth.

Gloom and the streets’ unhallowed joys,
 The sly-eyed girls, the jeering boys,
 Faint carolling amid the noise:
 A woman worn,
 A broken life, a heart, a voice
 Trembling and torn.

She did not sing of hillsides steep,
 Of reapers stooping low to reap:
 No love-lorn shepherd with his sheep
 Made moan or call:
 A mother kissed her child asleep
 And that was all.

Slowly into our hearts there crept
 I know not what – it flamed, it leapt.
 Was it God’s love that in us slept?
 I saw the mark
 Of tears upon her as she stepped
 Into the dark.

14 stooping low] stooping down *GDC*

IS CIVILISATION A FAILURE?

‘1906’, 26b (A0065) [A]; 31b (A0070) [A], entitled ‘The tailor fails’. ‘1908’, 7a (A0160) [A], entitled ‘The tailor fails’.

‘1906’, 26b is the preferred text.

A young man when at Teddywaddy
Bought a suit of this made-ready shoddy;
He said when it burst,
Oh Fi, tailors are cursed!
These garments would vex anybody.

IT IS THE LAST

‘1906’, 18a-18b (A0056-7) [A], draft, with title changed from ‘Is it the last’.
GDC; HS 79; BLP 52; CP 71.

Receipt dated 13 December 1906, NLA MS 1145/19.

AGS - JSN 7 December 1906 (puts proposal to act as N’s agent and cites this as one of two poems which are ‘truly poetic, but . . . very imperfect’); 8 April 1907 (he has the poem and ‘will use’).

The draft shows careful revision and is therefore taken as the preferred text.

White is the world, the weather warm and sweet,
 But time is dear
 To you and me my friend, for we may meet
 Just once a year.

Soon shalt thou rest, a warrior home from war.
 It seems not strange;
 Gently time maketh thee more ready for
 The old sharp change.

Thou hast done well indeed to come thus far
 Cheery and bright,
 Bold as a tranquil summer evening star
 Smiling goodnight.

Thou hast beheld the sunlight, sung the song,
 Fought with the fears;
 In the grim days thou hast been all along
 The Track of Tears.

Thou art not teased of Love, afraid of Fate
 Nor storms within.
 Too weary art thou now for Hope or Hate,
 Small strife or sin.

11 Bold as] Bold [⟨ers⟩] as *MS*

12 Smiling] [A] [s]miling *MS*

13 sung] song *MS*

15 grim days] grim [years] days *MS*

18 Nor storms] [Thou art not] Nor storms *MS* • [Nor] storms //Or storms [AGS] *GDC* • Or storms *HS, CP*

20 sin] [Sin] sin *M*

Continued overleaf...

Still is thy talk of far-back years and friend
That thou hast known,
But all thy stories run to one sad end
– I am alone.

How goes the time? ah, friend of mine, I think
Thy voice doth fail.
Here is my best tobacco, let us drink
This good brown ale.

Smoking, I watch thy fading features through
The Smoky Way;
Oh, ancient friend, shall I shake hands with you
Next Christmas Day?

21 of far-back years] of olden time *GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

25 How goes] [That was a] How goes *MS*

25 ah friend] O friend *GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

29 fading features] fainting features *CP*

31 Oh, ancient friend shall] Oh [friend] ancient friend [Shall] shall *MS*

31 shake hands] clasp hands *GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

JACK MCLEOD

ML MS 3354/2, Item 2, 11b [JSN], fair draft, incomplete.

When Jack McLeod left home in town
 He went to work for Nicholas Brown,
 Blacksmith Nicholas, grim and staid,
 Who did a regular roaring trade
 Down in the little bush township where
 The skies and the flowers and the girls were fair.

Jack McLeod was a lively lad.
 Though little enough spare time he had,
 He danced in a very bewitching way,
 He loved the company of the gay,
 Down in the little bush township where
 The skies and the flowers and the girls were fair.

Many a night the swift young feet
 Lightly danced to the music sweet.
 The dancers smiled and hurried along,
 Full of laughter and love and song,
 Down in the little bush township where
 The skies and the flowers and the girls were fair.

Who can write of a maiden's face?
 Who can tell of a maiden's grace?
 Some were gayer and better dressed

[Incomplete]

- 5 bush township] bush [village] «township» *MS*
 11 bush township] bush [village] «township» *MS*
 12 The skies] The [birds] skies *MS*
 17 bush township] bush village *MS*

LIFE

‘1895’, 1a (A0006) [JSN], fair draft.

It too shall perish, all this fair white flesh:
This baby body, beautiful and fresh,
This heart which many troubles does secrete
Some day, some hour, will give its final beat
And other feet will tread this lovely earth,
And other hearts be full of grief or mirth.

It seemeth strange, as strange as any dream:
For what is life – an everflowing stream
That swiftly runneth to the mighty sea,
Now seeming sad, now murmuring merrily;
Small time to ponder ere it nears the shore,
The sea is ready and cries out for more.

3 which many troubles] which «many» troubles *MS*

5 And] [B] And *MS*

7 life – an] life – an *MS*

LOVE AND LIFE

‘1895’, 3b-4a (A0009) [JSN], fair draft.

I heard the cry of all who cry,
 Men, maidens, wives and widowed mothers;
 Some suffered for their own sad sins,
 Some suffered for the sins of others.
 They murmured, ‘we are tired of life,
 We will not bear it any longer.’
 Oh, Love and Life are little things
 When Sorrow rages, growing stronger.

Upon a morning soft and sweet
 I walked and life did seem a blessing;
 I gathered hope from everything
 And quite forgot all weary guessing.
 ‘Oh, Love and Life are sweet’, I cried,
 ‘Though Death will soul and body sever
 ’Tis but a change, a happy change
 And Love and Life are one forever.’

Oh, Love and Life, Oh, Life and Love,
 So strangely, wisely, wed together!
 I may not learn the mystery,
 And so I guess I know not whether
 The angels know when Love was born,
 Or when with Life it first was mated;
 But surely there will come a time
 When those who love will not be hated.

2 widowed mothers] [widows] widowed mother [s] *MS*

5-6] They murmured “we are tired of life || We will not bear it any longer” *MS*

12 forgot] forget *MS*

14 body sever] body [together] «sever» *MS*

LOVE COMES IN SUMMER

ML MS 3354/2, Item 4, 26b [?], fair draft.

Love comes in Summer when the sky is blue:
Sweet are the days to the hearts that are true:
But the hearts of the false are heavy with care
Over the bright world everywhere.

Love comes in Summer when the days are long:
Life is a hard lesson, Love is a song.
Love comes in Summer when the world is warm:
Life is a long voyage, Love is a storm.

Love comes in Summer for a little while:
Roses grow round about, sweet faces smile:
At the end of the Summer, oh, where will it go
When its warm little prisons are chilly as snow?

MARIAN'S CHILD

The Bulletin 4 May 1895, p. 24. *The Bulletin Reciter: A Collection of Verses for Recitation*, 1901, p. 56.
The *Bulletin* is the preferred text, being the first published text.

First we thought of the river,
But the body might be found –
And it did not seem so cruel
To bury it in the ground.
So small it seemed, so helpless –
I hardened my heart like stone –
She kissed it over and over
And then I heard her groan.

I took it out of her bosom,
It cried and cried and cried.
I carried it down the garden –
The moon was bright outside.
I dug a hole with a shovel
And laid the baby down,
I shovelled the sand upon it –
The sand was soft and brown.

But ah, its cry was bitter.
I scarce could cover it in,
And when at last 'twas hidden
I sank beneath my sin.
Down at the foot of the garden,
Where the moon-made shadows fell,
I sold myself to the Devil
And bought a home in hell.

Down at the foot of the garden
Where the weeds grew rank and wild,
Under the shivering willows
I murdered Marian's child.
My heart was wildly beating,
My eyes and cheeks were wet,
For I heard the baby crying –
O God, I hear it yet!
I hear it crying, crying,
Just as I heard it cry
In Marian's arms in the morning
When I knew that it must die.

* * *

Continued overleaf...

Neither of us was woman –
 I was the younger one –
 And we strove to tell each other
 What a wise thing we had done.
 Why should it live to plague us?
 Why should it ever begin
 Travelling roads of trouble,
 Soiling its soul with sin?

Marian – ah, she remembers!
 In spite of all her tears
 Sweet children call her mother
 These many, many years.
 Yet when I saw my darling
 Her blue eyes seemed to swell –
 'Annie', she said, 'do you hear it?
 Listen – I hear it well.

'In the night I hear it calling
 With a muffled plaintive wail,
 And my heart stands still to count its sobs
 And always I try and fail,
 For I think the depth of my baby's grief
 Will never fathomed be
 Till the fires are lit in the bottomless pit
 To blast eternity.'

Once in a southern city
 Joy came into my life;
 He loved me, kissed me, thought me
 Worthy to be his wife.
 No, I will never marry –
 God, I had rather die –
 If I ever had a baby
 'Twould curse me with its cry,
 For down at the foot of the garden
 Where the moon-made shadows fell,
 I sold myself to the Devil
 And bought a home in hell!

MARJORIE, MOTHER AND I

‘1895’, 29a-30b (A0034-6) [JSN], draft, 5 stanzas, entitled ‘Our troubles’; 30b-31b (A0036-7) [JSN], fair draft, 5 stanzas.

29a-30b = A; 30b-31b = B

The fair draft (B) is the preferred text.

Poor Mother, she is washing all day long.
 Her hair is gray and she’s not very strong.
 She’s often cross when she comes home at night
 And finds that things have not been going right;
 But poor old Mother, she is not to blame –
 She’s tired, we’re poor, and Marjorie is lame.

’Tis years ago since father ran away.
 ‘He was no good’, I’ve heard the neighbours say.
 Once I told Mother what the neighbours said –
 She turned away and looked all white and red –
 And when I asked her what was father’s name
 She said, ‘be quiet! it only brings you shame.’

And Marjorie, all day she sews and sews,
 Hemming and putting buttons on in rows.
 She can’t go out much – she would like to read

Title] ‘Marjorie’ spelt ‘Majorie’ throughout in *B*

1] Mother must work she washes all day long *A*

2] Her hair is gray but she is stout and strong *A*

3 She’s often] Sometimes she’s *A*

6 She’s tired,] She’s tired, *B*

6 is lame] is [to] blame *A*

7 father] Father *A*

8] “He was no good” I’ve heard the neighbours say *B*

9 the neighbours] our neighbours *A*

10] She looked away and turned all white and red *A*

12 ‘be quiet . . . shame] “be quiet . . . shame” *B*

12] And Marjorie is quiet because she’s lame *A*

13 And Marjorie] [My sister] And Marjorie *B* • Poor Marjorie *A*

14] Long seams and sometimes buttons on in rows *A*

Continued overleaf...

But there are many many things we need
And cannot get. The books we have are few
And Marjorie has read them through and through.

Sometimes she reads aloud. I like to hear
Her reading for her voice is sweet and clear.
She reads the saddest books the oftenest,
And so I think she likes that sort the best,
But she is gay and glad enough at times
And jokes and laughs and says such funny rhymes.

I like to sit close up to Marjorie's chair
And catch a hold of her long yellow hair.
It is so pretty. Once I tell her so –
She said 'God makes all pretty things to grow.
The world is full of nice things everywhere,
Though some of us get but a little share.'

15 can't go out] can't [go] out *B*
16 many many things] many things *A*
17 get. The books] get The books *A, B*
18 Marjorie] Ma[r]jorie *A*
19-24] *A* 19-26 reads:

I very often sit by Majorie's chair
And catch a hold of he[r] long yellow hair
Sometimes when sewing[']s over and she's free
She gets a book and reads things out to me
I do not care for fairy stories now
They only are for babies anyhow
I like to hear «of» wild lands far away
When I grow up I think I'll go some day

25-30] *A* 27-32 reads:

But Marjorie she likes the Bible best
Joseph and David Samuel and the rest
What strange old stories they are to be sure
They make me half forget that we are poor
She reads a chapter and then «[makes]» for a choice
She reads one verse in a «[a]» low chanting voice

27] It is so pretty. [When] «Once» I tell her so *B*
28 She said God] She said "God *B*
30 share] share' *B*

MINNIE'S STORY

ML MSS 799, typed transcription [Edward Harrington].
WeeklyTimes 13 June 1896, p. 12.

FN – Hugh Anderson 12 August 1950, NLA MS 6946/21 ('the poem I mentioned as 'Minnie Ryan' [is] 'Minnie's Story').

The *Weekly Times* is the preferred text.

Walter Barry courted me
 More than twenty years ago,
 And I loved him with a love
 Strong as human heart may know.
 Walter Barry's eyes were bright,
 Walter Barry's voice was gay –
 Often do those glad old times
 Seem as near as yesterday.

There were eight of us in all,
 I was second, next to Jim.
 Mother had a worried life,
 Care and work had made it grim.
 In the heat of harvest time
 We were working and 'twas then
 Mother died – my mother died!
 Oh, to see her face again.

I remember well a bed
 And a sweet white face thereon,
 My grave promise, and the words
 'Mind the children when I'm gone.'
 One last look and tears and prayers –
 Friends we'd never seen before –
 Work and weariness, and pain,
 And a black hearse at the door.

Work and worry all the week,
 Not an hour for rest or play –
 Sunday was the only time
 For a blessed holiday.
 At the foot of Pannan's range
 All the plains are fair to see –
 There on Sunday afternoons
 Walter used to walk with me.

Continued overleaf...

Happiness in some sweet love
Men and women seek to find –
As they seek it, even then
Care is creeping close behind.
Little words make joy and pain
In a simple history –
Little words – oh, burning words –
'Minnie, will you marry me?'

Could I tell him, my sweet love,
Could I bravely answer no?
Could I tell him to forget
As my tears began to flow?
Should I tell him he must wait?
He was strong, and loved to rule,
So I stammered till I cried
Like a little girl at school.

Then his voice grew hard and cold
And his manners seemed to change.
Close about my heart there crept
Something chilly, cold and strange.
Still, he kissed me when he left,
Kissed my cheek and called me dear –
But I trembled all the while,
Trembled with a new-born fear.

Then there came another girl,
Happy, rosy, full of smiles.
Soon she won his love from me
With a woman's little wiles.
Katy Creggan was her name –
How I hate her even yet –
Though the grass is on her grave
'Tis a hard thing to forget.

So I worked, year in, year out,
Till the children, one by one,
Grew and needed not my care.
What I promised, I had done –
Some are married, down in town,
Some had travelled far to try
Life in further fairer fields,
And a lonely soul was I.

Continued overleaf...

Minnie's Story (cont.)

Walter Barry came one day,
Katy had been dead a year,
And he offered me a home,
Spoke of love, and called me dear.
Oh, the meanness of the man –
Was I not a woman still?
Had I not a woman's heart?
Had I not a woman's will?

'Walter Barry', then I said –
And I looked straight at his eyes –
'Once you spoke of love to me
But your words were only lies.
Once you would not wait for me –
Still you love me, so you say –
Ah, your love is little worth
Now my hair and life are gray.'

And he answered not a word,
Standing downcast and ashamed,
So I told him what I thought –
All my pent up anger flamed.
Then I turned and walked away
As my tears began to flow,
Bitter still as those I shed,
More than twenty years ago.

MISS MCKELLAR OF BRADLEY'S PLAINS

ML MS 3354/2, Item 1, 1a, 2b-3a, 5b-6a [JSN], draft. The text is ruled off after stanza 8, interrupted, and continued at 5b with a second stanza 8 which is an attempted revision of the first.

Miss McKellar of Bradley's Plains
 Was a young lady within whose veins
 'Twas generally understood there ran
 The blood of a very famous clan,
 Mighty men of the ancient time
 Celebrated in Scottish rhyme.

John McKellar was old, gray and grim,
 Burly of body and long of limb,
 And proud of the wool that he used to grow
 And pretty honest as Squatters go,
 A man who commonly used to take
 Various things for his 'stomach's sake'.

Mrs McKellar, his worthy wife,
 Led a very domestic life.
 A woman as good as you'd wish to see,
 But rather inclined to think that she
 Was something more than the usual run
 Of those who laboured beneath the sun.

Miss McKellar was young and free
 With a fierce wild love of liberty.
 When'er she mounted her favourite horse
 Little she cared whatever the course –
 Then to her a big brush fence
 Was a matter of little consequence.

They got a governess out from home,
 An elderly person, Miss Jerome,

8 Burly] [Long] of Burly *MS*

12] Various things for "his "stomach's sake" *MS*

13 Mrs McKellar his] Mrs McKellar [was] his *MS*

15 A woman] A[s] woman *MS*

23 to her a] to her [was] a *MS*

Continued overleaf...

A very excellent lady who
Had once mixed with, and therefore knew,
Lady This and the Earl of That
And many another aristocrat.

Miss Jerome assumed an air
Which made the family quite aware,
That she was made of the finest clay
And reared in a very elegant way,
And that she was, to her own sweet mind,
The very perfection of womankind.

Miss Jerome had a troublous time
In teaching this very wild lady to climb.
After very considerable pains
The stubborn fact remains
That Miss McKellar is nothing more
Than a wild young girl – what she was before!

True, she learnt to splutter and squeak
French and German three times a week,
True, she painted a cockatoo,
Which her father took for a kangaroo,
Then Mrs McKellar with bursting heart
Told him he wasn't a judge of art!

Miss Jerome declared one day
That she believed that the only way
To train the maiden a la Jerome
Was to give her a year at Home.

27-28] [Had once mixed with and actually knew] || A very excellent lady who
Had once mixed with [and actually] and therefore knew *MS*
29 Lady This] Lady/[Duchess] This *MS*
38 wild lady to] wild [lady] to *MS*
40 stubborn] stubbor[n] *MS*
45 painted a cockatoo] painted [a] cockatoo *MS*
47 McKellar] McK[ellar] *MS*
51 the maiden] the [girl] maiden *MS*
52 a year at Home] a year a [Dance] [at] Home *MS*

Continued overleaf...

Mrs McKellar then agreed
That 'twas the very best thing indeed.

Miss McKellar began to cry
Whenever they told her her destiny.
She begged and prayed in her wild young way
Just for a year or more to stay.
But she must leave her home behind
To move in company 'so refined'.

Away, away, over the seas
Where Miss McKellar's troubles increase;
Sick and weary and sore of heart
She hated the sea from the very start,
And when at last they sighted the shore
She even hated the dry land more.

To a ladies' college she was sent
Where first she was lectured to be content.
Was it a very grievous fault
To take all this with a grain of salt?
Considering too that her thoughts went back
To her favourite and an old bush track?

So she spent a sorrowful year,
And many and many a salt, salt tear
Fell on her pillow – and when one night
She dreamt of home with a fond delight

56-57] Whenever they told her her destiny
[But what could a poor little maiden do
For when the list had gone forth who
She loved her home]

60 'so refined?'] 'so refined' *MS*

69 Was it] [Mu] Was [at] *MS*

72] To her favourite and [an] old bust [bush] track *MS*. 'Dust' may have been intended:
'bush' seems more likely

73 a sorrowful year] [miserable] «sorrowful» year *MS*

75-76] [Fell on her pillow in order that || She might be an aristocrat] *MS*, 2 lines cancelled
preceding line 75

Continued overleaf...

'Twas only to wake, wake and cry,
But another thing to make her sigh.

Into Society she must go,
Everybody told her so.
She might have lived a butterfly life,
She might have been a baronet's wife,
But after her 21st birthday
Over the seas she sailed away.

77] 'Twas only to wake [heavy heart] wake and cry *MS*

79] Into she [must go] Society she must go *MS*

Discarded stanza 8:

True she [painted] learnt to splutter and squeak
French and German 3 times a week
She played the piano She painted too
And made the sky an orthodox blue
She also painted various things
[But her seemed rather unused]
But her birds looked sorry about the wings

MISUNDERSTOOD

There are two separate pieces with this title, one written c. 1892 and the other, a limerick, written c. 1907.

MISUNDERSTOOD [1]

ML MS 3354/2, Item 1, 8b [JSN], draft.

They could not preach that all was right
When nearly everything was wrong;
They could not while the battle raged
Sit down and sing a hollow song.
They could not shut their eyes to things
Which many men have tried to hide;
Their ears were eager still to hear,
Their eyes were still unsatisfied.

1 that all] that [life] all *MS*

5] [They could «not» basely shut their ears || They could not their eyes] *MS* 2 lines preceding line 5

MODERATION IN ALL THINGS

‘1906’, 31b (A0070) [A], under heading ‘Lake Charm’. ‘1907’, 1b [A], untitled, under heading ‘Lake Charm’. ‘1912’, 5a-5b (A0254) [JSN], entitled ‘Strategy at Lake Tchum’. (Lake Tchun is spelt variously ‘Charm’, ‘Tchum’ and ‘Thum’ in the texts.)

‘1906’, 31b is the preferred text.

A thrifty young man at Lake Tchun
Had his Ma-in-law out at his farm;
When she asked what she'd eat
He said, there's boiled wheat,
But don't eat too much of it Ma'am.

MR JOHNNY SHEPHERD

ML MS 3354/2, Item 4, 21a-21b [JSN], fair draft.

His father bought a mallee block
 And he's had a few good seasons,
 And Johnny puts on lots of style
 For some mysterious reasons.
 His father's quiet, his mother seems
 A very nice old woman,
 But Johnny – well – I won't be harsh,
 I'll say he's merely human.

'Every Sunday morning', as says a Yankee poet,
 Johnny feels himself a king
 And wants the world to know it.
 He shines his stirrups and his shoes
 (His shoes are small and dandy),
 And wears a most imperial air
 To anyone that's handy.

He saddles up a slashing hack
 And starts a swinging canter,
 Some pretty boys with whom he meets
 Indulge in playful banter.
 Why don't you get inside, sit back,
 And such advice and warning
 As little boys are wont to give
 Upon a Sunday morning.

Johnny's collars and his tie
 Have won her heart completely,
 And every time he stares at her
 She blushes, Oh, so sweetly.
 And when they all come out of church
 The women praise the sermon;

9] "Every Sunday morning" as says a Yankee poet *MS*. The line refers to the popular American tune and song 'Yankee Doodle'.

13] (His shoes are small and dandy) *MS*

18] Some pretty «boys» with whom he meet[s] *MS*

20 Why don't you] Why [did y] don't you *MS*

Continued overleaf...

The men talk horses, crops and rains
And blocks alive with vermin;
And Johnny stares and struts about
Looking exceeding funny,
But Oh, the smiles he wins from her –
They are as sweet as honey.

Her people ask him home to tea,
Away they ride together –
Giggling and laughing, very gay –
But not about the weather.
Some pretty boys they chance upon
Give sage advice and warning –
They still repeat those awful words
They uttered in the morning.

32 come out of] come [out] of *MS*

36 Johnny stares] Johnny [struts a] stares *MS*

NO FEAR OF DEATH

‘1906’, 28b (A0067) [JSN]. An extended version of this limerick occurs under the title ‘In the city of rest’, q.v.

A poor girl was ill in Geelong,
Where they don't go in much for a throng;
They said, don't fear pet,
She said, you forget,
I died – I was born in Geelong!

NOT FORGOTTEN

‘1895’, 14a-16b (A0019-22) [JSN], draft, 9 stanzas, entitled ‘A nurse’s memories’ with cancelled title ‘Nurse Brown’; 23b-25b (A0029-31) [JSN], fair draft, 9 stanzas, entitled ‘Not forgotten’. ML MS 3354/2, Item 3, 2a-3a [JSN], fair draft, 5 stanzas, entitled ‘Not forgotten’.

‘1895’, 14a-16b = A; ‘1895’, 23b-25b = B; 3354/2-3, 2a-3a = C
ML MS 3354/2, Item 3, 2a-3a omits stanzas 1-4 of A and B, drops lines from the remaining stanzas and has a different stanza arrangement. ML MS 3354/2, Item 3, 2a-3a (C) is clearly a second fair draft and is the preferred text. A & B are shown separately in the notes.

I have few friends, I lead a sober life,
 ’Tis three years since I had a holiday.
 I went down to the country where the air
 Is pure and sweet – I liked it well enough –
 But as for peace, I could not be at rest,
 My thoughts were coming back here all the time:
 I wondered and I worried all the day
 And slept but very poorly through the night.

There’s one I think of more than all the rest:
 Though he was wicked, very deep in sin,
 I loved him fondly with a whole heart’s love.
 He always seemed pleased when I talked to him,
 And in his easier moments sometimes smiled.

When he was dying, then he called for me,
 And I came quickly. In a dying voice
 He said, good-bye – you have been very kind.
 If I had lived – and then he gave a gasp,
 Muttering some words I could not plainly hear,
 And breathed perhaps ten minutes afterwards.

He had no friends about here, and I think
 I am the only one who ever goes
 To have a look at that poor grave of his.
 One time I planted a few flowers on it –

15 quickly.] quickly. *C*

17 lived –] lived – *C*

Continued overleaf...

They looked so fresh and hopeful for a while –
 But soon they withered – why I cannot tell.
 I know I cried a good deal over them
 And since have never planted any flowers.

And so I live my sober little life.
 On Sunday afternoon when things are quiet
 I read my Bible – I love most to read
 Of that bright city far, so far away,
 Where sickness comes not, and no salt tears fall
 Out of the eyes of weary weeping ones.

27 flowers.] flowers. *C*

28 live] [lead] «live» *C*

32 comes not] comes [not] *C*

MSS *A* & *B* read:

I[have]’ve seen some sorrow since I came down here *A* 1
 So much of sorrow have I seen and heard *B* 1
 And I am much surprised to hear folks say *A* 2
 But Sorrow still is sorrow unto me *B* 2
 The sight of [sinners] sorrow [makes] hardens human heart *A* 3
 [Omitted in *B*]
 One time I did believe it but not now *A* 4
 [Omitted in *B*]
 I cannot look upon a [woestruck] tearful man *A* 5
 I [cannot see] cannot look upon a troubled man *B* 3
 A weeping woman or a wailing childing [sic] *A* 6
 A tearful woman or a weeping child *B* 4
 Without a pang of pity and a wish *A* 7, *B* 5
 To comfort them with some poor words of mine *A* 8, *B* 6

Tis twenty years and more since I came here *A* 9
 Tis twenty years or more since I came here *B* 7
 A giddy girl and full of giddy thoughts *A* 10
 A giddy girl and full of vanity *B* 8
 A dreamer[s] of dreams full of vanity *A* 11
 [A dreamers of bad ma] Dreaming mad dreams that made my real life bare *B* 9
 And always on the outlook for a prince *A* 12, *B* 10
 To lead me to the fairy land of marriage *A* 13
 To come and woo me in a princely fashion *B* 11

I mind so well the first man I saw die *A* 14, *B* 12
 He had been hurt in some big accident *A* 15, *B* 13
 He suffered much and swore some horrid oaths *A* 16, *B* 14
 But he was conscious till the very last *A* 17
 But he was conscious to the very last *B* 15
 And died so quietly like an animal *A* 18, *B* 16

Continued overleaf...

That I young ignorant and full of fear *A 19, B 17*
 For some time doubted that there was a God *A 20, B 18*

But since that time how many have I seen *A 21 B 19*
 Dear patient souls who suffered silently *A 22 B 20*
 Who spoke of God as if they knew him well *A 23*
 Who talked of God as if they knew Him well *B 21*
 Who were so wrapped in hope of heavenly things *A 24 B 22*
 That death to them was robbed of bitterness *A 25 B 23*

[And there was one I think of even yet] *A 26*
 And one I think of more than all the rest *A 26, B 24*
 But he was wicked – very deep in sin *A 27*
 Tho he was wicked: very deep in sin *B 25*
 And yet I loved him with a whole heart's love *A 28*
 I loved him [with] madly with a whole heart's love *B 26*
 I wonder did he love me in return *A 29*
 [Omitted in B]
 I know he made his brightest face to me *A 30*
 [Omitted in B]
 And always seemed pleased when I talked to him *A 31*
 He always seemed pleased when I talked to him *B 27*
 And in his easier moments sometimes smiled *B 28*

When he was dying then he spoke to me *A 32, B 29*
 [And good] And said “good bye” you have been very kind *A 33*
 And said “good bye you have been very kind *B 30*
 I hope God will be merciful to me *A 34*
 [Omitted in B]
 I hope you will be happy all your life *A 35, B 31*
 A good kind woman strong and brave and true *A 36*
 [Omitted in B]
 If I had lived I might have been your friend – *A 37*
 If I had lived – and then he gave a gasp *B 32*
 He muttered something else I could not hear *A 38*
 He muttered else I could not hear *B 33*
 And breathed perhaps ten minutes after that *A 39*
 And breathed perhaps ten minutes afterwards *B 34*

No friends or kindred wept beside his grave *A 40, B 35*
 The gay companions of his sinfulness *A 41, B 36*
 Kept far away and now I think I am *A 42, B 37*
 The only one who goes to see his grave *A 43, B 38*
 One time I planted a few flowers on it *A 44, B 39*
 They looked so fresh and hopeful for a while *A 45, B 40*
 But soon they withered – why I cannot tell *A 46, B 41* [*B* without the dash]
 I know I cried a good deal over it *A 47, B 42*
 And since have never planted any flowers *A 48, B 43*

So [there] here I am I lead a sober life *A 49*
 I have few friend[s] I lead a sober life *B 44*

Continued overleaf...

Tis three years since I had a holiday *A 50, B 45*
 I went out to the country where the air *A 51*
 I went down to the country where the air *B 46*
 Is fresh and sweet to anyone like me *A 52*

Is fresh and sweet. I liked it well enough *B 47*
 But as for ease I could not be in peace *A 53*
 But as for peace I could not be at rest *B 48*
 My thoughts were coming back here all the time *A 54, B 49*
 I wondered and I worried all the day *A 55, B 50*
 And slept but very poorly through the night *A 56, B 51*

And so I lead my sober little life *A 57*
 And so I live my sober little life *B 52*
 On Sunday afternoons when things are quiet *A 58*
 On Sunday afternoon when things are quiet *B 53*
 I read my bible I love most to read *A 59, B 54*
 Of that bright city far – so far away *A 60, B 55* [*B* without the dash]
 Where sickness comes not and no salt tears fall *A 61, B 56*
 Out of the eyes of [weeping ones] weary weeping ones *A 62*
 Out of the eyes of weary weeping ones *B 57*

OLD GRANNY SULLIVAN

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS] with comment ‘This has never been printed’, the comment cancelled and a further note ‘Book’.

The Bookfellow 17 January 1907, p. 8; *GDC*; *HS* 22; *BLP* 31; *CP* 22. The poem was also printed as the second in the ‘Australian Poetry Books’ series published by Stephens in 1916.

Receipt dated 28 July 1906, NLA MS 1145/11.

JSN - AGS 26 January 1931 (comments that the ‘mistakes in ‘Granny Sullivan’ seem to be very glaring’ and says ‘As far back as the early days of the war I heard that ‘Granny Sullivan’ was being used in Catholic school books’). JSN - RHC 25 February 1934 (an alteration to the text for *CP*: ‘2nd line 2nd stanza I think the end of this line is very bad. I suggest instead of all that women pride’). JSN - JD 21 October 1934 (thinks this was one of several poems ‘turned out’ in, he believes, the winter of 1905).

The typescript has 8-line stanzas, with a change from 8 long lines to 8 short lines after the first stanza. The printed texts all have 4-line stanzas with long lines that suit the verse and this format has been adopted here.

The typescript is the preferred text.

A pleasant shady place it is, a pleasant place and cool,
The township folk go up and down, the children pass to school.
Along the river lies my world, a dear sweet world to me;
I sit and learn – I cannot go, there is so much to see.

But Granny, she has seen the world, and often by her side
I sit because I feel alone so much since mother died.
Old Granny’s hands are clasped, she wears her favourite faded shawl;
I ask her this, I ask her that, she says I ‘mind them all.’

The boys and girls that Granny knew, far o’er the seas are they,
But there’s no love like the old love and the old world far away.
Her talk is all of wakes and fairs – how after night would fall,
Oh, many a strange thing crept and came, and Granny ‘minds them all’.

6] I sit and listen while she speaks of youthful days of pride *Boo*, APB series, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP* •

I sit and listen while she speaks of all that women pride *CP*

11] Her talk is all of wakes and fairs or how when night would fall *Boo*, APB series,
GDC, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

12] ’Twas many a quare thing crept and came and Granny minds them all *Boo*, APB series,
GDC, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

Continued overleaf...

A strange new land was this to her, and perilous rude and wild,
Where loneliness and tears and care came to each mother's child.
The wilderness closed round them then, grim as a prison wall;
The white folk then were stout of heart – ah, Granny 'minds it all.'

The day she first met Sullivan, she tells it all to me,
Then she was barely twenty-one and he was twenty-three;
The courting days, the kissing days – oh bitter things befall
The bravest hearts that plan and dream – old Granny 'minds it all.'

Her wedding dress, I know the make – yes, every flounce and frill –
And the little home they lived in first with the garden on the hill,
'Twas there her baby boy was born, the neighbouring folk would call,
But none had seen a boy like Jim – and Granny 'minds it all.'

They had their fight in those old days but Sullivan was strong,
A smart quick man at anything, 'twas hard to put him wrong.
One day they brought him from the mine (the big salt tears will fall)
'Twas long ago, God rest his soul – poor Granny 'minds it all.'

The first dark days of widowhood, the weary days and slow,
The grim disheartening uphill fight then Granny lived to know;
The childer – ah, they grew and grew, sound rosy-cheeked and tall,
The childer still they are to her, old Granny 'minds them all.'

How well she loved her little brood – oh, Granny's heart was brave;
She gave to them her love and faith, all that the good God gave.
They change not with the changing years, as babies just the same
She feels for them, and some of them have brought her grief and shame.

15] The wilderness closed all around grim as a prison wall *Boo*, APB series, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

16 The white folk] But white folk *Boo*, APB series, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

18 Then she was barely] How she was hardly *Boo*, APB series, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

19 oh bitter] but bitter *Boo*, APG series, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

21 I know the make] I know by heart *Boo*, APB series, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

23 the neighbouring folk would] and neighbours came to *Boo*, APB series, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

36] She feels for them though some alas have brought her grief and shame *Boo*, APB series, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

Continued overleaf...

The big world called them here and there, ah, many a mile away;
 They cannot come, she cannot go, the darkness haunts the day.
 And I, no flesh and blood of hers, sit here while shadows fall;
 I sit and listen, Granny talks, for Granny 'minds them all.'

Just fancy Granny Sullivan at seventeen or so,
 In all the floating finery we women love to show,
 And oh, it is a merry dance, the fiddlers flushed with wine
 And Granny's partner brave and gay and Granny's eyes a-shine.

But let us pause, for pause we must, we only have our day;
 Yes, by and by the dance will die, the fiddlers cease to play
 And we will seek some quiet place while great grey shadows fall;
 We'll sit and wait as Granny waits – we'll sit and 'mind them all.'

37 ah many] and many *Boo*, APB series, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

40 minds them] minds it *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

41-44] omitted *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

42 we women] that women *Boo*, APB series, *GDC*

45 But let us pause] 'Tis time to pause *Boo*, APB series, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

46] Yes by and by our dance will die our fiddlers cease to play *Boo*, APB series, *GDC*,
HS, *BLP*, *CP*

47] And we shall seek some quiet place where great grey shadows fall *Boo*, APB series,
GDC, *HS*, *BLP*. *CP*

48 We'll sit and wait] And sit and wait *Boo*, APB series, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

ON SATURDAY NIGHT

‘1895’, 8a (A0013) [JSN], fair draft.

He is tired of the rush and rattle,
Of the weary weekday’s battle,
But he laughed at his children’s prattle
 On Saturday Night.

His honest heart is lighter
And his careworn face is brighter,
And his voice is softer, quieter,
 On Saturday Night.

Rest for the worn and weary;
Begone dull care and dreary;
Welcome kind words and cheery
 On Saturday Night.

ONLY A PARTING

ML MS 3354/2, Item 2, 5a [JSN], fair draft.

Only a parting – such a common thing,
 The parting of a maiden and a man.
 The great world takes but little notice of
 The bitterest pains her children have to bear.
 The two stand silent for a little while,
 The sky is heavy and the air is still
 And everything seems wrapped in sleepiness,
 Save their two aching, throbbing, loving hearts.
 The past is all too beautiful and brief,
 The future is so hard to hope against.
 Life seems all worthless to each lover now.
 A few short minutes will pass, perchance a year,
 But Time will soothe the sorrows in their hearts.
 Their love may still be just as true and fond
 And brighten up the face of everything.

2 The] [A] *MS*

7 sleepiness] sleepin[ess] *MS* (the writing is congested at the edge of the page)

10 future is so] future «is» so *MS*

12 short minutes will] short «minutes» will *MS*

13 But] [And] *MS*

14 Their love] The[ir] love *MS*

15 brighten up the face] brighten «up» the face *MS*

OPPOSITES ATTRACT EACH OTHER

‘1906’, 19b (A0058) [A], draft, entitled ‘Opposites attract’; 25b (A0063) [A], fair draft, entitled ‘Opposites attract each other’.

The preferred text is ‘1906’, 25b.

Said a bandy-legged man at Dunedin
Some study in Sex he'd been read'n:
Old Nature is great
At making things straight,
If I marry I'd get a knock-kneed'un.

OUR CONTEMPORARY IN TROUBLE AGAIN

‘1906’, 34a (A0074) [JSN].

The people of this town should ponder
The ways of that imposter yonder;
His wife is in gaol
And he can’t get the bail,
And also he lets his cow wander.

2 imposter] <imiposter>. The word is indecipherable except for the letters *m*, *sh* and *er*.

OUR FREE LIBRARY

ML MS 3354/2, Item 1, 6b-7b [JSN], fair draft. McKimm MS 21, f21, f26, 28, entitled ‘The Nhill free library’, *HI*, not located.

Nhill and Tatiara Mail 30 August 1893.

The fair draft is the preferred text.

There is within the town of Nhill,
All in Victoria Street,
A blest abode for lofty minds,
A glorious safe retreat,
An intellectual oasis where
Men may refresh their souls,
And where no horrid ‘barracker’
Can talk of kicks and goals.

Here doth the intellectual youth
The world-wide news acquire
From daily papers three days old,
Of which subscribers tire.
And here he smokes his cigarette –
He seemeth not to know,
Nor careth, for the notice that
Forbids his doing so.

With comic papers three months old
He seeketh to beguile
His weary soul – but rarely feels
Himself constrained to smile.
He reads the jokes with solemn face
On which no smile appears –
Those jokes do make him feel that life
Is but a vale of tears.

2 All in] Just in *N&TM*

7 ‘barracker’] “barracker” *MS*

13 cigarette] cigarette[s] *MS*

13] Here doth he smoke his cigarette *N&TM*

15 notice] notice [s] *MS*

19] His weary mind but rarely finds *N&TM*

23 Those] These *N&TM*

Continued overleaf...

A local paper meets his gaze,
 His eyes are quickly set –
 He readeth of a concert planned
 To overcome a debt,
 And of the things both said and sung
 By various persons there,
 And how a vote of thanks was passed
 To he who filled the chair.

'Tis in these pages 'Viator'
 Rolls all his thunders out
 Against those measly straying cows
 That oft-times roam about.
 'Tis in these pages 'Viator'
 Indignantly doth tell
 How such a place on such a road
 Is quite impassable.

And should the youth grow tired of this
 And quite impatient get,
 He seeks that wholesome magazine,
 The *Government Gazette*.
 Its page contains no thrilling tale
 Which would the passions wake,
 But it is calm and never does
 The sacred truth forsake.

Oh happy youth, how blest art thou!
 Thou cans't wait patiently
 For several days and then the news
 Is fresh enough for thee.
 Oh happy youth! let gratitude
 Thy grateful bosom fill,
 And bless the Fate that cast thy lot
 In such a town as Nhill.

32 To he] To him *N&TM*

33-40] omitted in *N&TM*

33 'Viator'] "Viator" *MS*

37 'Viator'] "Viator" *MS*

51 then the news] still the news *N&TM*

52 fresh enough for] fresh «enough» for *MS*

OUR MECHANICAL STAFF

‘1906’, 34a (A0074) [JSN]. ‘1908’, 4a (A0157) [A].
‘1906’, 34a is the preferred text.

A journalist’s life at its best
Is a strenuous unceasing quest.
There are races next week
At Bandicoot Creek –
Our Mechanical Staff take a rest.

1 journalist’s] journalist[’s] *MS*

5 Mechanical Staff] Mechanical [Staff] *MS* ‘1906’ • Mechanical Staff *MS* ‘1908’

OURSELVES

‘1906’, 34a (A0074) [JSN].

Said a parson with quite a sweet manner
As he called on the Stony Brok Banner,
The Lord is your creditor —
I’ll give, said the Editor,
Good ads for it to the last tanner.

4] I’ll give said [the] Editor *MS*

POLLY AND DAD AND THE SPRING CART

ML MS 3354/2, Item 4, 23a-24b [A], 12 stanzas, with some cancelled lines; 22b [JSN], revised lines for stanzas 7 & 10, cancelled; 20a-20b [JSN], 4 stanzas numbered 7, 8, 10 & 11, revision.
The Bulletin 5 December 1896, Red Page.

AGS – JSN 28 June 1924, NLA MS 1145, Item 26 (happy to write something about this poem ‘where I met you first’ for *Birth*).

The *Bulletin* text has what appear to be unauthorised editorial alterations and the fair draft is therefore taken as the preferred text. The stanzas at 20a, 20b & 22b are revisions for 23a-24b; the draft at 23a-24b is taken as the base text and the revised stanzas from 20a and 20b are incorporated.

23a-24b = A; 22b = B; 20a-20b = C

The old man’s putting Polly into the old spring cart,
 He bought it when he was married and I’ll bet he thought it smart –
 He always counts on Polly as a first-rate trotting mare –
 In fact he reckons the whole turn-out quite a stylish affair.

The wheels are dished and the poor old cart is knocked about a lot,
 And Polly is old and lazy and lame and doesn’t like to trot.
 We often tell the old man they’re all on the track downhill,
 But his eyes flash up and he answers, there’s ‘plenty of go’ in them still.

When the old man gets in liquor he’s sure to get in a row
 And the poor old chap, it wouldn’t take much to finish him right off now,
 So whenever he yokes up Polly and toddles into the town,
 Some of us go to fetch him out before the sun is down.

- 2 and I’ll bet he thought] and didn’t he reckon *Bul*
 3 on Polly as a] old Polly a *Bul*
 4] In fact he thinks the whole turn-out is quite a stylish affair *Bul*
 5 is knocked] has been knocked *Bul*
 6 lazy and lame and] lazy «and lame» and *A*
 7 tell the old man] say to the old Man *Bul*
 8] But his eyes flash up as he answers back, There’s plenty of go in us still *Bul*
 9] When the old Man goes to the township he’s sure to get in a row *Bul*
 10 And the poor] And poor *Bul*
 12 Some] One *Bul*

Continued overleaf...

Polly and Dad and the Spring Cart (cont.)

He usually goes to Riley's – we always go there first –
 And when he's just a little bit on it's then we find him worst.
 We'd rather see him real dead drunk, for then he's middling quiet,
 And we bundle him into the spring cart and see if the tail-board's right.

Poor old man and poor old mare and poor old spring cart too,
 Many a hundred miles they've gone when they were young and new,
 Many a mile they've gone in dust and many a mile in rain,
 But one of them some of these days will go, and they'll never run again.

The old man often grumbles that his family all are gone,
 And most of them never seem to care a hang how he's getting on.
 And perhaps old Polly's motherly thoughts run in a similar way,
 For all her family too are gone except a black and a bay.

The first she had was a fine roan colt, but he got killed in a whim –
 Loony Sam was running the thing and you couldn't depend on him –
 And a handsome chestnut yearling that didn't have no brand
 Was sold out of pound on the Sydney side, and another died with sand.

- 13] His usual place is Riley's so we always try there first *Bul*
 15 real dead drunk] [beastly drunk] «real dead drunk» [JSN] *A*
 15] We'd rather see him thoroughly drunk for then he can't show fight *Bul*
 16 the spring cart and see if] the old spring cart and see that *Bul*
 18 when they were young] when they all were young *Bul*
 20] One of them some of these days will go and the others won't run again *Bul*
 21 family] children *Bul*
 22 never seem to care] never «seem[ed] to» care *A*
 22] And most of them never seem to care how their poor dad's getting on *Bul*
 23 thoughts run] thoughts may run *Bul*
 24 family too are gone] family's scattered too *Bul*
 25-28] = *C* stanza numbered 7
 25-26] ≠ *B* 2 lines numbered 7 and cancelled
 25] [The first she had got killed in bolt and it's years and years ago] *A* •
 [The first she had was a fine roan colt but he got killed in a whim] *B*
 26] And a fine black filly was stolen running about Glencoe] *A* •
 [Loony Sam was [driving] running the thing and you couldn't depend on him] *B*
 26 running] driving *Bul*
 27] And the pretty young chestnut filly that never had any brand *Bul*
 28 with sand] of sand *A*. Horses ingest sand when kept on sandy pasture or fed grain in a sandy area and this can affect health adversely.
 28] Was sold out o' pound on the Sydney side and another died with the sand *Bul*

Continued overleaf...

One we sold to a parson and the parson drives him hard,
 And another was swapped for a watch and chain to a cove at the old stock yard,
 And one I saw in a butcher's cart out Goulburn Valley way,
 And another belongs to a German chap down about Rivoli Bay.

And the old man's family likewise are scattered here and there,
 And dead is the mother who loved them, and thought them very fair.
 She was proud of her girls – I know it – and proud of her big boys too,
 And worked and did for all of us, all that a mother can do.

Watty got killed in a hurdle-race – the horse he was riding fell.
 Harry has gone to the Golden West and he's doing pretty well.
 Lily is down at a shop in town – Dad and her had a row,
 And Nell, she married a real nice chap, they're living in Adelaide now.

29-32] = C stanza numbered 8

29 One we sold] And one we sold *A* • One we so[u]ld *C*

30 And another was] And one was *A*

30] And another we swapped for a watch and chain to a chap at the old stockyard *Bul*

31] And a cocky owns another one still out Goulburn Valley way *A*

32] And one belongs to a squatter down about Rivoli Bay *A*

32 German chap] German cove *Bul*

33] The old Man's family's just the same – scattered here and there *Bul*

34] And dead is the mother that loved them and thought them all so fair *Bul*

35] She was proud of her girls and proud of her [girls] boys too *A* (the line is clearly defective and the line from the *Bulletin* text is used)

36] This line also occurs following line 34, *A* where it is cancelled • And she worked and did for the lot of us all that a mother can do *Bul*

37-41] = C stanza numbered 10

37-38 ≠ *B* 2 lines beside number 10, cancelled

37] [Watty went into the Army it keeps him] from the drink] *A* •

[Watty got killed in a hurdle race they say he had taken drink] *B* •

Watty was killed in a hurdle-race; the horse he was riding fell *Bul*

38] And Harry is in New Zealand he [is] mining there I think *A* •

[Harry is in New Zealand [and] he's mining there I think *B* •

Harry has gone to the West, and I think he is doing pretty well *Bul*

39] And Nelly married a baker somewhere in South Aus *A* •

Nell is down in a shop in town – Dad and she had a row *Bul*

40] And Lily is barmaid [at] «in» a pub over at Southern Cross *A* •

And Lily married a real nice chap – she's living in Adelaide now *Bul*

Continued overleaf...

Fred is up in Queensland and he hasn't written for years,
 But we hear about him now and again from a station where he shears,
 And Annie is at Port Fairy – and the last we heard of Bill,
 He was somewhere over in New South Wales, working there at a mill.

And the only ones of the lot that are left are Jimmy and Bell and I,
 And I think it always our duty to keep a watchful eye
 On poor old Dad, and the poor old mare, and the poor old spring cart too –Although he
 always reckons they're nearly as good as new.

41-44] = C stanza numbered 10

41 Fred is] And Fred is *A* • Fred [is] Fred's *OR* Fred['s] Fred is *C*, the intention is not clear

41 But we] But [he] we *C*

43] And Tom is training horses and the last we heard of Bill *A*

43 And Annie] Annie *Bul*

44] He was over in Tasmania working there at a mill *A*

44 working there at] working «there» at *C*

45] So the only ones that are left at home are Jimmie and I and Bell *Bul*

46] And I always think it's our duty to look after the old Man well *Bul*

47] And to keep an eye on the poor old mare and the poor old spring-cart too *Bul*

48] For Polly is twenty and the cart – well it isn't exactly new *Bul*

¶ ‘Shall I have grim black night or stars or dew’

The Bulletin 20 July 1905, Red Page, under heading 'Flotsam'. A later version of this, entitled 'Night' (q.v.), is probably a revision by Frank Neilson.

Shall I have grim black night or stars or dew
Or golden day to fall upon my pain?
To say goodbye, for ever and to all,
Too tired to hope for Love's warm light again?
Welcome, sweet rest. But oh, 'twas sweet to know
The green world flowery in the sun and rain.

SHEEDY WAS DYING

ML MS A849, pp. 112-113 [JN], fair copy, annotated and dated '27/1/1' and with alterations [AGS]. '1929', 22a-22b (A0610-1) [A], 2 stanzas, revisions of stanza 4. NLA MS 605/31 [L], 'New 4th stanza', with comment 'this verse may be put in as an extra or may supplant 5th verse' (not attached to letter, but enclosure JSN - RHC c. 1933 for *CP*). NLA MS 605/33 [L], 'suggestion for last 4 lines of 5th stanza' (not attached to letter, but enclosure JSN - RHC c. 1933, for *CP*).
The Bulletin 7 December 1901; *GDC*; *HS* 34; *BLP* 40; *CP* 30.

JSN – Bertram Stevens 3 February 1907, ML MS A2453 (a draft occurs in '1906' at 36a-36b); 1 April 1907, ML MS A2453 (concerning inclusion of poem in an anthology). JSN - AGS, a draft in '1906' at 37a (concerning request from Stevens to include poem in proposed anthology). JSN - AGS 18 December 1923 (questioning comments made in *School Magazine* and authorship of lines). JSN - RHC 19 November 1933, NLA MS 605/43 (sending '2 fresh stanzas' for poems in *CP* with 'Suggestion for last 4 lines of 5th stanza' [of 'Sheedy was dying']); 25 February 1934, NLA MS 605/62-69 (correction to proofs *CP*). JSN - JD 27 January 1935, NLA MS 1145/64 (discusses Stephens's alterations).
Correspondence is given after the notes.

Stephens altered several words and two lines of the fair copy and changed some of the punctuation. The poem was printed in the *School Magazine* (Sydney) 1 February 1923 with comments by Stephens, who said that lines 27-29 were awkward: N disputed the lines, saying that they were Stephens's, and suggested some new lines, and he later wrote two new versions of the stanza in question. However, only one of these lines (line 29) was Stephens's.

ML MS A849 = A; '1929' = B; NLA MS 605/31 = C; NLA MS 605/33 = D
The fair copy (A) is the preferred text.

Grey as a rising ghost –
Helpless and dumb.
This he had feared the most,
Now it had come.
Through the tent door,
Burning and crying,
The Thirsty Land lay,
And – Sheedy was dying!

6] [Burning and crying] Mocking, defying [AGS] A •
Mocking defying *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

Continued overleaf...

Why should he ever
 And ever keep turning
 All his thoughts over
 To quicken their burning?
 Why should the North Wind speak,
 Creeping and crying?
 Who else could mourn for him?
 Sheedy was dying!

Ay! he had travelled far –
 Homeless, a rover –
 Drunk his good share and more
 Half the world over.
 So now had ended
 All toiling and trying:
 Out in his tent alone
 Sheedy was dying.

Never a priest to say
 Where he is going –
 Ah – he shall take the road
 As he is knowing

- 10 And ever] [And ever] «[Keep turning]» «Keep turning» [AGS] A • Keep turning *GDC, HS, BLP, CP*
 25-32] ≠ B 'New 4th stanza for Sheedy was dying' & B 'Sheedy was dying alteration'
 25] The heat on the tree-[tops] «top there» B 'New 4th stanza' •
 Never a priest to make B, 'alteration', *CP* •
 The heat on the tree-top there *C*
 26] [The fiery wind blowing] «Dancing and glowing» B 'New 4th stanza' •
 Prayer to his travel B 'alteration', *CP* •
 Dancing and glowing *C*
 27] There in the heart of him JSN – AGS 18 December 1923 •
 And never a priest to make B 'New 4th stanza', *C* •
 Out to that mist of things B 'alteration' *CP*
 28] All the world slowing JSN – AGS 18 December 1923 •
 Prayer for his going B 'New 4th stanza', *C* •
 None may unravel B 'alteration', *CP*

Continued overleaf...

That he shall rest:
And the North Wind is crying:
Who else should mourn for him?
Sheedy is dying.

Kind in a surly way,
Somewhat rough-spoken,
Straight to his fellow-men,
Keeping unbroken
A fine old contempt
For the world and its lying –
Now on his bunk alone
Sheedy was dying.

Birds of the Thirsty Land
In the dull grey
Mist of the even-time
Floated away –
Still did the North Wind speak,
Creeping and crying:
White, with his mouth agape,
Sheedy was dying!

- 29] [That he shall rest] «So! – to his rest – » [AGS] *A* •
So! – to his rest – *Bul, GDC, HS, BLP, JSN* – AGS 18 December 1923 •
[Going out] Going out *B* ‘New 4th stanza’ •
Steering out staring out *B* ‘alteration’, *CP* •
Going out going out *C*
30] And the wind crying *B* ‘New 4th stanza’, *B* ‘alteration’, *C, CP*
31 should] could *B* ‘New 4th stanza’, *B* ‘alteration’, *C, CP*
32 is] was *Bul, GDC, HS, BLP, B* ‘New 4th stanza’, *B* ‘alteration’ *C, CP*
35 Straight] [Straight] «Truth» [AGS] *A* • Truth *Bul, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*
37] [A fine old contempt] «With a strong man’s contempt» [AGS] *A* •
With a strong man’s contempt *Bul, GDC, HS, BLP* •
A strong man he stood without *D, CP*
38] Flinching or sighing *D, CP*
39] Now [in] «on» his [bunk] [«hut»] «bunk» alone [AGS] *A*
44 Floated] [Floated] «Floating» [AGS] *A* • Floating *Bul, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

Continued overleaf...

JSN- AGS 18 December 1923:

I notice in ‘Sheedy’ in School Paper you have marked awkward against 3 lines

Ay he shall take the road
As he is knowing
So to his rest

My memory is fairly clear about this. I had this stanza bungled up somehow when I first sent it to you. I may have written the line starting Ay – but the other two are yours. [Not so: the fair copy reads ‘Ah – he shall take the road || As he is knowing || That he shall rest;’.] You had to fix it up somehow. [AGS altered line 29 to read ‘So to his rest’.] I never liked the stanza much. My Dad never liked Sheedy at all. I think he thought it rather heathenish. I suggest altering to this

There in the heart of him
All the world slowing
So to his rest

N told Croll (19 November 1933) that he thought the fourth stanza was ‘very unsatisfactory as it [was]’ and went on to say ‘A.G. thought so too. When it was first printed years ago, he altered it without asking me, and he didn’t do the job very well.’

Then in response to a question from Devaney, ‘How many lines did A.G. Stephens supply for your verse?’, he replied (27 January 1935): ‘I think it was about ten years ago that he complained that one stanza in ‘Sheedy was Dying’ needed alteration. I pointed out that the last four lines in the eight line stanza belonged to him. He admitted this but said that when it was sent to the Bulletin in 1901 he thought that I might not bother replying if he wrote to me.’

SOMETHING NEW IN MILLINERY

‘1906’, 28a (A0066) [A]. ‘1907’, 1a (A0089) [A], entitled ‘Expecting too much’. Another version of this occurs at ‘1915’E, 20a (A0307) [JSN], entitled ‘The sacrifice’ [2], q.v.

The preferred text is ‘1906’, 28a.

A charming young lady named Breuster
Trimmed her hat with the head of a rooster.
When they asked, can it crow?
She smiled and said no,
It can't do that now but it use' ter.

TAKING NO RISKS

‘1906’, 31b (A0070) [A]. ‘1907’, 1b (A0091) [A], under name ‘Sealake’. ‘1929’, 44a (A0633) [A], entitled ‘The valour of caution’. ML MS 3354/3, Item 2, 7/13 [EN], transcription, entitled ‘The valour of caution’. LaT MS 9419/3677, typescript, transcription, untitled.

The Clarion 21 October 1909, p. 9, entitled ‘The wise father’, under heading ‘A column of Shaw Neilson’.

‘1906’, 31b is the preferred text.

A cooking class girl at Sea Lake
Cooked her father a big birthday cake.
When she pressed him to eat,
He said, no my sweet,
I must try and live on for your sake.

The *Clarion* reads:

A cooking class girl at Sea lake
Showed her father her very first cake;
When she pressed him to eat,
He replied, No, my sweet,
I must try and live on for your sake.

THE ANGEL OF THE DEW

ML MS 3354/2, Item 4, 12b-13a [JSN], fair draft.

We were standing close together, and your hand was in my hand:
How we planned!
Oh, the castles that we builded in the undiscovered land!

I remember we were happy and your eyes were all aglow:
Soft and low
Was your voice my little sweetheart in the moonlight long ago.

Looking upwards to the heavens we remembered God was there,
And the air
Seemed so full of hidden sweetness round about us everywhere.

Silvery was the light, and holy, and the angel of the dew
In the blue
Saw your pretty face and kissed it – but of course you never knew.

4] I remember we were happy [and your hand was in my hand] and your eyes were all aglow *MS*

THE ANXIETY OF MICHAEL

‘1906’, 19b (A0058) [A].

A young man, one Michael O'Farrell,
Was singing a Christmas carol;
When they offered him beer
He replied with good cheer
I am yours, but how big is the barrel?

Title] The anxiety of Michael | Michael O'Farrell *MS*
1 A young] [A] young *MS*

THE AUSTRALIAN POETS

‘1906’, 19b (A0058) [A]

Ye poets – now don't get excited,
You're not good enough to be knighted –
But you all get a pension,
You just have to mention
You're dead – and your country's delighted!

THE BLOOM AND FALL

There are two versions of this poem in the '1906' notebook, the first longer and unfinished and the second a shorter draft. The texts occur close together at 7b-8a, 9b-10a and 13b-14a: the stanza numbering at 9b-10a is confused and the heading at 13b-14a is confusing, no doubt because of the interruptions. The versions presented are therefore necessarily conjectural.

THE BLOOM AND FALL [1]

'1906', 7b-8a & 9b-10a (A0046 & A0048) [A], unfinished, 11 stanzas, numbered, with [1]-5 at 7b-8a and 5 stanzas numbered 1-5 at 9b-10a. There is a stanza at the top of 9b which was originally numbered 1 (this numeral is aligned with those of the other stanzas) and then renumbered 6, and the number 1 has been overwritten 'last verse'.

Our fathers walked and it was dim
 [*Stanza unfinished, space left for three lines*]

Our fathers roamed the forests through
 Slaying the wild boar and the deer.
 Each leaf, each living flower they knew,
 But not for flesh and blood they fear.

Our mothers watched their children run,
 The mother-love was right and strong,
 But when the darkness slew the sun
 The shadow-things might do them wrong.

The green world came before their eyes
 And the unwearied birds a-wing
 Brought hope to them – they said, arise –
 The sun runs high, it is the Spring.

They knew not, though they strove to learn,
 They heard mysterious voices call.
 The wind would blow, the sun would burn –
 Oh riddle of the bloom and fall.

17 not though] not [for] though *MS*

Continued overleaf...

But with the darkness there will come –
 The earth so very quiet and small,
 The fog-bound people blind and dumb –
 The faith-defying bloom and fall –

The blossoms lifted to the skies,
 The young life hastening to be old,
 Love that has lived in many lies,
 The green that goeth into gold.

Some evening mid the rustling grass
 A kindly angel does descend,
 And speaketh he to all who pass,
 Bravely as speaks a white-haired friend –

Old years we loved, old years that bring
 All the old shadows, shapes of woe;
 The slow crowd, priestly whisperings,
 The dead, slumbering in a row.

So was it when the pipes we played.
 It was a time of fire and joy,
 Kisses and carols for a maid,
 And ballads boisterous for a boy.

He saith, fear not for the night,
 All the unwearied birds a-wing
 Come chattering with the morn's first light –
 We are the witnesses of Spring.

[*Unfinished*]

THE BLOOM AND FALL [2]

‘1906’, 13b-14a (A0052) [A], draft, 5 stanzas numbered 1-5 under heading ‘Odd verses’.
 These stanzas stand on their own as a second, discrete version.

The daylight fadeth and it seems
 As if one listening in a wall
 Had heard God stirring in his dreams
 And wondered if the skies might fall.

Blossoms are lifted to the skies,
 The young life hastens to be old,
 The green Love seems not over-wise,
 All the green goeth into gold.

So was it when the pipes we played.
 It was a time of fire and joy,
 Kisses and carols for a maid
 And ballads boisterous for a boy.

Some evening midst the rustling grass
 God’s tenderest angel doth descend,
 And so he speaks to all who pass,
 Quietly as speaks a white-haired friend.

He saith, fear no evil light;
 Shall ye be broken if ye cling?
 All shall not perish in the night;
 Love is the witness of the Spring.

2 in] [by] *MS*

14 God’s] God[’s] *MS*

17-18] He saith fear [not little heart] «not evil light»

[For fear of all where on you cling]

Shall ye be broken if ye cling *MS*

THE BRIDE

ML MS A2471-1, typescript (Bertram Stevens papers).
The Bulletin 19 July 1906, p. 2.

The typescript is the preferred text.

O little face, so fair to kiss,
As clean and sweet as Heaven's dew;
O lips that only babble love;
O hoping eyes, I hope for you.

O little hands, so white, so fair,
To war in weary days of toil;
O little feet, so free, so wild,
To run upon the thorny soil.

O heart with many loves to hold;
O harper of the trembling strings;
I doubt not God may show you yet
The radiance of eternal things.

6 days] ways *Bul*

THE CASE OF ADAM

‘1906’, 18b-19a (A0057) [A], fair draft. LaT MS 9419/3677, typescript, transcription, untitled, under heading ‘Limericks by John Shaw Neilson’. A variant of the first stanza occurs at NLA MS 1145/76, typescript [FN], as a limerick, entitled ‘Doubting Thomas’.

The Bookfellow 7 March 1907, p. 7.

‘1906’, 18b-19a is the preferred text.

There was a bold preacher named Campbell,
Who said, without any preamble,
There wasn't a Fall,
There was no drop at all,
I think the historians ramble!

Then the clerics who still had a calling
Declared, 'tis a thing most appalling,
But we'd better just say
In a roundabout way
That it was a symbolical falling.

Whereupon an old party named Adam
Exclaimed to his wife, my dear Madam,
They have made a great fuss
All along about us –
But I think I may say that we've had'em!

Title] The story of Adam and his fall into sin is told in Genesis 3. *AV*
6 the clerics who] the [preachers] «clerics» who [JSN] *MS*
7 Declared 'tis] Declared 'twas *Boo*

NLA MS 1145/76 reads:

A Professor way out at Coonamble
Declared without any preamble
There isn't a Fall
There is no drop at all
I am sure the historians ramble

THE CHILD OF TEARS

ML MS A2471-1, typescript (Bertram Stevens papers).
The Bulletin 29 March 1906; *GDC*; *HS* 60; *CP* 54, entitled ‘Child of tears’.

JSN – JD 21 October 1934 (says ‘I was several months finishing [this]’).

The typescript is the preferred text.

Impetuous as a wild-winged bird
 Your mother could not be a slave;
 Her gift she gave unto the world,
 A child of many tears she gave.

No mouth was mad your mouth to kiss,
 No bosom held you safe and warm,
 Poor little soul who came and cried
 And no one heard you in the storm.

The people of the market-place
 Of all your shame made merry play;
 The worshippers to chapel went
 And said, our hearts are clean today.

Each mother to her white breast held
 Her little mite of Love’s own gold;
 Softly she sang for its sweet rest,
 And you were sleeping hard and cold.

They said of you, his eyes are bright,
 Fair was his mother’s face to see.
 His mother’s heart was false and black
 So as his mother he shall be.

Why the dark shadows hovering frowned
 You knew not with your wondering eyes;
 You played about the brink of Hell
 And you were sweet for Paradise.

In the long row your little grave
 Can cover all your baby fears;
 The great world cursed you and you died,
 Dear little unloved child of tears.

THE CHILD WE LOST

The Bulletin 4 January 1902; *GDC*; *HS* 71; *CP* 64.

Neilson said that he commenced this in 1900 but it was ‘very imperfect and [he] only got a few stanzas out’ (*Autobiography* p. 53). It was sent to the *Bulletin* and returned with the comment that it ‘wanted a lot of alterations’, which he did (*Autobiography* p. 55).

The *Bulletin* is the preferred text.

Six weeks it was till Christmas time –
 The summer seemed not far away –
 The white sheep ran upon the hills,
 The white lambs bleated all the day.
 Gladness was over all the land
 Like something out of God’s own hand
 His children fair would understand.

The garden was a world of bloom –
 The cherry trees were red and green –
 Two miles away the white smoke rose,
 And always did there come between
 The glory that we feel and know
 When sunlight seems to overflow
 Into a green warm world below.

Our brown-eyed beauty claimed a kiss –
 Sweet were her words and full of play –
 Light as the dancing thistledown
 Was all her airy talk that day,
 Of flowers and skies and heavenly things
 And sometimes softest whisperings
 Like music trembling on the strings.

Life to the child was very fair –
 Up from the ranges far and blue
 The sun came rosily each morn,
 Lighting the little world she knew.
 It was the time when bush-birds sing
 And children’s thoughts go wandering,
 And Summertime makes love to Spring.

2 The summer] And summer *GDC*, *HS*, *CP*

5] Oh, never was the world more fair *GDC* •

Oh, never was the earth more fair *HS*, *CP*

6] There was a sweetness in the air *GDC*, *HS*, *CP*

7] That does not linger everywhere *GDC* •

That sang of heaven everywhere *HS*, *CP*

10 Two miles] A league *HS*, *CP*

24] To shine upon the world she knew *GDC*, *HS*, *CP*

28 And Summertime] When summertime *GDC*, *HS*, *CP*

Continued overleaf...

The seasons sixteen times had turned –
 Gladsome or bitter, dark or fair –
 Since to our lives there came a love,
 The love that lighteneth every care.
 The children like the flowers unfold,
 The new life struggling with the old
 Would not and dare not be controlled.

We kissed her for a little time –
 We watched her wandering till she grew
 Smaller and smaller, till the sky
 Closed round about her and we knew
 The world could never be so fair
 As in the dear old days that were
 When sweet lights trembled everywhere.

The angels spoke not that bright day –
 Alas! that angels love the gloom –
 Fondly we dreamed she might have turned
 Back to the well-loved garden-bloom.
 O gentle heart, so soft and kind!
 O big bright eyes so bright and blind!
 What was it that you sought to find?

Back in the dim grey time they tell
 Of children tempted far away
 In the white glimmering of the moon,
 In twilight, or at dawn of day.

* * *

One evening when the sun was down
 A woman came – her eyes were brown.
 But our child came not from the town.

- 32] A joy that lightened every care *HS, CP*
 33] We watched her wandering down the hill *GDC, HS, CP*
 34] We watched her lovingly until *GDC, HS, CP*
 35] She seemed like someone standing still *GDC, HS, CP*
 36-42] omitted *GDC, HS, CP*
 43-56] ≠ 35-48 *GDC, HS, CP*
 44 that angels] that they *GDC, HS, CP*
 45] Had they but whispered, she had turned *GDC, HS, CP*
 48 bright eyes] brown eyes *HS, CP*
 52 glimmering] flimmering *CP*

THE COMING OF FATHER

‘1906’, 20a (A0058) [A]. ‘1908’, 6a (A0159) [A]. ‘1915’E, 9b (A0296) [JSN], as a quatrain, entitled ‘Graces’; 20a (A0307) [JSN], entitled ‘An experiment in strategy’, and signed.

The Clarion 1 July 1909, p. 3, entitled ‘The gentle strategist’.

‘1906’, 20a is the preferred text.

There was a nice girl at McCarthur;
She said to a man, would you rather
Kiss me or my sister?
The mean wretch – Oh, Mister
You mustn’t! He’s coming – That’s Father!

The *Clarion* reads:

There was a young maid of Macarthur;
She said to a man, “Would you rather
Kiss me than my sister?
– You mean wretch! Oh, Mister!
You mustn’t! You mustn’t! Ask father.”

THE CRY OF THE WOMAN

‘1906’, 20b (A0059) [A]. ‘1929’, 43a (A0632) [A], entitled ‘Early case of domestic unhappiness’. NLA MS 1145/76, typed transcription [FN], untitled.
The Bookfellow 7 March 1907.

‘1906’, 20b is the preferred text.

When Adam was walking about in
The garden he found his wife pouting,
He said, how’s the game?
She replied, it’s a shame,
I haven’t a thing to go out in!

1-5] Cf. Genesis 3: 7 *AV*. See also ‘The case of Adam’

THE DEAR LITTLE COTTAGE

There are two pieces with this title: a poem, written c. 1906, and two stanzas that are part of the poem entitled ‘The game of away, away’, written c. 1907.

THE DEAR LITTLE COTTAGE [1]

‘1906’, 29b-30a (A0068) [J], fair draft.
The Bookfellow 11 April 1907, p. 2; *GDC*; *HS* 54; *BLP* 61; *CP* 48.

JSN - AGS 26 July 1931 (this is one of twelve pieces N wanted to drop from a proposed collection).

The text is separated into two parts by numbering, the second part commencing at stanza 5. The fair draft is the preferred text.

’Tis not for the lilies, white lilies and tall –
 The grass has outlived them, it grows by the wall
 Of the dear little cottage that I know . . .

’Tis not for the cherries, the cherries are wild
 And into their branches has clambered no child
 To drink up the blood of a cherry . . .

’Tis not for the river hemmed in by the weir,
 Or the lilt of the winds in the glow of the year
 When the birds o’the water made merry . . .

A spell is upon me – and why should I stray
 When I have fine company all the long day
 In the dear little cottage that I know.

* * *

It is for the voices – the voices that blessed,
 The lips that made music, the hands that caressed,
 In the dear little cottage that I know.

9 made merry] make merry *Boo*, *GDC*

Continued overleaf...

It is for the shadows that sit by the door,
Strange feet that go tripping the old broken floor
At night when the fiddles go shrieking.

It is for the counsel, long loving and wise,
The hopes that were born in a legion of sighs
(The lips – oh, the cold lips are speaking).

It is for a temple enshrouded in mist,
A rosy girl raising her face to be kissed
In the dear little cottage that I know.

17 Strange feet] And feet *Boo* • The feet *GDC, BLP, CP*

18 fiddles go shrieking] fiddles are shrieking *Boo, GDC, BLP, CP* • fiddles go [tripping] «shreaking» [JSN] *MS*

THE DREAM IS DEEP

‘1906’, 39b (A0080) [A], fair draft.

The Bookfellow 1 October 1912 (in article ‘Shaw Neilson’ by A. G. Stephens); *GDC*; *HS* 93; *BLP* 111; *CP* 82.

AGS – JSN 8 April 1907 (has the poem and will use). JSN - AGS draft of letter in ‘1906’, 25b-26a dated ‘18th 07’ (saying this was sent in January).

The *Bookfellow* text contains likely unauthorised editorial alterations and the fair draft is therefore taken as the preferred text.

Sing me the song that never dies,
Of little Love blinded and bold,
Blossoms unblemished and blue skies
And the green going into gold.

All the uproarious pipes we played,
Frenzy and Folly, Fire and Joy,
Carols we caught up for a maid
And ballads boisterous for a boy.

I hear the blended bells and bands,
The fiddlers fiddling on the green,
The clapping of a thousand hands,
The trembling of a tambourine.

O happy hours, run kindly slow;
Black lies the night, nauseous and grim.
Who knoweth what a man may know?
(No – all he hath shall die with him).

The man God made he dreameth deep,
Down in his heart. High in the air
His Heaven lies. How shall he sleep?
He had a dream, the dream was fair.

12 a tambourine] the tambourine *Boo*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

16 (No – all] (No all *MS* • Not all *Boo*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*. The parenthesis and wording of the *MS* make sense and it is likely that this was a direction from N since similar use of parentheses occur in poems in N’s hand.

18 heart. High] heart. High *MS*

19 lies. How] lies how *MS*

THE DRUNKARD'S SONG

ML MS 3354/2, Item 2, 2b [JSN], fair draft, unfinished.

In the Silver Creek rush I did very well,
 I made a hundred a day
 For 3 or 4 weeks, and then, what then?
 I flung that money away!
 Not into the sea – I wish I had!
 Had it sunk forever, so far,
 It couldn't have dragged as now it does
 When I fling it over the bar.

And you can preach as long as you like,
 But as long as the bar is there,
 I'll spend the last penny that I can earn;
 Why, what in the deuce do I care
 For saintly women, or earnest men,
 Or angels in human form?
 Good resolutions are nowhere compared
 With the love of the liquor warm.

Is it to strengthen this poor old frame
 That I empty the brimming glass?
 Ah, no – 'tis to bring it sorrow and shame

[*Unfinished*]

1 Creek rush I] Creek «rush» I *MS*

6 Had] [[I...]] *MS*

15 Good resolutions are] Good «resolutions» are *MS*

THE EARTH BORN

'1895', 17a-17b (A0022) [JSN], draft, 1 × 6-line stanza & 2 × 5-line stanzas, all cancelled; 21b-22a (A0027) [JSN], draft, 3 × 5-line stanzas; 26a-26b (A0031-2) [JSN], fair draft, 3 × 5-line stanzas.

17a-17b = A; 21b-22a = B; 26a-26b = C
The fair draft 26a-26b (C) is the preferred text.

Lord, I am down among the misty ways,
For fellowship and sympathy I yearn,
I cannot tell which way I ought to turn.
I long to see the red sun rise and burn
And scatter all this dull and dreary maze.

Lord, I am struggling through the gloom,
And watching very closely if I may
Catch but a glimpse of light from far away,
And longing much to hear the angels say
That for a pardoned sinner there is room.

Lord, I am watching, watching through the night
And listening for the heavenly harmonies,
Guessing and wondering at great mysteries,
At all my poor dim darkened vision sees.
Lord I am watching, watching for the light.

1-5] = *B* stanza 1
6-10] ≠ *A* stanza 2 (7-11), = *B* stanza 2
6 struggling through] struggling struggling through *A*
8] Catch[ing] but a [glance] glimpse of light from [of] far away *B*
10 pardoned sinner there] pardoned [sinner] there *A*
11-15] ≠ *A* stanza 3 (12-16), ≠ *B* stanza 3
11 watching through] watching [for the] in the *A* 12
11 I am watching] I [am] watching *B*
13 Guessing and wondering at] And wondering guessing at *A* 14
14 darkened] darkned *A* 15
15] Yes Lord I still am watching for the light *A* 16, *B* 15

Discarded stanza *A*, stanza 1 (ll. 1-6):

Lord I am down among the misty ways
Forgetting half of such things that I learn
Still preaching kindness and myself so stern
That friends and evermore return
While all the time so living love does burn
Deep down within me on cold weary days

THE EFFECTS OF THE CHARGE

‘1906’, 31a (A0069) [A], entitled ‘No need of a will’. ‘1908’, 5b (A0159) [A], entitled ‘The effects of the charge’. ‘1929’, 46a (A0635) [A], entitled ‘The dying philosopher’. ML MS A3038/3, 9a (B0070) [FN], transcription, entitled ‘An overcharge’. ML MS 3354/3, Item 2, 8/17a [EN], transcription. LaT MS 9419/3677, typed transcription, untitled, under heading ‘Limericks by John Shaw Neilson’ with sub-heading ‘Our Medical column’. NLA MS 1145/76, transcription [FN], entitled ‘An overcharge’. *The Clarion* 1 July 1909, p. 3, under heading ‘Our Medical column’.

‘1906’, 31a is the preferred text. The *Clarion* title is adopted as being more appropriate to the text.

An old man was dying at Nhill;
They said, Sir, you should make a will!
But he said, my dear folk,
I am just about broke –
The doctor has sent in his bill!

The *Clarion* reads:

An old man was dying at Nhill!
They said, “Sir! You should make a whill.”
He replied, with a smile,
“Is it really worth while,
Since the doctor has sent in his bhill?”

THE FORTUNE TELLER

ML MS 3354/2, Item 4, 13a –13b [JSN], fair draft.

Before the fortune teller two little maidens stood:
 One was as grave and solemn as a figure cut in wood,
 One was a laughing spirit of a gay and gladsome mood,
 And both were very eager to learn what e'er they could.

He took the grave maid's little hand, and said with sombre air,
 I see much poverty and pain, sorrow and work and care,
 But one good man will love you, and think you very fair.
 He looked into the maiden's face and lo – a smile was there.

He took the laughing maiden's hand and said, as if in play,
 You will have gold and silver, fine lands and dresses gay,
 But you'll never have a sweetheart and you will be old and gray
 And lonely – but the tears came as she pulled her hand away.

4] And both were very eager to learn | [all that] «what e'er» they could *MS*

8 lo – a smile] lo – a smile *MS*

12 lonely – but] lonely – but *MS*

THE FUNERAL

Nhill and Tatiara Mail 1 April 1893, p. 3. NLA MS 1145/76, p.18, transcription [FN], with a note ‘early rare verse’.

The *Nhill and Tatiara Mail* is the preferred text.

On the village edge the little boys
Were shouting aloud their childish joys.
They ceased their rowdy pranks awhile,
The rowdiest urchin did not smile,
The merry were wise, the bold were shy,
As they saw the funeral passing by.

The dark plumes then went down the street,
Down past the tavern where cross-roads meet,
Where men were drinking their wine and gin
With loud coarse laughter and drunken din.
The drunken were sobered, they knew not why,
As they saw the funeral passing by.

It passed on then by the quiet old manse,
The parson’s daughter was out by chance.
She stood at the gate, she saw the crepe,
The hearse, the mourners, the coffin’s shape.
‘Father’, she called, a tear in her eye
As she saw the funeral passing by.

Grey-headed was he – his form once straight
Was bent, his looks were far away.
He said as the funeral passed that day
‘How many forget we too must die
Till they see a funeral passing by’.

It passed on then to the churchyard grey,
A wedding party came down the way.
As sorrow and joy passed side by side
The groom held closer the fair young bride.
These words she murmured, ‘Till death us part’.
He said ‘I love you with all my heart’.

THE GIRL OF THE PERIOD

ML MS 3354/2, Item 2, 6b, 7a-7b [JSN], draft, 3 stanzas, with fair draft immediately following.

Draft = A; fair draft = B

The fair draft (B) is the preferred text.

The minister stood in the pulpit
 And preached in his bitterest manner
 Against all the follies of fashion,
 And thundered and thundered and thundered
 Against the poor girl of the period.

The lecturer stood on the platform,
 Condemning as vile and deceitful
 The num'rous devices of women,
 And specially strong did he thunder
 Against the poor girl of the period.

The editor sat in his sanctum
 And put all his poor wits together
 In one superhuman endeavour,
 To wipe out forever if needed,
 This terrible girl of the period.

- 2 bitterest manner] bitterest [fashion] manner *A, B*
 7] [And used all] || Condemning in accents of thunder *A*
 8 women] woman *A*
 9 And] But *A*
 10 the poor] [this] the poor *A*
 11 "The Editor sat in his sanctum" *A, B*
A has 2 cancelled lines following line 12:
 [To wipe out for ever if needed
 This terrible girl of the period]

THE GOOD AND THE TRUE

ML MS 3354/2, Item 2, 2a [JSN], fair draft.

They are faithful, they are few:
Oh, the work they have to do
In this sneering jeering world
Where the lip of scorn is curled,
Where the weak are flogged along
For the pleasure of the strong,
Where all things are sifted out
And all creeds are tossed about.
In the hottest thickest fight
They are clad in radiance bright,
They are weary, weak and worn,
They are hailed with shouts of scorn:
They are waging war with sin.
Will they ultimately win?

8 creeds] creed[s] *MS*

THE GRAY DIGGER

‘1906’, 21a-21b (A0059-60) [A], fair draft, with three stanzas under title ‘The digger grey’ and stanza 4 under heading ‘continued Digger Gray’.

A cheerless day, and the sun was low,
 There was little life or warmth or glow.
 On a bare brown hill I saw him there
 The gray rain spitting on his gray hair.
 Faint was my heart, I had naught to say –
 I feared, I hated, that digger gray.

Soon as I looked I saw his trade –
 In his skinny hand was a short sharp spade.
 His mouth was cruel, his eyes were droll,
 He started digging a narrow hole.
 I stood beside him and strove to say
 Tell me who art thou, Oh digger gray?

He answered me nothing at all, and when
 I still did question he paused – and then,
 (Till my blood ran cold and my hatred grew,
 The rain was falling, my hands were blue –
 I dared not run, for he bade me stay)
 I dig a hole said the digger gray.

All the shadows rose up for me,
 I saw what the digger gray can see.
 The children laughed and the priest read prayers,
 The pedlar peddled his many wares –
 In the hush of dark or the light of day
 They all come home to the digger gray.

Title and text] The spelling *gray* is used throughout the poem and is used here for consistency.

2 glow] grow *MS*, a mishearing on Annie’s part

15 my hatred grew] my [faint heart] «hatred» grew *MS*

16]«The rain was falling my hands were blue» *MS*

THE HORNY FELLOW

‘1906’, 2a-2b (A0040-1), 11b-12a & 13a (A0050-1) [A], draft, 9 stanzas with extensive renumbering, some [JSN]. ‘1908’, 32a, 32b-33a & 34a (A0188-9) [JSN], a part-line under title, headed ‘7 Last verse’, 4 stanzas numbered 1-4 and 2 part-lines, one each under numbering for stanzas 5 & 6.

The chronology is uncertain but it looks as if the ‘1906’ MS is a first draft with 2 stanzas discarded and the ‘1908’ MS a revision of ‘1906’ which was abandoned. The ‘1906’ draft has stanzas as follows: 2a-2b, 4 stanzas numbered 1, [2] 1, [4] [‘stanza last’] ‘second last’ [JSN] and [3] ‘the last’ [JSN]; 11b-12a, 3 stanzas numbered [5] 2, [3] [6] (3) and [3] 7; 13a, 2 stanzas, the first numbered 4 and the second unnumbered. ‘1908’, 32a has the title, heading ‘7 last verse’ and the first 3 words of a line; 32b-33a has 4 stanzas numbered 1-4; and 34a has numbering for 2 stanzas, 5 & 6, with a few words of the first line of each stanza under each number and space left for the completion of the stanzas.

‘1906’ = A; ‘1908’ = B

‘1906’ is the preferred text: the ordering of the stanzas is necessarily conjectural.

He walks along slowly by creek and hill,
As mild-eyed as a boyish student dreaming.
He pulls the mighty logs into the mill
To meet the blue twin saws whistling and screaming.

He pulls the golden wheat sacks, four tier high,
Over the weary sand, confusing, blinding.
Red is the driver, brick-red is the sky,
The great wide wagon tyres tearing and grinding.

1-4] = A stanza numbered [2] 1; ≠ B stanza 1

1] He creeps along by river creek and hill B

2 As mild-eyed] As softly B

3 pulls] hauls B

4 blue twin saws] big ⟨twin saws⟩ B

5-8] = A stanza numbered [5] (2); ≠ B stanza numbered 2

5] He pulls the buff brown wheat bags 3 tiers high B

6] Through the long days of dust confusing blinding B

8 tearing and grinding] forever grinding B

Continued overleaf...

He pulls the wool o'er many a creek and hill,
 O'er dazzling plains, God-cursed and man-forsaken.
 In the long seasons rivers dry and fill,
 The dust dries hard, the flowers, the grasses waken.

He pulls the creaking wagon axle deep
 Through treacherous creeks, over the sandy ridges.
 He crawls into a little town asleep,
 He flounders on the planking of the bridges.

Famine he knoweth well, and heat and thirst,
 Seldom he sees the best, but all the worst.
 The gold is light, for all the quartz and gravel,
 All the vicissitudes of inland travel.

And what is his reward? A well tanned hide,
 Warnings of many colours, curses horrid.
 And if through sheer hard work he has not died
 And should grow fat – a bullet in the forehead.

Here's to thee honest friend, brave, patient, strong,
 Red roan or black, brindle or brown or yellow.
 Here's thy good health in something cool and long
 Thou mild-eyed well deserving horny fellow.

9-12] = *A* stanza numbered [3] [6] (3); omitted *B*

13-16] *A* stanza numbered 4; ≠ *B* 9-12

13] He winds far out among a world of sheep *B* 9

14] Through dismal plains and o'er the sandy ridges *B* 10

15 crawls] walks *B* 11

16 on] of *A*, a possible mishearing [*A*]

17-20] = *A* unnumbered stanza following stanza numbered 4; omitted *B*

21-24] = *A* stanza numbered [4] ['stanza last'] 'second last' [*JSN*], with comment '2 last' [*A*]; omitted *B*

25-28] = *A* stanza [3] 'the last' [*JSN*]; omitted *B*

25 thee] the *A*

Discarded stanzas

A stanza numbered 1:

I do not sing of that illustrious prince
 Whose throne is in the brimstone red and yellow
 Years in years out I['ve] known him ever since
 I was a boy – this honest horny fellow

A stanza numbered 3, renumbered 7:

Strange merchandise is his from far-off lands
 He hauls the [frog] «flour» he hauls the fiery liquor [*JSN*]
 What is his profit at the white man's hands
 Curses and many a cruel cat and flicker

Continued overleaf...

B stanza numbered 4:

Where mirage glistens in the miles of salt
And where the dense scrub groweth darker thicker
How patiently he moves from halt to halt
He mills the flour he pulls the fiery liquor

The part-lines at *B*, stanzas 5, 6 & 7 'Last verse' read:

Here to thee [32a, numbered 7 'Last verse']

All the dumb creature [34a, numbered 5]

And what is his reward [34a, numbered 6]

THE HOUR IS LOST

NLA MS 1145/73 [A], fair copy, dated 27 June 1906, the top right-hand portion of the leaf torn off.

The Bookfellow 14 March 1907; *GDC*; *HS* 50; *BLP* 60; *CP* 44.

Receipt dated 6 July 1906, NLA MS 1145/62.

Stephens marked lines 11-14 in *GDC* 1 with a slash and wrote ‘This <is> the bit’ in the margin.

The fair copy is the preferred text and incomplete lines have been completed from the *Bookfellow* text.

The hour is lost – was ever hour so sweet,
 Fruitful of blessings, friends and honeyed words?
 The sunlight in the faces – at our feet
 The world, bright, beautiful, its flocks and herds,
 Foliage of forests, choruses of birds —
 O happy time, why did we stand downcast?
 We should have leapt for love, but now the hour is past.

The hour is lost – scarce had we time to mark
 The glory of the green, the sky’s soft blue;
 And it came silently as comes the dark,
 Our hearts burned hot within us ere we knew —
 All suddenly we said, can this be true?
 This golden time was ours, and now downcast
 We stand dumb and amazed – alas, the hour is past.

1 hour so sweet] hou[r so sweet] *MS*

2 blessings] blessing *HS, BLP, CP*

2 and honeyed words] and [honeyed words] *MS*

3 the faces] our faces *GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

3 our feet] our [feet] *MS*

7 is past] is pa[st] *MS*

10] It came as silently as comes the dark *HS, BLP, CP*

11 us ere] us, Ere *MS*

12 can this] can it *GDC*

12] Then suddenly we said can it be true *HS, BLP, CP*

THE HUMMER

‘1906’, 3b-4b (A0042-3) [JSN], draft.

Dost know that gentle bird
 They call the hummer?
 He is both seen and heard
 In early summer.
 His hopes are high
 And he keeps an eye
 On each newcomer.

When summer heat is sore
 And stout hearts sicken
 He chirps his tale once more
 As chirps a chicken
 Till some kind heart
 Doth means impart
 His voice to thicken!

His clothes are somewhat frayed,
 His eyes are bleary,
 He hath no call or trade
 He seemeth weary.
 He views mankind
 And seeks to find
 A brother beery.

Full oft I see him stand
 Unblessed and blinking.
 He takes me by the hand
 And never winking
 Till in the end
 A coin I spend
 To see him drinking.

Thirsty and yet he smokes
 As smokes a steamer,
 Seldom indeed he jokes;
 Is he a schemer
 With plans designed
 To shake mankind,
 Or just a dreamer?

1 Dost know that] Dost «know» that *MS*

3 He is] [His hopes] He is *MS*

12 kind heart] kind heart[s] *MS*

24 He takes] And «He» takes *MS*

Continued overleaf...

Sometimes when hustling round
 I hear a roaring,
 Or snort, or whistle shrill
 That shakes the flooring.
 The ceilings bend —
 It is my friend
 Dead drunk and snoring!

Grave as a bishop he
 Is not officious;
 Most like a raven free,
 Quick-winged, suspicious.
 Him all men know,
 A carrion crow,
 Black-souled and vicious.

Dost know the gentle bird
 They call the hummer?
 He is both seen and heard
 In early summer.
 His throat is dry,
 He hath an eye
 For each newcomer.

The earth is thirsty, yet
 His thirst is greater.
 The sand is dry you bet
 At the Equator.
 But from them all
 He'd take a fall
 For he's a crater.

38 Or snort] Or [wh] snort *MS*

39 That] The *MS*

40] The ceilings [besnt] bend *MS*

58 His thirst] [But] [his] His thirst *MS*

59 The sand] The [world] «sand» *MS*

THE KING IMPETUOUS

‘1906’, 21b (A0060) [A].

A parson had got in at Windsor –
Said Edward, how goes the world’s sin sir?
The parson said, well –
And the King, how the h-ll
Did the chap at the gate let you in sir?

Title and line 2] The reference is to Edward VII who ascended the throne in 1901 and died in 1910. His affability and dandyism made him a popular figure with many of his subjects. See also ‘The king is dead’ and ‘The king is bald’.

THE LAND WHERE I WAS BORN

‘1906’, 1a-2a (A0039-40) [A], fair draft. ML MS A849/104-5 [?], fair copy. ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], 2 stanzas, with comment ‘Never been printed’, this cancelled and further note ‘Book’.

The Bookfellow 7 February 1907, p. 6; *GDC*; *HS* 8; *BLP* 12; *CP* 8.

Receipt dated 11 September 1906, NLA MS 1145/20.

[JSN - RHC] c. 1933, NLA MS 605/32 (corrections to proofs *CP*); 25 February 1934, NLA MS 605/62-69 (corrections to proofs *CP*).

‘1906’, 1a-2a = A; 849/104-5 = B; 4937/10-1 = C

The fair copy (B) is the preferred text.

Have you ever been down to my countree
 Where the trees are green and tall?
 The days are long and the heavens are high
 But the people there are small.
 There is no work there, it is always play,
 The sun is sweet in the morn;
 But a thousand dark things walk at night
 In the land where I was born.

Have you ever been down to my countree
 Where the birds filled up the Spring?
 The parrots screamed from the honey trees
 And the jays hopped, chattering.
 Strange were the ways of the water birds
 In the brown swamps night and morn;
 I knew the roads they had in the reeds
 In the land where I was born.

1-8] ≠ C 1-8

1 countree] country C, throughout

2 are green and tall] are ever so tall C 2

3 The days] Where the days C 3

5] No work is there; it is always play C 5

11 parrots . . . honey trees] parrot . . . honey[ed] trees A

14] In the brown swamps [in] the morn A

Continued overleaf...

Have you ever been down to my countree?
 Have you ridden the horses there?
 They had silver manes, and we made them baulk
 And plunge and gallop and rear.
 We were knights of the olden time
 When the old chain mail was worn;
 The swords would flash and the helmets crash
 In the land where I was born.

Have you ever been down to my countree?
 It was full of smiling queens;
 They had flaxen hair, they were white and fair,
 But they never reached their teens.
 Their shoes were small and their dreams were tall,
 Wonderful frocks were worn;
 But the queens all strayed from the place we played
 In the land where I was born.

I know you have been to my countree,
 Though I never saw you there,
 I know you have loved all things I have loved,
 Flowery and sweet and fair.
 The days were long, it was always play,
 But we – we are tired and worn;
 They could not welcome us back again
 To the land where I was born.

19 baulk] prance *Boo*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

29 small and their] small [but] «and» their *A*

33-40] ≠ *C* 9-16

33 been to] been in *A*

35 things I have loved] things I loved *A*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP* • things I love *C* 11

36 Flowery and sweet] flowery, sweet *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

37] Many a mile of the long mist lies *C* 13

38 But we – we are tired] But we[re] we are tired *A* • But we, – we were tired *GDC*, *HS*

39] But oh 'twas a sweet world that we knew *C* 15

40 To the land] 'Twas the land *C* 16

THE LOVE OF LIGHT

Nhill and Tatiara Mail 7 June 1893, text dated 'May 30th'.

'Truly the light is sweet!
It is a pleasant thing to see the sun.'
So sang King Solomon
Long years ago, and we can still repeat
'Truly the light is sweet!'

Thank God for all the light!
The light for all mankind
It maketh all things bright,
It bringeth great delight
To many a weary mind.

The sick man loves the light,
The night is Oh, so long!
 He has no rest.
The ever-gnawing pain
Half maddens his poor brain.
His mind is sore distressed,
 He prays for light,
The thing that he loves best.
He prays, and God is kind.
The sweet light comes and soothes his weary mind.

The bridegroom and the bride
 Both love the light.
She stands close by his side:
She says the sky is clear,
The sun is warm and bright.
Tho' every day must bring a certain night
 Let us be of good cheer.
God loves us all, and he blesses us with light.

The old man loves the light.
His step is feeble and his hair is gray,

1-2] Cf. Ecclesiastes 11:7-8: Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun: But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity. *AV*

Continued overleaf...

The Love of Light (cont.)

He has short time to stay,
He soon will pass away.
While shadows herald the approach of night
He looks, and loves to look upon the light.
The light is very kind,
It shineth everywhere.
Far in the sin-cursed town
This holy light falls on
Unholy places there.

It shines upon the sea,
The great wide open sea.
Its glory never dies
Out of our wondering eyes
Wherever we may be.

The light is full of love
And sweetest sympathy.
It kills the thought of care,
It banishes despair.
All things go merrily
Beneath its kindly glow.
It maketh all things bright
Around, above, below.
It bringeth great delight,
It maketh all things bright,
We dearly love the light.

THE LOVER SINGS

‘1906’, 2b, 3a & 5b (A0041 & A0044) [A], draft, 6 stanzas, 1 cancelled; 10a-10b (A0048-9) [A], fair draft, 5 stanzas; 11a-11b (A0049-50) [A], draft, 5 stanzas. NLA MS 1145/73 [A], fair copy, dated ‘2 Nov, 1906’ [AGS].

The Bookfellow 1 June 1912, p. 154; *GDC*; *HS* 41; *BLP* 86; *CP* 37.

Receipt, dated 13 December 1906, NLA MS 1145/19. AGS - JSN 7 December 1906 (offers to act as N’s agent and comments on the poem). JSN - RHC 19 March 1934, LaT MS 8910, Box 1206/4(b) (suggestions for autograph lines for *CP*). JSN - JD 21 October 1934, NLA MS 1145/68 (finished this and ‘It is the last’ quite quickly, ‘inside a month’).

Stephens wrote that ‘The lover sings’ and ‘It is the last’ were ‘truly poetic’ but ‘very imperfect’, and told N that he would have to spend ‘considerable time in revision’ before submitting the revised version ‘for approval’. It seems likely therefore that the subsequent alterations, seen in the *Bookfellow*, are Stephens’s. He later read lines 17 & 18 as speech and altered the proofs of *GDC* to correspond with this reading; he cancelled ‘His’ at line 17 and added ‘My’ in the margin, underlined lines 17 & 18, and added on Copy 1 ‘?suppose we put the song-words in italic, as if a quotation – the actual song. What do you think? Same style as Pretty Gleaner. Or let it stand?’ He also questioned the wording of lines 31 & 32 with a question mark and suggested alteration in the margin of Copy 1, and again, underlined the lines. N circled this last stanza and marked it with crosses in the margin to indicate the need for revision.

The first draft consists of 2 stanzas (without title) numbered 1 & 2 at ‘1906’, 2b and continues at 3a with 3 stanzas numbered 1-3, with stanza 1 cancelled and stanzas 2 & 3 renumbered 3 & 4. The second draft has 5 stanzas numbered 1-5 at 10a-10b, and the third draft at 11a-11b has 5 stanzas with stanzas 1 & 3 only numbered. The first and second drafts are similar, the third has 2 rewritten stanzas and revisions, and the fair copy has a further rewritten stanza and revisions. The fair copy has an error made in copying at line 17 with a part-line omitted and part of line 18 taken up to line 17.

‘1906’, 2b, 3a & 5b = A; ‘1906’, 10a-10b = B; ‘1906’, 11a – 11b = C; NLA MS 1145/73 = D

The fair copy (D) is taken as the base text. The error in line 17 is corrected by reference to the fair draft C. The *Bookfellow* has an inspired alteration in line 20, possibly Stephens’s, and this is incorporated.

A and B are listed in the notes and transcriptions of drafts A & B are shown separately as notes.

Continued overleaf...

It is not dark, it is not day,
 The earth is quiet'ning in the dew.
 Shall we not love her? all men may.
 Lo, here a lover passes too.
 Down a green shadowy path he goes
 And in his hand he bears a rose,
 Still singing that his heart is true.

Creeps the low night cloud where the eve
 Groweth still thicker, and anon
 The lover sings – and doth he grieve
 For red-lip kisses three days gone?
 Hark how he sings, high heavenly clear,
 Chief messenger of light to cheer
 The brown earth and that bides thereon.

Listen, and ye shall leave the earth,
 Brooding no more o'er baser things.
 His lily-love hath tears and mirth,
 Like to a running flower she clings.

- 1-7] ≠ *A* stanza 2; ≠ *B* stanza 1; ≠ *C* stanza 1
 2 is quiet'ning in] is quieting in *C* • lies quivering to *Boo*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*
 3] [All men can love her if they may] *C*
 6] [In his right hand he bears a rose] *C*
 8-14] ≠ *A* stanza [2] 3; ≠ *B* stanza 2; = *C* stanza [2]
 8 low night cloud] 'cloud' omitted in the fair copy *D*, an error in copying • low darkness
Boo, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*
 8] Creeps [below] «the low» night cloud [at] «where» the eve *C*
 9 still thicker] more gloomy *Boo*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*
 10] The lover sings [how shall] «and doth» he grieve *C*
 15-21] ≠ *C* stanza 3, also shown separately with *A* & *B*
 15 ye] we *Boo*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*
 15] He is the Emperor of the earth *C*
 16 o'er] on *Boo*
 16] His love hath heard deep whisperings *C*
 17-18] lines are italicised in *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*
 17] His lily-love hath that like to a [rest of line blank] *D*, an error in copying •
 His lily love in tears and mirth *C* •
 My/ [His] lily love hath rosy worth [AGS] *GDC*
 17 His] My *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*
 18 running] happy *Boo*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

Continued overleaf...

Glories have come up in her eyes –
 Wrapt in a fire he leaps, he flies.
 Not for himself the lover sings.

In every loveless lane or way
 Hearts have been heavy, prison-cold.
 For all who only moan and pray
 Still doth he sing – he sang of old,
 Joy-bearer, bard of better things.
 Not for himself the lover sings,
 Singer of Summer uncontrolled.

Mourners move inward from the gloom –
 Not for himself the lover sings –
 Give us, they cry, the buds, the bloom,
 All paradise and many Springs.
 Star follows star in the dull gray,
 Deep is the dark, it drinks the day.
 For very love of God he sings.

- 19 her eyes] his eyes *Boo, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*
 19] What is it that he fears or feels *C*
 20 he leaps he flies] = *Boo, GDC, HS, BLP, CP* • he falls he flies *D*
 20] Lo soon he stoops and stooping kneels *C*
 22-28] ≠ *A* stanza 5; ≠ *B* stanza 4; ≠ *C* stanza [4]
 22] [From] «In» every loveless lane and way *C*
 23] [For hearts that have a prison cold] *C*
 25] [Lo how] «Still doth» he sing he sang[s] of old *C*
 26 Joy bearer] Joy [better] bearer *C*
 29-35] ≠ *A* stanza [3] 4; ≠ *B* stanza 5; = *C* stanza [5]
 29 inward] o/[i]nward [AGS] *GDC* Copy 2 & Copy 4 • onward *HS, BLP, CP*
 31] Give us [they cry the] the living?/buds the bloom [AGS] *GDC* Copy 1
 32] The long light on our journeyings *HS, BLP, CP*

‘1906’, 2b, 3a & 5b (*A*) & 10a-10b (*B*) read:

A stanza 1 (2b), *A* stanza 1 (3a), cancelled:

- He is the Emperor of the Earth *A* (2b)
 He is the [Empire] Emperor of the world *A* (3a)
 He is the boldest of the Kings *A* (2b)
 He is the proudest of the Kings *A* (3a)
 Proud is her pain and mad her mirth *A* (2b)
 Bright eyed she waits her hair is curled *A* (3a)
 Like to a running flower she clings *A* (2b), *A* (3a)
 What is it that he fears or feels *A* (2b)
 He hath not been a slave of art *A* (3a)
 So soon he stoops and stooping kneels *A* (2b)
 Boldly from out his full heart *A* (3a)
 Not for himself the lover sings *A* (2b), *A* (3a)

Continued overleaf...

A stanza 2 (2b), *B* stanza 1:

It is not dark it is not day *A* (2b), *B*
 The earth is quieting in the dew *A* (2b), *B*
 And all can love her if they may *A* (2b)
 And all [may] «can» love her if they may *B*
 Lo here a lover passes too *A* (2b), *B*
 A down the darkning path he goes *A* (2b), *B*
 And in his hand he bears a rose *A* (2b), *B*
 Still singing that his heart is true *A* (2b), *B*

A stanza [2] 3, *B* stanza 2, *C* stanza [2]:

In the warm stillness of the eve *A*, *B*
 Creeps [below] «the low» night cloud [at] «where» the eve *C*
 No wondering star as yet has shone *A*
 No saffron star as yet has shone *B*
 Groweth still thicker and anon *C*
 He would not if he could believe *A*
 In his glad heart he may not grieve *B*
 The lover sings [how shall] «and doth» he grieve *C*
 That all love [hurries] «hastenes» to be gone *A*
 For red lip kisses lost or gone *B*
 For red lip kisses three days gone *C*
 His is the message all may hear *A*
 Hark how he singeth high and clear *B*
 Hark how he sings high heavenly clear *C*
 That will not hurt or fail or fear *A*
 Chief messenger of light to cheer *B*, *C*
 The brown earth or that bides thereon *A*
 The brown earth and that bides thereon *B*, *C*

B stanza 3, *A* ∅:

He is the Emperor of the Earth
 Close by him in the heart of things
 His lily love in tears [in] «and» mirth
 Like to a running flower she clings
 What is it that he fears or feels
 Lo soon he stoops and stooping kneels
 Not for himself the lover sings

A stanza [3] 4, *B* stanza 5:

Mourners come dripping in the gloom *A*, *B*
 Not for himself the lover sings *A*, *B*
 They journeyed far they found no room *A*
 In the wide earth there was no room *B*
 They came through blood and bickerings *A*
 Because of Palaces and Kings *B*
 So does he sing but dark and day *A*
 He holds the world while dark and day *B*
 Like shadows fall like shadows play *A*
 Float flickering in the white and gray *B*
 For very love of God he sings *A*, *B*

Continued overleaf...

A stanza 5, *B* stanza 4:

For all who perish by the way *A*
From every [lifeless] «loveless» lane and way *B*
For hearts that have a prison cold *A, B*
For all who only «mourn» and pray *A*
For all who only moan and pray *B*
Full voiced he sings – he sang of old *A, B*
Joy bearer bard of better things *A, B*
Not for himself the lover [things] sings *A*
Not for himself the lover sings *B*
His songs intrepid uncontrolled *A*
Singer of Summer uncontrolled *B*

THE MAN WHO PRAYED

‘1906’, 16a-17a (A0054-6) [JSN], draft, 8 stanzas with stanza 5 cancelled and a replacement stanza written immediately following.

'Twas in the time when oranges
Surrender all their green for gold,
'Twas in the time when lemon trees
Are bitten by the bitter cold.

'Twas in the time when butterflies
Seek in the wetted earth a home
And the bewildered honey bees
Sleep in the heavy honey comb.

'Twas in the time when buttercups
Move shyly to the face of day
And silver hatted mushrooms rise
Like little people in a play.

'Twas in this time my love fell ill,
Because of the evil winds that blew.
Her sister and her father prayed,
And I – I fell a-praying too.

I looked straight up into the sky,
I shut no eye, I bent no knee.
With all my being long I cried
To God to give my love to me.

Oh, many a night good neighbours came
And many a cheery tale they told,
Of the bright world and market days
And all that people bought and sold.

3 lemon] Lemon *MS*

5] Twas in the time in [the] time when Butterflies *MS*

8 comb.] comb. *MS*

9 buttercups] buttercup[s] *MS*

10 day] Day *MS*

16 I – I fell] I – I fell *MS*

Continued overleaf...

One night my dear love spoke my name.
I said, what is it aileth thee?
She whispered, all the air is dark –
It was the last she said to me.

28 It was] [And then s] It was *MS*

Cancelled stanza 5 reads:

[Not as the holy did I pray
With their closed eyes «cannot» they [see]
But in a rage to God I prayed
To leave my little love with me]

THE MILLIONAIRE

Nhill and Tatiara Mail 22 March 1893.

The millionaire is a mighty man,
Right from Beersheba even to Dan.
What is virtue? and what is truth?
What is honour and worth forsooth?
All to the backseats, sit you there,
Make room for the mighty millionaire!

'What are his virtues? What has he done?'
Says John Smith's daughter or John Brown's son.
Silence! Silence! have charity.
A millionaire is a rarity –
Ignore his vices and breathe a prayer
To God for this mighty millionaire.

But is it true that he drinks and swears,
And that his morals are light affairs?
And is it true that he gained by fraud
These mighty millions we love to laud?
Hush! Hush! show charity everywhere –
But most of all to the millionaire.

True, he has faults – but then we're all
Prone to evil and liable to fall.
Whiten his blackness all you can
Call him a Christian gentleman,
Give him a cushioned and easy chair –
All hail to the mighty millionaire!

2 Beersheba . . . Dan] Beersheba, one of the oldest places in Canaan at the extreme south and Dan, the most northern city of Canaan.

THE MIRTH-MAKERS

Nhill and Tatiara Mail 24 January 1894.

Who will dance on a weary day
To chase all troublesome things away?
I will dance, a sunbeam cried,
I will dance by the sandy shore,
By the castle wall and the cottage door
I'll dance as I never danced before
And mirth will follow me far and wide.

The day is weary and very long:
Who will sing us a gladsome song?
I will sing, said a little bird,
Songs as sweet as you ever heard,
I'll sing merrily all the day
And all sad things will hurry away.

Who will laugh in the midst of pain
To make this old world glad again?
I will laugh, said a little stream,
Things are not so bad as they seem;
I will laugh as I run to the sea
And the waves will answer me merrily.

THE MOTHER INTERVENES

‘1906’, 27b (A0066) [A].

Said a man to his wife up at Murchison,
See this nice springy cane I’ve been purchasing –
It will tan his young hide –
You monster, she cried,
You unnatural old wretch you would hurt your son.

THE OLD MAN'S WORRYING

There are two discrete versions of this poem, the first written c. 1896 and the second, a revision, post-1906.

THE OLD MAN'S WORRYING [1]

Australasian Journal 1 March 1897, p. 214.

The morning star is hardly up, the clock is striking four,
The frosty air is creeping through the keyhole of the door.
The neighbouring cocks around about are crowing lustily,
The old man's hair is snowy white, but out of bed jumps he,
For the old man's worrying, a-worrying and hurrying,
The old man's worrying, a-worrying constantly.

The girls and boys are long since wed, and scattered far apart,
A lonely feeling's creeping round about his poor old heart.
Aye, long and hard have been the years, the joys were short and few,
Old-time friends have long since gone, and he must soon go too.
So the old man's worrying, a-worrying and hurrying,
The old man's worrying his poor life's winter through.

The crops are very backward, and the rains are very late,
The hens are in the garden – they can fly the garden-gate,
The harrow-bar is broken, and the buggy mare is lame,
The old man's worrying, and wondering who's to blame.
The old man's worrying, a-worrying and hurrying,
The old man's worrying, a-worrying just the same.

The old man's worrying – the wheat is all in ear,
The hot winds play the mischief just about this time of year.
The cockspur's on the fallow, and the stinkwort's on the plain,
There's a sudden rise in cornsacks, and a sudden fall in grain,
So the old man's worrying, a-worrying and hurrying,
The old man's worrying, a-worrying again.

The weather's hot and horrid, and the old man's got the blight,
The grain is small and shrivelled, and the bags are very light.
The poor old man is losing heart, for all he looks so brave,
The lawyer folks have written up about those bills he gave.
So the old man's worrying, a-worrying and hurrying,
The old man's worrying, a-worrying to the grave.

THE ONE REQUEST

‘1906’, 20a (A0058) [A]. ‘1908’, 6b (A0160) [A]. NLA MS 1145/76, untitled, transcription [FN], an example of Frank’s rewriting perhaps.

‘1906’, 20a is the preferred text.

There was a young lady at Stawell,
She fell off a bike – such a fall!
When they asked what they’d do
She said, tell me true,
How is my hat on, that is all.

NLA MS 1145/76 reads:

A modern young lady of Stawell,
For their Annual fancy-dress ball,
[Said] she would go as Eve –
And would you believe
She simply wore nothing at all!

THE PAIN OF RETRENCHMENT

ML MS A354/2, Item 1, 1b–2a [JSN], fair draft with 4-line stanzas. NLA MS 6946/21 [FN], typed transcription.

Nhill and Tatiara Mail 26 July 1893, p. 3, with 8-line stanzas.

The poem is a response to the economic recession that hit Melbourne in 1891 and subsequent government actions. (Anderson and Blake note the impact on Neilson's sister Maggie, who was a sewing mistress at Tarranginnie school at the time: teachers' salaries were cut by the government. *John Shaw Neilson*, p. 50)

It is likely the variants in the published text are editorial and the fair draft is taken as the preferred text.

Our credit's down below zero, our lines don't pay for the grease,
Our taxes are very grievous, and yet they still increase.
That we must retrench and economise is very, very clear –
But how can the Governor manage on seven thousand a year?

Look at these bloated fellows who repair the permanent way –
For years they have robbed us to the tune of seven shillings a day.
What to them is money? it only buys them beer!
But how can the Governor manage on seven thousand a year?

The haughty sewing mistress has robbed us far too long,
We have given her twelve and sixpence which was absolutely wrong.
Her 'screw' shall be eight and fourpence – she'll take it never fear –
But how can the Governor manage on seven thousand a year?

How can he feed the lordlings who come from over the seas?
'Twas ever his great endeavour their dainty palates to please.
Depression prices will help him, but champagne still is dear –
Then how can the Governor manage on seven thousand a year?

2 grievous] grievous *MS*

3 economise] econimise *MS*

4 Governor] Governer *MS*

5 these] those *N&TM* 9

8 But how can] But how [many] can *MS*

11 'screw' . . . take it never] 'screw' . . . take [it] never *MS*

13 the lordlings] those lordlings *N&TM* 25

15 but champagne] [B]but champagne *MS*

Continued overleaf...

When we are honoured by visits from Persons of Consequence
 Who ride all over our railways all at our own expense,
 We're morally bound to feed them, or else the world will jeer –
 Then how can the Governor manage on seven thousand a year?

18 over our railways] over [the] our railways *MS*

Line endings *N&TM*:

Stanza 1: 1 zero || 2 grease || 3 grievous || 4 increase || 5 economise || 6 clear || 7 manage || 8 year ||

Stanza 2: 9 who || 10 way || 11 tune || 12 day || 13 money || 14 beer || 15 manage || 16 year ||

Stanza 3: 17 mistress || 18 long || 19 sixpence || 20 wrong || 21 fourpence || 22 fear || 23 manage || 24
 year ||

Stanza 4: 25 lordlings || 26 seas || 27 their || 28 please || 29 him || 30 dear || 31 manage || 32 year ||

Stanza 5: 33 visits || 34 consequence || 35 railways || 36 expense || 37 them || 38 jeer || 39 manage ||
 40 year ||

THE PAINTING OF A PICTURE

‘1895’, 4b–5b (A0010) [JSN], fair draft, signed; 6a–6b (A0011-2) [JSN], fair draft, with some renumbering of stanzas; 8b–9a (A0014) [JSN], fair draft. ML MS A3038/2, 2a–3a [FN], a transcription with a note ‘written before 20 years of age’.

‘1895’, 4b-5b = A; ‘1895’ 6a-6b = B; ‘1895’, 8b-9a = C
The third fair draft at 8b-9a (C) is the preferred text.

What is your answer painter pray?
Will you come for an hour a day?
Thanks so much – you’ll come, you say.

Speak to her gently, very mild.
She is my all, my only child.
The love I bear her is strong and wild.

Sweet is summer, and bright and long,
The breath of summer will make her strong.
Doctors very often are wrong.

The doctor spoke in an off-hand way –
I hardly caught what he had to say,
He seemed to be in a hurry today.

1-3] ≠ A 1-3; ≠ B 1-3
1] = A 2, B 2
2] = A 1, B 1
3] I’ll hear what [is your] «doctor» has to say A
4-6] ≠ A 4-6; ≠ B 4-6
4 gently very] softly and very A
6 love I] love that I A
7-9] ≠ A 7-9; ≠ B 7-9
7] Summer comes and is bright [strong] and long A •
Thank God the summer is bright and long B
8 will make] may make A
9] You know the doctors are often wrong A, B
10-12] ≠ A 10-12; ≠ B 10-12
10] How is your picture painter pray A
11] The doctor spoke in an offhand way A
12] I hardly caught what he had to say A •
[How is the picture pray] | He seemed in a hurry and wouldn’t stay B

Continued overleaf...

Summer is gone, cool is the night,
My little rosebud is very white.
I never have seen her eyes so bright.

The servants' whispers fell on her ears
And the big blue eyes filled up with tears,
And then I shuddered with many fears.

I asked the doctor again today
(He spoke in his usual off-hand way)
I hardly caught what he had to say.
Hasten painter, hasten pray –
My little rosebud withers away.

* * *

Thank you painter, your art is rare.
Surely those are her blue eyes there –
Let me look at her sunny hair.
Thank you painter, your work is rare.

She wore a bud. You painted it, yes –
Two white rosebuds and one white dress,
One more angel, and one bud less.

13-15] *A* ∅; *B* ∅

16-18] ≠ *A* 16-18; ≠ *B* 16-18

18] And I was shook with a thousand fears *A, B*

19-23] = *A* 19-23; ≠ *B* 19-23

20 He spoke] And he spoke *B*

22 Hasten painter] Hasten hasten painter *A*

24-27] ≠ *A* 24-27; ≠ *B* 24-27

25] Surely that is her sunny hair *A*

26] And those are her soft sweet blue eyes there *A*

26 sunny hair] yellow hair *B*

28-30] *A* ∅; ≠ *B* 28-31

28 bud. You] bud – [ah] – You *B* • bud. You *C*

29] Two white rosebuds and one white dress *B* 29

30] I love you painter. In my distress *B* 30

30] An additional line, follows line *B* 30: You came and you made my sorrow less *B* 31

Continued overleaf...

Everybody seems so gay,
 But all my life is coloured gray –
 My little rosebud's withered away
 And I look at her picture all the day.

31-34] *A* ∅; ≠ *B* 32-35

33 rosebud's] rosebud has *B* 34

Discarded stanzas

A & *B* stanzas numbered 5, lines 13-15:

No pain she suffers her face is sweet *A*
 She does not suffer her face is sweet *B*
 Seldom I hear the pattering feet *A*
 But I seldom hear her pattering feet *B*
 When will the picture be complete *A, B*

A stanza numbered 9, lines 28-31:

The angels colour the sweet white dress
 And the dear little satin shoes Ah yes
 I love you Painter I must confess
 For you have lessened my sore distress

A stanza numbered 10, lines 32-35:

What is the price I have to pay
 Thank you painter again I say
 I will not hurry you now – no – nay
 My little rosebud withered away

THE PEARL OF PRUDENCE

‘1906’, 27a (A0065) [A].

A dashing young man at Fitzroy
Proposed to a maid – she was coy,
And a prudent young miss,
For she said, tell me this –
Will your salary run to it dear boy?

5 run to it] run [to] it *MS*

THE POET SPEAKS

‘1906’, 8b-9a (A0047) [A], fair draft.

By all my creditors unpaid,
By all my lyrics yet to be,
By everything that’s good for trade,
O Alfred, Alfred, think of me.

Long have I written of the Spring,
Of bushlands ghastly in their gloom,
In fact I worked up everything
From wallabies to wattle bloom.

Of horses much I used to write,
Horses that never failed to gee;
How they could gallop through the night!
O Alfred, Alfred, think of me.

The shearer saunters through my lays,
The swagman’s swag again is rolled,
I know the red hot glimmering days,
The heat, the hunger, and the cold.

I have been singing in the dust,
Sore stricken in the time of drought;
Still in my country will I trust,
But Alfred, are you going to shout?

I have been thirsty for so long
I long to hear the glasses clink;
Great is the singer and the song;
O Alfred, Alfred, let us drink.

Alfred] Alfred Deakin (1856-1919), the second Prime Minister of Australia, with reference to the poet, Alfred Tennyson, implied.

See also ‘No time to jest’.

THE PREHISTORIC PLAYER

‘1906’, 20b (A0059) [A]. LaT MS 9419/3677, typescript, untitled, under heading ‘Limericks by John Shaw Neilson’. A second version occurs at NLA MS 1145/76, typescript [FN] entitled ‘Nightmare’. *The Bookfellow* 7 March 1907.

‘1906’, 20b is the preferred text.

A player who ran a small show a
Good number of years before Noah,
Said, your servant now begs
You won't throw any eggs,
For it hurts does the egg of a Moa.

2 Noah] The story of Noah is told in Genesis 7. *AV*

THE PRETTY GLEANER

NLA MS 1145/60, 25 [FN], 1 stanza under heading ‘4th stanza of Pretty Gleaner’; NLA MS 1145/60, 91 [JSN], a part-stanza under title ‘Pretty Gleaner’.
The Bookfellow 14 March 1907, p. 7; *GDC*.

Receipt dated 6 July 1906, NLA MS 1145/62.

Stephens marked the 5th stanza (lines 33-40) of the *GDC* text with the comment ‘Improve’ and N encircled lines 29-40 and marked the block with crosses in the margin to indicate the need for revision. The stanzas in the NLA notebook are attempted revisions for the *GDC* text. The *Bookfellow* is the preferred text.

The wheat is ripe, and sultry is the summer,
 Mine eyes are weary of the white and gold;
 My thoughts go back to an old-fashioned story
 That in an ancient story-book is told.
 ‘In the beginning of the barley-harvest’;
 I read – it is a tale of love and truth,
 And of a very tender tearful gleaner
 Dear little Ruth.

You were a pretty widow with no lover,
 And all excuses must be made for you;
 A dark and glorious Moabitish beauty
 You sighed, and sighed, ‘Whatever shall I do?’
 For life was bare to you – the skies were ashen –
 ‘Twas hard indeed to sit and dream of Fate:
 Love was a glorious garden – you were standing
 Outside the gate.

You knew no tricks at all at table tennis,
 You had no golf to fill the weary days,
 You had no bike, you had no boating parties,
 You had no theatres with problem plays.

2 weary of] weary with *GDC*

4 an ancient story book] The Bible

5-8] Cf. Ruth 1: 22 and 4: 13: So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem, in the beginning of barley harvest . . . And Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife. *AV*

Continued overleaf...

You knew not ankle pads nor ladies' cricket,
 You never knew the splendour of a ball –
 You had (as far as I can make out) clearly
 No chance at all.

Had you but lived in these our later ages
 The whole thing had been otherwise arranged:
 'A lady, stylish, young and prepossessing,
 Would like to meet (photos may be exchanged)
 A gent, with means respectable and loving' –
 Alas, alas, in your soft sunny youth
 They had not learnt the art of advertising
 Dear little Ruth.

Still the girls glean – but not for wheat or barley;
 Demure and very maidenish of mien
 Are they when out on this important mission –
 'Tis theirs – and it is only theirs to glean.
 And what they seek, it does not greatly differ
 From what they sought long centuries before;
 They haunt the pretty parlour now, instead of
 The threshing floor.

21 nor ladies'] or ladies' *GDC*

33 the girls glean] do they glean *GDC*

NLA MS 1145/60, 91 reads:

A gent with means respectable and loving
 But you – You had the short cut to the Truth
 No dull Hypocrisy stood [in] your bosom
 Dear little Ruth

NLA MS 1145/60, 25 reads:

Widows are widows still as they we[re] then dear
 Delight[ful]ly at home to single men
 Is it not strange about these dreadful men dear
 They are so slow and stupid now and then
 [I'm sure the girl[s] say his career is done for]
 Doubtless the girls said his career is done dear
 What could he see in her – her face her clothes
 A curious fact although you [court] «caught» but one dear
 (I'll chance it but I'm not supposed to pun dear)
 You caught their Boaz (beaux) [sic]

THE PRINCE OF PAIN

‘1895’, 19b-21a (A0025-6) [JSN], fair draft, 5 stanzas of 11, 14, 16, 13 & 16 lines; 28a-28b (A0033-4) [JSN], fair draft, 4 stanzas, 2 × 10 lines, 1 × 17 lines and 1 × 7 lines.

The second fair draft is the preferred text. The first draft is shown separately in the notes.

I killed all joy within them,
 I killed their hope and pride,
 And their love of better things
 Slowly died.
 I sickened them with care
 When they tried to say a prayer,
 They were heavy with despair
 And their minds were black and bare,
 So my friends who are in Hell
 Said I did it very well.

The millions are my slaves:
 They sweat and groan and run,
 They tell the blackest lies,
 Each struggles on and tries
 To grasp at what he can.
 A woman or a man
 Can never be at ease
 While I am on their track.
 I follow where I please,
 They cannot keep me back.

The children leave their play
 And labour all the day:
 I call and they obey.
 The old men all fear me,
 And old women too:
 They have so little life,
 Their hopes are very few,
 But they leave loved ones behind,
 And they know I have no mercy
 Warring with all humankind.

3-4 things || Slowly died] things | slowly died *MS*

Continued overleaf...

So they creep into their graves
 Glad enough to get away,
 And in their dying hours
 I often hear them say
 Bitter, bitter things of me.
 They are dying mournfully,
 They are dying every day.

I am very hard and old,
 I am strong and stout and bold:
 I have many friends in Hell
 And all kinds of misery
 I know well.
 I sicken heart and brain:
 I am Poverty – the Prince of Pain.

40 friends] friend[s] *MS*

‘1895’, 19b-21a reads:

I am very hard and old
 I am strong and stout and bold
 I’ve many friends in Hell
 And all kinds of misery
 I know well
 I never rest or sleep
 But a steady watch I keep
 While I shout triumphantly
 All your happy dreams are vain
 I am Poverty
 The Prince of Pain

The men are weak with fears
 And the women melt in tears
 They have waged a war with me
 Many years
 But they crumbled into dust
 As all men and women must
 They have fought and they are dead
 And their children fight instead
 But the children too will fall
 I will triumph over all
 And will shout right merrily
 All your fighting was in vain
 I am Poverty
 The Prince of Pain

Continued overleaf...

I [have] killed all joy within them
 I [have] killed their hope and pride
 And their love of better things
 Slowly died
 I sickened them with care
 [They] When they tried to say a prayer
 They were heavy with despair
 And their minds were black and bare
 Then the husband cursed his wife
 And the women cursed her life [sic]
 And they both fell deep in sin
 And my friends who are in Hell
 Said I did it very well
 And I muttered with a grin
 All your little dreams were vain
 I am Poverty
 The Prince of Pain

[They are all afraid of me]
 I have made them all fear me
 The young men tall and strong [sic]
 Trembles when I come along [sic]
 And the gay light-hearted maid
 Hangs her head and is afraid
 When she sees my majesty
 Little children cease their play
 And must labour all the day
 When I call they must obey
 They must answer instantly
 All their little dreams are vain
 For I am Poverty
 The Prince of Pain

The old men all fear me
 And [the] old women too
 They are dying wearily
 And the hopes they have are few
 But they leave loved ones behind
 And they know I have no mercy
 Warring with all humankind
 So they creep into their graves
 Glad enough to get away
 And I often hear them say
 Bitter bitter things of me
 They are dying every day
 While I shout triumphantly
 Human strength is all in vain
 I am Poverty
 The Prince of Pain

THE PROMISE

‘1895’, 10a-11b (A0015-7) [JSN], draft.

They stood together and their hearts were sore;
 They had not known any pain before.
 His words were light, far lighter than his mind,
 And she was fearful, like all womankind.

A brother’s love is full of hope and cheer,
 A sister’s love is full of clinging fear.
 He said, Oh little sister, we must part.
 One thing I ask of you before I start –
 Oh will you always pray to God for me
 When I am far away upon the sea?
 Now promise little sister, will you say
 That for your sailor brother you will pray?

She said, the sea, I hear, is very wild;
 I’ve always heard so since I was a child –
 And wild and wicked are seafaring men,
 And I may never see your face again.
 In after years she ne’er forgot the day
 When in her tears she promised, I will pray.

* * *

The sailor’s was a wasted, sin-cursed life;
 The sailor’s sister grew to be a wife;
 When midnight blackness fell upon the seas
 It was her task a tiresome child to please.
 The sailor cursed aloud by night and day;
 The sailor’s sister ne’er forgot to pray.

6 we must part] we [pa] must part *MS*

17 In after] I[n] after *MS*

21 the seas] the [«deep»] seas *MS*

24 ne’er] n’er *MS*

Continued overleaf...

And when at length her husband fell asleep
 And she was sad and old, dim thoughts would creep
 Across her mind – dim thoughts of other days,
 When she was young and walked the pleasant ways;
 When with her well-loved brother by her side
 She talked and in sweet love was satisfied.

One winter night, she by her bedside knelt,
 To tell her God the troubles that she felt.
 She prayed for all who travelled by the sea
 And one old sailor where'er he might be.
 He has not written home for many years,
 So long, so long, she thought with rising tears.

And then she felt a presence in the room;
 A holy light did banish all the gloom.
 Does Death come thus, she thought with sudden awe –
 Ah no – a blessed kindly face she saw:
 These were the words she heard the angel say:
 Your brother sleeps – you need no longer pray.

25 at length] a[t] length *MS*

31 her bedside] her [beside] / bedside *MS*

33 She prayed] [T] She prayed *MS*

34] [For one old sailor more] *MS*, preceding line 34

35 written home] written [hope] home *MS*

THE SACRIFICE

An extended version of a limerick, ‘Something new in millinery’, occurs at ‘1915’E, 20a, also entitled ‘The sacrifice’ [2].

THE SACRIFICE [1]

The Bulletin 14 September 1905, p. 2; *GDC*; *HS* 57; *BLP* 65; *CP* 51.

Stephens underlined line 11, the second part of line 19, and line 20 and wrote ‘weak very’ beside each in the margin of the *GDC* text, and N encircled the entire piece and marked it with crosses in the margin to indicate the need for revision.

The *Bulletin* is the preferred text.

White for the grave, strange-eyed and sable-dressed,
Is this my love so quietly doth lie?
The sunlight of her sweetness, her dear love,
All that she gave falls to the earth to die.
Love’s utter sacrifice, life’s old long pain,
Lost, lost – and shall this ever live again
O, God of pity?

White for the grave, all grace, all glory gone.
My love was young – my love was sweet and warm,
And so we dreamed as quiet voyagers.
Most hateful wreck, too cruel strife and storm!
The grave will cry its hunger every hour,
But oh, to spoil the glory of a flower!
Why, why – O God of pity?

Yet in her rest she shall not see grey hairs,
Nor children trampling on the holy things.
Though every day be dark, still in the dark
Love looks for light – the old hope climbs and clings
Up through all tears. In the black gloom and pain
My torn heart shrieks – give me my love again
O, God of pity!

3 dear love] dear grace *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

13 But oh] Yet thus *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

14] O god of pity *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

16 Nor children] Or children *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

20 shrieks] cries *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

16 Nor children] Or children *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

20 shrieks] cries *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

THE SEEKER

Two separate pieces occur with this title, both written c. 1906: one is a poem of 14 lines, the other, a limerick that occurs with three titles – ‘A difficult matter’, ‘An anxious seeker’ and ‘The seeker’ [1].

THE SEEKER [2]

‘1906’, 5a (A0043) [A], fair draft.

When he was young, he stood upon the ships
 And saw the great sea washing many lands;
 Soft music heard from many women’s lips,
 And caught from many honest hearts and hands
 Old mysteries and many strange commands.
 Doubting at times, he lingered with the dead
 ’Mid lilies gracious, roses white and red.

When he was old he sat and spoke at ease
 To friends innumerable – blue, crimson, white –
 That could not tarnish him, nor taunt, nor tease
 And so he loved, and waited for the night.
 Sometimes he smiled, and seemed to read aright,
 But not from lofty peaks or lighted towers –
 He saw the soothing parables, the flowers.

4 many honest hearts] many «honest» hearts *MS*

12 seemed] seem[ed] *MS*

14] He [plucked] «saw» the soft slow soothing parables «the flowers» *MS*

THE SEXTON RECONCILED

‘1906’, 28a-28b (A0066-7) [JSN]. ‘1929’, 43b (A0633) [A], entitled ‘Callous behaviour by a widower’. ML MS 3354/3, Item 2, 6/11a [EN], transcription, entitled ‘Callous behaviour by a widower’. LaT MS 9419/3677, typed transcription, untitled. *The Bookfellow* 7 March 1907, p. 7.

‘1906’, 28a-28b is the preferred text.

A poor woman died down at Lexton,
And she was the wife of the sexton:
Do you know what he did
When they screwed down the lid?
He said, well here’s luck to the next ‘un.

THE SIGHT OF MEANS

‘1906’, 20b (A0059) [A].

She had a small brother named Aaron –
He said, Sis has got her false hair on!
She cried, you young pest!
There’s a bull-dog ants’ nest –
I’ll get you and hold you down thereon!

1 Aaron] Adron *MS*, a likely mishearing

THE SILVER LINING

‘1906’, 27b (A0066) [A].

There was a young man of Port Pirie,
Remarkably sanguine and cheery;
When his mother-in-law
Got a touch of lockjaw,
He said, there's a rest for the weary!

THE SPIRIT OF CONTRADICTION

‘1906’, 28a (A0066) [A]. ‘1907’, 2a (A0091), [A], untitled, under heading ‘Port Fairy’.

There was a young girl of Port Fairy,
Exceedingly queer and contrary.
Her Pa was quite bald –
But when anyone called
She used to say, isn’t Pa hairy!

THE SYMPATHISER

‘1895’, 2a-2b (A0007-8) [JSN], fair draft.

Mother, she said, that man is weak,
That gray-haired woman's face is sad;
That little girl is pinched and thin
And Oh, she is but poorly clad.

Why are these people all so poor?
What is the cause, why is it so?
You silly girl, the mother said,
Why should you ask or wish to know?

Her tongue was silenced – but her heart
Beat quicker as her tears fell down.
This simple child of nature wept
For all the poor folk in the town.

That night she lay upon her bed.
She tried to, but she could not sleep,
For ragged forms and faces pale
Were in her eyes and made her weep.

Aye, call it folly if you like,
And laugh because her tears fell down:
She had a heart, and so she wept
For all the poor folk in the town.

THE TALES WE NEVER HEAR

‘Prize poems, essay, novelette and manuscript magazine: From the competition held in connection with the Australian Natives National Fete, Exhibition Building, January 26, 1893’, p. 38, one of the ‘Prize literary contributions’, with heading ‘Junior poem on any subject. By “Donovan Blair” (J. S. Neilson, Nhill)’. NLA MS 1145/62, a printed card. NLA MS 1145/9, the same, inscribed ‘To J. K. for Xmas 1941’ and signed Shaw Neilson. McKimm MS, typed transcription [FN].

FN – Hugh Anderson 4 December 1951 (the poem was printed as a broadsheet: ‘There were printed a few hundred – by Trodel & Co Melb. in 1894. John attempted to sell them in a house to house endeavour in Nhill 1894 but did not dispose of many’).

The Australian Natives publication is the preferred text.

Though we all alike are fashioned
By the great God’s wondrous will,
Though we grow and live together,
We are almost strangers still.
We are far too rash in judging,
We are far too prone to sneer,
And the tales that are the saddest
Are the tales we never hear.

What a strange wild march our life is.
Care o’ertakes and crushes joy,
Woman kills the sweet girl-creature,
Man destroys the laughing boy.
On and on, and ever faster,
Life is short, and death is near,
And the tales that are the saddest
Are the tales we never hear.

Could we know the wild emotions
Of a single human heart,
All its madd’ning cares and crosses,
As it plays its little part,
We should love each other better,
We should count all kindness dear,
For the tales that are the saddest
Are the tales we never hear.

4 almost] only *card*

Continued overleaf...

There are words we cannot utter,
There are thoughts we cannot tell,
Some are pure enough for Heaven,
Some are vile enough for Hell.
On this old world rolls and with it
Hearts that love, and hope and fear,
And the tales that are the saddest
Are the tales we never hear.

THE THING THAT HATH BEEN

‘1906’, 5a-5b (A0043-4) [A], fair draft. ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], with comment ‘Unpublished’. There are substantial differences between the two texts and it is unlikely that Stephens would have altered the text to the extent seen here, although there may be some unauthorised editorial revision. The fair draft is less obviously poetic and lighter in tone and these texts are therefore treated as discrete versions.

THE THING THAT HATH BEEN [1]

‘1906’, 5a-5b (A0043-4) [A], fair draft.

Did ever boy seek out sequestered nook
 Leaving his morning’s lesson all undone
 To rob a bird? to paddle in a brook?
 To meet his friend the forest, and the sun?

Did ever maiden musing much at prayer
 Walk, in a wink, a million miles away,
 To find some new manoeuvring for her hair?
 Some frock to glorify a summer day?

Did ever King in any age or clime
 Do evil deed, and father many lies,
 And leave a son to hear the people’s rhyme –
The King has gone to God in Paradise?

Did ever dreamer drink the blue air
 His soul upspringing with the saffron day?
 Did poet prate of women false and fair?
 Or wrest a secret from the quiet flowers?

1 sequestered] sequested *MS*

7 manoeuvring] manveouring *MS*

11 rhyme] rymne *MS*

THE THING THAT HATH BEEN [2]

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS]. The MS punctuation is reproduced.

Did ever schoolboy sweet seclusion seek –
Leaving his morning lessons all undone –
To rob a bird, to crawl along a creek,
To meet his friends, the forest and the sun?

Did ever maiden, kneeling long at prayer,
Drift in a dream a million miles away,
To bind a new-born blossom in her hair,
To frame a frock to crown a summer's day

Did ever King in any age or clime
Do evil deeds and live among the Lies;
And leave a son to hear the people's rhyme
The King has gone to God in Paradise?

Did ever dreamer, drinking the bright air
In ecstasy among the saffron hours
Prate of a woman's Eyes, or Lips, or Hair,
Or filch a secret from the quiet flowers.

THE UNSOLVED

‘1906’, 8a-8b (A0046-7) [A], draft, a 5-stanza poem with stanzas numbered [1], 2-5. Stanza 4 lies at the bottom of 8a with 3 lines and is rewritten at top of 8b with 4 lines. A new stanza follows, stanza 5, headed ‘2nd verse’.

I got me hence and wore my sweetest smile,
To buy a postage stamp – I gave a shilling;
The lordly person glared at me meanwhile,
Haughty and hard and cold, and most unwilling.

The sun is still – the earth is running round
Turning, as turns a dog chain on a swivel:
I do not dabble much in things profound –
But why are civil servants all uncivil?

Why? Why? I said, still pondering as I walked,
By all the lost souls ever doomed to shrivel,
By all the seers that ever winked or talked,
Why are the civil servants still uncivil?

They have good pay – their offices are warm
In winter – and throughout the summer season
Serenely cool – they know not hail or storm.
For all their Rage there is not any reason.

- 1] I got [my hints] «me hence» and wore my sweetest smile *MS*
3 at me] a[t] me *MS*
6 swivel] Shirel *MS*, a mishearing?
7 dabble] dapple *MS*, an obvious mishearing
12 Why are] Why is *MS*
16 Rage] [rage]Rage *MS*

Continued overleaf...

Some things there are that man may never mend.
Lawyers must live, and editors must drivel.
No doubt it will be so until the end –
The civil servant must remain uncivil.

17 that man] [but] «that» man *MS*

18 drivel] [dribble] drivel *MS*

Discarded stanzas

Stanza 2, lines 5-8:

Compel and get aboard the morning train
I sought a stern-eyed person at the station
Half over-awed suavely I tried in vain
And he he used a wicked [explanation] exclamation

Stanza 4, lines 13-15:

They have good pay their offices are warm
[Im] In winter and serenely cool in summer
They know not drought or dust or hail or storm

THE VICTORY OF JOHN

‘1906’, 23b-24a (A0062) [JSN], fair draft.

I met a charming eight year old
Upon her way to school –
Her pinafore was starched and ironed,
Her face was sweet and cool.

Where are your parents my sweet maid?
She smiled – they are away.
And why, I said, does brother John
Not come with you today?

They have gone to see the doctor sir.
She smiled – her eyes were blue –
They put the fastest horses on
And Johnny, he went too.

What ailment has thy mother now?
Or is thy father ill my dear?
Speak little one – she smiled, and smiled,
And hesitated still.

Well sir, at last she shyly said
(She was a sweet-eyed lass)
Mother, she sent us all to play
Out on the barley grass.

First we all played at Snigar nuts,
And then at Kick the tin

3 pinafore was] pinafore [had] was *MS*

13 what] ‘What *MS*

15 Speak little one] Speak [little] little one *MS*

16 still.] *MS*

17 shyly] shy[ly] *MS*

19 (She . . . lass)] (She . . . lass) *MS*

21 Snigar nuts] <Snigar> nuts *MS*

Continued overleaf...

Then we put grass seed in our ears –
Just put them out and in.

We tried who'd get one furthest in
And didn't we have fun!
When all us tried then Johnny tried
And Johnny – well, he won!

24] Jus[t] put them out an[d] in *MS*

THE WAYFARER

ML MS 3354/2, Item 2, 1a-1b [JSN], fair draft. Lines 6,12, 22 & 38 are indented in the MS.

Where is your home
 Oh poor tired weary one?
 The day is done,
 The night is coming on,
 The way is very lone:
 Where is your home?

Have you no home?
 Is there no place of rest
 Where your poor soul distressed
 Might find a sweet release,
 A little time of peace?
 Have you no home?

I have no home.
 In all this wide, fair earth,
 And ever since my birth
 A traveller I have been,
 And many lands I've seen.
 Each night upon my way
 I have craved leave to stay
 And rest a little while:
 I've travelled many a mile,
 I have no home.

I am a stranger here,
 But then, what are we all?
 The great as well as small
 Have little time to stay.
 We came but yesterday,
 Tomorrow we must go,
 And who shall say they know
 The place to which we pass?
 Many have gone, alas
 Never has one returned.

Though we have yearned and yearned
 To hear of what is there
 (They say that it is fair)
 Take courage soul of mine,
 There is a life divine,
 There is a home.

30 gone, alas] gone, alas *MS*

33 Though] Tho, *MS*

THE WEDDING RING

ML MS 3354/2, Item 3, 3b [JSN], fair draft.

Harry, you're blushing,
That's a bad sign.
Don't be offended
Old mate of mine,
Mention the thing –
A wedding ring.

See, there is Harry –
She's by his side,
Tall, light-complexioned,
Beautiful bride.
Lucky dog he –
Well, we shall see.

Happy's the bridal
The sun shines upon.
See, he is putting
The wedding ring on,
Now it is done –
These two are one.

* * *

What will I give for it,
Your wedding ring?
Really, I couldn't think
Of such a thing.

15 See he] See [they] he *MS*

THE WHITE FLOWERS CAME

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS] with comment ‘this was sent to Bulletin last summer. Never heard anything of it’, and a further comment ‘Book’]. ML MS A2471-1, typescript (Bertram Stevens’s papers).

The Bulletin 10 August 1905 (the Red Page); *GDC*; *HS* 81; *BLP* 103; *CP* 73.

JSN - AGS, draft, ‘1906’ (concerning a request from Bertram Stevens for poems for an anthology; N’s preference is for ‘Sheedy, The child we lost or The white flowers came’). JSN - RHC 25 February 1934, NLA MS 605/62-69 (a correction to proofs *CP*). JSN - JD 21 October 1934, NLA MS 1145/68 (this was one of a number of verses that N ‘turned out . . . one winter’).

The Bertram Stevens text differs from the A.G. Stephens MS which in turn differs from the *Bulletin* text. In contrast, the *GDC* text is the same as the *Bulletin*. Stephens’s comment suggests that his typescript predates publication in the *Bulletin* and it is likely that he altered the poem for publication. (The variants sound more like Stephens’s work than Neilson’s.) On this basis the typescript (B) is taken as the preferred text.

ML MS 4937/10-1 = A; ML MS A2471-1 = B

It was the sweet month tremulous
With dancing joys that none may quell,
The white flowers came upon the world;
They taught the old-time Parable.

Death would not let him stay for Love,
The watchers wept, the lights burned low.
He sighed, he felt the long cold kiss,
And yet it seemed not good to go.

Two damsels underneath the stars
Lay listening on the cool sweet ground:
Faint as the falling dew they heard
The song that spins the world around.

1 It was the] It was in the *B* • ’Twas in the *Bul*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

5] Life looked so very sweet a thing *B*, *Bul*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

6 watchers] watches *A*, a typographical error

7 He sighed . . . the long] He moved . . . a long *B* • He moved . . . the long *Bul*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

10 sweet] green *B*, *Bul*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

Continued overleaf...

Strange bickerings rose where Death and Life
 Sat quarrelling on the green hillside.
 Soft as a blessing spoke the bells,
 Blue sky and blossom for a bride.

'Twas in the summer heat and storm
 A thin white widow woman prayed.
 In many a lighted town was told
 The Parable of man and maid.

'Twas in the calm of eventime,
 Cool earth, and sky delightsome, mild,
 God's pity came – in tears he saw
 The blue eyes of a little child.

13 bickerings] bickering *Bul, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

16 blossom] blossoms *B, Bul, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

17] Toiling and tired at close of day *B, Bul, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

18 white] *GDC* has 'pale' and 'or? pale thin' [AGS] added in the margin

20 Parable] mystery *HS, BLP, CP*

21 calm] gray *B, Bul, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

THE WOOLLY SHEEP

The Bulletin 16 November 1905.

My gentle friend, dear golden-headed Tot,
Walks out one wet, warm morning in the Spring
To show me this, her last, her new delight
And I – I am prepared for anything.

The big bright eyes are proud. It is the pride
Of sweet possession – all her face is full.
I see before me in his long, soft clothes
A woolly sheep, delightful in his wool.

He skates around sedately through the room
And loud his praise the babbling cherub sings.
My eyes go wandering out the open door –
I think of woolly sheep and many things.

I see our thirsty sunburnt continent,
The wilderness where sluggish rivers creep.
They bear away thy burdens to the sea –
The land is all for thee, O woolly sheep.

For thee we grapple with the undergrowth,
For thee we spoil the glory of the trees.
All bloom must perish on thy heritage –
Begone, O singing birds and humming bees.

We store the trickling waters for thy sake,
We tap the bubbling rivers swift and deep,
A thousand feet below all bright and cool –
'Tis all because of thee, O woolly sheep.

Thy paths are in the far back-stretching scrub
Where rain scarce falls and grasses never grow.
Strange shrubs and trees will give thee sustenance –
Out, and still out, thy farthest heralds go.

We strip thee of thy treasures everywhere,
By dead dry plains and by the river-side.
The grim black ranges and the grave grey heath –
These too are thine – our land is warm and wide.

Continued overleaf...

But one sad thought is with us – we who toil
And toil, and suffer, nor one prize can keep:
They make us clothes from rags across the sea –
Thy wool is not for *us*, O woolly sheep.

Our flocks are out upon a thousand hills,
Our statesmen screech and all our trumpets blow,
And greedily the big ships take from us
The best and brightest wool the world can grow.

For all the millions in the smoke and mist
The white flesh must be beautiful and cheap,
As soft as flowers in spring-time tenderness –
Cold are thy little lambs, O woolly sheep.

TO A LITTLE FRIEND

ML MS 3354/2, Item 6, 2b [JSN], fair draft.

Will you love me little friend?
 You are very dear to me.
 Little heart so good and pure
 May I have your sympathy?
 I am earthy, of the earth,
 Teach me something of your mirth.

Let me clasp your little hand,
 Let me look into your eyes.
 Will you promise that although
 Grievous troubles may arise
 You will be to me a friend?
 You will love me to the end?

When the friends who love me now
 Find some grievous faults in me,
 When they think me harsh, unkind,
 Void of all sincerity,
 Will you love me just the same,
 Though I may be much to blame?

When the griefs of later years
 Come and dwell within your heart,
 When the brightest hopes that are
 Fail to make those griefs depart,
 If I'm living, little friend,
 I will love you till the end.

3 Little] [Yo] Little *MS*

9 promise that] promise [little] that *MS*

15 think me harsh] think «me» harsh *MS*

TO A LITTLE SINGER

‘1895’, 2b (A0008) [JSN], fair draft.

Thanks for your song my little friend,
It brought sweet memories near:
Ah – many of our brightest smiles
Are caused by what we hear:
How often does a simple song
A drooping spirit cheer.

Sweet singer, may your life be free
From Care, as was your song:
Oft may your voice in troubled times
Drive Care and Grief along:
May angels ever guard your path
And keep you from all wrong.

3 Ah] [How] Ah *MS*

TO MARY JANE

‘1895’, 17b-19b (A0023-5) [JSN], fair draft, 5 stanzas (95 lines); 26b-27b (A0032-0033) [JSN], fair draft, 4 stanzas (54 lines); 29a (A0034) [JSN], 1 stanza, cancelled and almost illegible. ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript, with comment ‘Printed? Where | Nhill, Oct. 31, 1894’ [AGS], (published text not located), 3 stanzas (33 lines).

17b-19b = A; 26b-27b = B; 29a = C; 4937/10-1 = D

It is unlikely that Stephens would have altered the text to the extent seen here without N’s authority, and the nature of the drafts strongly suggests a further revision by the author. The typescript MS 4937/10-1 (D) is therefore taken as the preferred text.

B is keyed to A in the notes and C is shown at the end.

Mary Jane, Mary Jane,
 You are very very fair,
 You are filling all this little town with sighs.
 A golden, glorious auburn is your hair
 And a soft, dreamy grey are your eyes,
 With your sweet angelic air
 Your’re an angel I declare,
 Mary Jane.

Mary Jane, Mary Jane,
 Very dainty are your feet,
 As you trip along the street
 All the people whom you meet
 Think you are extremely sweet;
 And the young men doff their hats
 And the old men gravely smile,
 And the other girls are looking
 Daggers at you all the while,
 Mary Jane.

Mary Jane, Mary Jane,
 When I sit within the pew
 And the parson reads and prays
 I scarcely ever understand
 A single word he says,
 For when I should be thinking
 Of my very sinful ways
 I am thinking all the blessed time of you.
 And I can’t control my eyes
 For they stare
 And they glare,
 And I cannot keep them looking
 For a moment anywhere
 But at you,
 Mary Jane.

Continued overleaf...

A 1-9 (omitted in *B*), (Mary-Jane not hyphenated in *B*):

Mary Jane Mary-Jane
 If you could only know
 The agonizing pain
 That I suffer and the woe
 My life is one long [g] sigh
 Through the summer hot and dry
 Through the winter wild and wet
 I am sighing even yet
 Mary-Jane

A 10-17, *B* 1-8:

Mary Jane Mary Jane *A, B*
 You are very very fair *A, B*
 Dreamy grey are your eyes *A*
 Dreamy gray are your eyes *B*
 And a most uncommon size *A, B*
 And a [golden] glorious golden auburn is your hair *A*
 And a glorious golden auburn is your hair *B*
 With your sweet angelic air *A, B*
 You're an angel I declare *A*
 You[r]«re» an angel I declare *B*
 Mary Jane *A, B*

A 18-37, *B* 9-28.

Mary-Jane Mary-Jane *A, B*
 Very dainty are your feet *A, B*
 As you trip along the street *A, B*
 All the people whom you meet *A, B*
 Think you are extremely sweet *A, B*
 Mary Jane *A, B*

(*A* 23 omitted in *B*)

And the young men lift their hats *A, B*
 And the old men blandly smile *A, B*
 [And while the other girls are looking Daggers] *A*
 And the other girls are looking *A, B*
 Daggers at you all the while *A, B*

(*B* has an additional line here)

Mary Jane *B* 18
 And even little boys *A, B*
 Playing marbles on the street *A, B*
 When troubled with the tripping *A* 30
 When troubled with the presence *B* 21
 Of your dainty little feet *A, B*
 Never dare *A, B*
 To rudely reprimand you *A, B*
 Or to swear *A, B*
 For even they are charmed *A, B*
 With the beautiful and fair *A, B*
 Mary-Jane *A, B*

Continued overleaf...

A 38-46 reads:

Mary-Jane Mary-Jane
 When I sit within the pew
 And the parson reads and prays
 I scarcely understand a word he says
 And when most certainly
 I really ought to be
 Thinking of my sinful ways
 I am thinking all the blessed time of you
 Mary-Jane

B 29-35 reads:

Mary Jane Mary Jane
 When I «sit» within the pew
 And the parson reads and prays
 I hardly ever understand
 A single word he says
 For my thoughts are all of you
 When I should be thinking of
 My sinful ways

A 47-53 (omitted in *B*):

And I can't control my eyes
 For they stare
 And they glare
 And I cannot keep them gazing
 For a moment anywhere
 But at you
 Mary Jane

A 54-74, *B* 37-54:

Mary-Jane Mary-Jane *A, B*
 You are proud and you are cold *A*
 You are very proud and cold *B*
 And you always speak of me *A*
 You [will] always speak of me *B*
 With serene severity *A, B*
 So I'm told *A, B*
 Mary-Jane *A, B*

(*A* 59 omitted in *B*)

But I would not now complain *A, B*
 I am getting used to pain *A, B*
 I shall never smile again *A, B*
 Mary Jane *A, B*
 For my heart is in a flame *A*
 All my heart is now aflame *B*
 And consumeth all my frame *A*
 It consumeth all my frame *B*
 But you're not the least to blame *A, B*

Continued overleaf...

(A 66 omitted in B)

So I wish you happiness *A*
 But I wish you peace and joy *B*
 All the same *A, B*
 Mary Jane *A, B*

(A 69 omitted in B)

I hope that you will marry *A, B*
 Some good man and true *A, B*
 A really good honest good man *A, B*
 And good enough for you *A, B*
 Mary-Jane *A, B*

A 75-95 (omitted in B):

In conclusion I may mention
 That I do not entertain
 The slenderest intention
 Of committing suicide
 Many men have suffered like me
 And nobly lived and died
 But I know one thing for certain
 I shall never smile again
 Mary-Jane
 I shall sigh a few more sighs
 I shall write a few more lays
 And I will – Well let me see
 I'd go and be a hermit
 And court all misery
 But that sort of thing has gone
 Out of fashion nowadays
 So I'll sigh a few more sighs
 And write a few more lays
 And try to reconcile myself
 To this world's ways
 Mary Jane

C reads:

[Now «I'm» very sweet is [...]
 And a rosebud's sweet to see
 But Mary Jane is sweeter
 Her voice to me is music
 A soft sweet harmony]

TO QUEEN ALEXANDRA

NLA MS 1145/60, 90 [JSN], 2 stanzas.

The Bulletin 31 August 1905, p. 36; *The Bookfellow* 15 June 1920, p. 130; *GDC* (omitted *GDC* 2).

The last three stanzas of *GDC* have been encircled and marked with crosses in the margins and the two stanzas at NLA 1145/60, 90 are replacement stanzas for those marked in *GDC*. The *Bookfellow* text is preceded by a notice of the publication of a forthcoming biography of Queen Alexandra with the comment that ‘these verses (now improved)’ were written ‘long ago’.

The *Bulletin* is the preferred text.

I saw your picture in a lady's paper:
It was a most improper thing to do –
Oh, please forgive me, dear Queen Alexandra –
 I fell in love with you.

I know (the daily papers always tell me)
Millions of hearts with loyal fires aglow
Beat for thee in the various little Britains –
 And mine bumps even so.

You never did, (I'm certain dear you didn't)
Or even think, a thing unkind or shady,
So long you've been, God bless you for it all,
 A quiet, married lady.

No other Queen could be so sweet as you dear,
Not Cleopatra, nor the one at Troy.
If you but tried you'd smite us all completely –
 Old buffer, man, and boy.

I dreamed one night (I had no pie for supper)
I saw you smile – you nodded once or twice.
I was the king of some important kingdom
 And things were going nice.

Title] Queen Alexandra: wife of Edward VII and daughter of Christian IX of Denmark.

10 Or even think] Or even thought *GDC*, *Boo*

12 married lady] English lady *GDC*

13 so sweet] as sweet *Boo*

Continued overleaf...

My legions moved, the earth was red with bloodshed,
 I saw my navies go, my navies come.
 I laid about me with big battleaxes –
 In fact I made things hum.

And lo, I woke – my tent door had been flapping.
 'Twas bright moonshine – I had not waked too soon.
 My dearest friends, they say I got a touch of
 The big round summer moon.

Had I but spoken once as I speak now dear,
 In your old home out there beyond the sea,
 From what I hear of old-time ways and notions
 'Twould have gone hard with me.

Perchance I had been taken to the Tower,
 Or else the King, in a tremendous passion,
 Had snicked my head off with a big rough hatchet –
 But that is out of fashion.

Kings now have altered all their little plans –
 They just go on like any other sinners.
 They smoke and smile and sit and see the play
 And sometimes speak at dinners.

Sorrows have fallen on thee, deep and sore –
 We all must have our troubles in our time.
 Just look at me – I find it such a bother
 To patch up this poor rhyme!

May Time deal fairly with thy fair sweet presence,
 May Death keep off his old cold clammy hand,
 And may the Drought and Rabbit keep afar from
 Thy fair green land.

May the good King grow jollier still, and fatter –
 Much dreaded by his foes each glorious year.
 Long may he smoke and be a fine old fellow
 And drink good British beer!

41-52] omitted *Boo*

49] May the good king your son grow ever fatter *GDC*

51 smoke and be] smoke till he's a *GDC*

Continued overleaf...

NLA MS 1145/60, 90 & *Bookfellow* lines 41-48 read:

And Queens no more urge on adventurous knights
To wear unhandy mail and awkward lances
They have committees now they kill Old Time *NLA MS*
They have Committees now and kill Old time *Boo*
At dull At Homes at dances *NLA MS*
At dull At Homes and Dances *Boo*

Of Queens of old of Queens that still persist
A bushman's knowledge is exceeding slender *NLA MS*
All that a bushman knows is dim and slender *Boo*
But in your face I saw the mother sweet
The woman brave and tender

TO QUEEN VICTORIA ON HER 74th BIRTHDAY

ML MS 3354/2, Item 2, 4b [JSN], fair draft.

Oh say, Queen Victoria, say
How are you enjoying it, eh,
On this happy morning in May
While the people are shouting hurray?
They hold you so dear, so they say.

Oh see, Queen Victoria, see
How your subjects wherever they be
Are drinking your health joyfully,
And some go for weeks on the spree
To show their intense loyalty.

What a lucky old lady are you,
With nothing whatever to do
But to sit there and collar your screw:
What a lucky old lady are you –
And no doubt you know it well too!

Title] Queen Victoria (1819-1901): Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland 1837-1901 and Empress of India 1876-1901.

TO SARAH ANN

ML MS 3354/2, Item 4, 12b [JSN], fair draft.

All the garden's white with blossoms
And the dew is everywhere;
There's a sweetness in the sunshine,
There's a sweetness in the air;
There's a naughty sunbeam dancing
On your rippling chestnut hair;
I have half a mind to kiss you
 Sarah Ann.

Do you really know that you are
Such a pretty little girl?
That your eyes are bright and gladsome,
That your hair's inclined to curl?
That your lips are red as cherries
And your pretty teeth like pearl?
That in fact you are an angel
 Sarah Ann?

11 eyes are bright] eyes «are» bright *MS*

TO THE DEPARTED

‘1895’, 9b (A0015) [JSN], fair draft.

Oh dearest do you think of me,
Oh do you love me yet?
God knows my days pass bitterly,
With bitter tears my cheeks are wet.

Dear friends I have, I love them well,
And they are very kind to me;
They speak – but Oh, they cannot tell
As you could tell heart history.

Oh dearest do you think of me?
Surely you never can forget
This heart that loves you faithfully,
This heart that fondly loves you yet?

3 days pass] day[s] pass *MS*

TOM McCANN

ML MS 3354/2, Item 2, 5a, 6a-6b [JSN], fair draft. ML MS 3354/2, Item 4, 12a, 13b, 14a-14b [JSN], fair draft entitled 'Oliver Hann' with stanza at 12a headed 'Last verse Tom McCann'. NLA MS 1145/76, p.17 [FN], transcription with comment 'Note by F.N. The following old Scotch rhyme should be set in as a preface to this ballad . . .' The poem also occurs in the 'Fable and fantasy dialogues' by Frank Neilson (where it is attributed to 'Alexander Kirkwood') and has the preface under the title.

The chronology is uncertain and MS 3354/2, Item 2, 5a, 6a-6b is therefore taken as the preferred text because it is the more finished, in a narrative sense, of the two authoritative texts. The second version is shown separately in the notes.

Never was boy so nicely reared,
 Never a boy such good things heard;
 Never did boy so curse and swear,
 Never did boy cause so much care
 As this young hopeful, Tom McCann,
 Son of an English clergyman.

McCann was a man of a musing mind,
 A bit standoffish, but not unkind;
 His wife, they called her a dear good soul,
 But quite unable to half control
 Such a boy as Tom McCann.

Boys are boys the wide world o'er,
 But some very bad ones are even more.
 Never did boy so scream and yell,
 Never did boy such falsehoods tell
 As this young hopeful, young Tom McCann.

He plundered bird's nests many a one
 And laughed and thought it jolly good fun;
 He grew in stature, he went to school,
 The master caned but he could not rule
 Such a boy as Tom McCann,
 Son of an English clergyman.

- 5] As this young [scamp of] «hopeful» a Tom McCann *MS*
 16] As this young [scamp of] «hopeful» a young T. McCann *MS*
 17 bird's] bird«'s» *MS*
 23 he got] he [went to] got *MS*

Continued overleaf...

He went to college, he got in debt
 He mixed with the very fastest set;
 He rowed one year in the Oxford crew,
 The best man in it – he looked it too.
 A strapping fellow was Tom McCann,
 Son of an English clergyman.

He took to betting, he took to drink –
 Lower and lower he seemed to sink.
 The tears come into an old man's eyes,
 A grey-haired woman sits down and sighs,
 All for the prodigal Tom McCann,
 Son of an English clergyman.

Disowned by his friends, disgraced at home,
 Out to the colonies he must come.
 A broken-down dandy, a jackeroo,
 He seeks fresh fields and pastures new –
 Poor foolish beggar, poor Tom McCann,
 Son of an English clergyman.

He found the station a trifle rough,
 He called the tucker villainous stuff;
 He quarrelled with the cook – the overseer
 Gave him the sack and he had to 'clear'.
 He carried his 'bluey' – poor Tom McCann,
 Son of an English clergyman.

He worked for a while on the western lines,
 He had a turn at the silver mines.
 He fought McGarry for twenty pounds
 And knocked him out in a dozen rounds.
 A real smart fellow was Tom McCann,
 Son of an English clergyman.

23 he got] he [went to] got *MS*

29] Poor foolish «beggar» poor Tom McCann *MS*

42 villainous] villanous *MS*

He died on a station somewhere out back
 (I heard from a fellow named Harry Black)
 He only lasted a day or so –
 The fever's sudden out there you know –
 That's where they buried Tom McCann,
 Son of an English clergyman.

Of all his doings I cannot tell –
 Let us forget them – 'tis just as well.
 The lads all liked him around this part,
 They said he wasn't so bad at heart.
 This is the story of Tom McCann,
 Son of an English clergyman.

MS 3354/2, Item 4, 12a, 13b, 14a-14b reads:

Never was boy so nicely reared
 Never a boy such good things heard
 Never a boy was thought so fair
 Many a fervent heart-felt prayer
 Rose to Heaven for Oliver Hann
 Son of an English clergyman

Boys are boys the wide world o'er
 The hearts that love them are often sore
 Who can tell what a boy may be
 All is hope and uncertainty

Numerous fights of his boyish days
 Brought him trouble as well as praise
 He had the whole school under his thumb
 Wherever he went – he made things hum

He went to college he got in debt
 He mixed with the very fastest set
 He rowed one year in the Oxford crew
 The best man in it – he looked it too
 A strapping fellow was Oliver Haun
 Son of an English clergyman

The world is wicked its ways are wild
 It careth not for a mother's child
 Many a time an old man sighs
 And tears come into a mother's eyes

Down on his luck disgraced at home
 Out to the colonies he must come
 Like many another jackeroo
 He seeks fresh fields and pastures new

Continued overleaf...

Away out back on the cattle run
 He saw that the glorious days were done
 The glorious «days» how good were they
 And the dear old land how far away

The station hands were a rougher set
 Than any other he'd ever met
 Though he soon began to understand
 The flowery talk of our sunny land

But the bush was dull for Oliver Hann
 Swift as a river his red blood ran
 And he felt the wild life in his breast
 And it could not would not let him rest

He worked awhile on the railways lines
 And had a turn [on] «at» the silver mines
 He fought McGarry for 20 pounds
 And knocked him out in a dozen rounds
 A real smart fellow was Oliver Hann
 Son of an English clergyman

We worked together I knew him well
 Where he has got to I cannot tell
 We had a drink and we said good bye
 It'll be three years [in] «next» July
 A strange wild fellow was Tom McCann
 Son of an English clergyman

NLA MS 115/76, p.17. Note by F.N.

The following old Scotch rhyme should be set in as a preface to this ballad

Monday's bairn is full of grace,
 Tuesday's bairn is fair of face,
 Wednesday's bairn is full of woe,
 Thursday's bairn is full of woe,
 Friday's bairn is loving and giving,
 Saturday's bairn must work for a living,
 Sunday's bairn will be straight and tall
 Happy and honest beloved by all.

'T WAS IN THE EARLY SUMMERTIME

The Bulletin 24 September 1903; *GDC*; *HS* 45; *BLP* 42; *CP* 40. (ML MS 3354/3, Item 5, is a photographic print of *GDC* 1.)

Stephens cancelled lines 6 & 7, 19 & 29 in *GDC* and added revised lines in the margin. He also cancelled an additional line not part of this poem that occurs as line 31 (a printer's error.)
The *Bulletin* is the preferred text.

Perchance it was of Chaucer's day –
Old Chaucer, cheerier soul than he,
Ne'er drank the good red wine of life,
And all his rhymes rang joyfully.
Or did it spring from some sad heart
That dwelt 'mid cypress gloom and rue?
Some dreamer who in shadows sang
Of sweetness that he never knew?
Poor quaint old half-forgotten rhyme:
 '*Twas in the early summertime.*

I dreamed a dream of gardens garbed
In many a bloom of pink and snow,
Of meadows where the rivers ran,
And woodland noises sweet and low;
The bold hills and the great calm sky,
The song-birds warbling far away,
The green wheat in the ear and all
The glory of a golden day,
They lilted to an old dead rhyme
 '*Twas in the early summertime.*

I dreamt of kisses and of tears,
A sweet warm world and wondrous fair,
Of lovers lingering in the gloom
And holy men at evening prayer;

6-7] «A dreamer wandering in the blue || Who in the slumbering sunlight sang» [AGS] *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

9] Poor old faint half-forgotten rhyme *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP* ('faint' corrected to 'quaint'

[AGS] in *GDC* 1)

11 gardens garbed] gardens clothed *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

19] «Poor old quaint half-forgotten rhyme» [AGS] *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

21 dreamt] dreamed *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

Continued overleaf...

Of singers and their brave old songs,
 Of flowers and many a field of hay,
 Of strong men riding out to war
 And children dancing at their play.
 Their feet beat out the pleasant rhyme,
 'Twas in the early summertime.

Five hundred years ago and more,
 Five hundred years, and I today
 Am sauntering in the bloom – and lo,
 A sigh, a kiss – they haste away.
 My heart beats happier for your loves,
 My heart is merrier for your joy.
 God's blessings come in sun and bloom
 To every love-sick girl and boy.
 Poor quaint old unforgotten rhyme
 'Twas in the early summertime.

29] «Poor old quaint half-forgotten rhyme» [AGS] *GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

30] An additional line follows in *GDC* and has been cancelled [AGS]:
 Where the twinkling colours blend

39] Poor old quaint unforgotten rhyme *GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

TWO LITTLE DREAMERS

ML MS 3354/2, Item 1, 6b [JSN], 1 × 3-line stanza, cancelled; 7b, 8a-8b [JSN], fair draft, 7 × 6-line stanzas. '1895', 7a-7b (A0012-3) [JSN], fair draft, 2 × 3-line stanzas & 4 × 6-line stanzas; 11b-12b (A0017-8) [JSN], fair draft, 6 × 3-line stanzas. NLA MS 1145/74B, typescript, 6 × 3-line stanzas (a transcription of '1895' 7a-7b).

3354/2-1, 6b = A; 7b, 8a-8b = B; '1895', 7a-7b = C; '1895', 11b-12b = D
The third fair draft, '1895', 11b-12b (D) is the preferred text.

One little sprite had black eyes and very wavy hair,
The other sprite had blue eyes and ringlets long and fair;
So they went to school together, and knew but little care.

I listened to their prattle, and she with eyes of blue
Said, when I am a woman I'll go and visit you,
And we'll have a talk together when we've nothing else to do.

I listened to their prattle, and she with wavy hair
Said, when I am a woman I'll go just everywhere.
I'll do just as I like then for no one then shall care.

The schooldays passed and vanished, sweet childhood's brightest things;
They had Life's joyous promise, they felt life's bitter stings.
Too seldom did they listen to God's deep whisperings.

1-3] ≠ A 1-3 (cancelled stanza); ≠ B 1-6; ≠ C 1-3

1 black] dark B 1

2 ringlets long and fair] was very very fair A 2

3 So . . . and knew] And . . . and they knew A 3, B 5-6

3] And they walked to school together a pretty little pair C 3

4-6] ≠ B 19-24; = C 7-12

4] The angels came to listen || And she with eyes of blue B 19-20 •

I listened to their prattle || and she with [wavy hair] eyes of blue C 7-8 •

I listened to their prattle | [and she with wavy hair | Said when I am a woman] and she with eyes of blue D 4

7-9] ≠ B 13-18; = C 4-6

7] The angels came to listen || And she with wavy hair B 13-14

8-9 Said, when . . . shall care] Said "when . . . shall care" C 5-6

10-12] B ∅; C ∅

10 childhood's] childhood[']s] D

Continued overleaf...

The black-eyed maiden married and sailed to foreign lands,
Where toil and tears and trouble wearied her heart and hands;
She said, we are but units, as sand grains in the sands.

Far in a noisy city, the blue-eyed dreamer's brain
All day with work is troubled – sometimes she says in pain,
The wide seas separate us – we shall not meet again.

13-15] *B* ∅; ≠ *C* 19-24

13] The black-eyed maiden married || [And sailed across the seas] | And sailed to other lands *C* 19-20

15 as sand grains] as [little] sand grains *C* 24

15 said, we are ... sands] said "we are ... sands *D*

16-18] *B* ∅; *C* ∅

Discarded stanzas

B stanza 2, lines 7-12:

They looked into the future
That mighty mystery
They thought the outlook pleasant
There was so much to see
They wished their girlhood over
They were eager to be free

B stanza 5, lines 25-30 & *C* stanza 4, lines 13-18:

[The bl darkeyed maiden married || And sa] *B*
The schooldays soon were ended *B*
The schoolboys soon were ended [sic] *C*
And gone was childish glee *B*
They said good bye to glee *C*
They looked less to the future *B*
[They thought] No loving lips rebuked them *C*
They still were [fair] far from free *B*
They still were far from free *C*
The present had its troubles *B*
They [pr] learnt to strive and struggle *C*
And many a mystery *B*
They longed for sympathy *C*

B stanza 6, lines 31-36:

The darkeyed maiden married
And sailed across the seas
To a young land and a fair land
But its beauty did not please
She loved the old land better
With a love that would not cease

Continued overleaf...

B stanza 7, lines 37-42 & *C* stanza 6, lines 25-30:

The other earns her[e] living *B*
 The other earns her living *C*
 In a busy city where *B, C*
 There are few who know her sorrows *B*
 There are few to know her sorrows *C*
 There are few her griefs to share *B*
 And few her griefs to share *C*
 And yet those little dreamers dream[s] *B*
 Alas poor little dreamers *C*
 Were Oh so bright and fair *B*
 Your dreams were very fair *C*

Line endings

B stanza 1 (lines 1-3 of reading text): 1 eyes || 2 hair || 3 eyes || 4 fair ||
 5 together || 6 care ||

B stanza 2: 1 future || 2 mystery || 3 pleasant || 4 see || 5 over || 6 free ||

B stanza 3 (lines 7-9 of reading text): 1 listen || 2 hair || 3 woman ||

4 everywhere || 5 then || 6 care ||

B stanza 4 (lines 4-6 of reading text): 1 listen || 2 blue || 3 woman || 4 You ||

5 together || 6 do ||

B stanza 5: 1 ended || 2 glee || 3 future || 4 free || 5 troubles || 6 mystery ||

B stanza 6: 1 married || 2 seas || 3 land || 4 please || 5 better || 6 cease ||

B stanza 7: 1 living || 2 where || 3 sorrows || 4 share || 5 dream || 6 fair ||

C stanza 3 (lines 4-6 of reading text): 1 prattle || 2 blue || 3 woman || 4 you ||

5 together || 6 do ||

C stanza 4: 1 ended || 2 glee || 3 them || 4 free || 5 struggle || 6 sympathy ||

C stanza 5 (lines 13-15 of reading text): 1 married || 2 lands || 3 trouble ||

4 hands || 5 units || 6 sands ||

WHEN ARE THE ANGELS NEAREST?

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], with comment ‘Ptd in Australasian’. ML MS A3038/2, 1 [FN], transcription, with a note ‘written in early teens. This poem I consider can be placed high up in Shaw Neilson’s work. F.N.’ McKimm MS, transcription, typed, entitled ‘When the angels are the nearest’. ML MS 3354/3, Item 4, 10/19, a note [A], ‘Find instructions in Mick’s old exercise. Angels nearest may be in brown box <out> home’.

Australasian 28 October 1893, p. 780. *Border Watch* 1 May 1943, printed as ‘believed hitherto unpublished’.

The *Australasian* text pre-dates MS 4937/10, Item 1 and is the preferred text.

When are the angels nearest?
 Is it when the skies are fair
 And the birds with their pretty chatter
 Make joyous all the air?
 When the wind is soft and mild
 Like the sleep of a little child?

When are the angels nearest?
 Is it under a leaden sky,
 When the clouds are full of sorrow
 And the great trees groan and sigh?
 When the light is nearly gone
 And the grim night hurries on?

When are the angels nearest?
 Is it when the parents stand
 By the grave of the little loved one,
 When sorrowing hand in hand,
 Hot burning tears they shed
 And the sobbing prayers are said?

When are the angels nearest?
 Is it in the long still night
 When the moon makes ghostly shadows
 That are neither black nor white?
 When sleep comes unto men
 Are the angels nearest then?

13 angels] ange’s *Aus*, a mechanical error

WHEN THE GOOD MAN DIED

‘1895’, 3a-3b (A0008-9) [JSN], fair draft, 4 x 3-line stanzas. McKimm MS typed transcription [FN].
Nhill and Tatiara Nail 4 April 1894 (4 x 6-line stanzas).

The *Nhill and Tatiara Mail* text has a different stanza 2 and three different part-lines. This is therefore taken as the preferred text. Punctuation is reproduced from the printed text.

In the dim light we were standing
 And his wife was by his side;
 The grim vale lay before him
 But he was not terrified.
 We were watching, for we loved him,
 When the good man died.

We had known him and loved him
 For the space of many years;
 We had known him in laughter,
 We had known him in tears
 When his bright hopes were blasted
 And his life was full of fears.

Outside the moon was shining,
 Inside the room was dim;
 We were standing in the dim light
 And the dim light fell on him
 And o’er his eyes was growing
 A white and misty film.

We heard his children sobbing;
 We saw their mother weep;
 It is little, very little,
 Oh so little, Love can keep
 For, even as we watched him,
 The good man fell asleep.

1] We were standing in the dim light | *MS* 1.1

5 for] for[e] *MS* 1.3

7-8] We had known him [his] and | «loved» him «his» whole life long *MS* 1.4

9-10] We had found him a true | friend a sturdy man and strong *MS* 1.5

11-12] He [had] mad mistakes but | never did a fellow mortal wrong *MS* 1.6

17-18] And the dear old eyes were | covered with a white and misty film *MS* 1.9

Line endings ‘1895’, 3a-3b:

1 side || 2 terrified || 3 died || 4 long || 5 strong || 6 wrong || 7 dim || 8 him || 9 film || 10 weep
 || 11 keep || 12 asleep ||

¶ ‘When your bullocks were bogged on the Berrigan Road’

ML MS 3354/2, Item 4, 25a-26a [JSN], fair draft. The line arrangement is reproduced from the MS.

When your bullocks were bogged on the Berrigan Road
 And you couldn't pull out, and you couldn't unload,
 When a cold steady drizzle set in from the south
 And the tail of your whip made a mark on your mouth,
 Then what did you say
 Eh?
 Billy McCrae?

When a Methodist parson rode up on a horse
 And asked, as he would, in a solemn discourse
 If the bullocks were tired, if your whip was of hide,
 And if he could help you by driving offside,
 Then what did you say
 Eh?
 Billy McCrae?

You mind up at Yulgar, the year that Big Fenn
 And little Jack Richards caught in the same pen,
 How you went for two hundred and wanted but one,
 When the manager blocked you and gave you the run?
 Then what did you say
 Eh?
 Billy McCrae?

In the year of the strike, when we camped up at Bourke,
 And couldn't get tucker and couldn't take work
 And a bloke that was with us suggested that we
 Should scab it at Murphy's at Walagaree,
 Then what did you say
 Eh?
 Billy McCrae?

When we met with a chap we'd known for years,
 Being stiff, we expected a couple of beers –
 But we stood in the bar and we heard him request
 A long 'Jimmy Woodser' of Hennessey's best!
 Then what did you say
 Eh?
 Billy McCrae?

24 And] [Wh] And MS

32 'Jimmy Woodser'] Australian slang for a solitary drink.

WHERE THE PELICAN BUILDS ITS NEST

‘1906’, 26b (A0065) [A].

The Clarion 21 October 1909, entitled ‘Where the pelican builds’.

‘1906’, 26b is the preferred text.

This may have been intended as parody of Mary Hannay Foott’s verse ‘Where the Pelican builds’, published in a volume with that title in 1885.

A curious old chap at Deniliquin
Made a pet of a pretty white pelican.
When it started to stray
He said, it’ll lay.
It’ll get away outback to Hell again.

The *Clarion* text reads:

An Irish up at Deniliquin,
Made a pet of a fine female pelican,
But he said, She will strahy,
Shure, the creature must lay,
It’s herself will get out back to hill agin.

WHICH COLOUR?

ML MS 3354/2, Item 6, 1a-2a [JSN], fair draft. Fryer MS F1347, transcription [FN], typed, with note 'written in early teens'.

Nhill and Tatiara Mail 23 May 1894.

The *Nhill Mail* text has a rewritten second stanza and this new second stanza suggests a revision by the author (it is unlikely an editor would alter a text to this extent). The *Nhill Mail* text is therefore the preferred text. Lines 15-27 of the MS are shown separately in the notes.

Which colour do you love best?
Which of the colours above the rest?

I know not how to choose –
I love the red so well,
It seems to bring to me
So much sweet sympathy,
So much of cheery hope,
So much I cannot tell
How it disperseth gloom.
Can there be anything
More beautiful to see
Than a blood-red rose in bloom?

Which colour do you love the best?
Which of the colours above the rest?

I know not how to choose –
I love so well
Green gardens and green trees,
How good are these
Our tired eyes to please.
The young child full of life
Rejoices in the grass,
And as the long years pass
Down, down, the old folks go
Six feet below,

5] It seems to me to bring *A*
13 love the best] love best *A*

Continued overleaf...

And the green grass does grow
 Upon each little heap
 Above them as they sleep.

Which colour do you love best?
 Which of the colours above the rest?

I know not how to choose –
 I love the blue so well
 For God himself looks through
 All space that seemeth blue.
 I know a little dell
 Where many bluebells grow
 And where I often go –
 I love blue skies,
 I love blue eyes,
 And what more would you know?

Which colour do you love best?
 Which of the colours above the rest?

I love the white the best,
 Aye better than the rest.
 'Tis full of joyous light,
 It never does allure,
 It brings no evil thought
 For it is pure.
 The sweetest flowers are white –
 The lily she is queen;
 Of all the flowers that are
 Both near and far
 The lily is serene.
 And yet, another thought –
 I always have been taught
 That Paradise is bright
 And that the angels' robes
 Are all pure white.

29 Which of the colours] Which colour *A*
 36 And where] And there *A*
 43 than the rest] than all the rest *A*
 44 of joyous light] of joy and light *A*
 49 she is] shy is *A*

Continued overleaf...

Discarded stanza 2 *A*, lines 15-27:

I know not how to choose
I dearly love the green
It brings to me
So many «a» pleasant scene
And pleasant memory
In bygone days I played
In childhoods hours I strayed
In meadow green and sweet
And there I learnt to love
The grass beneath my feet
All fresh green things that please
Green gardens and green trees
I love all these

WHITE AUSTRALIA

‘1906’, 14a-15a (A0052-3) [A], draft, 5 stanzas numbered 1-5, followed by 2 stanzas under the heading ‘1st verse’, replacement stanzas for stanzas 1 & 2.

Discarded stanzas 1 & 2 are shown separately in the notes.

Child of the white man – welcome to thy place;
Great are thy needs and piteous is thy cry.
If thou art scorned – alas, the race is lost;
Thy mother’s love is in her watchful eye.

For very life – for home – our fathers fought;
Proud is their record – for a thousand years
Our simplest liberties were dearly bought;
Shall we now halt because of craven fears?

Traitors are they who say fling wide the gates,
Let us have people – God has given soil.
How are you blind – well know we the vile fates
Of the slave peoples robbed and born to toil.

Trust not to those who preach for Greed of Gain;
If to our heart we take a keen-eyed foe
Soon shall we learn that pretty prayers are vain;
With the forgotten people we shall go.

’Tis for no Godless conquest we would arm;
Traitors and cowards, sophists smooth and mild
Have sought thee little one to do thee harm –
And it is ours to guard – the white child.

Title] The reference is to the White Australia Policy, an unofficial term which referred to the Australian government’s restricted immigration policy.

3 art] are *MS*

15 life – for home] life [as] for home *MS*

11 know we] know [ye] «we» *MS*

12 robbed and] robbed [of] and *MS*

Discarded stanzas

Oh little novice in a troubled time
Old is the east and wakeful is the west
If we are timorous now how shall we climb
God help us guard [our heritage and thine] «thee Baby at the breast»

They call us fools with hellish hates filled up
By loud-mouthed priests have we been reviled
Yet all we ask is liberty to make
Our land a home for thee sleeping child

WHY DID YOU KISS ME?

ML MS 3354/2, Item 4, 19b [JSN], 1 stanza numbered 3; 22a [JSN], fair draft. The stanza at 19b is a revision and the handwriting varies markedly between the two MSS, suggesting that the replacement stanza may have been written some time later. MS 19b is therefore shown separately in the notes.

Why did you kiss me? 'twas a cruel pain
 To give me, for my aching memory
 Brings back the sweetness of it all too plain,
 And leaves me then in utter misery.
 Oh, why did you kiss me?

It was a summer night – the air was warm,
 The moon was rising and the sky was clear,
 And I was leaning, dreaming on your arm,
 Dreaming and hoping – I had little fear.
 Oh, why did you kiss me?

But for that kiss I think it would have been
 Far easier for this poor heart to forget:
 But now, I cannot hope – there comes between
 The memory of a sweetness bitter yet.
 Oh, why did you kiss me?

11 that kiss] that [hgh] kiss *MS*

Stanza 3, 19b reads:

There is no sorrow than the pain
 Of[f] looking backward on the joys we stole
 The old time sweetness cannot come again
 [The hope] There is no hope my sorrow to console
 Oh why did you kiss me

WITH TEARS

ML MS 3354/2, Item 3, 1a-1b & 2a [JSN], fair draft. ‘1936’, 4a-5a (A0772-3) [FN], transcription with note ‘This appeared in Nhill Mail about 1894’. McKimm MS, transcription, typed.
Nhill and Tatiara Mail 4 August 1894.

The published text differs substantially from the fair draft which is treated as a discrete version.

WITH TEARS [1]

ML MS 3354/2, Item 3, 1a-1b & 2a [JSN], fair draft. ‘1936’, 4a-5a (A0772-3) [FN], transcription.

His blood was warm, his pulses beat so fast,
He loved the pleasures that can never last.
When Summer ripened into Autumn bloom
And Autumn sickened into Winter gloom
He had no hope amid the weary years,
Although he sought it carefully, with tears.

Up high above him stood the glorious blue
And all the sweet things of the world still grew.
He breathed again the same soft blessed air
But there was something missing everywhere,
Something he found not through the long, long years,
Although he sought it carefully, with tears.

He read the books of half-forgotten men
But the long looked-for never came again.
He saw, but there was much he could not see
In that great play of parts, humanity.
And so he struggled on throughout the years
Still searching, very carefully, with tears.

What is it follows him while Life will last?
The one companion of the times long past.
Why falls and rises his poor soul within?
It is not black with any grievous sin.
He is a man beset with many fears,
A man who searches carefully, with tears.

6] Cf. Hebrews 12: 16-17. *AV*

7 above him stood] above «him» stood *MS*

15 saw but] saw, but *MS*

WITH TEARS [2]

McKimm MS, transcription.

Nhill and Tatiara Mail 4 August 1894.

The poem was printed in the *Border Watch* 19 May 1942 with the following explanation:

Neilson once came here on a visit to see his aunt and after hearing a sermon at church preached by the Rev. R. A. Caldwell, on the text 'For ye know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing he was rejected, and he found no place of repentance though he sought it carefully with tears.' Heb. 12:17. He condensed the sermon into verse ['With tears' follows].

For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. Heb. 12: 17.

His blood was warm, his pulses beat so fast,
He loved the pleasures that can never last.
When glowing Summer fell asleep in bloom
And Autumn came with just a touch of gloom
He had no hope throughout the weary years;
He sought a place wherein to shed his tears.

Still up above he saw the glorious blue
With God's great goodness ever shining through.
The Sun delighted all the Earth each morn,
Souls took their flight and crying babes were born.
Life's lessons came out clearer through the years
While he was searching 'carefully, with tears'.

The children's mirthful music filled the air,
And softly whispered many a loving pair.
The grey-haired women and the grey-haired men
Looked on and dreamed that they were young again.
Sweet sights and sounds did vex his eyes and ears
For he was searching 'carefully with tears'.

Poor lonely man, so desolate today:
You had your choice – this is your chosen way.
You sold life's sweetest, purest, noblest things
For pleasures that long since have taken wings.
Now, what is left of all those wasted years?
An old man, searching 'carefully with tears'.

Continued overleaf...

Oh wretched Esau, heartsick, most forlorn!
How dark an evening for so bright a morn.
Our poor remorse, so wearisome and vain,
It cannot make the dead past live again.
Poor Esau robbed of every hope that cheers
Still searches very 'carefully with tears'.

Man knows not man. Man only sees in part,
And God alone looks down into the heart.
Oh, human heart that knows so much of pain,
That longs and longs to set things right again –
How many Esaus in these latter years
Are searching very 'carefully, with tears'.

25] Cf. Hebrews 12: 16-17. *AV*

John Shaw Neilson: The Collected Verse Period 2: 1907-1916

Edited by Margaret Roberts

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A CELT IN A KILT

‘1908’, 7a (A0160) [A].

There was an old celt named McPhee,
He was drunk as an old celt could be.
He would wear a kilt
And he wasn't well built,
If you look for yourself you can see.

¶ 'A certain good lady at Warrack'

'1907', 2b (A0092) [A], under heading 'Warrack'.

A certain good lady at Warrack
Gives her eldest son much purgatoric;
When he feels out of sorts
He can take it in quarts
And the thing is becoming historic.

2 purgatoric] perigorie *MS*

A CHEAP AND EFFECTIVE METHOD OF DISPERSING RABBITS

‘1912’, 5b (A0254) [JSN].

There’s an old fellow at Chillengollah
Whose cough is remarkably hollow;
The rabbits so few
You can’t get them or him,
Folks envy them at Chillengollah.

2 remarkably] [remarkably] *MS*

4 You] you *MS*

5 envy them] [envy them] *MS*

¶ 'A dashing young fellow at Francis'

'1907', 2b (A0092) [A].

A dashing young fellow at Francis
Trode in three consecutive dances
On a young lady's toe,
Till she cried, let me go!
You would spoil a dozen romances!

A PSALM OF LAW

‘1915’E, 9b (A0296) [A], with title [JSN].

Lawyers whom we pay remind us
That our lives have been sublime;
Those the other side pay find us
Desperate scoundrels all the time!

A PSALM OF LIFE

The Clarion January 1909.

Jean Page cites this as a parody of W. H. Longfellow's poem of the same title, in 'The poetry of John Shaw Neilson', MA thesis, University of Sydney 1981.

JSN – AGS 8 August 1924, no location (thinks 'B. Hoare is very cruel and unjust' [see notes] and has 'always regarded the Psalm of Life with great horror'); AGS – JSN 8 August 1927, ML MSS 4937/5, 207 ('I have always regarded the psalm of Life with great horror').

(Apply to Rev. W. H. Stealit for the tune.)

We can tell all mothers cheaply
How their infants may be smacked;
Missions interest us deeply;
We would like to be a tract.

Dried-up bones and blood We mix up
With some war whoops from afar;
Good smoked sausages We fix up
Like the artists that We are.

Various journals, miles behind Us,
Keep on grumbling as We climb;
Editors sometimes remind us
That We should be doing time.

Finally, beloved brothers,
Trespass not on Our domain;
Though We lift, We don't like others
Lifting out of life again.

Gloss] The poem caricatures W. H. Fitchett, the editor of a Melbourne magazine *Life*. See 'Fitchett the finder'. Benjamin Hoare (1842-1932) became leader-writer for the *Age* in 1890. He retired from the *Age* in 1914 but continued to write weekly articles until January 1921.

A SAVINGS BANK

‘The fable and fantasy dialogues’, by Frank Neilson, p. 93, attributed to ‘Alexander Kirkwood’, McKimm MS (written between 1912 and 1914). NLA MS 1145/76, typed transcription [FN], entitled ‘How savings grow’ (1956). This is more likely to be the work of JSN than of Frank Neilson. The earlier of the two versions is the preferred text.

McPhee paid his fare on a hearse;
Though ‘saxpence’, he muttered a curse;
And strange to relate,
As he settled the freight,
A bat flew out of his purse!

A SONG WITHOUT A TUNE

‘1907’, 11a-12a (A0100-1) [JSN], draft.

Lift up my lad, lift up your love, close up unto your heart,
 The sleepy ships, the sullen ships, will bear us far apart.
 Oh, the pretty palm trees that speak through mist and rain:
 Lift up my lad, lift up your love, her running tears are vain,
 For who shall know what winds will blow, or who shall meet again.

The little fearless stars walk together in the sky,
 My pretty one, I loved you, but there’s a dear – good bye.
 The waking ships, the weary ships, they only laugh at pain:
 Lift up my lad, lift up your love, her running tears are vain,
 For who shall know what winds will blow, or who shall meet again.

The palm trees, the palm trees, have taken hold o’me,
 But never lips were half so sweet as those you gave to me.
 The moving ship, the moving crowd, the language loud and plain:
 Lift up my lad, lift up your love, her running tears are vain,
 For who shall know what winds will blow, or who shall meet again.

4] Lift up my lad, lift | up [my lad lift | up your lad] love again | your love her | running
 tears are vain *MS*

5 will blow, or who] shall blow [and] «or» who *MS*

8 weary ships] weary ship[s] *MS*

13 moving ship, the moving crowd] moving ship | the moving crowd «[the busy]» | *MS*

14 up my lad] up «my» lad *MS*

15 who shall know] who[r] shall know *MS*

A SOUND CHURCHMAN

The Bookfellow 16 June 1914, p. 141, with signature Charlie Chaucer.

He was a Bishop orthodox –
One of those good old earnest haters
Of Progress, with its sharps and shocks.
He was a Bishop orthodox
Right from his hat down to his sox.
There was a soundness in his gaiters,
He was a Bishop orthodox –
One of those good old earnest haters.

A STRAY COW

‘1908’, 4a (A0157) [A].

We have just been informed that a cow
Walked through a shop window somehow:
She has eaten some beans
And a large stock of greens –
We are led to believe there’s a row.

1] «We have just been informed that a cow» [It seems that a well known cow || Has]
Walked *MS*

A TIRED POET'S VOICE

Sun (Sydney) Sunday 27 August, 1911, p. 11, under the name Horace O'Hazy. *The Bookfellow* 15 June 1914, p. 142.

The piece was written for a competition run by the *Sun*. (See 'From a coffin')
The *Sun* is the preferred text.

A drowsy world it was – no place for strife.
I did not fight – all noise I did abhor.
But it was sweet before the fire of life
To dream and drift and know what dreams were for.

To beg I was afraid – and as for theft
It was too strenuous – some folks thought it wrong.
I loved and laughed and loafed until I left –
Ah, soon there came the time to say 'so long'!

A WELCOME TO TOMMY BURNS

The Clarion 15 September 1908. Punctuation is reproduced from the printed text.

High Priest of Bash! O, Basher unabashed,
Director of the Punch! What shall we say
To Thee, O Smiter of the Mighty Smashed?
Thrice welcome here today!

Title] Tommy Burns: a Canadian boxer (world heavyweight champion) who visited Australia for the first internationally recognized world heavyweight title bout held in Sydney in 1908.

A WOMAN AND THE SPRING

‘1915’E, 22a-22b (A0309-A0310) [A], fair draft, 2 x 3-line stanzas and 4 x 2-line stanzas. Two-line stanzas have been adopted throughout.

Child, I am tired, but the blossoms are crying for me to sing,
Breath of my life, O beat of my heart – be glad in the Spring!

Child, I have nought to tell you and none to me could tell
For the foolish heart of a woman is deep as a parable.

Child, I have seen long summers, and have learned o’er the many years
What is the man – God made him a lion, and full of fears.

Child, I have read all Stories, and never a one is true,
But my eyes are glad for green trees and the white clouds in the blue.

O God that lives, I suffered! I feared not death but pain.
All that I loved and hated I would love and hate again.

Child, I am tired, but the blossoms are crying for me to sing,
Breath of my life, O beat of my heart – be glad in the Spring!

2 heart – be] heart [be] | Be *MS*

3 tell you and] tell you [for] «and» *MS*

5 o’er the] of the *MS*. The context suggests that this is a mishearing.

12 life, O] life [of] Oh *MS*

Line endings

Stanza 1 (lines 1-2 of reading text): 1 sing || 2 heart || 3 Spring ||

Stanza 6 (lines 11-12 of reading text): 1 sing || 2 heart || 3 Spring ||

¶ 'A young lady sang at Penola'

'1907', 2a (A0091) [A].

A young lady sang at Penola,
And when she had finished her sola
She was greatly amazed,
For they said God be praised,
She doesn't belong to Penola!

ADVICE TO A RHYMER

‘1915’E, 14a & 14b (A0301-2) [JSN], fair draft. The title and a part-line occur at 14a followed by a list of short titles.

Though creditors be fierce and friends be few
And all the world a Duck exceeding Blue,
Though mid the vandals ye be forced to roam
Never, dear lad, rhyme any come with home –
And as for seven for a rhyme for heaven
The man who uses that has turned a seven!

2 a Duck exceeding Blue] In Australian slang a ‘blue duck’ was anything that does not come up to expectations.
6 turned a seven] In Australian slang ‘to die; to faint; to have a vomiting attack’.

AFTER THE FESTIVAL

‘1908’, 19b (A0173) [JSN], fair draft.

Blooming strange language in the street,
The drunk unwilling to depart:
A copper with tremendous feet,
Unquiet Benno and his tart.

4 Benno] Cf. ‘Benno, and some of the Push’ by Edward Dyson, published 1911. Dyson (1865-1931) was a journalist and author of novels, short stories and ballads. The *push* is an Australian slang term used for a band of larrikins.

ALL FOR THE BEST

The Clarion 1 August 1909, p. 24. Punctuation is reproduced from the printed text.

A young lady died at Beltana,
She had constantly played the pianer.
We said it is best,
She has gone to her rest,
And the rest of us rest at Beltana.

ALL IS NOT WELL

‘1908’, 6a (A0159) [A]. LaT MS 9419/3677, transcription, untitled and with first line as ‘A fiery old farmer named Grundy’.

There was a young man of Lake Mundy,
He fell down a well on a Sunday.
When they cried is all well?
Then he said not all well –
There’s water – I can’t last till Monday.

ALL THE WORLD'S A LOLLY-SHOP

NLA MS 1145/60, 33-38 [A], 45 [FN] & 86 [A], fair draft, with 8-line stanzas.
The Bookfellow 15 June 1915, p. 132; *HS* 77; *BLP* 66; *CP* 69, all with 4-line stanzas.

The MSS consist of 5 x 4-line stanzas numbered, at 33-38, an unnumbered stanza at 45, and a title and first line at 86. Stanza 2 is misnumbered 3, and errors of haste occur. Stanzas 4 & 5 do not occur in the *Bookfellow* version where a new stanza occurs and the sequence of stanzas is changed. It is unlikely that Stephens would have altered the text in this way and to this extent without authority and the *Bookfellow* is therefore taken as the preferred text.

Life is behind the counter and he waits on all who buy,
 He has a sweet for every mouth, a smile for every sigh;
 And 'tis the greatest miracle that ever did befall,
 He has so many customers, and yet he serves them all.

Now some do fear too much the powers that would all joy retard,
 And some bite slow and gingerly, and others quick and hard;
 And some look ever left and right, and some have little care,
 For all the world's a lolly-shop and always trading fair.

Life is behind the counter and he knows not how to frown,
 His talk is of a lad's delight and of a wench's gown;
 He puts the hot love on the lip, the red blush on the skin,
 And ever to his spacious shop the customers come in.

But when the sweetness leaves the sweet and sugars bring no joy,
 May we have love of tenderling, some gracious girl or boy;

1-4] ≠ MS II.1-8
 2] He has a hope for every heart || A sweet for every sigh MS II.3-4
 4 He has] There are MS I.7
 5-8] ≠ MS II.41-48
 6 and others quick] And some bite quick MS I.44
 7 and some have] But some have MS I.46
 8 For all] Oh all MS I.47
 9-12] MS ∅
 13-16] ≠ MS II.9-16

Continued overleaf...

All the World's a Lolly Shop (cont)

And when we have no heart to love, we are not wanted then,
So let us die as ladies calm and courteous gentlemen.

When we shall face the weather bleak outside the trembling wall,
Can we be sure of taste or bliss or any shop at all?
So let us not despise the place where we had feastings rare,
For all the world's a lolly-shop and always trading fair.

- 15 no heart] not heart *HS, BLP, CP*
 15 not wanted] not needed *MS* l.14
 16 as ladies] like ladies *MS* l.15
 17-20] ≠ *MS* ll.17-24
 17 When we shall face] And when we face *MS* l.17
 18 or bliss] of bliss *HS, BLP, CP*
 19 had feastings] have feastings *MS* l.22

Discarded stanzas

MS stanzas 4 & 5, lines 25-40:

All the world's a lolly shop
 With sweets of every kind
 To please the eye to please the ear
 To please the fretful mind
 And ever come new customers
 Hot foot to have their share
 For all the world's a lolly shop
 And always trading fair

And some will make a maiden laugh
 And some will make her sigh
 And some are good for the sweet grass
 And some for the grave sky
 And some bring up the blue days
 And some the mellow air
 For all the world's a lolly shop
 And always trading fair

ALONG A RIVER

‘1906’, 32a-32b (A0070-1) [JSN & WN], draft, with alterations [JSN]. ‘1908’, 2a-2b (A0155-6) [A], fair draft.

GDC entitled ‘A bush scene’; *HS* 18, entitled ‘Bush scene’; *BLP* 14; *CP* 18. Also published in the *School Paper* 1 October 1926, p. 133, entitled ‘A bush scene’.

JSN - RHC 19 November 1933, NLA MS 605/30 (requesting a title change, back to ‘what it was first called’).

‘1906’ = A; ‘1908’ = B

Variants in the published texts are of the kind Stephens frequently made and the fair draft (B) is therefore taken as the preferred text.

Green leaves – a patch of world along a river,
The drab and silver draping every limb,
The cackling kingfisher with throat a-quiver
Eager to sing for us a morning hymn —

In yonder bend the rough red rock hangs over
The black duck’s brood – a little fleet at sea;
In the far sky a wicked foe doth hover;
A plover calls – it is a call for me.

Across the stream, slowly and with much shrinking,
Softly a soft-eyed wallaby descends
To the blue water’s edge. I see him drinking —
Sweet is the morning for me and my friends.

1 leaves –] leaves – *B*

1 of world] of [leaves] world *A*

2] Soft silver lacing every trunk and limb *A*

2 drab] [g?.. [or] f?..] drab *B*

4 for us] to us *A*

5 In yonder bend] By yonder trees *GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

6 brood –] brood – *B*

8 calls –] calls – *B*

7] In the far blue a wicked hawk doth hover *A*

8 call for me] call to me *A*

9] Across the stream with [many a timid shrink] «slyly and with much shrinking» *A*

10 Softly a soft-eyed] Slowly a soft-eyed *A* • Slowly a full-eyed *BLP, CP*

10] «Down» to the «blue» edge and now I see him drink *A*

11 edge.] edge. *B*

AN EDITOR INDIGNANT

The Bookfellow 15 June 1914, p. 141, under the name 'Charlie Chaucer'.

The Editor was wroth. He said
Some wretch disputes our circulation!
Some jelly-fish not wholly dead.
The Editor was wroth. He said
Some jelly-fish squirms in his bed
And vends this vile vituperation.
The Editor was wroth. He said
Some wretch disputes our circulation!

AN INTERESTING EXPERIENCE

‘1908’ 6a (A0159) [A], with ‘experience’ misspelt ‘experient’. ‘1915’E, 10b (A0297) [A], incomplete, untitled.

The Clarion 1 July 1909, p. 3, entitled ‘Interesting experience at Harrow’.

The preferred text is ‘1908’, 6a.

There was a young lady of Harrow,
She thought she could stand in a barrow;
Her lover, he wheeled,
And the young lady squealed
And shot straight ahead like an arrow!

The *Clarion* reads:

A certain young lady at Harrow,
Stood up for a ride in a barrow;
Her lover then wheeled,
And the young lady squealed,
And shot straight ahead like an arrow.

AN OPEN LETTER TO ADA

‘1908’, 22b-23b (A0176-7) [A/JSN], draft, 8 stanzas with stanza numbered 2 cancelled and with alterations [JSN].

A fine run has the world, we cannot stop her:
Here Judkins raves, and there, a dangerous Warrel,
And what one good man thinks most sweet and proper
The next man thinks amoral.

Is every actor an audacious sinner?
Is every actress an adventuress shady,
Unfit to look at, much less ask to dinner?
Nay – surely not, sweet lady.

Loud is thy voice and sharp – it doth not alter;
Old is the tale and weary, very long:
But there’s a law that lawyers cannot alter,
A Lady can’t do wrong.

Listen, ye good church-goers and home-stayers:
Love us a little – we have long loved you,
And when you drop a tear for the poor player,
Drop one for Ada too.

There is and will be Difference of Opinion –
Millions of eyes could never look together:
The mind is wider than a King’s Dominion,
Changeful as wind and weather.

Title] Ada Ward, an American evangelist and former actress: she visited Melbourne in 1907 and 1909. See ‘The greatest boomster’.

1] [The world performs indeed] «A fine run has the world» we cannot stop her *MS*

2 Judkins] William Henry Judkins. See ‘Judkins in paradise’.

Warrel] No reference found.

5 an audacious] The *MS* has ‘a abesiois’ [A], with part of the word cancelled and what looks like ‘adanciores’ written above it [JSN]. (I am indebted to Harold Love for this conjectural reading. Ed.)

17 and will be] and [always] will be *MS*

18 never look] never [so] look *MS*

Continued overleaf...

An Open Letter to Ada (cont)

Why the poor heathens raged so on the blindness,
An ancient hymnist failed to understand:
From those who have the Light we ask some kindness,
In this a Christian land.

Do not these white-robed Choristers when singing
Flirt furiously, perchance for recreation?
And preachers too for all their straight upbringing,
Make sometimes a sensation?

Cancelled stanza 2:

[There is a Power superior to all Fuss
It strives it lives in every King's dominion
Tender and loving working hard for us
The Difference of Opinion]

AN UNDESIRABLE ALIEN

‘1908’, 21a (A0174) [JSN].

The Greek youth ain’t overclean –
I think he’ad better stop on board:
The Pure Food Act is swift and keen
And cruel as a two-edged sword.

3] The [Board] «Pure» [of] Food Act [Health] is swift and keen *MS*

AS FAR AS MY HEART CAN GO

ML MS A3038/1, 22b & 23a (B0126-8) [JSN], fair draft, 6 x 4-line stanzas numbered 1-6, with stanza 5 cancelled.

Sun (Sydney) Sunday 24 September 1911, p.11. *GDC*; *HS* 47; *BLP* 63; *CP* 42, all with 2-line stanzas.

The alterations in the published texts are of the kind Stephens often made without authorisation and the fair draft is therefore taken as the preferred text.

I care not now for the gardens
Nor the gayest flowers that grow;
The little flower in the firelight is
As far as my heart can go.

I care not now for the long road
Or the mountains far away,
For the little world that we love in is
As far as my feet can stray.

No smile for me from the city,
No salty call for me,
For the mouth of my little lady is
As far as my eyes can see.

I sing no more of the red wars,
I have no love for steel,
For the glamour of my dear love is
As far as my lips can feel.

What can I know of heaven?
What should a lover know?

2 Nor] or *Sun*, *GDC*, *BLP*, *CP*

3 flower in] flower [at] in *MS*

6 Or] o'er *Sun*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

7 For the little] The little *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

11 little lady] little sweetheart *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

15 For the glamour] The glamour *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

Continued overleaf...

As Far as my Heart Can Go (cont)

The little face at the fireside is
As far as my heart can go.

19 fireside] [firse] fireside *MS*

20 can go] can go. *MS*

Cancelled stanza 5:

[I could not hear the angels
Did they sing ever so clear
For the honey of her love song is
As far as ever I hear]

Line endings *Sun*, *GDC* and other published texts:

1 grow || 2 go || 3 away || 4 stray || 5 me || 6 see || 7 steel || 8 feel || 9 know || 10 go ||

AT A GIRL'S GRAVE

The Clarion October 1909.

The *Clarion* text cannot be located and the text reproduced is that printed in *GDC* (A & B, 78). The poem can be traced to the drafts of a longer piece entitled 'To a sweet woman' which occur in the '1909' notebook and at ML MS A3038/1, 26b.

There was in you sweeter than Spring's breath
Pity – the pity that in tears would run.
Death had not been to you so deep a death
Had love-kiss painted you, oh little one.

Heart-ache and mother-hunger – every tune
Of mourning filled you – you were crucified.
How could I say your grave was made too soon,
Dear little girl who died, and died, and died.

AT THE BOARDING HOUSE

‘1907’, 16a (A0105) [JSN]. ‘1908’, 33b (A0190) [A].

The Clarion July 1908, under heading ‘Some Parodies. Desperate attempts at the manner of Arthur Adams.’

‘1907’, 16a is the preferred text.

Sir, it is six and tea is due,
The Landlady promotes a stew
Weary with water terrible –
I wouldn’t stand it, sir, would you?

The Clarion reads:

The boarders look exceeding blue,
The landlady promotes a stew,
Weary with water terrible,
I wouldn’t stand it, Sir, would you?

Gloss] Arthur Henry Adams (1872-1936), a New Zealand journalist, poet and novelist, succeeded A. G. Stephens as editor of the ‘Red Page’ of the *Bulletin*.

AT THE BUSH HOTEL

‘1908’, 33b (A0190) [A].

A farmer’s son, slow-eyed and flash —
The landlady promotes a hash,
The publican pot-bellied prates
Of cucumbers and cows and cash.

AT THE FOOT OF MT ARIPALUS

‘1908’, 5b (A0159) [A], under heading ‘Our medical column’. ‘1929’, 45b (A0635) [A], entitled ‘Patient fears the worst’, under heading ‘Our medical column’. ML MS 3354/3, Item 2, 15b [EN], transcription, entitled ‘Patient fears the worst’, entitled ‘Patient fears the worst’, under heading ‘Our medical column’.

‘1908’, 5b is the preferred text.

Said a man to his wife at Aripalus,
Though we’re bad with this darned erysipelas,
It’s not the disease
But the old doctor’s fees
That will in the latter end cripple us.

AT THE SOCIAL IN AID OF THE HOME MISSION

‘1908’, 5a (A0158-9) [A], under heading ‘Notes from the churches’.

An irreverent young fellow named Kendell
Turned a large organite by the handle;
He turned it so fast
That the folks were aghast –
They said ‘this amounts to a scandal!’

AT THE SUBURBAN HOTEL

‘1907’, 16a (A0105) [JSN].

The Clarion July 1908, entitled ‘At the wayside’, under heading ‘Some Parodies. Desperate attempts at the manner of Arthur Adams.’

Blinks the bold barmaid at her mash,
The Dishes in the Washup clash.
The Publican pot-bellied pants,
The cook accomplishes a hash.

2 Dishes] [dishes] Dishes *MS*

The Clarion reads:

Beams the bold barmaid at her mash,
The Dishes in the Washup clash;
Dimly the drowsy drunks collapse,
The Cook accomplishes a hash.

BARDIE AND BIRDIE

ML MS 3354/2, Item 5, 6a [JSN], draft. Fryer MS F1347, transcription, typed [JD], entitled ‘Puir Scotch’, with the original title following and with comments in the margin indicating difficulty in reading N’s handwriting.

3354/2 - 5 = A; F1347 = B

The draft (A) is the preferred text. A transcription of MS F1347 is given as notes.

Away ma wee birdie, away, richt away –
I wad faen use awa but ’twould na rhyme wi hay;
(On this beastly Scotch language I’m not very sound)
Does the airt’ mean all earth, or just only the ground?

I’m ay getting bawbees my sangs are so braw,
Gin ye anger me birdie yer neck I’d thraw.
It’s sair wark this rhymen when rhymes a’are flown –
What the hell is pure Scotch for I’m all on my own?

Said the puir wee bit birdie astonished am I –
Ye take like a Lowlander broughch up on Skye,
And tho’ you should threaten my puir neck to thraw,
Oh bardie, ye’re gi’een yerself richt awa.

To put it in English, dear Hugh, I have felt
It’s my duty – the crofter is just a plain Celt.
Broad Scotchmen don’t always say ‘so’ and mean ‘sae’ –
They don’t give themselves or their stuff right away.

2 I wad] I [c] wad *A*

3 (On . . . very sound)] (On . . . ve[r]y sound *A*

6 I’d thraw] I’d thraw *A*

7 a’are] a’are *A*

10 Ye take] Ye [talk] take *A*

11 my puir neck to thraw] my [poor] «puir» neck to [scraw] thraw *A*

12 yerself richt awa] yerself [righ] rigct awa *A*

13 English] [english] English *A*

15] [He don’t talk broad] || Bro[a]d Sc[o]tch «men» don’t always say ‘so’ and mean ‘sae’ *A*

MS F 1347 reads:

Away, ma wee birdie
Away, right away,
I wad faen use”awa but twould
na rhyme wi hay
(On this beastly Scotch language
I am not very sound
Does the airt’ mean all earth
or just only the ground?)

Continued overleaf...

Bardie and Birdie (cont.)

I'm aye getting bawbees ma
 sangs are so braw
 Gin ye' anger me birdie
 yair neck wad'I scraw
 Its yair' wurk' this ryhmen [sic]
 When rhymes aire aw' floren ——Not sure of this word
 What the hell is pure Scotch for
 I'm aw on ma' own

Said the pure wee bit birdie
 "aslimished am I"
 (again not sure of writing | Could be [xxxxxx] astonished
 Ye talk like a Lowlands brought
 up on Skye
 Anf though you should threaten [sic]
 ma puir neck to Scraw'
 Oh, bardie, ye're giv'een
 Yersel' richt' awa

(To put in English Dear Hugh, I have felt
 It my duty. The crofter is just a plain celt
 Broad Scotchmen thet always say
 nay nay
 may and mean may
 When told "Give themselves or their siller' away
 [They don't give]

BARMAID AT BINNEY'S

'1909', 14a-14b (A0212-3) [JSN], draft, incomplete. The first stanza has 3 long lines and 2 short lines with a line drawn under them and is followed by 2 long lines and 1 short line without numbering. Three stanzas with short lines numbered 2-4 follow. Stanzas 2 and 3 are each followed by a space (equivalent to the space break between stanzas) and then a single line, followed by another space break. Whilst N's intention is not exactly clear, the evidence of other MSS suggests that it was his intention to repeat the 3 lines following stanza 1 between stanzas 2 and 3 (at least) as a refrain, or chorus.

Three leaves have been removed after line 36 and the two lines following on the next page are part of another poem – not part of 'Barmaid at Binney's'.

The stanza form of the draft is retained and the lines following stanza 1 are reproduced following stanzas 2 and 3.

Salt Earth and barren sky and the slow wheels –
 What man shall pity her for all she feels?
 Old triumphs follow her, promises gleam,
 Ribbons and flimsy things shake in her dream.

Getting down south with the fever upon her
 Life leaves her little of fair love or hours,
 A barmaid at Binney's.

Scum of the wilderness,
 Scum of the town,
 Stared at her woman soul
 Beating it down.
 Woman friend, mother loves,
 These were not hers –
 Rough is the narrow road,
 Night – and all blurs

Going down south with the fever upon her
 Life leaves her little of fair love or hours,
 A barmaid at Binneys.

8] Scum of [the] wilderness *MS*

15] [See] Night and «all» blurs *MS*

16 Going down] Going down *MS*

Continued overleaf...

Barmaid at Binney's (cont.)

Night and the narrow road,
All bushes blurred,
Comes the uncouth complaint
Of a dull bird –
Comes as a messenger
Bold to declare
All love is ruinous,
Pain is a prayer.

Getting down south with the fever upon her
Life leaves her little of fair love or hours,
A barmaid at Binney's.

Up in the yellow bar
Someone will say
'Sadie was down to it,
Packed her away.'
Up in the yellow bar
Rude men will sigh,
'Poor little devil she's

[*Incomplete*]

32-33] "Sadie was down to it || Packed her away *MS*

36 'Poor] "Poor *MS*

BURIED IN MAY

‘1907’, 4b-5b (A0094-5) [JSN], fair draft, 3 stanzas. The poem is drawn off after stanza 3 and is followed by the number 4, as for another stanza. The piece stands as it is and the ruling off would seem to indicate a change of mind at that point.

It was the month of May – the mushroom time –
 A summer bird still loudly made hosanna;
 The girls picked many buttercups, the boys did climb
 The grey trees topped with green – heavy with manna.
 Like a garden peopled with friends, the world lay,
 But in that bright sun a cold voice did cry
 I’ll take your love – I’ll bury her in May.

I stood beside a little limestone hill –
 Into the world the early lambs came crying;
 A small, small bird spoke with persistent will
 Of long days pleasant and the pain of dying.
 Why did this small bird speak this thing to me?
 Did he of fair love make mockery?

My love is red-lipped as the reddest flower –
 Her hair is as the night that hath no stars;
 These many years I’ve seen her many an hour;
 No tears have come to her, nor any scars.
 No bitter pain at all with her hath been;
 Still as a child she loves the blue and green.

4 green –] green – *MS*

17 No tears] No [pain] tears *MS*

CONSOLATION

‘1908’, 34b (A0191) [JSN], fair draft, 4 couplets, numbered.

When dentists hold us by the jaw
And lawyers frighten us with Law;

When friends we had are friend no more
And bailiffs rattle at the door;

When doctors leave us to our fate
And eager undertakers wait;

It does us good – it really does
To read about That Man of Uz.

8 That Man of Uz] Cf. Job 1:1: There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. *AV*. (God gave Satan permission to afflict Job greatly.) See also Robert Burns’s poem ‘Address to the Devil’, lines 97-102.

CONTENT

‘1908’, 21a (A0174) [JSN], cancelled; 22a (A0175) [JSN], draft. ML MS 3354/2, Item 6, 12a [JSN], entitled ‘The Englishman home’.

ML MS 3354/2, Item 6, 12a is the preferred text.

I sit in my ancestral Hall,
I say unto my family,
I don't want anyone to call,
With fools and asses let me be.

CUPID WITH A SHANGHAI

ML MS 3354/2, Item 6, 10b [JSN], draft, 1 × 8-line stanza. Fryer MS F1347, typed transcription [JD], with 3 × 4-line stanzas.

3354/2-6 = A; F1347 = B

The additional lines in Devaney's typescript suggest that N either later revised this piece to send to Devaney or that Devaney's transcription is from an earlier MS now lost, since it is most unlikely that Devaney would have added another stanza. The typescript (B) is taken as the preferred text.

Cheerful and chubby, pink and round,
I saw him walking up to me,
But no crossbow on his soft arm found,
Nor any arrow could I see.

Inquiringly I glanced at him
To see what weapon did he bear.
His fat hand held no arrow grim,
I saw a little shanghai there.

So now he strolls on business bent,
Roguish his impish mouth and chin.
He creeps through every continent,
Cupid – the little Larrikin.

1 Cheerful and chubby] cheerful «and» chubby *A*

3] But no bow on his soft arm hung *A*

3] *A* has two cancelled lines following line 5:

[Glad were his eyes and all for sport
He held instead of arrow grim]

5] Inquiring[ly] I glance[d] at him *B*

7 His fat hand] [And smo] His fat hand *A*

DAME HUBBARD'S PILGRIMAGE

There are two discrete versions of this piece: one, the draft of a short poem, and the other, the draft of a longer, unfinished poem. Both versions parody the nursery rhyme 'Old Mother Hubbard'.

DAME HUBBARD'S PILGRIMAGE [1]

'1907', 37b (A0127) [JSN], draft.

The dog did skip like a hastening kangaroo,
 Anticipating bones with keen delight:
 The dame waxed sorrowful sore grieved to see
 The cupboard held no toothsome scrap to woo
 That dog from Death, who came blacker than night:
 – So do the wronged gain immortality.

1 like a hastening] like [a] hastening *MS*

3 sorrowful sore grieved] sorrowful [for plain] sore grieved *MS*

5 who came blacker] who [talking] came blacker *MS*

6 – So] – So *MS*

DAME HUBBARD'S PILGRIMAGE [2]

'1908', 12b (A0166) [JSN], unfinished, a stanza and 2 lines; 13a (A0166) [JSN], end words for stanza 2. The end words suggest that N intended to rewrite the first draft as a second stanza for this second version.

Dame Hubbard hears her dog – its cry is loud;
Sorely it doth complain both night and day
With a vehemence wasting not away.
A puzzled dame is she, for she doth crowd
Into her mind the riddles of O'Dowd –
More to be feared than warriors in array –
But to our tale, I must beg leave to say
The dame proceeds – dog follows, with head bowed.

Now doth he skip like any kangaroo,
Anticipating bones with keen delight

[*Unfinished*]

Title] [The] Dame Hubbarnd Pilgrimage *MS*, with a line under 'Pilgrimage' which may be intended as a cancellation
4 A puzzled dame] An [idle] «puzzled» dame *MS*
5 O'Dowd] Bernard O'Dowd (1866-1953) was a poet, radical and parliamentary draughtsman. O'Dowd's poem, 'Mystery', was published in the *Bookfellow* 28 February 1907, and Neilson's piece is clearly intended as a comic parody.
See also 'More mystery'.

The end words at 13a are 'kangaroo', 'delight', 'see', 'moo' ['woo?'], and 'night'. There is another word that is indecipherable.

EARLY GONE

‘1908’, 20b (A0174) [JSN], with a cancelled draft of 3 lines entitled ‘The old’uns’ preceding it.

The things I could have said of yore
Were all swapped for yarn or song,
And when I use them, critics roar
I do these ancient drippers wrong.

1 things] thing[s] *MS*

4 drippers] <drippers> *MS*

The cancelled lines read:

[The thing I could have nicely said
They took them for a yarn or song
And when I use them it is said]

EARLY KISSES

ML MS 3354/2, Item 5, 26a-27b [JSN], fair draft. The second stanza was published in a revised form in the *Clarion* May 1909 as ‘The happy thief’, q.v.

How glorious is the taste of early kisses,
 How sweet the thefts that make them doubly tender:
 Sweet is the hearing, and full sweet the seeing,
 We look and laugh at blossoms fleeing, fleeing.
 Praise God, we say, praise the all-loving Sender;
 Sad, sad, is the slow soul who faints and misses,
 He shall not know God’s heat within his Being.

The man who steals a kiss shall never rue it,
 Who buys a kiss doth harken to the Devil:
 Who steals a kiss shall move in happy places,
 In darkest night he shall see angels’ faces.
 Never shall he sink down to dull Earth’s level;
 The Spring shall take his life and quite renew it,
 He shall go down to Death with all the Graces.

7 not know God’s] not [know] God’s *MS*

13 life and quite] life [and] quite *MS*

ETERNITIES

The Clarion 9 July 1908, p. 7, under heading ‘Some parodies’, with sub-heading ‘Some hopeless attempts at the manner of James Hebblethwaite’.

Some jokes there are death cannot smite:
The Constable, his Hoof and Jaw,
The Drunkard homing through the night,
The old malicious Ma-in-law.

Gloss] James Hebblethwaite (1857-1921), a poet and teacher, and later clergyman.

EXCITEMENT AT BOIGBEAT

‘1912’, 5a (A0253) [JSN].

A pretty girl down at Boigbeat
Wore a harem skirt in the main street;
The Mayor said I’m shocked!
While the traffic got blocked!
We can’t allow this at Boigbeat!

3 mayor said] mayor [said] *MS*

4 got blocked] got [blocked] *MS*

5 at Boigbeat!] at [Boigbeat] *MS*

FACTS INDISPUTABLE

‘1907’, 35a (A0124) [JSN], entitled ‘Facts undisputable’; 35a (0124) [JSN], entitled ‘There is no charge’, cancelled.

The Earth seems flatter at each Pole,
And as a rule Night follows Day;
The Woman has the largest soul,
The Man was merely made to pay!

The cancelled version reads:

[There is a thing that doth not change
While Natures forces work their will
The Woman’s ways with hats are strange
The Man he hath to pay the Bill]

FOR A CHILD

ML MS A3038/1, 41b (B0162) (a part-leaf) & 42a (B0163) (a part-leaf) [JSN], fair draft, signed, 4 stanzas, entitled 'Missing', stanzas 3 and 4 separated by a row of asterisks; 41a (B0163) (a part-leaf) & 42b (B0164) (a part-leaf) [JSN], fair draft, 4 stanzas, entitled 'Love could not keep him', stanzas 3 and 4 separated by a row of asterisks; 43a (B0163) & 44b (B0167) (a part-leaf) [JSN], fair draft, 5 stanzas, entitled 'Love could not keep him', stanzas 4 and 5 separated by a row of asterisks; 44a (B0166) (a part-leaf) [JSN], 2 stanzas numbered 4 & 5; 45a (B0168) [JSN], 4 stanzas, revisions, the first headed 'Forth' [sic], the next two, 'Second' and 'Third' and the fourth numbered [4], and the stanza headed '3rd verse'.

Sun (Sydney) Sunday 23 April 1911, p. 13, entitled 'Love could not keep him'; *The Bookfellow* 1 October 1912, p. 254, in article 'Shaw Neilson' by A. G. Stephens, the poem without title; *GDC*; *HS* 92; *BLP* 106; *CP* 81 (*GDC* and the later printed texts entitled 'For a child').

JSN - JD 21 October 1934 ('For a child' and 'Love's coming' 'were about the first two that A.G. praised very highly').

The stanzas headed 'Forth', 'Second' and 'Third' are all variants of the final stanza and are first, second and third preferences. The *Bookfellow* prints line 1 of the stanza headed 'Second' and lines 2-4 of the stanza headed 'Forth' as the final stanza of the poem and this is repeated in *GDC* and the printed texts.

41b & 42a = A; 41a & 42b = B; 43a & 44b = C; 44a = D; 45a = E

In the absence of a fair copy or initial typescript by Stephens the first published text is the preferred text. The text is introduced in the Stephens article as a 'a lament for a child' and the title of the later published texts is retained. The separation by asterisks of the last two stanzas, seen in the fair drafts, is also retained. A and B are shown keyed to C in the notes and D and E are shown separately in the notes.

Into your angel mouth
The sport of Spring
And the Summer's honey
Came rioting.

Your eyes were as flowers,
Fine gold your hair,
Warm in my heart you sang
Love like a prayer.

1-4] ≠ A 1-4; ≠ B & C 5-8; = *Boo*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*
5-8] ≠ E stanza '[4] 3rd verse'; = *Boo*, *GDC*, *HS*, *CP*; omitted *BLP*

Continued overleaf...

For a Child (cont.)

The sunbeam, the moon-mist,
Were one with you
And all the sighing bloom
That takes the dew.

Love was about you,
Through your silken skin
Love like a sun-ray
Ran out and in.

* * *

Wild kiss and heavy love
Lose every hold.
Oh sunlight – my sunlight –
How dark the cold.

9-12] ≠ *B* 1-4; = *C* 1-4; = *Boo*, *GDC*, *HS*, *CP*; = *BLP* 5-8

13-16] = *D* stanza numbered 4; = *Boo*, *GDC* & *HS*; = *BLP* 9-12; = *CP*

17-20] ≠ *A* 13-16; ≠ *B* 13-16; ≠ *C* 17-20; ≠ *D* stanza numbered 5; ≠ *E* 'Forth'; = *E* 'Second'; ≠ *E* 'Third'; = *Boo*, *GDC*, *HS*, *CP*; = *BLP* 13-16

C stanza 1, *B* stanza 1 (lines 1-4):

The sunbeam – the moon mist *C*
Sunbeam and moon mist *B*
Were one with you *C, B*
And all the sighing bloom *C, B*
That takes the dew *C, B*

C Stanza 2 (lines 5-8), *B* stanza 2 (lines 5-8), *A* stanza 1 (lines 1-4):

Into your rosy mouth *C, B*
In your lips and [eyes] sweet eyes *A*
The sport of Spring *C*
The taste of Spring *B, A*
And the Summers honey *C, B*
And the summer's honey *A*
Came rioting *C, B*
Were rioting *A*

C stanza 3 (lines 9-12), *B* stanza 3 (lines 9-12), *A* stanza 2 (lines 5-8):

Sweet as the Carol *C*
Sweet as the carol *B*
Your voice was a carol *A*
That angels knew *C, B, A*
In an old time play ground *C, B*
[In an] ⟨Man⟩ old time play ground *A*
Was the voice of you *C*
Was the Voice of you *B*
Where God walked through *A*

Continued overleaf...

For a Child (cont.)

A stanza 3 (lines 9-12):

We heard your heart beat
 As [your bl] the days ran
 We dreamed of brave [day] years
 And a brow brave man [sic]

C stanza 4 (lines 13-16):

Bright for your baby eyes
 Walked the white moon
 All the sum's mystery [sic]
 Ended too soon

C stanza 5 (lines 17-20), *B* stanza 4 (lines 13-16), *A* stanza 4 (lines 13-16):

Hot love and torrid kiss *C*
 Fierce love and torrid kiss *B*
 Love word and torrid kiss *A*
 Lose every hold *C, A*
 Lose their last hold *B*
 But the sunlight is cruel *C*
 – But the Summer is cruel *B*
 But the Sun is cruel *A*
 – How dark the cold *C, B,*
 – How dark the cold *A*

D stanza numbered 5:

Hot love and torrid kiss
 Lose every hold
 But the sunlight is cruel –
 – How dark the cold

D stanza numbered 4:

Love was about you
 Through your silken skin
 Love like a sunray
 Ran out and in

E stanzas headed 'Forth', 'Second', 'Third':

Wild love and hot kiss *Forth*
 Wild kiss and heavy love *Second*
 Keen love and crying kiss *Third*
 Lose every hold 'Forth', *Second*', *Third*
 – Oh Sunlight my Sunlight *Forth*
 The Sun is all sorrow *Second*
 The sweet sun is sorrow *Third*
 How dark the cold *Forth, Second, Third*

E stanza numbered [4] 3rd verse:

Your eyes were as flowers
 Fine gold your hair
 Into my heart you put
 Red love – a prayer

FOR A COUNTRY EDITOR

‘1912’, 2a (A0248) [A], fair draft.

Sun (Sydney) 27 August 1911, p. 11, under the name ‘Horace O’Hazy’, entitled ‘A country editor’s voice from the coffin’; *The Bookfellow* 15 June 1914, p. 142, entitled ‘A country editor’s voice’.

The piece was an entry in a competition (announced in the *Sun* Sunday 9 July 1911) inspired by Neilson’s verse ‘From a coffin’, which was published under the title ‘The voice from a coffin’. ‘For a country editor’, ‘For a tired poet’, ‘From a coffin’, ‘Before the dying fire’ and ‘The philosopher’ are all responses to Landor’s ‘I strove with none, for none was worth my strife’.

The fair draft is the preferred text.

Why should we make a fuss,
 We’re here to stay;
 Reptiles that slandered us
 Wriggle away.
 Write us no epitaph!
 Sling us no slime!
 We were the whole d — d Staff
 Once on a time.

1] We made a final fuss *Sun, Boo*

2] And said our say *Sun* •

We said our say *Boo*

3 that] who *Sun, Boo*

4 Wriggle] Wriggled *Sun, Boo*

FOR A TIRED POET

‘1912’, 2a-2b (A0248-9) [A], fair draft. (See ‘For a country editor’)

Nothing on earth was really worth much strife;
If wolves would come I would open wide the door.
I warmed myself at the good fire of life
And now I go to warm myself some more.
I was too tired to beg, and as for theft
It was too strenuous – some folks thought it wrong.
I loved and laughed and loafed until I left –
Ah, soon there came the time to say – so-long.

3 the good fire] the [big] «good» fire *MS*

FROM A COFFIN

ML MS 3354/2, Item 5, 18a [JSN], fair draft, entitled ‘The voice in the coffin’. ML MS 3354/2 Item 6, 9a [JSN], fair draft, entitled ‘The voice in the coffin’. ‘1912’, 3b (A0251) [A], entitled ‘The voice from the coffin’. NLA MS 1145/60, 92 [JSN], 2 lines, revision (for lines encircled in *GDC* Copy 1).

The Clarion 1908, as ‘Wrapped in the yellow earth’, *HI*, (missing from LaT copy of paper); *Sun* (Sydney) 9 July 1911, p. 13, entitled ‘The voice from the coffin’; *Sun* (Sydney) Sunday 20 August 1911, p. 11, entitled ‘Voice from the coffin’; *GDC*, untitled; *HS* 76, entitled ‘From a coffin’; *CP* 68, entitled ‘From a coffin’.

The piece may be derived from ‘The voice of the stiff’, a draft of 4 stanzas at ML MS 3354/2, Item 5, 23a or, alternatively, may have been the stimulus for the longer poem. The verse was the stimulus for a competition in the *Sun* announced in the Book Fellow page by Stephens on 9 July 1911: ‘In writing his ‘coffin-words’ Shaw Neilson gives us an idea

. . . We offer half a guinea for not more than eight lines of a coffin voice after the fashion of Neilson’s or Landor’s.’ Stephens quotes the verse again 20 August 1911, saying ‘Shaw Neilson . . . sent this’, with the comment ‘We printed the penultimate ‘I loved and laughed and lived’ sacrificing a rhyme and a touch of Australian piquancy in order to gain greater dignity’. Two entries from Neilson (under the name Horace O’Hazy) were printed 27 August 1911, ‘A tired poet’s voice’ and ‘A country editor’s voice from the coffin’, and the latter was named as ‘The best burlesque stanza’. (See ‘For a country editor’)

The text printed in the *Sun* 20 August 1911 appears to be the one sent to Stephens and is therefore taken as the preferred text, in the absence of the *Clarion* text. The variations in the title are not considered significant and the better-known title is taken for convenience.

3354/2-5, 18a = A; 3354/2-6, 9a = B; ‘1912’, 3b = C; NLA 1145/60, 92 = D

Wrapped in the yellow earth
 What should I fear?
 Sour hate and shallow mirth
 Never come near.
 Shape me no epitaph,
 Sugar no rhyme –
 I had my little laugh
 Once on a time.

2 What] Why C

3] Falsehood or acid mirth A •

Falsehood or foreign mirth B

5 epitaph] elegy C

7] There was a war in me C •

I loved and laughed and lived [AGS] *Sun* 9 July 1911 •

I had the heart to laugh D, *HS*, *CP*

GOODBYE TO BITTERNESS

‘1915’C, 9b-10a (A0321) [JSN], draft.

Strange heaviness was with me,
 And fears were in my Soul;
 The stones that were upon me
 Were more than I could roll.
 Just now I breathe the better air
 And hear a warmer cry –
 Surely I shall not fall again?
 So Bitterness – Good bye!

I'll take the road to the green time,
 My soul shall have its fling;
 I'll shake a leg with every girl
 That shakes a leg in Spring.
 I'll hear the noise of honey-bees,
 Heavy and brown and slow –
 I'll go to where the young birds fly,
 Where all the blossoms go.

I'll walk and read in a girl's eyes
 Riddles of grace and pain,
 And the soft silk of warm fruit
 Shall give me hope again.
 I shall not rest with those who rest
 Nor toil with those who buy –
 I'll take a great green holiday,
 So Bitterness – Good bye!

1 with me] with [one] me *MS*

2 fears] fear[s] *MS*

3 stones that were] stones [that] were *MS*

5 breathe the] breather the *MS*

6 a warmer cry] a <warmer> cry *MS*

7 fall again] fall [fear] again *MS*

8 So Bitterness – Good] So [Oh] Bitterness good *MS*

9 to the green time] to the [shearing] «green» time *MS*

18 Riddles] Riddle[s] *MS*

HE NEVER TOUCHED THE EARTH

NLA MS 1145/60, 47 [FN], fair draft.

The poor lad started on his walk,
It scarcely was a mile,
Not far away he knew his love
Was ready with her smile.

Had God been looking out the sky
He would have shook with mirth
For the poor lad was in a dream,
He never touched the earth.

He said, it is a sea of air
And all the clouds will swim –
The poor lad, he half forgot
The earth was under him.

HE TAKES OFF HIS HAT

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], with comment 'Never been printed'.

'I always take off my hat to a cow.' Tommy Bent.

A great man is Tommy, and strange are his tricks,
They say that his heart is as hard as his bricks!
God gave him good armour, his hide it is tough,
His speech is a sword and a bludgeon his bluff.
But lo, how he changes – he makes his best bow;
He always takes off his silk hat – to a Cow.

A great man is Tommy, he puts in their place
All Simper and Satin, all Frill and Fine Lace.
He roars and rages, he fumes and he frets –
We're sliding the wrong way, we can't pay our Debts!
But lo, how he changes – he makes his best bow;
This one thing is left him – the dairyman's Cow.

A great man is Tommy, for always he sees
The shiploads of butter, the mountains of cheese.
'Tis well with the People, 'tis well with the Land,
'Tis well with our Credit – the Jews understand.
And Tommy, he tumbles – he makes his best bow;
He always takes off his silk hat – to a Cow.

Gloss] Sir Thomas Bent (1838-1909), a local and state politician and land speculator, was defeated in the 1894 general election after the worst of a chaotic economic recession, and kept himself solvent during the depression by dairying at Port Fairy. He was premier and treasurer from February 1904 to January 1909.

HER EYES

ML MS 4937/28 [*GDC* Copy 2], fair copy [JSN], with direction ‘5 cap double’, date ‘June 1911’, and line 10 added [AGS]. (The MS is pasted into the volume.)

Sun (Sydney) 25 June 1911, p. 11; *GDC*₂ *HS* 48; *BLP* 57; *CP* 43.

JSN - AGS 26 July 1931 and 2 August 1931 (wants to drop this from a proposed collection because it is ‘mawkish and silly’).

The fair copy is the preferred text.

Dark eyes are hers – but in their darkness lies
 All the white holiness of Paradise;
 A tender violet within them shows
 And the unsullied beauties of the rose;
 Dark eyes are hers.

Dark eyes are hers – that move my heart to sing;
 They have consumed the summer – caught the Spring –
 Stolen the starlight and exultingly
 Lifted the moonbeams’ old embroidery;
 Dark eyes are hers.

4 beauties] [beauties] beauty [AGS] *MS*, *Sun*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

6 hers –] hers – *MS*

7summer – caught the Spring –] summer – caught the Spring – *MS*

10] line omitted in the fair copy and written in [AGS] *MS*, an error of haste

HER FOOT

‘1915’C, 14a (A0325) [JSN], fair draft.

What is her foot, this slyly wakeful thing?
It has the voice of Love and it can sing,
It beats, it beats, its ways are ravishing.

I am not in a street or near a town
But with an ancient people, fierce and brown;
Out of the hills strange warriors have come down.

In my right hand I hold a jagged spear,
Wild men in feathers mock me – oh, I fear!
Music of flowing blood is in my ear.

HER LADDIE

ML MS 3354/2, Item 5, 7a & 8b [JSN], draft, with line 1 written as two short lines.

He was fond o'the flowers – he was fond o'the sun and the rain;
 The voice of him surely was sweeter than all the Spring honey.
 He cared not for any girl's kisses – but oh, it was vain;
 He lacked not the best o'good clothes – I gave him bright money.
 Oh, my God – my Laddie.

When I wander away for a walk in the afternoon sun
 The little birds anger me so – I hear them all mocking;
 I sharpen all swords that I have – I suffer for all I have done;
 I have had keys – I have locked doors – but oh, the unlocking!
 Oh, my boy – my Laddie.

He was but four years when he babbled of going away;
 He was but five when his father had taught him to whistle;
 He was eager for joy and the glamour of lands far away
 And my love blew from him – as light as the top of a thistle.
 Oh, my God – my Laddie.

2 of him surely] of «him» surely *MS*

9 doors – but oh] door[s] but Oh *MS*

11 four years when] four year«s» [old] when *MS*

14] And my love[s] blew from him as «light» [as] the top of a thistle *MS*

Line endings, line 1: 1 flowers || 2 rain ||

HIS FATHER'S COAT

NLA MS 1145/60, 46 [FN], fair draft. The numbering for a third stanza follows line 14. This may indicate an expectation on the part of the amanuensis rather than the intention of the author.

There is no lack of crimson in your blood
Good lad – fill up the coat your father wore
And eat your dream, before the moonbeams scud
To leave you dancing on the desolate floor.
Oh, have your love and fear not any flame,
Love will not ever bring you any shame
But all its tenderlings about your door.

But there will be disasters by the way,
Manoeuvrings of the heart and leagues of lies;
Your sons will rob you sweetly night and day,
Your daughters will be sweethearts in your eyes;
Clear loves and sorrowful, but are no more.
Good lad, fill up the coat your father wore;
The walls of paradise are dim with sighs.

9 heart] heart[s] MS

HIS HEART WILL KNOW

‘1907’, 8b-9a (A0098) [JSN], draft.

Count him not hard-hearted, he sorrows not among flowers:
The sun is over his head but the sunlight has faded.
All that was sweet in the little black box lies hidden:
Keen looks, shrill voices, nothing that stabs him can matter.
Let him bury his dead, and give him no pity of ours.

1 among flowers] among [the] flower[s] *MS*

2 has faded] has <faded> *MS*

4 stabs him can] stabs «him» can *MS*

HONEYTHIRST

‘1912’, 15b-16a (A0264) [JSN], fair draft. Numbering for stanza 7 follows line 25: however, this reads as a finished piece.

'Twas yesterday I walked abroad
So that mine eyes might see
The yellow world, to calm and cure
This honeythirst in me.

The sun like a fierce player stood
Chiding his violin,
Loves were the songs that came to him
Red as an orange skin.

And as he ceased, two simple stars,
Like tender brides and shy,
Stood mournfully – and Oh, I cried,
This honeythirst have I!

As they were mourning, slow the moon
Walked in her gown of gold,
And in me woke the bitterness,
The honeythirst of old.

* * *

One morn I spoke to a green friend:
Oh tell me wizard tree,
Whence did it come, why should it come,
This honeythirst in me?

The green tree, the white, spoke
Ever so faint and clear,
But a dark cloud was on my soul,
I was not born to hear.

1 walked] walk[ed] *MS*

2 So that mine eyes] so that [my] mine eyes *MS*

23 dark cloud] dark [soul] cloud *MS*

HOW SHALL I LIVE FOR MY LOVE?

‘1910’, 4a-4b (A0226-7) [JSN], draft.

How shall I live for my love?
– ‘Mid roses frail and fine,
And the green grape shall have my blood
And hold this heart of mine.

I’ll find in purple flowers
Glories of rain and dew,
And I’ll pray to the blue heaven,
Because her eyes are blue.

I’ll take the scent of violets,
The passionate mignonette
With an old air will hold me,
And I shall not forget.

Only a lover listens,
Only a lover sings:
All else is Doubt and Bitterness
And the depth of dark things.

2 ‘Mid] Mid[e] *MS*

6 rain] Rain *MS*

7 And I’ll] And/ I[’]ll *MS*

12] [The tenderest bird or blossom] *MS* following line 12

HUMAN WEAKNESS

‘1908’, 22a (A0175) [A].

Poor Jonah was exceeding grim,
He felt so wet it made him frown;
But after all, we’re just like him;
We don’t like being taken down.

HUMBUG

Another poem, ‘The mare’s nest’ has a stanza under the title ‘Humbug’ (indexed as ‘Humbug’ [2]).

HUMBUG [1]

‘1907’, 54b–56a (A0144-5) [JSN], fair draft. Stanza 7 comes at the top of a leaf and the stanzas on the leaf are misnumbered 8-10.

My furious fight with Fact and Fate
I wage incessantly;
Truth I abhor with hideous Hate,
It don’t kow-tow to me.

I am Proud Private Enterprise,
I bleed, exploit and lend;
Pointing to Heaven with sad eyes
I’m the Poor Man’s Friend.

I am the ally, true and brown,
The Brother Black and Tan,
I am the King’s God-given Crow –
The Godly Public man.

The Country’s going to the dogs
And if it grieves me
Sometimes to help, to roll my logs,
The country’s proud and free.

I smoodge, I supplicate, I shove,
To every trick I’m up
In Christian Charity and Love –
Also the yellow Pup.

3 Truth] [Th] ruth *MS*

14 And if it] I am «if» it grieves me *MS*

Continued overleaf...

Humbug (cont.)

I am the stout Sisyphist –
I fume, I screech, I roar,
I trample on, I take, I twist,
I really can't do more.

I lay foundation stones – I talk
About the good I do,
And then by May and Might I baulk
Good measures getting through.

I am not young – nay, I am old;
In every age and clime
I blasphemed and I bought and sold,
I'm Humbug all the time.

I am the God of all things cheap
(Of course I don't mean Land);
Through all the centuries I creep,
I wink and Understand.

21 Sisyphist] Secesh *MS*

31 and] an[d] *MS*

34 (Of . . . Land)] (Of . . . Land) *MS*

I AM ATHIRST

ML MS A3038/1, 18b (B0119) [JSN], fair draft.

I am athirst – I beg of the bare sky
Whitened with stars – weary with parables;
I ask of the Earth and every wind that sighs,
Brides in their blossoms – velvet damosels.

I am athirst – I plead with the blue rain
Craving the unquiet sunlight for my own;
Sobbing at shadow music – scented pain,
Prayers in the paint – the pity in the stone.

3 of the Earth] of [the] Earth *MS*

4 blossoms – velvet damosels] blossoms – velvet damosols *MS*

IN CHICAGO

‘1907’, 1a (A0089) [A].

Said a very stout man in Chicago,
I’m sick – if I die let my soul go
To a vault dark and deep –
Flats ain’t too cheap –
There’s no saying where a man may go.

2 soul go] [soul] [go] *MS*

IN NIMITYBELLE

‘1907’, 56b-57b (A0146-7) [JSN], fair draft. NLA MS 1145/60, 91 [JSN], a stanza numbered 2 under title ‘Nimitybelle’, a revision for *GDC*.

The Bookfellow January 1912, p. 44, entitled ‘Nimitybelle’; *GDC* (omitted in the unnumbered 4th copy), entitled ‘Nimitybelle’.

The poem won the prize of one guinea ‘offered [in the *Bookfellow*] for the most interesting love story in not more than 24 lines of verse, every stanza ending with the word “Nimitybelle” . . . [the prize going to the] ‘ingenious Shaw Neilson, now the leading writer of verse in Victoria and a poet of promise’.

The second stanza in *GDC* is blocked and marked with crosses in the margin to indicate the need for revision.

The *Bookfellow* and the *GDC* texts are more obviously poetic and reflect Stephens’s editorial practices. The fair draft is therefore taken as the preferred text.

Nimitybelle is a dear little town –
Under the hill the homes are cosy;
The boys grow up and the men grow down,
The old dames talk and the girls are rosy.
They live so long – I need hardly tell
They keep no doctor in Nimitybelle.

Sleepy the cows and the goats are slow,
And the horses know that nothing can matter;
The weekly wash in the wind doth blow
And each of the seven days wax flatter.
No one his neighbours would undersell –
Trade is dead level in Nimitybelle.

- 2] Its trees are green and its homes are cosy *Boo, GDC*
- 3 The boys . . . the men] The lads . . . their dads *Boo, GDC*
- 4] The dames wax stout and the girls are rosy *Boo, GDC*
- 5] The rest of the world is all very well *Boo, GDC*
- 5 so long –] so long – *MS*
- 6] But not important to Nimitybelle *Boo, GDC*
- 7] The cows are sleepy the goats go slow *Boo, GDC*
- 8 And the] The *Boo, GDC*
- 9] Even the cocks have a careless crow *Boo, GDC*
- 10] And one day dies and the next seems flatter *Boo, GDC*
- 11] The grocer casually hopes to sell *Boo, GDC*
- 12] But no one worries in Nimitybelle *Boo, GDC*

Continued overleaf...

In Nimitybelle (cont.)

But things do happen, they always will:
 The windmill turns in the windy weather,
 The lad with a shanghai loves to kill,
 And the belle and her beau go out together;
 The old men fish, and they sometimes tell
 The weights of fishes at Nimitybelle!

The little tale, ah well – oh yes –
 She was as bright as a dogwood blossom;
 She managed the courting I must confess,
 Her eye was the eye of a pert opossum.
 I bought her a ring. Yes thanks, she's well,
 And I loved her forever in Nimitybelle.

- 13 But] Yet *Boo*, *GDC*
 14 turns] works *Boo*, *GDC*
 15 a shanghai] the shanghai *Boo*, *GDC*
 16 And the] The *Boo*, *GDC*
 18 weights] weight[s] *GDC* Copies 2 & 3 • weight *GDC* Copy 1
 19 ah well –] ah well – *MS*
 19] A story of love you ask ah yes *Boo*, *GDC*
 21 managed the] managed [I'm] the *MS* • did the *Boo*, *GDC*
 22 eye of a] eye of [a] *MS*
 22] Her eyes were the eyes of a pert opossum *Boo*, *GDC*
 23 a ring. Yes] a ring. Yes *MS*
 23] I made a Madam of Mademoiselle *Boo*, *GDC*
 24] And we rented a cottage in Nimitybelle *Boo*, *GDC*

NLA MS 1145/60, 91 reads:

The cows are sleepy the goats are slow
 The horses know that nothing can matter
 Even the cocks have a cautious crow
 They seem to feel that the Earth is flatter
 Than Scientists think but they grieve to tell
 Their ingenious knowledge to Nimitybelle

IN THE COOL COUNTRY

‘1915’B, 7b-8a (A0364) [A], fair draft, 8 stanzas, entitled ‘A cool cool country’; 9a-9b (A0365-6) [A], draft, 7 stanzas, entitled ‘In the cool country’.

A later version of this poem, entitled ‘In the dim counties’, was published in the *Bookfellow* 15 June 1920.

‘1915’B, 7b-8a = A; ‘1915’B, 9a-9b = B

The fair draft (A) is the preferred text and the more felicitous title of the second draft is retained.

All Kings are hollow
All Queens are calm,
No mirth or menace
Dim light or psalm.

Unholy wench
Lie sweet and clean
In the cool, cool country
Below the green.

A lover’s quietness
Fills up the day,
The eyes know not of
The lips’ delay.

Menace of sunbeam
Or witless moon

1-4] ≠ B 5-8

1 hollow] desolate B 5

2] [Queens are all calm] | Queens have a calm B 6

3] No hope [of] or holy man B 7

4] Sequel or psalm B 8

5-8] ≠ B 21-24

5] The little brown wench B 21

6] And the holy and clean B 22

7] All are good citizens B 23

8 Below] Under B 24

9 Fills] Fill[s] A

9-10] omitted in B

13-16] ≠ B 9-12

13-14] Malice of sunbeam or || Menace of moon B 9-10

Continued overleaf...

In the cool Country (cont.)

No more enslave us
With light or tune.

No shrill endeavour,
No gentle sin
Or blaze of honey cup
Can enter in.

No silken heavens
Delude the eye –
The drowsy centuries
Go feebly by.

Maids have no magic,
Their feet are dumb.
'Tis the cool, cool country
And all may come.

No love can smite us,
No blood can flow
In the fine, fine country
That lies below.

- 15] No more shall chasten us *B* 11
16] With light [and] «or» tune *A* • As with a tune *B* 12
17-20] omitted in *B*
21-24] omitted in *B*
25-28] ≠ *B* 13-16
25 Maids] maid[s] *B*
26 Their] All *B* 14
27] Night has [outwids wed] «witted Love» *B* 15
28] How shall he come *B* 16
29-32] ≠ *B* 25-28
29] love cannot sabre us *B* 25
30] Blood cannot flow *B* 26
31] 'Tis the fine country *B* 27
32] Often below *B* 28

Discarded stanzas

B stanza 1, lines 1-4:

[Little street wenches]
The little street wench and
The holy and clean
Fill the fine towns in
The land of the lean

B stanza 5, lines 17-20:

Love o`the sunny road
How should he burn
Love o`the cooing lip
Why should he turn

IN THE DIM COUNTIES

NLA MS 605/110, typescript [AGS], with corrections.
The Bookfellow 15 June 1920, p. 133; *BLP* 97; *CP* 102.

JSN - AGS 5 January 1916 (suggests this title as the title for a proposed book of his verse). JSN - RHC 26 February 1934, NLA MS [?], *HI*, not located (concerning proofs *CP*). FN - JSN 23 July 1934, ML MS 3354/1: 63-68 (commenting on the reception of *CP*: he likes this poem).

The poem is a later version of ‘In the cool country’ (c. 1913). N’s reference to the title in 1916 suggests that a revision of ‘The cool country’ had been written by that date and the fact that the poem does not appear in *HS* (1919) suggests that one or another revision was not sent to Stephens until after this date.

The typescript is the preferred text.

In the dim counties
 We take the long calm,
 Liltin’ no haziness
 Sequel or psalm.

The little street wenches,
 The holy and clean,
 Live as good neighbours live
 Under the green.

Malice of sunbeam or
 Menace of moon
 Piping shall leave us
 No taste of a tune.

In the dim counties
 The eyelids are dumb.
 To the lean citizens
 Love cannot come.

Love in the yellowing,
 Love at the turn,
 Love o’the cooing lip
 How could He burn?

The little street wenches,
 The callous, unclean,
 — Could they but tell us what
 All the gods mean.

Love cannot sabre us,
 Blood cannot flow,
 In the dim counties
 That wait below.

IN THE WIND

‘1910’, 18a-18b (A0239-40) [JSN], fair draft. This is an early version of ‘The petticoat plays’.

In maddest merriment
Her silly tears would come.
Her heart, a mourner, made
All music dumb.

May she have love asleep
For lovingly she sinned;
This is her petticoat
Upon the wind.

All white – the devilry
Of old almost gone.
Oh wilful whisperer
We gazed upon.

How delicate with grief,
Here to our sleepy eyes
The outlines of the leaf
Sewn in Paradise.

How lazily the lace
Brings into life again
All her sweet wonderment,
The pride and pain.

4 dumb.] dumb. *MS*

6 sinned –] sinned – *MS*

8 wind.] wind. *MS*

9 white –] white – *MS*

13 grief] greif *MS*

15-16] Cf. Genesis 3: 7: And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. *AV*

16 Paradise] Paridise *MS*

Continued overleaf...

In the Wind (cont.)

The jewels that she wore
Make strange flesh divine.
She was not woman. She
Was a wild wine.

There was a night of bloom,
The restless blossoms fell.
One hour she told to me
Black things to tell.

May she have love asleep,
She wed not any sigh.
This is her petticoat
The wind will dry.

23 woman. She] woman. She *MS*

28] [Half that her] | Black things to tell *MS*

30 wed] An unusual use of the word with irony intended.

IS IT YOU SADIE?

‘1912’, 17b-18a (A0266) [JSN], draft.

Is it you I hear Sadie,
Or a wind’s whine?
Oh, for my man and my home
And the sweet child of mine.

Is it you I hear Sadie,
Never quite clear?
Oh, my heart’s at the green time
All the sunny year.

The sweet children chatter;
This old man’s eyes
Can see what the wind sees
When the wind dies.

The young lover murmurs,
His mind is dim;
He is lisping and listening,
And no-one hears him.

Is it you I hear Sadie?
It is long, so long –
Come nearer, it is sunlight,
Red summer-strong.

Is it you I hear Sadie?
That slow wine the moon
Put upon old sorrows
In a pale swoon.

Give to me no pity,
No mouth-made thing –
I have lived – I buried
Sadie and Spring.

Title] [Do [y] I hear you Sadie] «Is it you Sadie» *MS*
3 my home] my [ch] home *MS*
22 That] [When] that *MS*
25 Give] [Is] Give *MS*

IS THIS A RECORD?

‘1908’, 4b (A0158) [A]. LaT MS 9419/3678, typescript, transcription, untitled.
The Clarion 1 July 1909, p. 3.

The preferred text is ‘1908’, 4b.

There was an old lady at Adelaide,
She swore that a hen she had had laid
Two eggs in one day –
But the other hens lay
Less than that by a long way in Adelaide.

The *Clarion* reads:

A worthy old lady of Adelaide
Declared that a hen she had had laid
Two eggs in one day,
But the other hens lay
Less than that by a long way in Adelaide.

JEMIMA'S HAT

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], with comment 'Unprinted | Sun newspaper'.
Sun (Sydney) 3 December 1911; *The Bookfellow* 15 February 1914, p. 36.

The typescript is the preferred text.

The singers sang – so sweetly did they sing
 Of Paradise and angels all a-wing
 The soaring summer birds made faint reply,
 Lost in the love of Summer and blue sky.

Roses and sunlight at the very door,
 The prayers went up – God heard them all before;
 Sunlight and flowers without, and we within
 Thought not of soul or psalm, nor any sin.

The singers sang – I wonder did they know
 All that their voices gave me, soft and low?
 In shade or shine whatever joys depart
 My Paradise is with me in my heart.

The singers sang – so sweetly did they sing
 Of robes and harp and angels all a-wing,
 And still I stared – I may have stared before –
 'Twas such a pretty hat Jemima wore.

6 God heard them] we prayed them *Sun, Boo*

8 nor] or *Sun, Boo*

14 harp] harps *Sun, Boo*

JONAH

‘1907’, 2b (A0092) [A].

I'm not to be kept down, said Jonah;
I'll see if I can't get the loan of
A dry suit of clothes –
I couldn't wear those,
They'd put me away with the donna.

Title] The story of Jonah is told in Jonah: 1 & 2. *AV*

JONAH TAKES LEAVE OF THE WHALE

There are two pieces with this title, both with the same theme.

JONAH TAKES LEAVE OF THE WHALE [1]

‘1907’, 15b (A0105) [JSN], fair draft.

Said Jonah, how jolly to see the dry land,
How pleasant on old ‘terra firma’ to stand.
That old whale was spouting – I jumped at the chance –
Enough of adventure – away with Romance!
I’ll write my memoirs – they should have a good sale –
I’m not to be kept down by any old whale.

Title] Cf. Jonah 1: 17 & 2: 10: Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights . . . And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land. *AV*

JONAH TAKES LEAVE OF THE WHALE [2]

‘1907’, 12b-13a (A0102) [JSN], under heading ‘Bible stories in rhyme’, with gloss.

Said Jonah, delighted to see the dry land,
How pleasant on old ‘terra firma’ to stand.
The future’s before me, I really can’t fail –
I’m not to be kept down by any old whale.

Title] See ‘Jonah takes leave of the whale’ [1]

2 ‘How pleasant . . . ‘terra firma’] How [nice] pleasant . . . ‘terra firma’ *MS*

The gloss reads:

Recently it has been suggested that Scriptural instruction might be given to State School scholars by inserting in the School Paper short poems descriptive of the leading kings, miracles etc in Biblical history. The *Offsider* rises to the occasion. When his verses first struck this office the Religious Editor who was naturally the first to read them was so touched that he wept aloud for nearly two hours.

JUDKINS IN PARADISE

ML MS 3354/2, Item 5, 2b-3a [A], fair draft.

Speaking at a crowded meeting yesterday the Rev Mr— said that he did not know of anyone who was doing as much for the Lord in Australia as was Mr Judkins. (News item)

He shall be freed from earthly taint
 And all his clerical grease paint;
 Angels beholding him shall faint
 With sheer surprise.
 He'll soon boss every blessed Saint
 In Paradise!

He shall most probably recall
 St Peter and dispense with Paul;
 Moses will sing exceeding small;
 Why, bless your eyes,
 Old hands won't get a job at all
 In Paradise!

Title] Judkins, William Henry (1869-1912) and Judkins, George Alfred (1871-1958). This probably refers to William, a lay preacher in the Methodist church and editor of the journal *Review of Reviews* who campaigned vigorously against the 'social evils' of the day, notably gambling, racing, drinking and dancing. His campaigns came to a climax in 1905 and 1906 when he staged a campaign against John Wren and gambling and preached to large audiences at Wesley Church, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne.

A cancelled sentence follows the first in the gloss:

[He believes that if that Rev gentleman were suddenly called away the Lord would find it almost impossible to find a man to fill his place.]

JULIE CALLAWAY

There are two discrete versions of this poem.

JULIE CALLAWAY [1]

ML MS 3354/2, Item 5, 14b-17b [JSN], draft, with some renumbering of stanzas, 2 cancelled stanzas, and additional stanzas under headings 'Last verses Julie Callaway' and 'Last verses of Julie Callaway'. The title occurs in a list of titles in '1909', 2a (A0200) [JSN], as 'Julie Callaway' 'Ball[ad]'.

When Julie was seventeen
There came a bearded man;
He burned his kisses into her
And her soul's ache began.

He praised her for her white skin
And her eyes of the wild blue,
She clung to him, she clung to him,
More than her mother knew.

They sauntered in the dark time
Unlit by moon or star;
The wind spoke in the sandal wood
And in the blue balaar.

Oh, the small wind spoke fearfully
As one who long had sinned,
And the lovers murmured mournfully
It is the praying wind.

4 soul's ache] souls [work] «ache» *MS*

6 her eyes] her [her] eyes *MS*

11 sandal wood] sandlewood *MS*

12 the blue balaar] This may be a reference to *Exocarpos cupressiformis*, known as the Cherry ballart or native cherry.

13 small wind spoke] small «wind» spoke *MS*

15] mournfully] mournfully [wind] *MS*

Continued overleaf...

Julie Callaway [1] (cont.)

They walked until the green time
 Put Love in everything;
 The bees were hot with honey-thirst
 And hastening with the Spring.

The big box was blossoming,
 The nights forgot their dew;
 The white lambs in long days
 Were clamouring for the ewes.

They walked until the white time
 Made miracles of flame;
 The wind was from the wilderness,
 With a red rush it came.

Not even tender April dews
 Could cure their sore disease,
 And soon the little globes of gold
 Sat in the orange trees.

Now came the time of blue rain
 And the weird winter moon;
 The little red-legged water hens
 Ran round the red lagoon.

The black duck with her little brood
 Sat like a fleet at sea;
 The over-wise white pelican
 Took all things dreamily.

* * *

17 walked until] walked [unto] «until» *MS*

18] «Put Love in everything» | [When the young birds take wing] *MS*

20] [For the sap o the Spring] *MS*, preceding line 20

21] [Now there] *MS*, preceding line 21

21 The big box] This may be *Eucalyptus melliodora*, commonly called yellow box, a tree noted for its delicately scented flowers and high yield of honey.

25-28] stanza numbered [6] 7

29-32] stanza renumbered [6] 8

33 the time of] the [days] «time» of *MS*

35 The little] [A] The little *MS*

40 things] thing[s] *MS*

Continued overleaf...

Julie Callaway [1] (cont.)

He was a bonny bearded man
 And she was lily-skinned,
 But ever in the blue balaar
 There spoke the praying wind.

The lover of Julie gave of
 His strong love the sign,
 And Oh, the rosy mouth of her
 Was delicate as wine.

* * *

The preacher with the round face
 Looked round him in dull hours;
 He heard the talk of tired girls
 And rustling crape and flowers.

The preacher with the round face
 Stood mournfully to pray,
 But the quick tears, the quiet tears,
 Left him no word to say.

The preacher with the round face
 Spoke not of Death or Sin;
 And the stern men with shovels stooped
 Putting the brown Earth in.

* * *

They mourned her for her white skin
 And her eyes of the wild blue.
 Her lips, they were the truest lips
 That lover ever knew.

* * *

- 42 lily-skinned] lily skinnd *MS*
 47 rosy]rosey *MS*
 51 He heard] [An] He heard *MS*
 54] [Spoke not] *MS*, preceding line 54
 57 the round] the[r] round *MS*
 63 they] the[y] *MS*

Continued overleaf...

Julie Callaway [1] (cont)

And she had dreamed of the bride's bloom
And all the bride's array,
But Death was in the praying wind
For Julie Callaway.

67 the praying] the [leaing] praying *MS*

Cancelled stanzas

Stanza numbered 6, following line 20:

[They walked unto the white time
And world of red days
The wind of the wilderness
Was [lost] «weary» on his ways]

Under heading 'Last verses Julie Callaway' at top of 16a:

[She fell from of[f] her tall horse
And there at Julie's side
They knew by her faint faint heart
She would not be a bride

And the stern girls]

JULIE CALLAWAY [2]

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], with spelling ‘Calliway’ and comments ‘Never been printed’ and ‘Book’.

Sun (Sydney) Sunday 5 January 1913, p. 13; *GDC*; *HS* 19; *BLP* 38; *CP* 19.

JSN - AGS 26 July 1931 (one of fourteen pieces N wants to drop from a proposed collection)

The typescript is the preferred text.

This world, I always call it mine
 Because no other world I know,
 Love it or hate it how you will,
 With kindness like the overflow
 Of some bare river rambling on
 So does it only seek to bless.
 Oh, dry your tears for all things gone,
 The old world kindly wanders on.

This world of mine, this world of yours,
 November, and a glorious day
 (So drowsily the bees did hum)
 And pretty Julie Callaway
 Stood laughing, lingering at the door.
 Of all this sweetness, grace and gleam,
 The old time singers sang of yore,
 So let us all sing evermore.

The air grew sweeter, days were long,
 And everywhere beneath the sky
 Death who would never be gainsaid
 Sat waiting with a watchful eye.
 On every tree there comes a flower,
 To every lad and lass a time,
 A dancing day, a month, an hour,
 The gold world trembles in a shower.

6 seek] speak *Sun*

Continued overleaf...

Julie Callaway [2] (cont.)

Oh, pretty Julie Callaway,
 God surely loved her for her dream.
 A little home not far away –
 How wonderful the world may seem
 When one we love (and Love is strong)
 Walks with us in the flowery way;
 All else that in the world is wrong,
 How soon forgotten – Love is long.

* * *

It is not far, you see her grave;
 'Tis in the shadow of the trees.
 I sometimes fancy Julie hears
 The midday murmuring of the bees,
 And knows our footsteps everyway –
 And this sweet world to her denied.
 'Twas in the bloom of bride's array
 She died upon her wedding day.

And is God merciful or kind?
 He knoweth all – full well He knew
 Millions of hard, sin-maddened men,
 And wasting, worn-out women too,
 Praying for Death as devils pray –
 And she, pure-hearted, beautiful,
 In orange bloom, in bride's array,
 Death found her on her wedding day.

37 everyway] every way *Sun*

43 men] man *typescript*

JUST FOR A DAY

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], with comment ‘Never been printed’.

Just for a day dear, just for a day, Joey –
'Tis little now that's left, when the older friends are going;
Your eyes were like the blue sky, your face was like the sunlight;
Will you listen to me sweetheart when the summer flowers are growing?

Oh, the days of sunlight – nothing then could part us –
But the big black shadows gather, covering flower and tree;
I would kiss thee now dear, I would kiss thee long, Joey;
They say that you are sleeping – I know it cannot be.

KINGS ANCIENT AND MODERN

‘1907’, 13b (A0103) [JSN].

‘Sweet is the Light’ – that was sublime,
But no Kings play in pantomime:
Loudly the Kaiser Wilhelm cries
‘Give me the limelight every time.’

Title] King[s] *MS*. A pun on *Hymns Ancient and Modern* may have been intended: this first appeared in 1861.
3 Kaiser Wilhelm] Kaiser Wilhelm *MS*. Wilhelm II [William II] (1859 – 1941), Emperor and King of Prussia, abdicated 9 November 1918: reputedly, a man of inflated opinions about his own political skills, artistic taste and strategic genius.

LEG PULLING

‘1907’, 50a-51b (A0139-41) [JSN], incomplete.

I am the precious process by
Which humankind is hoaxed;
Equines were tritoed when I
Uncautious comrades coaxed.

The mystic doth the skies forsake,
I tickle worn-out seer;
I am the great astounding Fake
Yawning throughout the years.

Coolly, I collar all mankind,
I watch it strive and strut;
Fain would I laugh, I feel inclined,
But nay – my mouth is shut.

Blithely I speak bold honeyed things
To homely Queens, red-haired;
It is for you I cry, Oh Kings,
This Universe was reared.

When Bishops sit in Conference,
I play my Proud Trump Card –
I say, your progress is immense,
But Sirs, you work too hard.

I flirt with every freckled girl,
Idly I praise her eyes,
Setting her softened brain awhirl,
Her shoes a smaller size.

3] [Hors] Equines were tritoed when I *MS*

9 Coolly] Cooly *MS*

10 and strut] and [shut] strut *MS*

12 nay my –] nay my – *MS*

15] It is for you «I cry» Oh Kings *MS*

Continued overleaf...

Leg Pulling (cont.)

Deftly I take unbearded lads,
I show them cigarettes

[Incomplete]

Cancelled stanzas

At 50a , under title ‘Leg pulling’:

[Wine the red rebel furious
Red [wine and] fads other little fads
[Doubt] full «And dull» delicious debts]

Stanza numbered 4:

[Blithely I say cool honeyed things
To homely red-haired [things] Queen
Lo ye are Gods I say to Kings]

LET US BE MAKING MERRY

‘1909’, 17b-18a & 18b-19a (A0216-7) [JSN], draft. There are 6 stanzas numbered 1-6 at 17b-18a with 3 stanzas cancelled and with renumbering, and 3 stanzas which are revisions at 18b-19a. The revised stanzas are numbered 1, 5 & 6 and stanza 1 is cancelled. Stanza 2 (at 17b) has been numbered 1 but there is no other stanza numbered 2. The order of the stanzas here is therefore conjectural.

Let us be making merry:
Lovers at middle moon
With their kissing have taught us
And we shall travel soon.

Let us be making merry:
The green grace of the Spring
Has left us all unsweetened
With a cold questioning.

Let us be making merry:
It is no waste of wine –
I’d like to look in your heart
And lend a hope of mine.

Let us be making merry:
I dimly hear and see –
I’d like to know what your eyes
Have told your heart o’me.

Let us be making merry,
Let us be playing fair:
There is a shadow showing
Pain – at the back of Prayer.

1-4] = stanza numbered 2
3 kissing have] kissing [of] have *MS*
5-8] = stanza renumbered [4] 3
9-12] = stanza renumbered [5] 4
13-16] = stanza numbered 5
13] [I’d like to kn] || Let us be making merry *MS*
17-20] = stanza numbered 6

Cancelled stanzas

Stanza numbered 1 at 17b:

[Let us be making merry
Our life has been a sigh
The winds in every weather
Have shouted a good-bye]

Continued overleaf...

Let us be Making Merry (cont.)

Stanza numbered 3:

[Let us be making merry
Riots in Earth and air
Too plainly have showed us
Pain at the back of prayer]

Stanza numbered 6:

[Let us [me] be making merry
As sailors [long] «just» ashore
There is a Voice – a Shadow
A Hand is at the door]

Stanza numbered 1 at 18b:

[Let us be making merry
The while we sell and buy
The wind[s] in every weather
Make sorrowful good-bye]

LET US CONSIDER LOVE

‘1915’C, 5b (A0317) & ML MS A3038/1, 45b (B0169) [JSN], fair draft, 1 × 5-line stanza, 1 × 4-line stanza and 1 × 6-line stanza. The rhyme scheme suggests that 4-line stanzas were intended and 4-line stanzas have been adopted here.

Let us consider Love, that is flaming and bold,
That is all too faint with fear and feverish losses,
Making the wet days warm and the sunrays cold,
Dancing in softest silks, staggering under crosses.

Let us consider Love, this serpent slim,
In the flowered and favoured places slyly gliding,
Always out on a heart hunt, grasping and grim,
Making us fear we know not where he is hiding,

Let us consider Love, though he beat us sore,
And we are faint with kneeling, sighing and suing;
Let us be sweet with Love – let us love him more;
Let us be kind to Love that is all our undoing.

7 Always] Always[s] *MS*

11 Love –] love *MS*

Line endings

Stanza 1 (lines 1-4 of reading text): 1 bold || 2 losses || 3 cold || 4 silks || 6 crosses ||

Stanza 2 (lines 5-8 of reading text): 1 slim || 2 gliding || 3 grim || 4 hiding ||

Stanza 3 (lines 9-12 of reading text): 1 sore || 2 suing || 3 love || 4 more || 5 Love || 6 undoing ||

LET YOUR SONG BE DELICATE

ML MS A3038/1, 38a (B0154) [JSN], 3 stanzas, numbered 2, [3] 4 & 5, with stanza 5 cancelled; 39a-39b (B0156-7) [JSN], draft, 6 stanzas, numbered, with stanzas 2, 4 & 5 cancelled; 40b (B0160) [JSN], 2 stanzas numbered 5 & 6, under short title 'Song be delicate'. NLA MS 605, proof *CP*.
The Bookfellow 15 November 1913, p. 258; *GDC*; *HS* 3; *BLP* 78; *CP* 3. (*HS*, *BLP* & *CP* have the title as 'Song be delicate'.)

JSN – JD 4 November 1934, NLA MS 1145/67 (thinks he must have been thinking of Kipling's 'noisy verse and also his intolerance' when he wrote this).

3038/1, 38a = A; A3038/1, 39a-39b = B; A3038/1, 40b = C
 The *Bookfellow* is the preferred text.

Let your song be delicate.
 The skies declare
 No war – the eyes of lovers
 Wake everywhere.

Let your voice be delicate.
 How faint a thing
 Is Love, little Love crying
 Under the Spring.

Let your song be delicate.
 The flowers can hear;
 Too well they know the tremble
 Of the hollow year.

Let your voice be delicate.
 The bees are home;

1-4] ≠ *B* stanza 1
 4 Wake] Run [Roam] *B*
 5-8] = *A* stanza 2
 9-12] ≠ *B* stanza 3
 9 song] soul *B*
 13-16] ≠ *A* stanza numbered [3] 4
 13 voice] song *A* stanza [3] 4

Continued overleaf...

Let Your Song be Delicate (cont.)

All their day's love is sunken
Safe in the comb.

Let your song be delicate.
Sing no loud hymn:
Death is abroad – oh, the black season,
The deep – the dim.

15 their day's] their[s] A [3] 4 • their days *Boo, GDC, HS*
15 day's] days *Boo, GDC, HS*
16 Safe] Deep A stanza [3] 4
17-20] ≠ B stanza 6; ≠ C stanza 6
17 song] soul B, C stanza 6
19 abroad –] abroad – B, C
20 deep –] deep – B, C stanza 6

Discarded stanzas

A cancelled stanza 5:

[Let your voice be delicate
The night is old
Softly the moonbeams suffer
Perils in gold]

B cancelled stanza 2:

[Let your voice be delicate
Has Love come in
Love is it little Love crying
– And the air is thin.]

B cancelled stanzas 4 & 5:

[Let your song [be] delicate
Let not the cold
Affright let you little one there lingers [sic]
The touch of gold]

[Let your voice be delicate
A child may hear
Storm of blood and of bosom
When eyes are clear]

C stanza 5:

Let your voice be delicate
The cool hours call
Oh the rare girl in yellow
Plays on us all

LINES FOR AN ALBUM

‘1907’, 26a-26b (A0115-6) [JSN], fair draft.

The sun is flooding all the Land
 (It’s quite the usual thing with him);
 Why can he never understand
 That people sometimes like it dim?

Long did I wake ere break of day,
 Loud barked a beastly mastiff pup,
 Five solid hours the cocks held sway,
 Glad was I when the sun got up.

So here I write at your command
 Dear Lad with the Gentle Eyes;
 I am a most indifferent hand
 At telling necessary lies.

2 (It’s . . . him)] ‘It’s . . . him’ *MS*

6 mastiff pup] mastiff [⟨buff⟩] pup *MS*

7 Five] [An] Five *MS*

LISTEN, OH PANSY

‘1907’, 8b (A0098) [JSN], draft.

Listen, Oh Pansy, was never me – I who was never your lover,
I who saw all from afar in the prime of the Summer,
I who was with you when all our own little world was flooded.
Bright is the earth as of old and a clear sky above her.

1] Listen Oh Pansy was never me I who [not of] [was never] your lover[s] *MS*

LITTLE GIRL OF THE SKY

ML MS 3354/3, Item 1, 2/3a [JSN], fair draft, with 1 x 2-line stanza (the first) and 3 x 4-line stanzas. Four-line stanzas have been adopted throughout.

Here in my world there are
Too many men,
Rising so slowly and
Falling too sharply again.

You I discern at the even
In the garden near by,
Looking out to the east and the southward
Little girl of the sky.

Little of earth is upon you,
I know not your share,
But your eyes have gone out all beyond me
And the strange waters there.

By the fall of your hair
And the long boats near by,
Cloud-land is your land, not my land,
Little girl of the sky.

11] But your «eyes» have gone out all beyond you *MS*

Line endings stanza 1 (lines 1-4 of reading text): 1 men || 2 again ||

LITTLE GIRL WITH BLACK HAIR

There are three discrete versions of this poem, all occurring in MSS dated c. 1910, the third of the three entitled 'The little girl with black hair'.

LITTLE GIRL WITH BLACK HAIR [1]

'1915' C, 8b-9a (A0320) [JSN], draft.

Oh little girl, I seek you everywhere,
But in your place lives a woman rare,
Oh little girl with the black hair.

As a sweet pansy hastening to its prime,
Tender as thoughts that only run in rhyme,
You were an angel in the greener time.

Still live the green, the golden, the silver air,
But you have changed, you are not anywhere,
Oh little girl, girl with the black hair.

Your eyes had tenderness that angels know,
Your sweetening glance did softest grace bestow,
Oh little witch, of Not so long Ago.

There lives a queenly woman, tall and fair,
But my old love, she is not anywhere,
Oh little girl, girl with the black hair.

4] As a sweet pansy in its || Hastening to/ [its early prime] [time] [its] prime *MS*

6 were an angel] were [an] angel *MS*

11 sweetening glance did] sweetening «glance» did *MS*

13 There lives a] The[re] lives [a] *MS*

14] But my old love [is] She | [She] is not anywhere *MS*

12 Ago.] Ago. *MS*

15 girl, . . . hair.] girl, . . . hair *MS*

LITTLE GIRL WITH BLACK HAIR [2]

ML MS A038/1, 25a (B0130) [JSN] & '1910', 17b (A0239) [A], fair draft.

'Twas in a time when Love ran out and in
Making ludicrous all Life and sin –
Blue were the ribbons tied about your chin.

Girls there are many, always up and down
Against the greenery of every town,
And every little land where Life is brown.

And there were miracles, a scent so rare
And a bright music beating everywhere,
Oh little girl with the Black Hair.

Ay, though the Patient Grower should declare
That love of you was sin, still would I dare
To love you, little girl with the Black Hair.

Title] [Oh] little girl with black hair *MS*

1 and in] and in. *MS*

4 and down] and town *MS*, an error of haste

LITTLE WHITE GIRL

‘1909’, 4b (A0203) [JSN], incomplete, entitled ‘So pale and pretty’. ML MS A3038/1, 16a (B0114) & 27a (B0134) [JSN], fair draft, signed, entitled ‘Oh little white girl’.
GDC; *HS* 58; *BLP* 74; *CP* 52.

The *GDC* text indicates a fair copy (missing) which is a revision of the two MSS and *GDC* is therefore taken as the preferred text.

‘1909’, 4b = A; 3038/1, 16a & 27a = B

Fears are mine for a face so pretty:
 Violets perish, lilies are few:
 There is an ache in my heart for you.
 In all the tawdry treacherous city
 You are the one thing white and clean,
 The only riches where all is mean,
 Little white girl, so pale and pretty.

Fears are mine for a face so pretty:
 I have been lover of lips and chins,
 And a listener to violins
 Crying for love and calling for pity,
 And it all comes back with your eyes and hair
 But the darkness threatens you everywhere,
 Little white girl, so pale and pretty.

- 1] Little white girl so pale and pretty *A* •
- Little white girl you are barely pretty *B*
- 2] You are a riddle without a clue *A* •
- (Read «me» your parable through and through) *B*
- 4] In all the tiresome and untamed city *A*
- 5 white] sweet *B*
- 7] Little white girl you are barely pretty *B*
- 8] Little white girl so pale and pretty *A* •
- Little white girl you are almost pretty *B*
- 9] I have seen eyes and experienced chin[s] *A*
- 10] And cheeks that were as subtle as sins *A*
- 11] Calling for kisses and crying for pity *A*
- 12] But never a being so white so rare *A* •
- Dreams drop out of your eyes and hair *B*
- 13] [line missing in *A*]
- 14] [line missing in *A*] • Little white girl you are almost pretty *B*

¶ **‘Lives of millionaires remind us’**

NLA MS 1145/60 [FN], under heading ‘Parody’.

Lives of millionaires remind us
If we really wish to climb,
Conscience should be left behind us,
It might call the business crime.

LONGFELLOW AT THE RACES

The Clarion 21 October 1909, p. 9, a variant of stanza 2 of 'Pessimistic punter', q.v.

There is no meeting I have yet attended
But some horse ran dead there;
There is no jock I ever saw suspended
But wore an injured air.

LOVE A MICROBE

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], 14 stanzas, with corrections and comment ‘Never been printed’, this cancelled and a further note ‘Printed in Sun’ newspaper Sydney’. Another version appears in ‘The fable and fantasy dialogues’, by Frank Neilson, p. 91.
Sun (Sydney) Sunday 4 December 1910, p. 9, 11 stanzas.

JSN - AGS c. Autumn 1907, draft in ‘1906’ at 38b (A0079) (is ‘trying to fix up ‘Love a microbe’).

The typescript, MS 4937/10, Item 1, is the preferred text.

‘An American scientist claims to have discovered the microbe of love.’ (News item)

Love, it is a microbe! Oh young men beware!
 It liveth in the laughing eyes and in the floating hair,
 And in the pretty parted lips that deadly thing is there.

’Twill come at noon, ’twill come at eve, ’twill come at dawn of day,
 In every inconceivable and inconvenient way
 The merry microbe moves the world and dances blithe and gay.

In all a maiden’s wraps and gowns, in every tuck and frill,
 Quite half a million strong he lurks, he bides his time until
 He knows the hour, he knows the man, he works his deadly will.

A champion strong man Samson was, great-hearted, brave and tall;
 Delilah, she made eyes at him, but ah, that was not all,
 The microbes marched him to his death, he fell beneath the wall.

Young David smote Goliath sore, the Bible tells us so,
 And David was a first-rate man with any stand up foe;
 But the little microbe took him, and made him mean and low.

Gloss] ‘News item’ is cancelled in the typescript and omitted in the *Sun*. The *Sun* has ‘Another American . . .’ instead of ‘An American . . .’

4-6] omitted *Sun*

7-33] = *Sun* 4-30

10-11 Samson . . . Delilah] Delilah betrayed Samson to the Philistines Cf. Judges 16. *AV*

13-14] David . . . Goliath] David, by faith, defeated and slayed Goliath. Cf. 1 Samuel 17.

AV

Continued overleaf...

Love a Microbe (cont.)

Just take the case of Solomon – a man we all must praise,
But the microbes came in batches, seven-hundred different ways,
They ruined him entirely and spoiled his latter days.

Oh, Sunday is the microbe's day – the boldest boys will call,
The girls get on their pretty things, ay, ever since the Fall;
How daintily they dress themselves – the microbe knows it all.

They walk to church – the microbe moves – they hear the organ play,
Oh, prettily they sing the psalms – the microbe feels his way,
Oh, the little microbe takes us, yes, even when we pray.

The mirthful little microbe he moves in every dance,
In every dainty flying foot, in every tender glance,
In lights and flowers and melody the microbe sees his chance.

The girls are all good friends with him – see little Tot and Sis,
Their dresses lengthen every year, until no man may kiss
Their pretty mouths – the microbe knows, he rarely makes a miss.

He loves the dawn, he loves the day, he loves the bright moonshine;
When the tenderness is in our hearts and the red blood warm as wine,
In the soft sweet time of mystery he works his fell design.

He knows our many weaknesses, he knows the time of flowers;
In the early, most delightful time, in the scented summer hours,
He walks within the wilderness, the gardens and the bowers.

Of all his pranks by land and sea the half was never told;
Ay, stronger far than Life and Death or Hate or Greed of Gold,
He hops his hornpipe in the heat, he canters in the cold.

Love, it is a microbe! Oh young men beware!
It liveth in the laughing eyes and in the floating hair,
And in the pretty parted lips that deadly thing is there.

16-17 Solomon . . . seven-hundred different ways] Solomon had seven hundred wives who led him to idolatry, and hence adversity. Cf. 1 Kings 11: 1-3. *AV*

34-39] omitted in *Sun*

40-42] = *Sun* 31-33

LOVE THE PLAYER

ML MS A3038/1, 19b (B0121) [JSN] incomplete, 1 stanza and a part-stanza entitled 'Love the harper'. '1909', 15a (A0213) [JSN], incomplete, 2 lines; 16b-17a (A0215) [JSN], fair draft, 4 stanzas.

3038/1, 19b = A; '1909' 15a = B; '1909', 16b-17a = C
The fair draft at '1909', 16b-17a (C) is taken as the reading text.

With his imperious harp he taught
Dull poets journeying for rhyme,
The red lads in the dust of war,
The white girls at the milking time.

Gladly he spoke of a ripe rose,
Of the shrill birds – the royal sun –
Offering the manna to the monk,
Holding the honey to the nun.

His work was in the saffron corn
And in the blowing of the air,
On the peach bloom and the girl's gown,
His pictures were everywhere.

Gladly he gave in green lanes,
On the bare streets and boiling seas.
Out of his yellow strings he took
All lovers of the centuries.

1 imperious] impleous *C*. *N* frequently left *t* uncrossed and *impetuous* may have been intended. However, *imperious* accords better in terms of both sound, and sense.

1] [Emphatically] «Oh lovingly» he played for all *A*

3 The red] The[r] red *A*

4 girls at] girls [«in»] at *C*

5] Madly he played of the green spring *A*

6] Of [blue] the blue showers and royal sun *A*

6 birds –] birds – *C*

7 the monk] the mouth *A* [MS *A* is cut at this point]

12] MS *C* is annotated '[weaving] JD' in the margin and Devaney amended the line in *UP* to read 'His pictures [weaving] everywhere'

The 2 lines at '1909', 15a which are probably part of the incomplete text *A* read:

Loudly he laughed with sailor-men
Making no coward on the sea

LOVE'S COMING

'1910', 15a-15b (A0236-7) [JSN], unfinished, 3 stanzas & a line, [lines 1-2 of stanza numbered 4] entitled 'The coming'. ML MS A3038/1, 20a (B0122) [JSN], fair draft, entitled 'The coming'. NLA MS 1145/54 [FN], transcription, annotated.

Sun (Sydney), Sunday 14 May 1911, p. 11; *GDC*; *HS* 40 (an extra p.40 with printer's errors corrected has been inserted opposite the original page in the ML volume); *BLP* 84; *CP* 36.

JSN - JD 21 October 1934, NLA MS 1145/68 (this and 'Lament for a child' 'were about the first two [poems] that AG. praised very highly').

The transcription by FN is annotated: 'This version of the lyric is from the first draft of the poem. Note in the line '4th stanza' the word warm sin: A.G. Stephens maintained the word 'warm' was correct in diction sound & sequence. He finally altered it to wild sin as my brother wished him to do so. F.N.' The differences between the transcription and the *Sun* text suggest that Frank copied from a later draft, not the first draft as he says.

Frank's comments – which are frequently unreliable – suggest further revision and consultation between author and editor, prior to publication. In this case the comments may well be correct for the printed text corrects some very awkward lines in the fair draft and at the same time shows no obvious sign of Stephens's interference. On this basis the *Sun* is taken as the preferred text. Punctuation is reproduced from the printed text.

'1910', 15a-15b = A; 3038/1, 20a = B; NLA MS 1145/54 = C

Quietly as rosebuds
Talk to the thin air,
Love came so lightly
I knew not he was there.

Quietly as lovers
Creep at the middle moon,
Softly as players tremble
In the tears of a tune;

1-4] ≠ B 1-4

1] Quietly as the rosebuds B

3] So love came as lightly B

5-8] ≠ A 9-12; ≠ B 5-8

5] Quietly as creeping lovers A, B

6 Creep] Watch A, B

7 players] masters C

8 In the tears of] On the tears of B •

O'er the keys in C

Continued overleaf...

Love's Coming (cont.)

Quietly as lilies
 Their faint vows declare
 Came the shy pilgrim,
 I knew not he was there.

Quietly as tears fall
 On a warm sin,
 Softly as griefs call
 In a violin;

With no hail or tempest
 Blue sword or flame,
 Love came so lightly
 I knew not that he came.

9-12] ≠ A 13-[14]; ≠ B 9-12, = C 9-12

9 as lilies] as waterlilies A, B

11 Came] So came B

13-16] ≠ B, C 13-16

13 fall] travel B

14] Over a warm sin B •

On a wild sin HS, BLP, CP

15 call] praying B

16 a violin] a pure violin B

17-20] ≠ B, C 17-20; A ∅

17 With no hail] Without hail C, Boo, GDC, HS, BLP, CP

18 Blue] No blue B

19] So lightly love came up B

Discarded stanzas

A stanza 1 (lines 1-4):

Love was a little lad
 Dreamy and deep and shy
 Hunger was on his mouth
 And hot thirst in his eye

A stanza 2 (lines 5-8):

Quietly as the rosebuds
 Talk to the thin air
 So halted love at my heart
 And found an opening there

MAGGIE TULLIVER

‘1907’, 17b-18a (A0107) [A], 2 stanzas numbered 4 & 2 (misnumbered), revisions.

NLA MS 1145/60, 92 [JSN], 1 stanza, revision.

Sun (Sydney) Sunday 28 August 1911, *HI*, not located; *GDC*; *HS* 27; *BLP* 72; *CP* 27.

Receipt dated 28 July, NLA MS 1145/11.

JSN - AGS draft in ‘1906’, 36a–36b (A0079) (concerning alterations); draft in ‘1907’, 19b (A0109) dated 31 July 1907 (concerning alterations); 2 January 1924 (‘Maggie is always very real to me’).

The poem was sent to Stephens mid-1906. In mid-1907 N had second thoughts about it and considered dropping the 5th stanza (‘1906’, 36a-36b, ‘1907, 19b) and altering the 4th and 6th stanzas (‘1907’, 17b-18a). The *Sun* text cannot be located and these revisions do not occur in *GDC* or any of the published texts. The final stanza in *GDC* (stanza 6) has what looks like a suggestion with a question mark preceding it in the margin in Stephens’s hand, in this instance indecipherable, and N has encircled the stanza and marked it with large crosses to indicate the need for revision. The stanza in the NLA notebook (1145/60, 92, c. 1913) is a revision for *GDC*.

On this basis and in the absence of an earlier published text *GDC* is the preferred text.

I see the old-time mill, the old-time miller,
The peaceful river in a pleasant land;
And you, the dark-eyed dear rebellious Maggie
They could not understand.

Love in the bud – hedgerows and English meadows –
The sunlight’s flickering shadows gathering fast –
And your big tears because the world has gripped you,
The golden gates are passed.

Dreamer of many dreams from the beginning,
Eager to love, eager to spoil and spend;
Into your life God put a crooked lover
And pity, love’s old friend.

Anon I see a tall man proudly fashioned,
A full sweet woman, lovable and fair –
What of the path? Sweet flowers and sharp-edged perils
And bleeding hearts are there.

The world has branded you a false, foul sinner;
It is not merciful, and you were rash –
Up at the whipping-post your white flesh trembled –
You felt the cruel lash.

Continued overleaf...

Maggie Tulliver (cont.)

In the last anguish does the Unseen Pity
See the long wrestlings of this flesh and blood?
But Death was kind to you, dear dark-eyed Maggie –
You walked into the flood.

24 You walked] Who walked *HS, BLP, CP*

Discarded stanzas

'1907', 17b-18a, stanzas numbered 4 & 2 [6]:

Still on I see a tall man proudly fashioned
A full sweet woman lovable and fair
What of the path – it winds through many shadows
The bleeding hearts are there

I see no old-time mill no peaceful river
But a wild flood that surges all around
And for a flash – one moment dark-eyed Maggie
Dear Maggie that was drowned

NLA MS 1145/60, 92:

Too sorrowful to live too [sweet] «young» to wither
Too sweet to be the sport of knave or clown
I see [you] I see I bless the swollen river
The flood that took you down

MAY

ML MS 3354/2, Item 5, 18a-18b [JSN], fair draft.

The Bookfellow 1 June 1912, p. 156; *GDC*; *HS* 26; *BLP* 16; *CP* 26.

The *Bookfellow* text has a different second stanza and because it is unlikely that Stephens would have altered the text to this extent, the *Bookfellow* is taken as the preferred text.

Shyly the silver-hatted mushrooms make
Soft entrance through
And undelivered lovers, half awake,
Hear noises in the dew.

Yellow in all the earth and in the skies,
The world would seem
Faint as a widow mourning with soft eyes
And falling into dream.

Up the long hill I see the slow plough leave
Furrows of brown;
Dim is the day and beautiful. I grieve
To see the sun go down.

But there are suns a many for mine eyes
Day after day;
Delightful in grave greenery they rise,
Red oranges in May.

9 long hill] far hill *MS*

11 beautiful. I] beautiful. I *MS*

12 go down] low down *MS*

13 are suns a many] are [sins] suns a many *MS*

15] In the grave greenery [I] red ripe they rise *MS*

Discarded stanza 2, *MS*:

Full well I know the unwearied bees have filled
Their walls with gold
By the dull evens are the young lambs chilled
For the clear nights are cold

ME

ML MS 3354/2, Item 5, 26a [A], fair draft.

With the best uni-cells I could buy,
With the molecules at my command,
I made a magnificent try,
I scraped and I scratched and I planned.
The notion that man has evolved
Should be put away back on the shelf;
Quite early in life I resolved
That I would leave nothing unsolved!
I'm the bloke who created – Myself.

I was tired of the jelly-fish state,
I arose from the slush and the slime;
I soon had a shindy with Fate,
I biffed that old fellow called Time.
I fashioned my soul with a thump,
(A howling success as you see)
The notion that I am a Chump
Should be rooted right out by the stump!
I'm the Bloke I created – I'm Me!

15 A howling] [It] A howling *MS*

MEDICAL NOTES

‘1907’, 15a (A0104) [JSN], fair draft. ‘1929’, 45b [A], under heading ‘Our Medical Column’ with sub-heading ‘No 1’. ML MS 3354/3, Item 2, 15b [EN], transcription, with heading ‘Our medical column’. LaT MS 9419/3677, typed transcription, entitled ‘Possible causation of Gastric Trouble’.

A variant of the first stanza is printed the *Clarion*, April Fool’s Day, 1909, entitled ‘The editor’s reply to constant subscriber’.

‘1907’, 15a is the preferred text.

Constant Subscriber says he feels
 A wondrous fullness after meals;
 We in our wisdom have been asked
 What state of health this thing reveals?

We wish such fullness was our own
 We answer with an envious moan;
 At the gay restaurant where we dine
 A case like this is quite unknown!

The *Clarion* reads:

Constant Subscriber says he feels
 A wondrous fullness after meals;
 We, in our wisdom, must admit
 That eating sometimes causes it.

MELBOURNE IN THE GLOOM

‘1915’E, 1b-2b (A0287-8) [A], draft, 6 stanzas; 16a-17a (A0303-4) [JSN], fair draft, 4 stanzas, entitled ‘To an almost converted city’. ML MS 3354/2, Item 5, 7b-8a [A] 5 stanzas, fair draft; 19a [?], 3 stanzas numbered 4-6; 27b [JSN], gloss and line 1 only under title ‘Melbourne on Sunday’.

The notebook and part-notebook were both in use at the same time and the chronology is therefore uncertain. The three stanzas at 3354/2-5, 19a are intended as revision, probably for 3354/2-5, 7a-8a which lacks the final stanza that occurs at 19a and in the other drafts.

The longer of the two fair drafts, 3354/2, Item 5, 7b-8a (C) is taken as the preferred text and stanza 6 from 3354/2-5, 19a (D) is incorporated in the text.

‘1915’E, 1a-2b = A; ‘1915’E, 16a-17a = B; 3354/2-5, 7b-8a = C; 3354/2-5, 19a = D

Suggested by reading Miss Jessie McKay’s ‘Dunedin in the Gloaming’

Holy Melbourne, I have heard a most disquieting rumour
That thou once did’st dance a jig and showed signs of humour.
Is this so, or do I merely make a ghastly bloomer?

Holy Tom Bent hatches quickly some more acts new fangled;
Save us from the roaring lion Satan ere we’re mangled!
Winking barmaids, for the public safety, should be strangled.

Should there not be special prayers for punters picking winners?
Should not Rescue Homes be started for outrageous sinners
Who on Sabbath days persist in eating smoking dinners?

Why not start in early life each vile habit nipping?
Do not boys who play the wag from Sabbath school need whipping?
Should not little girls wear longer dresses when they’re skipping?

Gloss] Jessie McKay (1864-1938) was a New Zealand poet of some note.

1-3] = A; omitted B

4-6] = A; omitted B

3 Is this so] Is this true «so» A

4 Tom Bent] Sir Thomas Bent. See ‘He takes off his hat’

8] [Do n] Should not Rescue Home[s] [were] be started for outrageous sinners A

9 in eating] in [having] eating A

10-12] = A; = B 4-6; = D

Continued overleaf...

Melbourne in the Gloom (cont.)

Proudly, gladly, Judkins smiles in his ti-tree hallow,
 Like a farmer drilling superphosphate on his fallow,
 Like a butcher charging tenpence halfpenny for his tallow.

Be more bilious Melbourne, be a he-goat on the tether,
 On the Lord's days let no lads and lassies walk together,
 God save Edward; may his foes fall into Fiery Weather.

13-15] ≠ *A*; omitted *B*; ≠ *C*

13 Judkins] William Henry Judkins. See 'Judkins in paradise'

13 hallow] used ironically, and meaning as in the shrines of saints

15] [Like a butcher charging 10d ten pence] for his tallow] || Like a butcher getting more than market for tallow *A* •

Like a butcher charging 10 1/2 [ten pence halfpenny] for his tallow *C* •

Like a butcher getting more [*line unfinished*] *D*

16-18] ≠ *A*; ≠ *B* 10-12; omitted *C*

17] On the Lord's day let no lads and lasses walk together *A, B* 11

18 Edward] King Edward VII. See 'The King impetuous'

Discarded stanza *B*, stanza 3, lines 7-9:

Satan sly old serpent ever some new trick will try on
 Please take notice also he's a raging lion
 Such a character I think all cops should keep an eye on

Ms 3354/2-5, 27b reads:

'A Pitiful attempt at the manner of Jessie McKay'

Oh the mighty Melbourne town like a blanket sodden

MISUNDERSTOOD

There are two separate pieces with this title, one written c. 1892 and the other, a limerick, written c. 1907.

MISUNDERSTOOD [2]

‘1908’, 4b (A0158) [A], with a correction [JSN].

They asked the new bowler named Patrick
To try and accomplish the hat trick;
Arrah now, he said,
Put a hat on your head.
I'm ready if you are for that trick.

1 bowler] [boulder] «bowler» [JSN] *MS*

MORE MYSTERY

ML MS A308/1, 5b (B0098) & '1906', 35a-35b (A0075-6) [JSN & A], fair draft. Lines 1-20 [JSN] and lines 21-36 [A].

Sardonic Science gives the wheeze,
You don't know much at all;
Your father was a chimpanzee
And well – he couldn't fall.

Your ancient creeds are stiff and stark,
Your reckless record fails;
Noah was never in an ark
Or Jonah in a whale.

Too little acid or too much
In baking powder bought
Compels devouring man to clutch
Himself with pains distraught.

The lawyers scoop up all they can,
They die and leave no ghosts;
Our tales are underneath a ban –
What is our proudest boast?

Social Position – that's the thing;
All do we give for swag;
Also we say 'God bless the King,
The Empire, and the Flag.'

Why still delight bald-headed men
Swift ballet dancers' legs?
What force compels the setting hen
To cease producing eggs?

4 well –] well – *MS*

6 reckless record] <reckless> record *MS*

9-10] Baking powder is a mixture (giving off carbon dioxide), used as a raising agent in baking. It can be purchased ready-mixed, although some cooks disparage the use of the commercially prepared product.

14 They] [A] The[y] *MS*

15 tales] toles *MS*

18 All] [Still] All *MS*

Continued overleaf...

More Mystery (cont.)

When singing why do tom-cats not
Select a sun-filled hour?
What grievance has a mopoke got?
Why is a sheoak sour?

Think not my friend these thoughts of mine
Are mysteries absurd;
Great scientists are full of faith –
I could not take their word.

Really, my friend, I seem to be
Wrapt in a foggy cloud –
So if you want more mystery
You'd better ask – O'Dowd!

33 seem] seemed *MS*

36 ask – O'Dowd] ask – O'Dowd *MS*. Bernard O'Dowd: see 'Dame Hubbard's pilgrimage [2]'. O'Dowd's poem 'Mystery' was published in the *Bookfellow* 28 February 1907, and Neilson's piece is clearly intended as a comic parody.

MY COW IN SWITZERLAND

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], with comment ‘This has never been printed’.

Much have I read of milking time
And milkmaids in the morn,
And geese and all those farmyard things
And cows and calves and corn;
But this I say, there never was,
Whatever breed or brand,
A downright, decent cow like mine,
My cow in Switzerland.

She never kicks a milking stool
Nor tramps a milking pail,
She never shakes a leg rope off
Nor flops me with her tail;
Her teats I never find them sore
So nicely have I planned,
I milk her with the greatest ease,
My cow in Switzerland.

I feed her on the big blue hills
Twelve thousand miles away,
I know no need to fuss about
With ensilage or hay.
She never takes a cough or chill,
She always seems to stand
All sorts of weather, my old cow,
Up there in Switzerland.

MY LADY CHIDES

‘1906’, 15a-15b (A0053-4) [A], fair draft. ‘1907’, 31b–32a (A0121) [JSN], fair draft with new lines 4-7 and a new second stanza, the two stanzas separated by a short drawn line.

‘1906’ = A; ‘1907’ = B

‘1907’ (B) is the preferred text.

It was the dawn when sweetest sounds are heard,
 She chided me beneath a cherry tree.
 Laggard, she cried, now each impetuous bird
 Mocketh the morning with untiring glee,
 And thou art late to crave a kiss from me.
 My dear love troubled me with two bright eyes;
 I was but mad where no man would be wise.

* * *

Not far away a little river ran
 And to it sloped full many trees, a row,
 The brightest flowers that ever bloomed for man
 And shrubberies where summer winds sang low.
 Colours and scents and loves of long ago
 Did trouble me, but my love's dancing eyes
 Did make me mad where no man could be wise.

3 impetuous] impetuous *A* • impetuous *B*

4 Mocketh the] Mocketh [«in»] the *B*

7 wise.] wise. *B*

14 wise.] wise. *B*

Discarded lines 4-7 and discarded stanza 2, *A*:

Holdeth the heavens with his gurgling glee
 And doth thou dare to crave a kiss from me
 I am so mad my love is so all-wise
 My sweet love hath the morning in her eyes

O Woman would's't thou chide and thou hast been
 Close to us with us when all hope had fled
 Hiding thy tears to crown thyself a queen
 Wasting much love and lifting up the dead
 With thy face radiant lips of wilful red
 Mocking the saints and making mad men wise
 Look we for Morning ever in thine eyes

MY LOVE IS LIKE A VIOLIN

‘1910’, 1a-2b (A0223-5) [JSN], draft, 8 stanzas; 12b (A0233) [JSN], revisions. There are two stanzas at 1a; the first is unnumbered and has the fourth line cancelled and the second is numbered 2 and the stanza is cancelled. Two stanzas occur at 1b, the first, unnumbered, the second, numbered 4 and both stanzas are cancelled. There are two stanzas at 2a; the first is unnumbered and the second is numbered 3 and two lines are cancelled. Two unnumbered stanzas occur at 2b and there are revised lines at 12b; two under the number 1, a further two under the number 2 and a part-stanza of five lines under the number 3.

The first stanza has 7 lines in contrast to the other stanzas which have 6 and a line has been discarded here to give a better reading. The order of stanzas here is necessarily conjectural.

My love is like a Violin:
 In the full dark she feels and tells
 Of a deep rest and quiet bells,
 Of green joy running out and in,
 Of sweet Love in the honey cells;
 My love is like a Violin.

My love is like a Violin:
 On a blue day in the bleak June
 When all the water birds commune
 And dreamily wade out and in,
 When the mild sun is like a moon,
 My love is like a Violin.

My love is like a Violin:
 So airily she walks the blue
 I know not where I'm wandering to,
 Nor the strange heaven I am in –

1-6] ≠ first stanza at 1a

1-3] = 1a

3 quiet bells] quiet bells // Parabel *MS*

4] = the second of 2 lines, revisions, under number 1 at 12b (the first of these 2 is omitted) 5-6] = 1a

6 Violin.] Violin. *MS*

8] On a blue day in the «the» bleak June. *MS*

10 and in.] and in. *MS*

7-12] = unnumbered stanza at 2a

13-18] ≠ second of 2 stanzas at 2a, numbered 3

13-15] = 2a

16-17] = revised lines under number 2 at 12b

Continued overleaf...

My Love is Like a Violin (cont.)

I am in love with sleep and dew;
My love is like a Violin.

My love is like a Violin:
Ere ever the red earth was formed
Or a pale soul with love was storm'd,
Ere ever the round earth could spin,
With her bright blood my heart was warm'd;
My love is like a Violin.

My love is like a Violin:
Pleadings of thunder, prayers of rain,
Music of moonbeams – all in vain
Do I compare to her sweet din.
Gone is an older prayer or pain;
My love is like a Violin.

18] = 2a

18 Violin.] Violin. *MS*

19-24] = first of 2 unnumbered stanzas at 2b

24 an] and *MS*

25-30] = second of 2 unnumbered stanzas at 2b

27 vain] vain – *MS*

29 an] and *MS*

Discarded lines and stanzas

Lines at 1a, stanza [1] following line 3:

[That wayfarers one time may <hear>]

Of all that [«run»] «runs» [in] as Life and Sin

Revised line at 12b, the first of 2 under the number 1:

Old tendere[n]ce a[nd] parables

Cancelled stanza numbered 2 at 1a:

[My love is like a Violin

Her voice «is» like an opening flower

On a green on a green hour

When water birds walk out and in

The green lakes laughing in a shower

My love is like a Violin]

Cancelled stanza , unnumbered, the first of two at 1b:

[‘My love is like a Violin’

Quickly she «showed» me I was blind

All children all womankind

I could have kissed them cheek and chin

Nor any sin could my heart could find

‘My [heart] «Love» is like a Violin’]

Continued overleaf...

My Love is Like a Violin (cont.)

Cancelled stanza numbered 4, the second of two stanzas at 1b:

[My love is like a Violin
 Now all my heaven and Earth is new
 As wonderful and babes blue
 White as a dove immune from Sin
 I am afraid of sleep and dew
 My love is like a Violin.]

Stanza numbered 3 at 2a, following unnumbered stanza:

My love is like a Violin
 So air[i]ly she walks the blue
 I know not where Im wandering to
 [When shall my [falling] halting]] days begin
 [I am afraid of sleep] and dew
 My love is like a violin

Four lines at 12b may have been intended to replace lines 26-29:

Storm of the thunder [....] || Rush of rain
 Music of moonbeam all in vain
 Do I compare to her sweet thi<n>
 [Unconquerable] blaze of pain

MY PRISONER

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], with comment ‘unprinted’.

My prison house was grim and bare,
The sunlight brought no blessing there;
Too soon I learned that life was long
And so I made my prison strong:
I made me bolts, I made me bars,
My soul went hung’ring for the stars.

Out in the world the flowers that grew
Stood glorious under heaven’s blue,
And oft I heard strange sounds, I wist,
Like children laughing in the mist:
I made me bolts, I made me bars,
My soul went hungering for the stars.

The dark day needed long to die
But in the twinkling of an eye
Through many a by-way black with shame
A bright soul to my prison came:
The sunlight’s flood was like the sea,
It brought my prisoner unto me.

Too strange it seemed to my dim eyes,
I, who had dreamed of Paradise;
A pure voice whispered in my heart
‘Let not thy blessing now depart’.
I made me neither bolts or bars,
I knew no hunger for the stars.

NIGHT

ML MS A308/2, 12a [FN], transcription, with comment ‘Note by Frank: this poem is one of John’s [...] 1908 pieces and I think it good’. This is a probably a revision by Frank of an untitled piece published in the *Bulletin* (1905) under the heading ‘Flotsam’. See ‘Shall I have grim black night or stars or dew’.

Shall I have grim black night or stars or dew
Or waking day to fall upon my pain?
To say goodbye forever and to all –
Too tired to hope for Love’s warm light again –
To rest, to rest – but ah, ’twas sweet to know
The green world revelling in the sun and rain.

5 but ah] but [...] ah *MS*

6 revelling in] [revelling] «glistening» in [?JD] *MS*

NO TIME TO JEST

‘1908’, 20a (A0173) [JSN].

The time recording angel spoke:
I am flat out – my work’s immense;
I do not take it as a joke
When Deakin speaks at Conference.

4] Deakin, Alfred (1856-1919), barrister, journalist and Prime Minister.

NOT TUMBLED TO

There are three discrete versions of this poem, all in the '1915'E notebook. Two of the three are entitled 'The soul of the sandfly', q.v.

NOT TUMBLED TO

'1915'E, 22b (A0310) and inside back cover [A], fair draft.

The stanzas at 22b are numbered 2, 3 & 3 (the latter in error) and a stanza on the cover is unnumbered. The placement of the unnumbered stanza as stanza 1 is conjectural, but logical.

Who says go swim should have no fear of wading
 When flappers are to mission fields afar
 Urged on by parsons – why don't those persuading
 Go out themselves? How slow some people are
 At tumbling to.

If roosters couldn't crow night would be stilly,
 If tortoises could sprint, they'd skip and hop;
 If Parliament boiled over like a billy
 White ants would be quite thick upon the top
 And tumbled to.

Suppose a case – if prayers for rain were followed
 By floods disastrous – could flood holders sue
 Rash clergymen for praying rather solid?
 And would the High Court such a case review
 And tumble to?

It would fetch lady writers to their senses
 If in their yarns Dukes, Baronets and all
 Were income taxed (author to pay expenses);
 Readers would cry – old Tommy rot must fall,
 We tumble too!

7 they'd skip] they['d] skip *MS*

13 clergymen] clergyman *MS*

O LADY OF THE DAZZLING FLOWERS

The Bookfellow 15 February 1914; *HS* 87; *BLP* 64.

JSN - AGS 26 July 1931 (this is one of four pieces N wants to drop from a proposed collection); 2 August 1931 (this is one of the '6 worse'); 22 September 1932 (one of five N now wants to drop). JSN - RHC 19 November 1933, NLA MS 603/30 (this is one of four pieces N thinks 'are inferior and amateurish').

The *Bookfellow* is the preferred text.

O lady of the dazzling flowers
And the frock so white and fine,
How hopeless is thy prettiness
And that cool heart of thine.

Thou hast not been to the rude field
Where men and women war,
Thou hast not found what a woman's mouth
And a man's full heart are for.

Thy speech is all of a thin calm,
Of sleep and slow sunshine;
Oh, hopeless is thy happiness
And that pale heart of thine.

Through the love-feud and the love-thirst
Thou hast not fought and smiled,
Thou hast not heard the strings that speak
In the crying of a child.

Thou hast not been where tears lie hot
And words can only run,
Thou hast not cried to the bare night
Or prayed for the white sun.

OH HEART OF SPRING

ML MS A849, Vol. 4, p.106-107 [A], fair copy, 4 stanzas. ML MS 3354/2, Item 4, 26a [FN], a stanza, under title ‘Heart of Spring’ with heading ‘Last stanza’, with title, heading and first line [JSN] and alterations [FN]. ML MS 3038/3, 16a [FN], transcription.

Sun (Sydney) 5 November 1911; *The Bookfellow* 1 March 1912, p. 82; *The Bookfellow* 15 April 1915, front cover; *GDC*; *HS* 1; *BLP* 110; *CP* 1.

Receipt dated 11 September 1906, NLA MS 1145/20, *HI*, not located. AGS - JSN
14 November 1927, ML MS 3354/1, n.d., n.p. [14 November 1927] (‘Please look at Heart of Spring – line “Oh that we could as thee rise from the night.” Education Dept. doubts grammar of “as thee”. I think it is a bit strained. Will you have “as thou” or “like thee”?’). JSN - RHC 25 February 1934, NLA MS 605/92 (corrections to proofs *CP*).

The *Sun* and all subsequent texts have three stanzas and *HS*, *BLP* and *CP* have the title as ‘Heart of Spring’, and it is likely that the decision to drop the weaker, second stanza was Stephens’s. The stanza at MS 3354/2, Item 4, an attempted revision of stanza 4 (the last stanza), contains variants that occur in the *Sun* and *GDC* and it is likely that this revision postdates the first publication since Frank Neilson’s hand does not appear as that of an amanuensis until c.1913.

The fair copy is the preferred text and MS 3354/2 is shown separately in the notes.

Oh Heart of Spring,
Spirit of love and light and joyous day,
So soon to faint under the fiery summer,
Still smiles the earth, eager for thee alway.
Welcome art thou, so ever short thy stay,
Thou bold, thou blithe newcomer.
Whither, oh whither, this thy journeying
Oh Heart of Spring?

Oh Heart of Spring,
Spirit of hope and cheer, how hath our joys increased.
Long waited we, as watchers growing thinner,

Title Oh Heart] O Heart *Sun*, *Boo* 1912 & 1915, *GDC* • Heart of Spring *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

1 Oh Heart] O Heart *Boo* 1912 & 1915, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*, throughout

2 love and light] light and love *Sun*, *Boo* 1912 & 1915, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

3 under] beneath *Sun*, *Boo* 1912 & 1915, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

9-16] omitted *Sun*, *Boo* 1912 & 1915, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

Continued overleaf...

Oh Heart of Spring (cont.)

Weary for cock-crow and the lighted east,
Murmuring as faintly murmurs some poor priest
Praying to God to shrive a broken sinner.
Whither, oh whither, blithely journeying
Oh Heart of Spring?

Oh Heart of Spring,
After the next long storm, the winter's rain,
When the keen winds their last lament are sighing,
The sun shall raise thee up to life again.
In thy dim death thou shalt not suffer pain:
Surely thou dost not fear this quiet dying?
Whither, oh whither, blithely journeying
Oh Heart of Spring?

Oh Heart of Spring,
Youth's emblem, yet old as unchanging light,
Uncomprehending, unconsumed, still burning;
Oh, that we could like thee rise from the night
To find a world of blossoms lilac, white,
And swallows, long-winged, unafraid returning.
Whither, oh whither, this thy journeying
Oh Heart of Spring?

17-24] ≠ *Sun, Boo* 1912 & 1915, *GDC, HS, BLP* 17-24; ≠ *CP* 9-16

18] After the stormy days of winter's reign *Sun, Boo* 1912 & 1915, *GDC, HS, BLP, CP*
25-32] ≠ *Sun, Boo* 1912 & 1915, *GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

26 Youth's] Youth *fair copy*, probably an error in copying

26] Youth's emblem ancient as unchanging light *Sun, Boo* 1912 & 1915, *GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

27 Uncomprehending] Uncomprehended *Sun, Boo* 1912 & 1915, *GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

28 like thee] as thee *Sun, Boo* 1912 & 1915, *GDC, HS, BLP, CP*. The reading referred to
in AGS – JSN [14 November 1927] may have been an editorial alteration.

29 lilac, white] lilac-white *Boo* 1912 & 1915, *GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

30] And long-winged swallows unafraid returning *Sun, Boo* 1912 & 1915, *GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

31 whither, this thy journeying] whither [this thy] journeying *fair copy*, blank space is left
for a word or words of approximately this number of letters in the *MS*

MS 3354/2, Item 4, 26a reads:

O Heart of Spring

Youth's Emblem ancient as [unending] «unchartered» Light [FN]

Uncomprehended unconsumed still burning

Oh that we could as Thou arise from the Night

[To find a world of blossoms sky-blue rose-red]

[To find a world [of] «with» blossoms] from sky-blue rose-red to [lilac] «snow» white

With long-winged swallows unafraid returning

Whither Oh whither thy sweet journeying

Oh Heart of Spring

OH PLAYER OF THE FLUTE

‘1912’, 16b-17a (A0265) & 18b-19b (A0267) [JSN], draft, 15 stanzas, numbered, with 5 stanzas cancelled and renumbering. ‘1915’D, 3b (A0282) [JSN], 1 stanza, following title ‘Woman so thin’.

JSN - AGS 5 January 1916 (discusses poem and suggests use of title and 3 lines as a gloss to title for a new book).

Correspondence is given after discarded stanzas and line endings.

Stanzas numbered 2-5 at 16b & 17a are cancelled and stanzas 4-9 at 18b-19a are renumbered 2-7. Three stanzas at 19b are numbered 10-12 and renumbered 8-10, and a fourth stanza, misnumbered 10 is crammed in at the bottom of the page. The text is interrupted by household accounts between stanzas 3 & 4 (at 16b-17a) and by the poem ‘Is it you Sadie?’ between cancelled stanza 5 at 17a and stanza numbered [4] 2 at 18b. The stanza at ‘1915’D, 3b has four lines and different rhythms and is a later attempted revision of the stanza numbered 10 and added at the bottom of 19b, most probably for a gloss, as mentioned.

Three stanzas numbered [6] 4, [7] 5 & [9] 7 have 2 long and 2 short lines each. Uniform stanzas of 3 lines have been adopted.

Oh Player of the Flute, let us together
Enter the charmed towns of intense wine
Where the white girls whiten the white weather.

Oh Player, play – it is the golden time –
Never again can earth or air be bitter.
I shall walk upward into enraged rhyme.

Fill me, Oh Player – fill me, till I be
For a great season drunken, falling, crying.
Is it the white Wine of Eternity?

Mournful thy mouth is, mournful is thy chin –
But with thy playing thou hast made so tender
This night, a night to faint for loving in.

Title] The MS has *O player* . . . and *Oh* throughout the text. The different use in the title is regarded as an error of haste.

4 Player] Play[er] *MS*

9] Is / [Was] it the white [wine] Wine of Eternity *MS*

11] But with thy playing [too tender] Thou hast made [to] so tender *MS*

12] This night/ [It is] a night to faint for loving in. *MS*

Continued overleaf...

Oh Player of the Flute (cont.)

Lead me, Oh Player – let me tarry not
 With thy green jealousies – these women swaying
 For a long journey. Lo, my heart is hot.

Oh Player, play – 'twas but a moment gone –
 Out of the wood a boy came piping, prying
 Into my soul, and laughed and wandered on.

Oh Player, play – my tim'rous dream goes mellow,
 A girl comes in, all young, clean as the dew –
 Hear me, Oh Player – she lies in the Yellow.

Oh Player, play – put love about your pity –
 Lips and red kisses, achings, early flowers,
 Wisdom of wind and rain, joy of a city.

A shape is near me – hear me, Player – play.
 'Tis the red tiger, love – all night he teaches
 Lovers – forever his delicious prey.

Oh Player of the Flute, let us together
 Enter the charmed towns of white wine,
 Where the white girls lighten the white weather.

14 jealousies –] jealousies – *MS*

15] For a [great] «long» journey | Lo my heart is hot. *MS*

19 my tim'rous dream] my tim'rous/ dream *MS*

20] A girl comes [up] «in» all young | [with heaven['s] glitter] «clean as the dew» *MS*

21 she lies in the Yellow] She [dies] in the Yellow. *MS*

24] Wisdom of wind and Rain, Joy of a city. *MS*

27] The *MS* is confused and has been altered twice to give three lines:

[His wide eyed Lovers | on the perilous way] •

[His wide eyed lovers [«on»] «who» | [Fear him on the perilous way]]•

Love[r]s forever his delicious prey

28 Flute] flute *MS*

Cancelled stanzas

Stanza 2 (at 16b):

[Thou art so young and yet thy voice is old
 Old as the light and shade heavy as honey
 Bright as a woman webbed about with gold]

Stanza 3 (at 16 b):

[Pity is of the night out of the deep
 All Gods come up playing in heavens mellow
 Oh Voice of Tenderness Oh place of Sleep]

Continued overleaf...

Oh Player of the Flute (cont.)

Stanza 4 (at 17a):

[Oh Player play tho[ugh] I should choke with fear
Of all thy cruelty give out good measure
Show me oh show me let me see and hear –]

Stanza 5 (at 17a):

[Pity is of the Night Oh subtle Pity
Aye it will teach «us» with each broken flower
And every girl adrift in [the re] a red city.]

Stanza [12] 10:

[I am assailed with spices – honey spilling
[And there is] Hunger is here «and an» Impeleous thirst
All that I love these new made graves are filling]

Discarded stanza, at ‘1915’D, 3b numbered [3] [2]:

[It is with you I would | go while] «Away and away with me till» my eyes quicken
Till I walk to the dream Towns of intense wine
Where the white girls whiten the white weather
Gently – and tears are mine

Line endings

Stanza numbered [6] 4 (lines 10-12 of reading text): 1 chin || 2 playing || 3 tender || 4 in ||

Stanza numbered [7] 5 (lines 13-15 of reading text): 1 not || 2 swaying || 3 journey || 4 hot ||

Stanza numbered [9] 7 (lines 19-21 of reading text): 1 mellow || 2 dew || 3 Player || 4 Yellow ||

JSN - AGS 5 January 1916:

Re Title | How would this do | In the Dim Counties with these lines on Title Page
To a Flute Player

Oh Player of the Flute let us together
Enter the keen towns of intense wine
Where the white girls lighten the white weather

I wrote a few more stanzas but they were no good at all. The idea is all right I think. I got the notion from something I read about Venetian painters who could paint a white sky. How do you like the rhymeless line in middle.

OH SUMMER SALE

ML MS 3354/3, Item 1, 3/5a-3/5b & 4/7b [JSN], draft, 5 stanzas, some numbered and two misnumbered.

Opera or more – whatever form of Art
 Doth thee encompass? Yea I feel the thrilling
 Of all thy many bands down in my heart.
 (Oh, the sweet day – a thousand heads are filling)
 Our sweethearts heard. Oh, who would be unwilling
 To boast of loving on this day? Oh, pale
 Would be his blood – but ah, I sing to thee
 Oh Summer Sale.

Thou art composed of a sweet flimsiness
 Far from that old outrageous thing called Reason;
 Thou hast all colours buoyant to excess,
 The greens and golds of the insurgent Season;
 The lavender, the blue, but nay, no treason,
 The whites in all soft innocence prevail.
 Here doth a clumsy rhymer worship thee
 Oh Summer Sale.

The hastening players in this happy time
 Move as so many dancers to a measure;
 Sweet women unafraid, climb to see
 Thy whims that for a moment brief they treasure.
 Dull men, philosophers in their mean leisure
 Would mock thee, but their ancient precepts fail;
 Man who loves woman knows the might of thee
 Oh Summer Sale.

2 encompass? Yea] encompass Yea *MS*

4 heads] head[s] *MS*

5 sweethearts heard.] sweethearts heard. *MS*

5 unwilling] unwilling [on] *MS*

6 loving on this day.] loving [in] on this day. *MS*

7] [We] Would be his blood but ah – I sing to thee *MS*

11 Thou hast] Thou has[t] *MS*

17] The hastening player[s] in «of» [the] this | [happy] [company] [time] *MS*

19] Sweet women unafraid [«and smiling»] climb to see *MS*

21 philosophers] philosopher[s] *MS*

Continued overleaf...

Oh Summer Sale (cont.)

Thou dost remind me of all sportive things:
 Birds in the leaves, the restless colts and fillies,
 White witless courtesans, white liveried kings,
 Of worlds all baby-white – white the water lillies.
 Like a proud Highlander with many gillies
 So am I with my thoughts. If they should fail
 I would be firm with them, but ah – I sing
 Oh Summer Sale.

So numerous are thy parts I could not hope
 To praise them all (they are beyond extolling);
 Grimly a mere dull-headed man I grope.
 The fires that are all womankind controlling
 Burn joyfully in thee – the faith consoling
 Her heart, these storms within thee, will not fail.
 Less than a glow worm here am I – I sing
 Oh Summer Sale.

26 Birds] Bird[s] *MS*

27] «White witless courtesans White liveried kings» *MS*

28] Of worlds all baby «white» white the water lillies *MS*

30 thoughts. If] thoughts. | If *MS*

37 in thee – the faith] in the[e] – the faith *MS*

OLD NELL DICKERSON

‘1915’C, 15b & 16a (A0327) [A], incomplete (two leaves removed between 15b & 16a), 2 stanzas numbered 1 & 2, a part-stanza numbered 3, a part-stanza [8] and 2 stanzas numbered 9 & 10. NLA MS 6946/21 & ML MS A3038/1, 10b (B0107) [JSN], fair draft, signed, a 10-stanza poem, stanzas 1-4 & part-stanza 5 at NLA MS 6946/21, part-stanza 5, stanza 6 & part-stanza 7 at ML MS A3038/1 [incomplete], 10b and part-stanza [9] & stanza 10 at NLA MS 6946/21. ‘1910’, 13a (A0234) [A], 2 stanzas numbered 1 & 2, under short title ‘Nell Dickerson’. ML MS 849, pp.108-111 [A], fair copy, 11 stanzas, with alterations and with stanza 6 cancelled [AGS].

Sun (Sydney) 6 August 1911, p. 13; *The Bookfellow* 15 June 1914, p. 139; *GDC*; *HS* 14; *BLP* 25; *CP* 14.

JSN - AGS 26 July 1926 (in response to comments from AGS: ‘I did not know any particular old woman like Nell but have seen several that might pass for her’, and continues ‘I don’t think the last stanzas are absurd; I think the piece would be flat without them’). JSN - RHC 25 December 1933, NLA MS 605/47-48 (says he is sending an alteration which ‘gets rid of the lines ‘The gravel streets were cream’’); 25 February 1934, NLA MS 605/69 (an alteration: ‘1st line 2nd stanza [line 73] I suggest wild instead of mad’).

‘1915’C, 15b & 16a = A; NLA MS 6946/21 & ML MS A3038/1, 10b = B; ‘1910’, 13a = C; ML MS 849, pp.108-111 = D

The fair copy, ML MS 849, pp.108-111 (D) is the preferred text and NLA MS 6946/21 & MS A3038/1, 10b (B) is shown separately in the notes.

The young folk heard the old folk say
 ’Twas long ago she came;
 Some said it was her own and some
 That ’twas another’s shame.
 Oh pleasantly the seasons passed
 In gray and gold and green,
 But the heart of old Nell Dickerson
 No one had ever seen.

They said that when a baby crowed
 She turned her head away,

1-8] ≠ A 1-8; ≠ B 1-8

1 old folk] old folk[s] [AGS] D

4 That ’twas] It was *Sun*, *Boo*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

5 Oh pleasantly] [Oh] «And» pleasantly [AGS] D • And pleasantly *Sun*, *Boo* • All pleasantly *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

9-16] = A 9-16; ≠ B 9-16

Continued overleaf...

Old Nell Dickerson (cont.)

And when delightful lovers kissed
 Her sallow face went gray.
 Some said she laughed at love and death
 And every man-made law,
 But the heart of old Nell Dickerson
 No babbler ever saw.

October with warm greenery
 Made all the town a dream;
 The poorest soul had time to laugh,
 The gravel streets were cream.
 A hundred anthems rose to God
 Through the uproarious blue,
 But the heart of old Nell Dickerson
 No singer ever knew.

The summer sauntered in with wheat
 And forest fire and haze,
 And the white frocks of white girls
 And lads with love ablaze.
 Sweet sighs were in the high heavens
 And on the warm ground,
 But the heart of old Nell Dickerson
 It never yet was found.

The winter came with wistful talk
 Of water-birds in tune,
 And while their snowy treasures slept
 Did mother ewes commune;

17-20] = *A* part-stanza 3,17-20 [21-60 missing]; ≠ *B* 17-24

17] October ran with greenery *CP*

18] And blossoms white and fair *CP*

19 to laugh] to feast *CP*

20] On beauty everywhere *CP*

21 A hundred] A thousand *CP*

25-32] = *B* 25-32

30 And on] And «up»on [AGS] *D* • And upon *Sun, Boo, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

33-40] = *B* 33-40

Continued overleaf...

Old Nell Dickerson (cont.)

In every wind and every rain
Some daring joys would climb,
But the heart of old Nell Dickerson
Was prisoner all the time.

The young folk heard the old folk say
'Twas long ago she came.
Some said it was her own and some
That 'twas another's shame.
Oh pleasantly the seasons passed
In gray and gold and green,
But the heart of old Nell Dickerson
No one had ever seen.

* * *

The streamers stood across the sky
One evening clear and warm;
The old folk said the streamers come,
They come for strife and storm;
Old Nell then laughed her hollow laugh,
Her neighbours looked in awe,
But the heart of old Nell Dickerson
No neighbour ever saw.

And with the night came thundering
Like devils wandering near,
And the tender little children wept

38 would climb] would [find] climb *D*

41-48] cancelled [AGS] *D* • omitted *Sun, Boo, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

49-56] = *C* stanza numbered 1

51 folk] folk[s] [AGS] *D*

52] [They come for] «Foretelling» strife and storm [AGS] *D* •

Foretelling strife and storm *Sun, Boo, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

53 Old Nell then] «When» Old Nell [then] [AGS] *D* • When old Nell *Sun, Boo, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

54 Her neighbours] [The] Her neighbours *A* • «The» [Her] neighbours [AGS] *D* • The neighbours *Sun, Boo, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

57-64] ≠ *C* stanza numbered 2

57 thundering] thunderings *C*

58 devils] [devils] «evils» [AGS] *D* • evil *Sun, Boo, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

Continued overleaf...

Old Nell Dickerson (cont.)

And women shook with fear.
 Out on the night went one stern soul,
 Along the wind it blew –
 O, the heart of old Nell Dickerson
 No babbler ever knew.

* * *

Softly they sought her little room
 And she was blue and cold,
 And on the walls some straggling words
 Her last poor wishes told:
 Nothing she gave and little begged –
 They read them mournfully –
 Bitter and black was all my life
 But wear no black for me.

'Twas a green day and a mad day
 And lovers walked along,
 And the old men the gray men
 And ruddy men and strong,
 And the tenderest of pale girls
 In pink and green and blue
 Walked mournfully behind the heart
 That no one ever knew.

And there were many dropping tears
 On sashes red and wide,
 And more hot prayers were said that day
 Than if a king had died.
 Oh some wore white and yellow frocks
 And some wore blue and green,
 But the heart of old Nell Dickerson
 No one had ever seen.

66] This line is missing in *GDC* copies 2, 3 & 4 and has been written in in the margin [AGS?]
 69-72] = *A* part-stanza [8]
 70 read them] read [them] there [AGS] *D* • read there *Sun, Boo, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*
 73-80] = *A* stanza 9
 73 a mad day] a wild day *CP*
 76 And ruddy] The ruddy *Sun, Boo, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*
 80 ever] every *BLP*
 81-88] = *A* stanza 10

Continued overleaf...

Old Nell Dickerson (cont)

NLA MS 6946/21 & ML MS 3038/1, 10b reads:
NLA 6946/21

The young folks heard the old folks say
Twas long ago she came
Some said it was her own
And some another's shame
The township folk saw season[s] [go] pass
In gold and gray and green
But the heart [of] old Nell Dickerson
No one had ever seen

* * *

The[y] said that when a baby crowed
She turned her head away
And when delightful lovers kissed
Her sallow face went gray
Some [sta] said she laughed and at Love and Death
And every «man» made law
But the heart of old Nell Dickerson
No babbler ever saw

* * *

October with warm greenery
Made all [G] the town a dream
The poorest soul had time to laugh
The graevelle streets were cream [sic]
A hundred anthem[s] went to God
Up somehow through the blue
But the heart of [old] Nell Dickerson
No singer ever knew

The summer sauntered in with wheat
And forest fire and [hate] / haze
And the white frock[s] of white girls
And lads with love ablaze
Sweet signs were in the «high» heavens
And on the warm ground
But the heart of [old] Old Nell Dickerson
It never yet was found

The winter came with wistful talk
Of water birds in tune
And while their snowy treasures slept
Did mother ewes commune
In every wind and «every» rain
Some daring joys would climb
But the heart of old Nell Dickerson

Continued overleaf...

Old Nell Dickerson (cont)

ML 3038/1, 10b

Was prisoner [for <a> crime] «all the time»

For hours she looked [and] right bitterly
 At all who passed her by
 And many a lad walked hurriedly
 And many a lass was shy
 But many a heart sore | for here life was bare [sic]
 For <her> whose [feet [was] «were» [lame] [bare] [sic]
 But the heart of Old Nell Dickerson
 No soul could ever share.

One day they missed hear at the gate [sic]
 The green day wore away
 The lovers said she is not here
 And children at their play
 Said surely she is ill and dead
 And old folks talked in awe
[following lines missing]

NLA 6946/21

Walked mournfully behind the heart
 That no one ever knew

And there were many dropping tears
 On sashes red and wide
 And more hot prayer[s] were [said for her] said that day
 That [Than] if a king had died
 Oh some wore white and yellow frocks
 And some wore blue and green
 But the heart of old Nell Dickerson
 No one had ever seen.

ON READING A RECENT COPY OF 'LONDON PUNCH'

'1907', 26b-27b (A0116-7) [JSN], draft.

Thou dost smell heavy of that atmosphere,
 Th'unholy mustiness that men call 'Home';
 Stale doubly art thou, staler than beer
 That cannot sparkle nor has heart to foam.
 I do not doubt why Englishmen leave home;
 Thou art a part of Nature's hidden scheme;
 From thee men fly – and Lo, the Imperial Dream.

Our fathers tell us of thy glorious Past,
 And there were many giants in those days;
 They marched and sang 'mid laughter loud and fast;
 They lit the Lamp that shed the joyous ray
 And mirth fell even in the darkest ways:
 Cans't thou not give just one poor little gleam?
 Say, art thou Punch? or do I merely dream?

Then did there live great Artists – truly great,
 They showed the Men and Manners of the Time;
 The Warriors fighting Statesmen in Debate,
 Rudely Ridiculous, sometimes half sublime.
 They held a creed that Dullness was a Crime:
 What art thou now in all the Nation's scheme?
 Say, art thou Punch? or do I merely dream?

3 than beer] than «bad» beer *MS*

4] [That three weeks back] || That cannot spark[1]e nor has heart to foam *MS*

ON THE CHEEK OR THE CHIN

ML MS A3038/2, 21a (B0029) [FN], transcription, entitled ‘Dolly’, with comment ‘May have been sent to AGS by JSN never printed about 1900’. ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], with comment ‘Unprinted’, comment cancelled and ‘Printed in ‘Sun’ newspaper’ added, and with an alteration to the text.

Sun (Sydney) Sunday 27 November 1910, p. 9; *GDC*.

The typescript, ML MS 4937/10, Item 1 is the preferred text.

The twilight died and the old stars
 Came out on the roof of night.
 Kind and true were your clear eyes
 And your ribbons pink and white.
 Dear little dainty Dolly,
 Pretty and white and thin,
 It was sweet to kiss you Dolly,
 On the cheek or the chin.

Oft in the sinking summer,
 When the world was bare and brown,
 Your dainty feet went tripping
 On the white streets up and down.
 The leaves dropped into the garden,
 The cool bright nights came in,
 It was sweet to kiss you Dolly,
 On the cheek or the chin

Something there is that all must love:
 The miserly man his hoard,
 The sailor lad the salt sea,
 And the soldier boy his sword.
 All the angels I dream of
 Are pretty, and white and thin,
 But for kissing give me Dolly,
 On the cheek or the chin.

1 The twilight] Twilight *Sun*

2 Came out on] [Came out] «stood» on [AGS] *MS* • Stood on *Sun*

OUR CONTEMPORARY AGAIN VOMITS SLIME

ML MS 3354/2, Item 6, 8a [JSN]. A version of this occurs at ‘1908’, 4a (A0157) [A], entitled ‘A base slander’, under heading ‘A page from the Stony Brok Banner’, with alterations [JSN].
The Clarion 1 August 1909, p. 24.

ML MS 3354/2, Item 6, 8a is the preferred text.

That our wife from us seeks separation
Is a lie that has gained circulation.
We know its vile source,
Such statements of course
Bear with them their own refutation.

‘1908’, 4a reads:

A certain obscure publication
Give [a] «this» outrageous lie circulation
That [a] «our» wife seeks divorce
This situation of course
Bears with it its own refutation

PAINT ME A PETTICOAT GREEN

NLA MS 1145/60, 39-40 [A], with alterations [JSN], & 42-45 [JSN & FN], draft.
The Bookfellow 15 December 1915 (p.1 of the Supplement); *HS* 4; *BLP* 80; *CP* 4. (*HS*, *BLP* & *CP* have the title as ‘Petticoat green’.)

JSN - AGS 5 January 1916 (discusses poem). JSN - JD 28 October 1934, NLA MS 1145/68 (discusses poem).

Correspondence is given after the notes.

The *Bookfellow* has an additional stanza (9) and is taken as the preferred text.

I would not ask of a joyful man for his heart would be too cold,
 And I would go on a long journey to a country ripe and old.
 I would like to walk where the mad folk went and never a soul was mean –
 'Twill all come easily, mournful man, if you paint me a Petticoat Green.

Oh, every feud is a lifelong feud and every fight is fair,
 The girls have eyes and the men have blood and the swords are sharp and bare,
 The witches fight with the dairymaids, and the fairies still are seen –
 'Twill all come easily, mournful man, if you paint me a Petticoat Green.

For green indeed is a dear colour, we learn to lisp thereon,
 Till we grow too tall for our first fair love and the glories all are gone;
 And when at length we have footed it well, our eyes grow tender then,
 We sit and talk when we may not walk – we are close to the green again.

Title] [Painting the] Paint me a Petticoat Green *MS*

1 man for] man | [F]or «for» [JSN] *MS*

2 journey to] journey | [T]o «to» [JSN] *MS*

3] I would like to move where the mad folks [go] «are» And never a soul is mean *MS*

4 if you paint] [to] «If you» paint [A] *MS*

5] [When] «Oh» every feud [is] «was» a lifelong feud And every fight was fair [JSN] *MS*

6] When the girls had eyes and the men had blood And the sword[s] were sharp and bare
MS

7] When the witches cheated the dairymaids And the fairies still were seen *MS*

8] Twill all come easily mournful man | Paint me a Petticoat Green *MS*

9 indeed] [in]deed *MS*

11 well, our eyes] well | Oh our eyes *MS*

12 may not walk] may not talk *MS*

Continued overleaf...

Paint me a Petticoat Green (cont.)

A petticoat is a tender thing, tender as love or dew,
 Perhaps it is piece of an angel's garb that has sometime fallen through,
 For there be gates in the distant sky that the elder seers have seen,
 And you, you have known them mournful man, so paint me a Petticoat Green.

Paint me all that the children laugh in a long white afternoon,
 Paint me all that the old men know when they croak to the setting moon,
 Paint me flowers and the death of flowers, and the tenderlings that grew
 Between the time of the north wind and the kindness of the dew.

Paint me eyes on a holiday and the long kiss of a bride,
 Paint me ashes and dying men and the shriek when a woman died;
 Mournful man, there is love in you, but your big tears come between –
 Grant me a favour, mournful man, and paint me a Petticoat Green.

Paint me joy in a whistling dance, and gloom on a heavy hill,
 Paint me reeds and a water-bird, and a matchless maiden's will;
 Paint me men that have laughed at death, and hope that is good to see –
 I know you have known it, mournful man – you can beckon it up to me.

Paint me prisons of olden times and the flight of the butterflies,
 Paint me all that the madmen see when they speak to the sullen skies;
 Paint me rogues that are loath to die, and the sighing of honest men,
 Paint me Youth that is weak and worn, and Age that is young again.

- 13 love or dew] love [or] dew *MS*
- 14 sometime] sometime[s] *MS*
- 15] For there be many holes in the sky that the elder seers have seen *MS*
- 16 known them . . . so paint] seen them . . . paint *MS*
- 17] Paint me all that the children laugh on a long brown afternoon *MS*
- 19] Paint me all that I fear to know all that I never have seen *MS*
- 20] Twill all come easily mournful man paint me a petticoat green *MS*
- 26 a matchless maiden's] the maze of a maiden's *MS*
- 27 men that have] men who have *HS, BLP, CP*
- 27 hope that is good to see] ghosts in a sleepy sea *MS*
- 28] I know you have seen them mournful man you can call them up to me *MS*
- 29 olden times] old-time *MS*
- 30] Paint me half that the madman sees when they speak to the sullen skies *MS*
- 31 rogues] robes *MS*

Continued overleaf...

Paint me a Petticoat Green (cont.)

I would not ask of a joyful man for his heart would be too cold,
 But the love is deep in you mournful man, though your speech is white and cold.
 Paint me lilies and summer maids, and skeletons – all are clean –
 'Twill all come easily mournful man if you paint me a Petticoat Green.

33-36] *MS* ∅

JSN - AGS 5 January 1916 is a reply to a question from Stephens:

Re your query as to what I mean by 'Petticoat Green'. In it I am asking a melancholy painter to paint me an ordinary petticoat or underskirt green because green I take to be the colour of youth and all joy. The petticoat in this too represents for me woman at her most charming time 16 to 20. The petticoat will be merely used by the painter to express everything in his heart and eyes. 'Twill all come easily Love, Hate, Peace War Youth Age Play Toil Other Lands Other Times Witches Fairies Dairymaids everything in the rhyme and everything I can't get in I shall read as much or more than the artist can paint.

It all seems plain to me but of course one does not always see one's own obscurities.

JSN - JD 28 October 1934 has the comment:

Two bits of verse I remember well are 'The wedding in September' and 'Petticoat green'. [Then discusses 'The wedding in September'.]

As I have told you before, one winter I was taking some dope after I had had a bad back. I felt in very good spirits and started writing some verse. I finished both 'The wedding in September' and 'Petticoat green' in a few weeks. I think I wrote 'Petticoat green' because green is such a delightful colour for weak eyes. These two pieces are I think twins in spirit. They rumble about the influence of colour and sound on the human being.

PESSIMISTIC PUNTER

ML MS 3354/2, Item 5, 5a [A], fair draft. Stanza 2 occurs as a quatrain, with variants, published in the *Clarion*, entitled 'Longfellow at the races', q.v.

There is no sport – what seems so is division
Of spoil – don't waste your breath
Yelling applause (I speak not in derision,
Sport died – I saw its death).

There is no meeting I have yet attended
But some horse ran 'dead' there;
All jocks will chance it (though full oft suspended)
If they but get their share.

I am full up – there is no honest trying
Save trying to run 'dead';
Listen to Isaac for his losses crying,
Can he be comforted?

11 Isaac] The son of Abraham, who became very wealthy. (The *losses* are obscure.) Genesis 26:13. *AV*

PICK AND SHOVEL MEN

‘1907’, 18b (A0108) [JSN], fair draft, 2 stanzas, the first numbered 11 and the second 12 (to indicate place in a sequence of similar pieces).

The Clarion 15 July 1908, p. 7, under heading ‘Some Parodies. Desperate Attempts at the Manner of Arthur Adams’.

The fair draft is the preferred text.

The Pick emphatically descends,
The Navy like a Rainbow bends,
Shovels like Debt collectors move,
Sharply a Ganger superintends.

Blasphemies, and for Interlude
Impromptu oaths absurdly crude;
A Barrow Wheel a-weary whines
(They never grease them as they should).

1] = *Cla* 2

2] = *Cla* 1

3] Hither and thither shovels slide *Cla* 3

4] And a shrill ganger superintends *Cla* 4

6] Impromptu oaths (by no means crude) *Cla* 6

7] A wheelbarrow a-weary whines *Cla* 7

8 (They . . . should)] (they . . . should) *MS*

8 grease them] grease it *Cla* 8

PLAY HOUR

NLA MS 1145/60, 50-51 [JSN], draft.

I wander round, I am both brown and seedy,
It is the play hour when the children run
(Strangers to love for love are ever greedy).

Dark is the world with many a shade assaulted;
Here are the fire flies, beings of crying joy,
These stars that for our soul's sake here have halted.

Oh Wilderness be kind, I now beseech you;
These eyes are innocent, this blood is warm;
Oh, that I might stay on but to impeach you.

Your promises I know, your splash of honey,
And your long agonies all through the green;
Tell me not anymore your face is sunny.

There will be blinded eyes and tired feet straying,
And stricken heads dropping in weariness,
And War that dulls the memory of all playing.

I wander round, I am both brown and seedy,
There is a whistle and the fire flies run
(He who is out for love is ever greedy).

3 (Strangers . . . greedy)] (Stranger[s] . . . greedy) *MS*

5] Here are the fire flies | [light] «being[s]» of [supreme colour] «crying joy» *MS*

6 These stars] These/ [Or] stars *MS*

13 There] The[re] *MS*

18 (He . . . greedy)] (He . . . greedy) *MS*

POOR SWEET PRETTY JOEY

ML MS 3354/2, Item 6, 3b [JSN], fair draft.

Poor sweet pretty joey
How cruel to take you
Away from the blue skies,
Away from the green fields,
Away from the sunlight,
Away from all glad things.
Oh, was it not cruel
To put you in prison
Here in the dark city
So full of sad people,
Poor sweet pretty joey?

Poor sweet pretty joey,
How gray you are growing,
And once you were clad in
Such glorious colours,
And even your whistle
Is duller and sadder.
Your best days are over
Poor sweet pretty joey.

PRESENCE OF MIND

ML MS A3038/3, 9a (B0070) [FN], transcription, with a note, 'Never in print. Partly mine'. This appears in 'The fable and fantasy dialogues', by Frank Neilson, p. 93, entitled 'A live-wire salesman', attributed to 'Alexander Kirkwood'.

A brilliant young man named de Garis
Whom little on earth could embarrass,
From his plane in a crash
He wrote wire, sending cash,
For big order for Plaster of Paris.

RESIGNATION

‘1908’, 33b (A0190) [A]. ‘1929’, 43a (A0632) [A], entitled ‘Noah not a pessimist’. ML MS 3354/3, Item 2 6/11a [EN], transcription, entitled ‘Noah not a pessimist’. LaT MS 9419/3677, typescript, transcription. *The Clarion* 15 July 1908, p. 7, entitled ‘Noah not a pessimist’, under heading ‘Some parodies’ with sub-heading ‘Desperate Attempts at the Manner of Arthur Adams’.

The preferred text is ‘1908’, 33b.

Old Noah said I am resigned –
Though many cares are on my mind,
Though with the wild beasts I embark,p
I leave my creditors behind.

ROSES THREE

ML MS 3038/1, 37a (B0152) [JSN], fair draft. NLA MS 3330 [JSN], fair copy.

Sun (Sydney) Sunday 9 March 1913, p. 13; *The Bookfellow* 1 April 1913, p. 88; *GDC*; *HS* 56; *BLP* 99; *CP* 50.

ML 3038/1, 37a = A; NLA 3330 = B

The fair copy (B) is the preferred text.

What is a rose – a white, white rose?
A sweetheart sweet'ning in the Spring;
Shyly she lives, and shyly grows
Mourner and mystic – blossoming.

What is a rose – a red, red rose?
A woman proud, in a proud hour;
Scented of love – she overflows;
It is the ripening of the flower.

What is a rose – a yellow rose?
A woman grave, in the pale gold;
Braver than all – she smiles and knows
It is the quietening for the cold.

2 sweet'ning] sweetening *Sun, Boo, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

2] Oh a sweetheart – a subtle thing *A*

3 grows,] grows, *B*

4] Deep is the swoon of blossoming *A*

5 rose –] rose – *B*

6 proud,] proud, *B*

7 love –] love – *B*

7] With the reade [red] love she overflows *A*

9 a rose,] a [flow] rose, *B*

10 the pale] the [pla] pale *B*

11 than all – she] than all – she *B* • than «all» she *A*

12 quietening] quiet'ning *Sun, Boo, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

SAINTED JANE

‘1908’, 21b (A0174) [A], with title [JSN]. The whole cancelled.

Cold beef and mustard – give me Keen’s!
But as for reading Sainted Jane –
I tried it once – ’twas in my teens –
It never shall occur again.

1 Keen’s] A commercially produced mustard powder.

2 Sainted Jane] The reference is obscure.

SAUCY SUSETTE

ML MS A3038/2, 4a (B0009) [A], draft, with a line omitted and added at end of poem; 8a (B0013) [FN], transcription, with comment.

The transcription has the comment ‘rather like this piece but of course it’s only ‘Light Verse’. Perhaps it could get put in with others.’

The Bookfellow 15 November 1913; *GDC*.

The *Bookfellow* is the preferred text.

All the glad child is in her glistening ways,
 All the magnificence of velvet days.
 She a sweet challenge is – her mouth a ruse –
 Shyly she steps – the sweetest thing in shoes –
 Saucy Susette.

Blessings of blossom-time about her dance,
 She is Religion – she is Ripe Romance –
 Subtle is she, but very kind withal –
 Shy as the white dew at the even-fall –
 Saucy Susette.

3] She a sweet challenge [h] is – her [ro] mouth a [rose] ruse *MS*

4] «Shyly she steps – the sweetest thing in shoes» *MS*

7] She is [religion] Religion she is [ripe romance] Ripe Romance *MS*

8 withal] with all *MS*, a possible mishearing

SIGNS OF THE SEASON

‘1915’E, 12a-13a (A0298-9) [JSN], fair draft; 15b-16a (A0303) [JSN], fair draft; 18a-18b (A0305-6) [JSN], fair draft.

The Clarion 15 December 1908, p. 5, entitled ‘Signs of the seasons’.

12a-13a = A; 15b-16a = B; 18a-18b = C

The third of the three fair drafts (C) is the preferred text.

The staggering postman stumbles to and fro
 Under an avalanche of Christmas cards.
 I am as mad as Saul was long ago,
 I don’t want any old insane regards.
 The shop-worn wish the soaring soul retards,
 The penny trumpet’s toot assaults the ear,
 And Rechabites recant, and call for Beer!

Weary of food and dull with yellow fat
 The goose gives up the ghost, and drapers sell
 To many a giggling girl a gorgeous hat,
 And every youth must be a summer swell.
 Mine ear-drums drink of sounds Unspeakable!
 Ah Carol Singers sing – it is no crime
 To slay them in the Act at Christmas Time!

- 1] Astounded postmen staggering to and fro *A*
- 2 cards.] cards. *C*
- 3 Saul] Saul was troubled by an evil spirit. Cf. 1 Samuel 16: 14. *AV*
- 3] Ever delivering parcels as they go *A*
- 4] Prize platitudes and old <insane> regards *A*
- 5] Done up by some infernal far off bards. *A* •
- From pompous pious pump[ed]-up-something bards *B*
- 6] Satan I pray thee in the coming time *A* •
- The toot of troublous trumpets assau[l]ts the ear *B*
- 7] Reward each [rhymers] «wretch» according to his rhyme *A* •
- A time of much Bewilderment and – Beer *B*
- 8 of food] with food *A*
- 9] Unto the world the grey goose bids farewell *A*
- 10] And every maid must have a summer hat *A*
- 12] With sporting spotted ties unspeakable *A* •
- Lo, the loud spotted Tie Unspeakable *B*
- 13] While Carol singers sing. Is it a crime *A* •
- When Carol singers sing – is it a crime *B* •
- Ah Carol Singers sing – It is no crime *C*

SOLOMON AND US

‘1908’, 31a (A0187-8) [JSN], fair draft. Variants of stanza 2 occur at ‘1907’, 13b as a quatrain entitled ‘Solomon in a bilious mood’, q.v. and at ‘1907’, 14a, as a quatrain entitled ‘The decay of humour’, q.v.

Said Solomon:

There’s nothing beneath the sun,
The whole thing has been overdone.
Lucky I have my family
And so I have a little fun.

Said We:

Just look at us in latter days
Who still a feeble laugh would raise,
Sifting the dead jokes joyfully,
Treating them many different ways.

Title] Solomon reputedly had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines. Cf. 1 Kings 11: 3. *AV*

2 been overdone] been [theatres] overdone *MS*

SOLOMON CRITICISED

‘1908’, 33b (A0190) [A].

Old Solomon to heights sublime
And great magnificence did climb.
Sweet is the light, he said, but I
Prefer the Limelight every time.

4-5] Cf. Ecclesiastes 11: 7: Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun. *AV*

SOLOMON IN A BILIOUS MOOD

‘1907’, 13b (A0103) [JSN], a variant of stanza 2 of ‘Solomon and us’, q.v.

Nothing is new beneath the sun –
Wisdom is aging – so is Fun.
Sometimes I tell my family
The whole thing has been overdone.

2] Solomon was noted for his wisdom, as told in 1 Kings 3. *AV*

SONG FOR A SINNER

‘1915’E, 17a-18a (A0304-5) [JSN], fair draft.

When you go under ground with all your airs,
 Your kindly lies and your ridiculous prayers,
 You shall not ever fear to face again
 The strong man’s rage, the woman wild with pain,
 Nor Song nor Sigh will beat upon your Brain.

The World shall mourn thee neither less nor more
 Than all the Pawns who played the Game Before.
 The lover-lad will kiss his love anew,
 The water-birds will have their dance to do,
 And the rude Spring will gallop over you.

The Men who Make will match the Men who Mar,
 The Eye Unsatisfied will seek a Star,
 Thy Visitor the Worm will speak thee fair,
 The Bride will tremble and the Child will stare,
 And the red Summer will ride everywhere.

2 ridiculous] ridiculous *MS*

3 not ever fear] not «ever» fear *MS*

6 thee neither less] the[e] «neither» less *MS*

11 Men who Mar] Man who Mar *MS*

SONNET

(Written during a fit of temporary insanity)

‘1907’, 28a-28b (A0117-8) [JSN], fair draft.

Are we all driven by some Devil strong
 Who hath not half enough to do in Hell,
 That we so ramble through the Right and Wrong,
 Get mad and fight, or sit around and sell
 Our Brain and Muscle, while a fairy Bell
 Calls us to dim delights 'mid woodland elves?
 Are we some other things – or just Ourselves?

We Men and Women, are we ever wise?
 We buy fine clothes and wear a patched-up smile;
 We talk of Truth, and live among the Lies;
 We say that Pain is good, and Love is guile,
 And other things not really worth our while.
 Hark to the Bell! Oh the wish – woodland elves –
 Are We some other Folk – or just Ourselves?

2 in Hell] in [it] Hell *MS*6 us to dim] us «to» dim *MS*7 Ourselves] ourselves *MS*8 Women] Womens *MS*11 Love is guile] Love is «guile» *MS*12 worth our while] worth [the] our while *MS*14 Are We some] Are [So] We some *MS*

¶ **‘Still laughing wearily with love’s old shame’**

‘1909’, 7a-7b (A0205-6) [JSN], incomplete, 3 stanzas, one unnumbered and incomplete and two numbered 4 & 5. The unnumbered stanza follows immediately after the signature attached to the previous poem, ‘Sylvia and a salad’, as if it were carried backwards from a leaf further on. However, there is some space following stanza 5 so it is not likely that the stanza at 7a was carried over backwards from those at 7b.

[.]

Still laughing wearily with love’s old shame
 Julia, but Julia’s soul – oh where? oh where?
 The soul of Julia, it went out with her hair.

I have felt love about her pretty chin
 And the sweet neck of her (was it a sin?)
 When she grew stronger I could hear her sing
 But the lost soul was not in anything.

When her skirts rustle, listening am I,
 On her slim ankles I have kept an eye.
 The nauseous nurse in this has had some share,
 I have lost Julia, with my Julia’s hair.

[*Incomplete*]

- 2 (first stanza) Julia, but Julia[’s] soul | – oh where oh where *MS*
 3 (first stanza) The soul of Julia | [of] I went out with her hair *MS*
 1 (stanza 5) listening am I] listening [I] am I *MS*
 3 (stanza 5) this has had] this «has» had *MS*
 4 (stanza 5) my Julia’s] my Julia[’s] *MS*

SURELY GOD WAS A LOVER

ML MS A0308/1, 8a & 9a (B0102 & B0104) [JSN], fair draft, 7 stanzas; 10a & 11a (B0106 & B0108) [JSN], fair draft, 6 stanzas.

Sun (Sydney) Sunday 9 October 1910, p. 9; *The Bookfellow* 15 July 1914, p. xxvii Supplement; *GDC*; *HS* 51; *BLP* 75; *CP* 45.

N dropped 3 stanzas from the first draft (at 8a & 9a) in the second draft (at 10a & 11a), altered two others substantially and introduced 2 new stanzas, and he then discarded the second draft in favour of the first for publication. The *Sun* text omits stanza 3 of the first draft and the variants there are corrections of a grammatical kind. Because these are the kinds of alteration Stephens commonly made, the fair draft at MS A3038/1, 8a & 9a (A) is taken as the preferred text. The second fair draft is shown separately in the notes.

3038/1, 8a & 9a = A; 3038/1, 10a & 11a = B

Surely God was a lover, when he bade the day begin,
Soft as a woman's eyelid – white as a woman's skin?

Surely God was a lover, with a lover's faults and fears,
When he made the seas as bitter as a wilful woman's tears?

Surely God was a lover, dreaming of damoisels?
At the dawn's calm and the eve's calm his quiet love he tells.

Surely God was a lover, with the madness love will bring?
He wrought while his love was singing and put her soul in the Spring.

Surely God was a lover, by a woman's wile controlled
When he made the Summer a woman thirsty and unconsolated?

Surely God was a lover when he made the trees so fair?
In every leaf is a glory caught from a woman's hair.

2 eyelid white] eyelid – white *A*

4 seas as] sea as *Sun*, *Boo*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

5 damoisels] damosels *A*

5-6] omitted *Sun*, *Boo*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

7-8] = lines 5-6 *Sun*, *Boo*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

9-10] = lines 7-8 *Sun*, *Boo*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

11-12] = lines 9-10 *Sun*, *Boo*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

12 hair.] hair. *A*

Continued overleaf...

Surely God was a Lover (cont.)

Surely God was a lover? See in the flowers he grows
His love's eyes in the violets – her sweetness in the rose.

13-14] ≠ lines 11-12 *Sun, Boo, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

13 lover – see] lover – see *A*

14 violets –] violets – *A* • violet *Sun, Boo, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

ML MS A3038/1, 10a, 11a reads:

Surely God was a lover when he bade the day begin
Soft as a womans eyelids white as a womans skin

Surely God was a lover with a lover[']s faults[s] and fears
When he made the sea [so] as bitter as a womans wilful tears

Surely God was a lover when he made the Spring so green
And the dawns calm and the eyes calm and the glistening day between.

Surely God was a lover [w] hating the dark and cold
When he made the summer a womand thirsty and thick with gold [sic]

Surely God was a lover when he made the sky so fair
And the [g] clouds like a winsome women changing and fading there [sic]

Surely god was a lover when every wind he throws
Car[r]ies the voice of violets – the mad musk of the rose

SYLVIA AND A SALAD

‘1909’, 7a (A0205) [JSN], fair draft.

When Sylvia a salad makes
How earnestly she takes a salad.
How lovingly she lifts and shakes
When Sylvia a salad makes.
How truthfully she builds and breaks,
Breathless as rhymer at his ballad.
When Sylvia a salad makes
How earnestly she takes a salad.

6 Breathless] [Earnestly] [Earnest] Breathless *MS*

TELL ME AND TELL ME ALL

ML MS A3038/1, 37b (B0153) & '1912', 7a (A0255) [JSN], unfinished.

Tell me and tell me all
Of little Love again,
Whose play is perilous,
Whose way is black with Pain.

Tell me of Love whose lips
Have brought the Heavens near;
The honey of his hope
Has made a war on fear.

He wages cruel war
By many a bare bedside;
He sears the heart of her
Who may not be a bride.

Tell me of Love whose touch
Has shaken all our days;
He does delight and cheat
And chasten and amaze.

Tell me of little Love,
So short a time have I –
I fear the Long black cloud
Over the western sky.

Tell me of gentle Love,
Creamy and white and fair

[*Unfinished*]

5-6] [Tell me of Love for I || No other sound would hear] *MS*, cancelled lines preceding new lines 5-6

11 the heart of her] the heart heart of her *MS*

16 amaze] <amaze> *MS*. The word looks like *unmaze*.

THAT LAMB AGAIN

The Clarion 1 March 1909, p. 14, under heading ‘Condensed Classics’. Punctuation is reproduced from the printed text.

This parodies the popular nursery rhyme ‘Mary had a little lamb’.

Sweet Mary a little lamb had,
And after her it made a pad;
It went on with its rot
Till her teacher forgot –
He said, ‘Dammit all! this is too bad!’

THAT NIGHT

‘1909’, 15b & 16a (A0214) [JSN], fair draft

We tenderlings were all too much afraid;
 If Love was with us, why were we so dumb?
 It was a famous night for gathering wool;
 We were afloat – the flight was beautiful,
 Although we sat beneath the cherry plum.

Out through the air, where all the riddles are,
 Boldly we thought to dim the awful sun;
 If Life and Love are good, why should a Death
 Sit on our lips and fight against our breath?
 ’Twas thus we thought beneath the cherry plum.

I fear we learned to love in mid air;
 There was not left to us one little crumb
 Of all the manna of the green, green time.
 Oh, but our enterprise was black,
 That night we sat beneath the cherry plum.

4 afloat – the] afloat – the *MS*

6 air] Air *MS*

14 enterprise was] enterprise [not] was *MS*

THE ANGEL IN THE CHERRIES

ML MS A4937/10, typescript [AGS], with comment 'Never been printed'. Listed in the Contents as 'The angel in the churches'.

The witchery was in her eyes,
A child, and God had made her fair.
The green leaves trembled o'er her head
And red ripe cherries here and there.
But surely, no, not anywhere,
Search the whole wide world round and round,
Not such sweet cherry lips were found.

Her face – But no, I may not tell
Of all that came to me that morn;
Too long within my heart had lived
A loneliness that made forlorn.
Now in one sharp, sweet moment torn
From out myself, what time she smiled,
I kissed this angel of a child.

THE ANGEL WITH THE CURLING PINS

‘1909’, 9a (A0207) [JSN], fair draft.

Angels I hear of (always in old stories)
Dropping through mist of mauve and white and blue,
But my dear love is wrapped in greater glories,
Even her halo is exceeding new.

Oh, but her frock has rhapsodies within it
And lovable are all her little sins;
An angel up to date – this very minute!
She is the angel of the Curling Pins.

1 hear of] hear of [it] *MS*

6 And lovable] And/ [How] lovable *MS*

7 to date – this] *MS*

THE APPEAL FAILED

‘1908’, 5a (A0158) [A], cancelled, under heading ‘Notes from the churches’.

Said a cultured young cleric at Leer,
I beseech all you good folk here
To subscribe sixpence each,
There are heathens to reach –
But they said, that’s the price of a beer!

THE APPROACH OF SPRING

‘1907’, 34 b (A0124) [JSN].

The daisy dawdles on the lea,
The mopoke lifts his liver wing;
My wife requires new drapery,
I am convinced – it is the Spring.

4 convinced – it] *MS*

THE BENCH CRITICISED

‘1908’, 6b (A0160) [A], under heading ‘Accidents and offences’. LaT MS 9419/3677, transcription.

Said a drunk to the Bench at Lake Wallace,
Why here do you constantly haul us?
While you and your set
Drink all you can get,
Why not all the same treatment for all'us?

THE BISHOP

‘1908’, 21b (A0175) [A], title [JSN].

Long is his sermon, long is his chin,
(The last he can't help being long);
Like all the rest he won't give in
Till everybody says he's wrong.

THE BLACK FRIEND

ML MS A3038/1, 20b (B0123) & '1910', 16a (A0237) [JSN], fair draft.

He is the oldest, wisest,
 Of sages that I know,
 But he lightly talks of butterflies
 And childish flowers that grow;
 He tells of broken homes and strange,
 Of all no man may mend –
 Oh, the old Night talks to me,
 He is my friend.

He tells of little ships that lie
 Buried below in green,
 Of the grey sky and the cold earth
 And the life that runs between;
 Of a frail girl faltering
 With a jewelled soul to spend –
 Oh, the old Night talks to me,
 He is my friend.

He has no love for traders,
 For the rasping market noise;
 His pity is all for pink girls
 And little fresh-eyed boys;
 He tells of little journeyings
 And white flowers at the end –
 Oh, the old Night talks to me,
 He is my friend.

1 wisest] wis[e]st *MS*

10 below in] below <on> *MS*

18 For] [In] For *MS*

THE BOOK AGENT

‘1908’, 19a (A0172) [JSN].

With prayerful voice and soulful look
He booms religious literature –
And at the next house sells a book
That Ovid might have thought impure!

2 literature –] *MS*

3 house] <house> *MS*

4 Ovid] Publius Ovidius Naso (43 BC-AD 17/18), a Roman poet, exiled from Rome: his poem *Art of Love* caused offence and his works were banned from the public libraries of Rome.

THE BORROWER

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], with comment ‘Never been printed’, comment later cancelled. *Sun* (Sydney) 12 January 1913, p. 13.

The *Sun* text is headed with the comment ‘The verses ‘Julie Callaway’, in last issue, were written by Shaw Neilson. To emphasise apology for omitting the author’s signature, it is printed again in another manner.’ The typescript is the preferred text.

When McCarty first got married – well, his wife, she made him swear
By the Saints he thought the most of and the Other Powers up there
That he’d never lend the buggy or the harness or the mare.

When the baby came, McCarty, he was boisterous for a while
And we drank that baby’s future in the fine old-fashioned style,
But he wouldn’t lend that buggy ‘just to go for half a mile.’

When McCarty’s young wife’s mother took and died within the week,
Well, it made McCarty quieter, and his countenance was meek –
So I asked him for the buggy, and he glared – he couldn’t speak.

But I didn’t give up either. I’ve always heard them say
If you want a thing you’ll get it, if you only know the way.
I’d be careful, I’d be cunning, I’d talk him round some day.

Och, the next time that I axed him – ’twas a murderous hot retort –
He’d sooner see me baking (and he said it with a snort)
In that horrid place Gehenna – but he called it H--- for short.

Then I spoke of Michael Davit, and John Dillon, ‘there’s a man,’
Och, my mother’s tongue was famous, and in all our breed it ran
Since the Irish and the fighting and the drinking first began.

Then I talked about the ould times, and the ould land over there,
Of the dancing and the fighting – och, we both enjoyed a fair,
Then I called the child a jewel, and I praised the ould bay mare.

Nixt I went in strong for Home Rule, what we suffer and endure,
And the things our fathers fought for – och, my brogue was getting pure –
Ye can have it, says McCarty, ye’ll be careful to be shure.

3 or . . . or] nor . . . nor *Sun*

6 that buggy] the buggy *Sun*

10 either. I’ve always] either; for I’ve always *Sun, MS*

THE BREAK OF DAY

‘1908’, 7b (A0161) [JSN], draft, 4 stanzas, stanza 2 cancelled; 8a (A0161) [JSN], draft, 4 stanzas, cancelled.

GDC; *HS* 29; *BLP* 20; *CP* 29. (*HS*, *BLP*, *CP* with title ‘Break of day’).

7b = A; 8a = B

In the absence of a fair draft or fair copy *GDC* is the preferred text.

The stars are pale.
 Old is the Night – his case is grievous,
 His strength doth fail.

Throughout the stilly hours
 The dews have draped with Love’s old lavishness
 The drowsy flowers.

And Night shall die.
 Already, lo – the Morn’s first ecstasies
 Across the sky.

An evil time is done.
 Again, as some one lost in a quaint parable,
 Comes up the Sun.

1] The stars are pale «tired out» *B*

2 Old is the Night] [Tired] Old is the Night *A* •

The Night is old *B*

3] He doth not wail *B*

4] The *MSS* reading is retained here because the line is clearly deficient: it is possible that *the* was omitted in copying.

Throughout stilly hours *GDC* •

Through stilly hours *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

5] The dews have builded up strange palaces *A* •

The dews have reared strange tear bright palaces *B*

6] Among the flowers *A*, *B*

7] But the sad Night will die *A* •

But the sad night will die *B*

8 Morn’s] [moon’s] Morn’s *A*

10 An evil] The evil *B*

11] Again like an uncertain parable *B*

12 comes up] goes round *B*

THE BULL-FROG TO THE MOUNTAIN DUCK

ML MS 3354/2, Item 7, 4a-4b [A], draft, 4 stanzas, stanza 4 cancelled. NLA MS 1145/46 [L], fair copy, 5 stanzas (enclosure with letter JSN - JD 31 March 1935). Another version appears in 'The fable and fantasy dialogues', by Frank Neilson, p. 43, where it is entitled 'A protest', and attributed to 'Alexander Kirkwood'.

JSN – RHC 20 November 1933. N sent this to Croll with two other pieces to consider for inclusion in *CP*. When he sent it to Devaney in 1935 with some other 'bits of [his] comic verse' he said he 'didn't think it was ever offered to A.G. and [he] was sure it was never offered to anyone else'.

ML MS 3354/2-7 = A; NLA MS 1145/46 = B
The later, fair copy (B) is the preferred text.

'Twas at the week-end in my walk,
Listening, I heard a bull-frog talk
Sharply but with no grievous croak,
'Twas to a mountain duck he spoke.

Warfare, he said, is always war
But there are things I much abhor;
Theft is the blackest on the list –
Madam – you are a parodist.

Up through the blackness, bleak, remote,
How carefully I kept my throat;
My deep voice long before the Fall
Was an abundant joy to all.

As we came upward from the sea
Long did I practise carefully;
Aeons elapsed and I was proud,
In the long night I spoke aloud.

Madam, I care not how you kill –
Eat me, digest me, as you will,
But I protest against this wrong,
Leave me, oh leave my little song!

Cancelled stanza A, lines 13-16:

[Madame [you] «he» said you live a lie
You have your hunger so have I
War will be [wadged] «waged» but decency
Dies at the thought of parody]

THE BUSHRANGER

‘1907’, 19a & 20a-20b (A0108-0110) [JSN], fair draft. Stanza 1 & the first line of stanza 2 at 19a are numbered and the second full stanza at 20a has been numbered 2. The poem has been drawn off after stanzas 4, 5 & 6 as if to indicate completion, with no discernible change in the handwriting.

Our Knights have never had a show –
 Crusades are over long ago –
 But Our Dear Friend he did his best,
 Never shall We forget to Blow.

He was indeed a proud young Prince –
 We have not seen his equal since –
 Even dread Trooper on his Track
 Nor Death itself could make him Wince.

'Twas for his picturesque Display
 They hunted him – well, so they say.
 The Press, the Plausible Police,
 Tell of his Prowess till today.

There is a thing I really think –
 Historians very blindly blink.
 Bushrangers invariably were
 Captured through giving way to Drink.

Liquor, the very vilest kind,
 Clouded his eyes and dulled his mind.
 Sleeping, he gave his foes a chance
 To dawdle upwards from Behind.

Appalling, oh most Patent Fact –
 Oh statement that I can't Retract –
 Really, dear friends, I sometimes feel
 I'd like to write a Temperance Tract!

4 We . . . Blow] We . . . Blow *MS*

10 him – well] him – well *MS*

11 Press – the] Press – the *MS*

13 There is] The[re] is *MS*

19 gave his foes] gave [his] foes *MS*

20 Behind.] *MS*

22 Oh statement] [I nev] Oh statement *MS*

THE CALL OF THE WILD

‘1907’, 1a (A0089) [A].

The old man yelled out to his child
And the little lad knew he was riled;
He said, I am took – like the chap in the book
I respond to the call of the wild.

Title] The reference is to a novel with this title, written by Jack London and published in 1903. The ‘chap in the book’ was in fact a dog who escaped from the servitude of drawing a sled in Alaska to be the leader of a pack of wolves.

THE CAT AND THE FIDDLER

‘1915’B, 5a-7a (A0361-3) [FN], fair draft, 15 stanzas numbered, stanzas 8-13 renumbered 9-15 [JSN], and alterations [JSN] and stanzas numbered 8 (at 6b) & 10 (at 7a) [JSN]. ML MS A3038/2, 22a & 23a, transcription [FN], 11 stanzas entitled ‘The cat and the fiddle’. NLA MS 1145/16, p. 13, transcription, typed (a photocopy).

Several stanzas are duplicated in ‘The wedding in September’, also in this notebook.

JSN - JD 28 October 1934 (discusses poem). Correspondence is given after the notes.

‘1915’B is the preferred text.

They killed her once in a dim time,
They brained her cruelly,
On a cold day in the falling rain
Beside a fallen tree.

The fiddler stood with his soul full,
He had too much to sing –
Lightly he slew the slim creature
To gain a yellow string.

But when he played in the dark night
Some noise he could not quell
Came crying in the yellow string,
As devils cry in Hell.

Oh, he played long and tenderly
Of blossoms at the fall,
But the cat came in the white firelight
And mournfully did call.

He played of love and golden hair,
Of lips and hearts and eyes –
But ever on his tightened strings
A whispering curse would rise.

* * *

20 would rise] would [cry] rise [JSN] *MS*

Continued overleaf...

The Cat and the Fiddler (cont.)

Through all the centuries fiddlers are
A shiftless race of men –
The whispering curse is on them still
And lives and leaps again.

A fiddler is a handless man –
He does not sow nor reap,
He cannot know the care of kine
Or the many ways of sheep.

He plays of tawny sailor men
And the salt tears of a rover,
He plays of love that may not love
And the yellow joy of clover.

A fiddler is a witless man –
His eyes are moist and dim,
The simplest girl with a red lip
Can make a slave of him.

He plays of birds that may not speak
And old men dropping slowly,
And he hears all day a mother's cry
And a low laugh and unholy.

He cannot see – he sees too far,
He seeks some worthless charm –
He has no place in a proud city
Or on a happy farm.

He plays to make the flowers grow,
He shakes the heart of Spring –
But the cat he slew so long ago
Climbs on the fiddle string.

Down in the dark he plays and plays
Of all the fires that burn;
He tells the ways of the blue winter
And the Summer's soft return.

Continued overleaf...

The Cat and the Fiddler (cont.)

The fiddler is a homeless man
 (The whispering bids him roam),
 He loves, and loves, but he never loves
 To give his love a home.

He plays to make the flowers grow,
 To bid the blossoms fall,
 But the cat is in his yellow strings
 And whispers in it all.

53] The fiddler] [He loves] The fiddler *MS*

57 the flowers grow] the [roses] «flowers» grow [JSN] *MS*

58 To bid the] [And makes] «To bid» the [JSN] *MS*

60 whispers in it] whispers [through] «in» it [JSN] *MS*

Writing to Devaney, in relation to ‘The wedding in September’ (28 October 1934), Neilson said that the fiddler ‘playing about so many different things all started from the dreadful sounds that came from the cat’, at night, and that he ‘tried in some way to connect the mysterious sounds from the fiddle with the mysterious sounds from the cat’. The poem is based on the assumption that catgut, used for the strings of musical instruments, was obtained from cats.

THE CATERPILLAR

ML MS 3354/2, Item 6, 5b & '1907', 26a (A0115) [JSN], draft, 2 stanzas, both cancelled.

I hear a sparrow cheep
Among the cherries;
He finds them good and cheap,
Also the berries.
The Gardener pats his beds
Along the gravel;
Just watch my worthy friend,
He starts to travel.

He gets just what he needs,
No fear or flurry;
The Simple Life he leads,
No Wear or Worry.
This life would just suit me,
No one could wish a stiller;
I think I'd like to be
A caterpillar.

4 the berries] the [cherr] berries *MS*

7 my worthy] my <worthy> *MS*

10 or] of *MS*

13 just suit me] just [suit] me *MS*

THE CAUSE OF THE TROUBLE

‘1936’, 5a (A0773), transcription [FN], entitled ‘The Judge and Maud’, with note ‘this limerick appeared in *Clarion* Sept 1908’. ML MS A038/3, 10a (B0071), transcription [FN], entitled ‘Maud Mueller’, with a note, ‘Printed in *Clarion*’.

The Clarion 1 March 1909, p. 14.

The Clarion is the preferred text. Punctuation is reproduced from the printed text.

The Justice was riding abroad,
He stopped, and he hummed and he hawed.
'Twas not the sweet hay
That caused the delay,
'Twas the eyes and the ankles of Maud.

5 Maud] This may be a reference to a poem by J. G. Whittier, ‘Maud Muller’, published in *The Panorama and Other Poems* in 1856.

THE CIRCUIT HORSE

ML MS 4937/10, typescript [AGS], with comment ‘This was sent to Bulletin about seven years ago. It may have appeared’, with second part of the comment cancelled.

FN – Hugh Anderson 12 August 1950 (The ‘Circus horse’ should be ‘Circuit horse’).

The Bulletin 13 May 1909, p. 13.

Variants suggest it is likely Stephens edited the text for publication and the typescript is therefore the preferred text.

Jimmy Giller had a cottage in a little one-horse town
Where there lived a missionary, well, we'll call him Mr Brown.
He was working up the circuit, deep in debt and deep in sin,
Jimmy used to work at odd jobs for the butcher Mick O'Flynn.

Jimmy's backyard and the parson's were divided by a fence,
Old and splintered were the palings and of not much consequence.
Jimmy's eyes, and none were better, often looked to get a view
What his neighbours did and didn't, what his neighbours ought to do.

Jimmy had a horse and kept him rolling fat, and shining clean,
But the parson's horse was seedy and the parson's horse was lean.
Many masters he had served with, men of manners, rough and strange –
He had thought when 'taking orders' there would come a blessed change.

He could jump and he could gallop when his heart was young and gay,
He was aged, but 'twasn't age made him hang his head that way.

1 Jimmy] Billy *Bul*, throughout

2 lived] dwelt *Bul*

3] He was working up the circuit which was deep in debt and sin *Bul*

6 splintered] broken *Bul*

7] Through the gaps old Billy used to poke his head to get a view *Bul*

8 neighbours . . . neighbours] neighbour . . . neighbour *Bul*

9 kept him] kept it *Bul*

12 He had thought] And he thought *Bul*

14 He was aged but 'twasn't age made] He was old but 'twasn't age that made *Bul*

Continued overleaf...

The Circuit Horse (cont.)

True, the years his limbs had stiffened, but 'twas lack of honest feed
Made him sour and melancholy, though it wasn't in his breed.

Yet he had a pious master, one who never cursed or swore,
Exercise he had in plenty, but he looked for something more.
Slowly in the circuit buggy, sadly, did he trot along
Out on country visits, tea fights, sometimes Services of Song.

Tea fights at which brothers sat, and sisters smiled and poured them tea,
Coffee suppers where the pastor and his flock fed sumptuously;
Then there came when feasting finished choice selections by the choir;
All the time the old horse hungered standing by the post and wire.

Jimmy Giller wasn't honest as the strictest notions go,
He'd been 'had' for cattle duffing and had done a year or so,
But within him was no meanness – one thing cut him to the heart,
'Twas his equine neighbour's sufferings, and he strove to take his part.

So one shining Sunday morning when all Nature seemed to laugh
And the poor old horse was munching some wild-oaten, long-cut chaff,
Jimmy Giller stood and waited, knocking at the parson's door,
It was opened and the parson stood and smiled – and nothing more.

Half-bewildered was the good man, but he thought he guessed aright –
Doubtless here a soul in darkness sought assistance to the light –
Rousing sermons he'd been preaching must have reached his neighbour's ears
And a conscience-stricken sinner was about to melt in tears.

- 15] Though the years his limbs had stiffened 'twas the lack of oats and chaff *Bul*
16] though] thought *MS*
16] Made him look as sour and sorry as a little skim-milk calf *Bul*
17] Yet he had] True he had *Bul*
18] Exercise and fresh air also yet he wanted something more *Bul*
20] Out on country visits, tea fights] Out on visits country tea fights *Bul*
22] fed sumptuously] feed sumptuously *MS* • fed sumpt'ously *Bul*
27] cut] touched *Bul*
29] So one] On a *Bul*
30] And the circuit horse was eating some apology for chaff *Bul*

Continued overleaf...

The Circuit Horse (cont.)

But no sign of tears showed Jimmy, he was muttering, wondering still,
 How to start without much swearing, but he hardly had the skill;
 There he stood and looked like thunder, never even said good day,
 Murmuring, mumbling, muttering, fumbling for the proper words to say.

Do you think that this 'ere Jesus – out it came, all in a burst,
 Who you say was never hard on what we call the very worst,
 Do you think that this 'ere Jesus, if he had your job on hand,
 He'd starve a horse, and drive it, till it couldn't hardly stand?

Very red the parson's face grew. Jimmy walked out to the gate,
 But like other great reformers he had spoken rather late –
 For the horse's days were numbered – glad to quit, he bade adieu
 To the church and to the circuit, 'twas the best thing he could do.

37 muttering . . . wondering] mutt'ring . . . wond'ring *Bul*

38 but he hardly] and he hardly *Bul*

40 Murmuring, mumbling, muttering] Thinking glaring mutt'ring *Bul*

41 Do you] D'ye *Bul*

42] Who ye say wuz kind and friendly even to the very worst *Bul*

43] D'ye think that his'ere Jesus if 'e'ad a'horse down here *Bul*

44] E'ud starve it starve it starve it cuz a ton of chaff wuz dear *Bul*

46 rather late] [very] «rather» late *MS*

THE CONTRACT HERO

‘1915’C, 3b (A0315) [JSN], 2 stanzas & 3 lines and ML MS A3036/1, 43b (B0165) [JSN], 1 line & 1 stanza. ‘1915’E, 21a (A0308) [JSN], title, in a short list headed ‘Pieces to finish this year’, with the number 4 beside it to indicate 4-line stanzas. The MS is written in pencil and is very faint, and it is illegible in some places. The reading is necessarily conjectural.

I am the Servant of the Smart
 Young ladies who assault the heart
 With bluebrush, corned beef, and bosh,
 And well-tamed monsters for the mart.

Always I dip in deepest dyes,
 Strange rioting I supervise.
 I smoke - and gust’ly drink
 As my agreement specifies.

Firmly I fall into a bar,
 I am a God, I drink Three Star.
 I am so White, so wonderful –
 Beside every boy is – Tar.

Monday – a most impetuous haste –
 Comes a small Death – the waste –
 Blithely I boil the Billy Can
 Smacking my stiff lips at the taste.

Title] The reference is to a shearer, a would-be ‘gun’ or top man.

3] With <bluebrush corned beef> and bosh *MS*

6 rioting] <rioting> *MS*

7] [Coolly] I smoke and <gust’ly> drink *MS*

10 Three Star] a beer

10 White] the very best

12 Tar] Tar was used in shearing sheds to dress cuts on sheep and the ‘boy’ who applied the tar was ranked low in the hierarchy of the shed.

13 Monday . . . impetuous] <Monday> . . . impelous *MS*. What looks like an *l* is probably an uncrossed *t*.

14] [Comes] a small <Death> the waste *MS*

THE CRY OF THE MOTHER

‘1915’C, 8a & 10b-11a (A0319 & A0322) [JSN], draft.

Stanza 1 at 8a is very much a draft and the poem shows uncertainty about stanza form. It looks as if N started the poem at 8a, stalled or abandoned it, and then continued at 10b-11a having clarified his intention. Stanza 1 is made uniform with stanzas 2-5 in line length here.

Mother love is more than fire, fiercer than a jewel,
Crying out as cries a fire fainting for its fuel,
He my sweet bird flew and flew, never fearing falling,
With his little mouth for kisses, and his brave eyes calling.

Heart o’me, heart o’me, every beat you’re breaking
When the yellow stars go small, and all the world is waking;
A red day and, oh my God, all the days to follow
With my crying arms empty, every hour so hollow,
 Oh, the sweet child.

I dream a million times that he comes laughing, running,
With his sweet mouth for kisses and his dear eyes funning;
He is never faint or famished, always warm and glowing,
With his little mouth for kisses, and his gold hair blowing,
 Oh, the sweet child.

All his days I loved him with a love loud as thunder
But tenderer than white flower with crying dew under;
He is out upon the sunlight, never fearing falling
With his little mouth for kisses, and his brave eyes calling,
 Oh, the sweet child.

Title] The [‹wine›] «cry» of the mother *MS*

2] Crying out [across the dark || Oh Beloved fuel] as cries a fire fainting for its fuel *MS*

3 sweet bird flew] sweet bird [bird] flew *MS*

6 every beat you’re breaking] every [will you never stop] «[cease]» «beat you’re» breaking *MS*

6 and all the world] and «all» the world *MS*

9 empty every hour] empty [and] every hour *MS*

10] I dream[ed] a million times that he comes laughing «[crawling]» running *MS*

16 All his days] All [the] his days *MS*

17 tenderer than] tenderer that *MS*, an error of haste

Continued overleaf...

The Cry of the Mother (cont.)

He is lispng through the moonlight – what a lonely place to wander –
 The angels' love is white love – by my love the fonder –
 My blood was in his sweet heart filling, fighting, flowing
 On the little mouth for kisses and the gold hair blowing,
 Oh, the sweet child.

Line endings

Stanza 1 (lines 1-4 of reading text): 1 jewel || 2 fuel || 3 falling || 4 kisses
 || 5 calling ||

Stanza 2 (lines 5-9 of reading text): 1 breaking || 2 waking || 3 follow || 4
 hollow || 5 child ||

Stanza 3 (lines 10-14 of reading text): 1 running || 2 kisses || 3 funning ||
 4 glowing || 5 kisses || 6 blowing || 7 child ||

Stanza 4 (lines 15-19 of reading text): 1 thunder || 2 under || 3 sunlight ||
 4 falling || 5 kisses || 6 calling || 7 child ||

Stanza 5 (lines 20-24 of reading text): 1 moonlight || 2 wander || 3 fonder ||
 4 flowing || 5 kisses || 6 blowing || 7 child ||

THE DAY IS THINE

ML MS 4937/10, typescript [AGS], with comment ‘This was sent to ‘Austral Light’ last April it may have appeared’, the comment cancelled and further note added ‘Book’.

GDC; HS 33; BLP 73.

JSN - AGS 15 February 1919; 15 October 1922; 7 June 1931; 26 July 1931; 2 August 1931; 22 September 1932. FN - JSN 24 October [1933]. JSN - RHC 19 November 1933. N advised Stephens (15 February 1919) that he considered this ‘amateurish’ and that he didn’t ‘feel fit to try and alter [it]’. He was resolute in regarding the poem in this way and negotiated with Stephens, unsuccessfully, to have it dropped from *BLP* and the later projected collection. On N’s advice (19 November 1933) Croll dropped it from *CP*. In a letter to Neilson (24 October [1933]) Frank advised that he remembered ‘one rather bad misprint in The old sundial in the first book’ and said that ‘love should read lose and loving should read losing.’ This reading makes better sense and accords with the variant in the published texts, and it is therefore incorporated in the text.

The typescript is the preferred text.

‘This striking motto is on an old sundial at Market Deeping’.

’Twas in that far off land of mine,
Dear land I never more may see;
The grey church, like a ghost stood up,
The old sundial spoke to me
Down deep into this soul of mine,
Only this day, the day is thine.

The bright-eyed baby buds and flowers
Showered sweetness on the dancing Spring;
Down in the dark green shade I heard
The singers of the deep woods sing.
The old sundial said its say,
This, only this, no other day.

Title and gloss] The motto is omitted in *GDC* and the published texts, and these enclose the title in inverted commas.

5 down deep] Spoke deep *BLP*

6 this day] the day *HS, BLP*

Continued overleaf...

The Day is Thine (cont.)

The players of the playtime pass,
How swift the troublous seasons turn;
All that we strive for most we lose,
And losing, never yet may learn.
The old sundial still speaks on,
This day – already, 'tis far gone.

The kisses and the fallen tears,
The hearts that could not hold their pain,
Seem holier in the mist of years.
The old sundial speaks again,
Stern teacher to this soul of mine,
This day, quick, perishing, is thine.

15 we lose] we love *MS, GDC, HS, BLP*

16 And losing] And loving *GDC, HS, BLP*

THE DEAR LITTLE GOD

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], with comment ‘Unpublished’.

The dear little god was forced to rest,
And a little girl slept one afternoon;
What did she dream of, good or ill?
The day was golden, the wind was still,
You never could guess, you never could know;
The days were sleepy, the hours were slow;
All that I tell you is surely true –
Listen, the dear little god, he knew.

The dear little god – he stood on the road
And the white bloom stood on the apple tree;
The winds all whispered, he listened still
(The moon rose up and the wind was chill)
He heard sweet sounds and he smelt sweet flowers,
The dear little god who may not see.
He did not frown and he did not chide,
The tears are falling, the world is wide;
All that I tell you is surely true –
Listen, the dear little god, he knew.

Though the night be dark and our eyes are shut
The day and the dark are alike to him;
He creepeth over the snow white beds
And snow white pillows when all is dim;
The sun springs up and the sun falls west;
A little toil, and a little rest;
All I tell you is surely true –
Listen, the dear little god, he knew.

THE DEATH OF BILL HARDY

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], with comment 'Never been printed'.

Bill Hardy was bad, he was worse, they told it to me –
 I wasn't too frisky myself getting over a spree –
 But I managed to get to McGubbins – out there in a hut,
 A hole of a place – I found him, well, nearly all but.

Thin – talk about thin, he was cutting the blankets to bits,
 And laugh like the devil he could, but only in fits,
 And he talked away by the mile, sometimes uncommonly queer –
 A lot about fighting and God knows what else, and a lot about beer.

He'd never be missed in the world, and now he was ill
 There wasn't no friends to fuss. I'd seen a good lot o'Bill,
 I'd travelled with him, and was up to his game all along.
 I haven't got much to be proud of – but Bill, he came it too strong.

The cough, it would pretty well beat him, and then he'd get clear –
 'Twas a close kind of night with thunder, about the end of year,
 And Bill, he was pointing away down to the foot of the bed
 That's her and the kiddie says he, and I thought they were Dead.

I couldn't see nothing – I looked, there was nothing to see.
 Bill reckoned my eyes were no good and he roused on to me –
 Take her out! drag her out by the hair of the head! or the ear!
 And what in the h--l are you good for to let her come in here!

He might have been married, for women will take to infernally sour-looking chaps.
 He never talked much about things gone by, they weren't too pleasant perhaps.
 Was it some girl he hadn't done square by? God knows
 She was getting' fair home on him now, and he couldn't stand up to hard blows.

A cantankerous fellow was Bill with a very insultin' style,
 But he stood to me once – I was sick out there at the Seventeen Mile.
 There's many a worse-hearted chap keeps easy enough out of gaol,
 It ain't the doin' – it's getting' away, that's where the most of us fail.

I saw him come into the room, as plain as could be –
 The devil it was come for Bill, and a nice thing to see!
 I never believed in no ghosts, but I know what you'll think,
 But no, I'm d---d if it was – it wasn't the drink.

Continued overleaf...

The Death of Bill Hardy (cont.)

Lookin' about he was, his little eyes cunnin' and keen,
Scorched and dried up he seemed, you could easily tell where he'd been.
His nose was as sharp as a razor – it might be a hard thing to say
What I really did see, but it grinned – it was horrible hoary and grey.

Of course he'd come up for Bill, I'd heard of such doings before,
That's what he's there for, but sometimes it's angels or spirits that rap at the door.
It's a difficult job for a man to make out what's rot and what really is true
But a man must believe what he sees for himself, and that's what I do.

Bill was a lot quieter now, he was goin' off fast.
I knew by the cough and rattle he had it was was comin' at last.
We all try to dodge it – you talk and you talk, – it's all very well,
This world ain't too bad at all and the next one – you never can tell.

We buried poor Bill on the run. I cried like a child,
And in at the pub I told one or two what I saw, and they smiled.
But I don't care a d--- for them all, or the matter of that, what they think –
'Twas the devil I saw come for Bill – and it wasn't the drink!

THE DEATH WE DIE

ML MS 3354/2, Item 5, 25a-25b [A], fair draft.

There is a death that comes soon after summer,
More as a friend than foe it seems to come.
It has no band nor any rude red drummer,
So soft its voice is that we think it dumb
But in the deep of night it makes us sigh –
 This is the death we die.

We wonder why the young child shakes his rattle,
We feel not half the gladness of the Spring.
We marvel that the lovers pray and prattle,
We know but dimly what the mad birds sing,
We catch but half the colours in the sky –
 This is the death we die.

We think of some quiet hour, and not far hidden,
Someone departing that no loves can hold;
Of prayers and hopes and longings, some forbidden,
And something very dark and long and cold,
And of a mound where withered white blooms lie –
 This is the death we die.

THE DECAY OF HUMOUR

‘1907’, 14a (A0103) [JSN]. ‘1915’E, 11a (A0297) [JSN], untitled, with the title in a list of titles above it. This is a variant of stanza 2 of ‘Solomon and us’, q.v.

The preferred text is ‘1907’, 14a.

Thus spoke the wisest of all men:
Nothing is new and, really, when
We read the modern joke we find
Things have been getting worse since then.

THE DECLARATION

‘1912’, 3a-3b (A0249 & A0251) [JSN], draft.

Now I shall love you till the birds
Have lost the way to sing,
Until there be no tenderness
Upon the face of Spring . . .

And I shall love you till a babe
Shall neither laugh nor cry,
When men no more are wanderers
And women’s tears are dry . . .

And I shall love you till the trees
Know neither sun nor rain,
When morning brings no mystery
And Love can leave no pain . . .

And I shall love you till there be
No grace in hearts of men,
When a girl’s eyes will grow no love,
I’ll love you until then.

3] When all the tenderness [blooms will fail] «Until there be no tenderness» *MS*

4] [To play upon the] «Upon the face of» Spring *MS*

6 laugh nor] laugh [«or»] nor *MS*

8 women’s] women[’s] *MS*

9 love you till] love [when] [you] till *MS*

15 grow no] grow [make] no *MS*

THE DISADVANTAGES OF ABSALOM

‘1907’, 17a (A0106) [JSN], draft. The second stanza occurs as a quatrain in ‘1907’, 37a (A0126) [JSN], entitled ‘Had Absalom lived nowadays’ and in ‘1915’E, 11a (A0297) [JSN], entitled ‘The disadvantage of being dead’.

In the dim centuries long ago
They had poor ways of doing things.
It was a time of sham and show,
Cantankerous concubines and kings.

If living now he would no doubt
Make a good living anywhere,
Writing strong testimonials out,
Booming a ‘Hair Wash’ for the hair.

Title] Cf. 2 Samuel 3:3 and 18:9. *AV*. Absalom, the son of David, rose up against his father, fled, and was trapped when he rode under the boughs of an oak tree, caught by his hair.

4 Cantankerous concubines] Cantankerous [and] concubines *MS*

8] Booming [his] a ‘Hair Wash’ for the hair *MS*

THE DISMAYED SINGER

‘1912’, 10a-10b (A0258-9) [A], fair draft.

Gaily for Life, dear Life, she sang,
And when they heard her sing
The tawdry shameless songs they loved
They sighed, O evil thing.

Truth in its unclad holiness
Strove in her warm and strong,
Gladly they listened, glibly scorned,
The woman with the song.

Gaily for Life, dear Life, she sang
Of paltry souls and sins,
But in the dark she leaned to hear
Love and his violins.

She who had warred and worked and wept,
Hungered, and was denied,
Seemed to me like God’s messenger
Who was dismayed, and died.

I cannot pray for her, for she
Could neither creep nor cling,
But from the clean young heart of her
There came no evil thing.

THE DRIVE

‘1907’, 39b (A0129) [JSN], fair draft. The title occurs at 43b in a list of titles with the comment ‘5 lines long’ beside it.

We crossed the stone culvert, we streaked up the lane,
The horse was a game one, he pulled on the rein;
The tree tops all glittered against a bold sky,
The last dew drops wandered and left the world dry;
We drove out together, dear Sadie and I.

THE EDITOR

‘1908’, 21b (A0175) [A], with title [JSN].

His scissors move, now fast now slow;
He cuts out many a dreary thing
And to a young bard whispers low,
Really, I am full up of the Spring.

4 of the Spring] of [the] spring *MS*

THE EDITOR TO A SPRING POET

The Clarion 15 September 1908, p. 9. Punctuation is reproduced from the printed text.

The Law should make a raid on all offending
Poets in Spring,
Who take a corpse, dress it, and keep on sending
The darned old thing!

THE EDITOR'S WOE

'1907', 24b-25b (A0114-5) [JSN] & ML MS 3354/2, Item 6, 4 [JSN], draft.

This is the sorrowful story
Told when the lamplight fails
And the Editors edge together
Telling their woeful tales.

The Bulletin man, he's stricken:
His eyes once bright and clear
Are bloodshot, weary, and bleary,
And he drinks not even – beer.

Weary am I, he moans,
Weary and dull of soul;
Man that is born of woman finds
There are things that he can't control.

First it was gentle Dorothy,
Dorothy, oh so fair,
With the poetry pouring out of her eyes
And harbouring in her hair.

But Dorothy were aye too sweet
And her face too fair to see,
For a cleric captured her, we admit
That a very good judge was he.

But how can we ever again take pride
In poems or pars or puns,
When Dorothy's dimpled hands preside
At the Feast of a Thousand Buns?

2 fails] fail[s] *MS*

8 not – even] *MS*

11 woman finds] woman [he] finds *MS*

22 poems] Poems *MS*

Continued overleaf...

The Editor's Woe (cont.)

Then there was sweet Eugenia,
 Eugenia, dark and tall,
 So pert and pretty, so wise and witty,
 The very pick of 'em all.

Eugenia went a'roaming
 In a big ship over the sea;
 Oh day of woe, that she met that knight,
 And a doughty knight was he.

Now he has ta'en Eugenia
 In a cold land, smoky blue,
 And never again shall she appear
 In the old guise that we knew.

How can we rage of the Wrongs of Man,
 Or fight for the Fall of Fat,
 When the very choice of our Chosen Few
 Committeth a crime like that?

This is the mournful story
 Told when the daylight fails
 And the Editors edge together
 Telling their mournful tales.

24 Buns?] Bun[s]. *MS*

25 there was] their their was *MS*

30 ship over the sea] «ship» oversea *MS*

31 knight] night *MS*

33 Eugenia] Eugeni *MS*

34 land, smoky] Land | Smoky *MS*

39 chosen] chose[n] *MS*

41] This [is] the mornful story *MS*

44 Telling] [Hol]Telling *MS*

THE EMPEROR

‘1912’, 13a-13b (A03036) [A], fair draft.

Since ever Death was dark,
 Since ever Earth was green
 Or mist ran into mist,
 No fairer Lord was seen.

Since ever lovers sought
 The scented evening air,
 Since ever love was red
 Seeking his royal share . . .

He had no trumpeters,
 Cannons or battleships,
 But gold was on his hair,
 The honey on his lips.

Did but his sweet lips move
 Or his white eyelids stir,
 All tremulous, we said
 It is the Emperor.

He had but learned to love,
 He had not learned to run.
 There was an awful quiet,
 A shadow on the sun.

’Twas but a dozen moons,
 Never so sweet a reign,
 Spring’s wayward greenery
 Gave wiser summer pain.

* * *

He does not love or move,
 He does not heed or stir.
 The loveless, waxen thing,
 Is it our Emperor?

Oh, but his eyes were blue!
 The lilies of his skin
 Have held us, eyes and heart,
 Since ever he came in.

19 an] a[n] *MS*

32 came] come *MS*

THE EVENTIME

The Clarion 15 July 1908, p. 7, under heading ‘Some Parodies’ with sub-heading ‘(Some hopeless attempts at the manner of James Hebblethwaite)’. Punctuation is reproduced from the printed text.

At evening with the wife I sit,
And talk of monies, owed and spent,
Of flitting as the swallows flit,
And the enormity of rent.

1 with the wife] with [the] wife *Cl*

THE EYES OF LITTLE CHARLOTTE

ML MS 3267 [FN], signed [JSN], enclosure with letter to Mary Gilmore 26 March 1914, with comment on envelope ‘The message of a man to my boy going out into the world. M.G. 14.2.14.’ [MG].
The Bookfellow 15 May 1914, p. 108; *HS* 36; *BLP* 44; *CP* 32.

JSN – MG 26 March 1914 (letter is incomplete and there is no reference to this in the pages extant); JSN – MG 19 March 1934 (remembers the time her son went to Queensland, and writing this poem), with comment [MG] ‘He sent me a special copy of this for Billy. M.G. 26.7.42.’ JSN – JD 28 October 1934 (was ‘surprised when [Stephens] spoke well of it’ because he thought it was ‘rather a common piece’).

The dates suggest that the Gilmore version was probably copied from the fair copy not long before it was sent to Stephens. Because of N’s regard for Gilmore it is likely that he made sure that her copy was a ‘fair’ copy, and MS A3267 is therefore taken as the preferred text.

Now God has made a wistful world,
And a woman strangely coy:
Her eyes say come, and go, and come,
And stay, and be a boy.
Oh, the eyes of little Charlotte say
Come, kiss me if you can –
But in a trice they change and cry
Go out and be a man.

Oh, the eyes of little Charlotte say
You shall not flinch at pain;
You shall not sigh for the cool cities
Or moan for the soft rain.
The wind shall bite you, throat and cheek,
The sun will leave its tan –
But the eyes of little Charlotte say
Go out and be a man.

And you shall speak as a man speaks,
Not mealy-mouthed or mild,
But you must go with a girl’s love
For every lisping child.
Nor shall you live in the far clouds
As only dreamers can –
For the eyes of little Charlotte say
Go out and be a man.

14 sun will] sun shall *HS, BLP, CP*

Continued overleaf...

The Eyes of Little Charlotte (cont.)

And you shall fight as a man fights
And fare as a man may,
And you shall see as giants see
And hear what giants say.
You shall not bide in a safe place
Near by a lady's fan –
For the eyes of little Charlotte say
Go out and be a man.

And your reward – the old reward
That is for all who dare,
The long love of a warm woman
And kisses, proud and fair.
Oh, you shall toil for Love – the Law
Since ever Love began –
For the eyes of little Charlotte say
Go out and be a man.

THE FAMOUS PINK WINE AT THE BUSH SHANTY

ML MS A038/3, 8a (B0069) [FN], transcription, with a note 'Never in print'.

This appears in 'The fable and fantasy dialogues', by Frank Neilson (written between 1914 and 1918), where it is attributed to 'Alexander Kirkwood'. Another version occurs in 'Remembering Shaw Neilson', by Jack McKimm (a draft).

ML MS A038/3, 8a is taken as the preferred text.

Have you heard of the death of Mick Geary?
He has gone where there's rest for the weary.
When the gods mentioned drink,
He said, yes I'll have pink –
Like the last one I had with Jim Cleary.

The McKimm recollections give the background to the piece:

In 1912 the Chillingollah Football team won the Premiership. My father, who was one of the stalwarts of the team, prevailed upon Neilson to write a number of limericks about local personalities for the guests to sing at the celebration smoke night . . . There was no hotel in the area. The only watering hole was a wine saloon owned by one Jim Cleary. The choice of drinks was rather limited: you had the red, known as 'pinkie' or nothing. One of the local customers was a Mr McGeary.

THE FAR COUNTRIE

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], with comment ‘Appeared in ‘Weekly Times’ but has been altered’. The *Weekly Times* text has not been located.

Jean King suggests this may be a parody of Victor Daley’s poem ‘In a far country’, published in the *Bulletin* 28 September 1905.

Rest, it is time to rest,
Sweet queen of the dimpled chin.
The day has made ready to die,
And the shadows will soon begin
Their swift march, one by one,
Up from the grave of the sun.

Rest, it is time to rest,
And we in the firelight glow
Fain would wander away again
To the land you love and know.
We may not enter, we may not see,
The land we left is a far countree.

THE FIRE UNQUENCHED

‘1906’, 15b-16a (A0054) [A], draft, entitled ‘Love is a fire’. ‘1907’, 32b-33a (A0122) [JSN], fair draft, entitled ‘The fire’. ‘1908’, 2b-3a (A0156) [A], fair draft, entitled ‘Love is a fire’; 18a-19a (A0171-2) [JSN], fair draft, entitled ‘The fire unquenched’, signed and annotated ‘Finis’.

Notebooks ‘1907’ and ‘1908’ were both in use in 1907. However, the comment with the second fair draft in the ‘1908’ book suggests that N regarded this as the final draft, and ‘1908’, 18a-19a (D) is therefore taken as the preferred text. ‘1906’, 15b-16a (A) is shown separately in the notes.

‘1906’, 15b-16a = A; ‘1907’, 32b-33a = B; ‘1908’, 2b-3a = C; ‘1908’, 18a-19a = D

It was a rippling day in rising Spring,
Soft was the grass, I could not hear your feet;
The world had crazy gone a-blossoming,
Glories of yellow ran among the wheat
And many blooms did make the blaze complete.
To either side we looked, never behind;
Love burned between our eyes – and we were blind.

After the battle all the furies cease,
The storm will spend itself, the wind be still;
The men of strife have centuries of peace
Down in a dale, or on a sloping hill.
But Love, Death chasteneth, he cannot chill,
It hath no end – and who shall it call sire?
From out whose womb came Love that is a Fire?

- 1] I was dumbfounded in the deeps of Spring *B*
4] A yellow glory ran away the wheat *C*, a probable mishearing [A]
6] Love envious Love did easy conquest find *B* •
A joyous world – where none did grieve nor tire *C*
7] It burned between our eyes and we were blind *B* •
Love – love my little one Love was a fire *C*
8 all the furies cease] falls a heavy peace *B, C*
9] The wind shall spend itself the storm be still *B, C*
10 have centuries of peace] from all their strivings cease *B* • shall [ha] from their striving cease *C*
11 dale . . . hill.] dale . . . hill. *D* • dell . . . hill *C*
12] But love it resteth not nor ever will *B, C*
13 end – and who shall it call sire?] end – and who shall it call sire *B* • end nor hath it any sire *C*
14 Fire?] Fire. *D*

Continued overleaf...

The Fire Unquenched (cont.)

‘1906’, 15b-16a reads:

It was a rippling day in rising spring
Soft the grass I could not hear your feet
The world had crazy gone [to] «a» blossoming
Nor lacked a flower to make its joy complete
You walked close to the barley by the wheat
The cloud[s] were gone the red sun reached up higher
Love love was nigh and love it was a fire

After the battle some will sing a psalm
The storm will cease and every wind be still
[The hater shall not] All those who sat in strife shall know a calm
To rest in a deep valley or a hill
But love my little love I tell thee still
When flowers crowd out and the red sun runs higher
Love love my little one Love is a fire

THE FRIEND OF LITERATURE

‘1907’, 6a-7b (A0095-6) [JSN], draft.

Who seeks for every flower that grows
 Who feels the throbbing of the heart
 Who follows where the brave man goes
 Who trembles when the tear drops start . . .
 I ask you not from whence he came,
 He shall be friend, in more than name.

Who hath no jealousy of joy
 Hopeful for all things further on,
 Who chides no eager girl or boy
 Who hails not every goose a swan,
 Whose eyes can see, whose speech is pure . . .
 He shall be friend to Literature.

Who wandereth in the ages old
 Knowing the early toiler there
 (Ah, we who reap one hundred-fold
 Know not the sower’s life and care) . . .
 He shall have blessing to the end,
 He shall be something more than friend.

He shall ride far by land and sea
 Men shall make haste to call him King,
 Knowing a wild girl’s mystery,
 The message that a child may bring,
 He shall look deeper into time
 He shall falter, he shall climb.

6] He shall | [be some | thing n] friend | «in more» than name *MS*
 14] [Learning of | ancient queen | and king] *MS*, preceding line 14
 15-16 (Ah we . . . care)] (Ah we . . . care) *MS*
 22 message] message *MS*

THE GAME OF 'AWAY, AWAY'

'1906', 23a & 25b (A0061 & A0063) [JSN], draft, 1 stanza under the title 'Away away' and 2 stanzas entitled 'The dear little cottage' [2]. '1908', 1b-2a (A0155) [A], fair draft, 3 stanzas entitled 'The game of "away, away"'.
The Bookfellow 2 May 1907, p. 13, entitled 'The game of away, away! by J ss M K !'

This was entered for a competition run by the *Bookfellow*, for the 'best parody of any well-known Australian verse-writer.' The 'Bookfellow' commented that this was 'one of several clever transcription[s]' and 'mimicry [rather] than true parody'. 'J ss M K' would be Jessie McKay, who wrote 'I came to your town today'.

'1906', 23a-25b = A; '1908', 1b-2a = B

The *Bookfellow* contains elements of both drafts and is therefore taken as the preferred text.

I called at the address you gave
 And you were away, away.
 I said, 'No doubt he is spending his stuff
 On a supper after the play.
 He's doing it in with the Dukes and Earls
 Or cutting it up with the Chorus girls' –
 But O, the pity,
 Your windy promises long have I read –
 But I know your breed and the way you're bred,
 And the game of 'away away!'

I called again at the same address
 And you were 'away, away'.
 'He's gone to the mountains', I said, 'they're cool,
 But he is as cool as they.

- 3] I said he must have plenty of stuff. *A*
 4] Perhaps he has gone to the play *A*
 5 with the dukes] with dukes *A*
 6 with the Chorus] with chorus *A*
 8 long have I] long I read *A, B*
 9] But I swore <strongly> I was very carefully bred *A*
 10] When you were away away *A*
 11] I called at the address you gave *A*
 13 He's gone] He['s] gone *A* • [I said] He's gone *B*

Continued overleaf...

The Game of 'Away Away' (cont.)

He's spinning fine yarns (his old games yet)
 I suppose he's head over ears in debt' –
 But O, the pity,
 I had one or two little bills to meet,
 For a man must keep his creditors sweet,
 And you were 'away, away.'

I wearily called at the old address,
 And you were 'away, away'.
 I said, 'Perchance he has gone to church,
 But he hasn't gone there to pray.
 A summons will cost me half a crown
 But I have been badly taken down.
 I'll have no pity!
 I'll get it out of you yet if I can –
 You're playing it too low down, old man,
 With your game of 'away, away'!

- 15] He's spinning some yarn his old game yet *A* •
 He is spinning fine yarns (His old games yet) *B*
 16 head over ears] head over hears *A*
 19] *A* ∅
 21-30] ≠ *A* 20-29; ≠ *B* 21-30
 21] I called at the address you gave *A* 20
 23] I said he couldn't have gone to church *A* 22
 24] He wouldn't have cheek to pray *A* 23
 25] It cost me little this trip to town *A* 24
 25 summons will cost] summons [would] «will» cost *B*
 26] I owe the cabby a half a crown *A* 25
 26 But I have] [And] «But I» have *B*
 27] But oh the pity *A* 26
 28 you yet if] you «yet» if *B*
 29] No doubt it's «convenient» for you old man *A* 28 •
 You're making a prime convenience old man *B*
 30] This plan of Away away *A* •
 Of being "away away" *B*

THE GIRL WITH THE BLACK HAIR

There are three discrete versions of this poem: the first occurs at '1910', 11a-12a (entitled 'The girl with black hair') and as a fair copy pasted into *GDC* Copy 1 and was published in the *Bookfellow* in 1913; the second and third, 'The girl with the black hair' [2] and 'The place of death' occur at '1915'C, 14b-15a and '1915'C, 12b-13b.

THE GIRL WITH THE BLACK HAIR [1]

'1910', 11a-12a (A0232-3) [JSN], fair draft, entitled 'The girl with black hair'. LaT MS 8910, Box 941/6 [JSN], fair copy, pasted into *GDC* Copy 1.

The Bookfellow 15 December 1913, p. 292; *GDC*; *HS* 43; *BLP* 62; *CP* 39

JSN - AGS 26 July 1931; 2 August 1931 (N wanted to drop this from a proposed collection: he thought it was one of the '6 worse' and disliked it [now] because it was 'mawkish and silly').

'1910', 11a-12a = A; LaT MS 8910 = B

The fair copy (B) is the preferred text.

Her lips were a red peril
To set men quivering
And in her feet there lived the ache
And the green lilt of Spring.

'Twas on a night of red blossoms,
Oh, she was a wild wine!
The colour of all the hours
Lie in this heart of mine.

I was impelled by the white moon
And the deep eyes of the Spring,
And the voices of purple flutes
Waltzing and wavering.

4 Spring] Spring. *B*

7 colour] colours *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

8 Lie] corrected to 'live' in *GDC* 1, with a question mark [AGS]

8 mine.] mine. *B*

10 Spring,] Spring, *B*

11] And the swooning of violet flutes *A*

12 wavering.] wavering. *B*

Continued overleaf...

The Girl with the Black Hair [1] (cont.)

Of all the bloom most delicate
 Sipping the gold air
 Was a round girl with round arms,
 The Girl with the Black Hair.

Her breath was the breath of roses,
 White roses clean and clear,
 Her eyes were blue as the high heavens
 Where God is always near.

Her lips were a red peril
 To set men quivering
 And in her feet there lived the ache
 And the green lilt of Spring.

- 15 a round girl] the round girl *HS, BLP, CP*
 16] The [G] girl[s] with the [black] Black Hair *B*
 17-20] omitted in *BLP*
 19 heavens] heaven *GDC, HS, CP*
 23 the ache] the [ache] ache *B*
 24 Spring.] Spring. *B*

THE GIRL WITH THE BLACK HAIR [2]

‘1915’C, 14b-15a (A0326) [JSN], fair draft, untitled. The fourth line in each stanza has an end stop and this is not shown in the notes.

I was impelled by the white moon
 And the deep eyes of the Spring,
 And the swooning of violet flutes
 And a fainting fiddle string.

I was the freest guest of God,
 I had no need to pray,
 And every song was my own song
 And every dawn my day.

Girls of the greenery came out
 Playing with feet and eyes,
 The winds were lovers of their hair
 And listeners for their sighs.

Of all the bloom most delicate,
 Unearthly bloom and rare,
 Was a round girl with round arms,
 The girl with the black hair.

Her breath was the breath of roses,
 White roses clean and clear,
 Her eyes were blue as the high heavens
 Where only God is near.

Her voice had a sweet pity
 And on her cheek and chin
 Young loves danced on deliriously
 Over her balmy skin.

11 were lovers] woe lovers *MS*

23 Young] [Un] Young *MS*

THE GREATEST BOOMSTER

‘1908’, 9a-9b (A0162-3) [JSN], draft, signed.

Who is the greatest boomster
The world has ever seen?
Bishop or bard or baron bold
Or ancient king or queen?

I thought of every warrior
That ever wore a sword,
And then of knights and troubadours
And then – of Ada Ward!

Lo – when I looked at Ada’s name
Straightway my heart was glad
For no man ever read that name
Who did not see an ‘ad’.

Then did I turn her name around,
And stranger still I saw
A magic word – all artists know
Our Ada loves a draw!

8] Ada Ward, an American evangelist and former actress: she visited Melbourne in 1907 (when she spoke about the ‘evils of bridge’), and again, in 1909.

8 then – of] then – of *MS*

9 Lo – when] Lo – when *MS*

10 Straightway my] Straightway [was] my *MS*

11] [Always she takes about with her] *MS*, following line 10

12 an ‘ad’] an ‘ad’ *MS*

15 magic word –] magic word [s] – *MS*

16] [I spell it this DRAW] *MS*, following line 15

THE GREEN GIRL

There are three discrete versions of this poem, all written about the same time and closely related to the later, longer poem ‘The green singer’.

THE GREEN GIRL [1]

ML MS A3038/1, 14a (B0112) [JSN], fair draft, signed.

A brown bride is the Summer,
The Winter weeps at will,
But I have a green sweetheart
And I shall love her still.
For where is love like first love?
Though many loves arise,
Oh, the Spring is a green girl
With diamonds for eyes.

8 eyes.] eyes. *MS*

THE GREEN GIRL [2]

ML MS A3038/1, 14b (B0113) [JSN], fair draft.

There's no love like first love,
Delightsome, divine!
The Spring is a green girl,
An old love o'mine.

THE GREEN GIRL [3]

ML MS A3038/1, 15a (B0114) [JSN], fair draft, signed. This occurs as stanza 1 of ‘The green singer’, with variants.

Old singers have shadows
That follow like fears,
But I know a singer
Who never saw tears.
The first love is free love,
Delightsome, divine!
The Spring is a green girl,
An old love o’mine.

8 o’mine.] o’mine. *MS*

THE GREEN SINGER

‘1915’C, 6b (A0318) & ‘1910’, 13b (A0235) [A], fair draft. NLA 820.5A, MS inserted in *The Bookfellow*, 3rd series, Volume 1, 1911-1912, [A], fair copy, with punctuation and a correction [AGS].
The Sun (Sydney) 10 September 1911, p.11; *GDC*; *HS* 2; *BLP* 79; *CP* 2.

HS, *BLP*, and *CP* have the title as ‘Green singer’ and printed with 4-line stanzas. The poem developed from an earlier piece ‘The green girl’ and stanza 1 is a variant of ‘The green girl [3]’.
 The fair copy is the preferred text.

All singers have shadows
 That follow like fears,
 But I know a singer
 Who never saw tears.
 A gay love, a green love,
 Delightful, divine!
 The Spring is a singer,
 An old love of mine.

All players have sorrows
 And into the play
 Old sorrows will saunter,
 Old sorrows will stay.
 But here is a player
 Whose speech is a wine!
 The Spring is a player,
 An old love of mine.

All singers grow heavy:
 The hours as they run
 Bite up all the blossoms,
 Suck up all the sun.
 But I know a singer,
 Delightful, divine!
 The gay love, the green love,
 An old love of mine.

14 is a wine!] is divine! *Sun*

15 Spring] [spring] Spring [AGS] *fair copy*

THE HAPPY THIEF

‘1936’, 1a (A0769) [FN], transcription, with comment ‘This appeared in Clarion’. NLA MS 1145/45 [L], transcription, with comment ‘This appeared in Clarion about 1908 or 1909’.

The Clarion May 1909.

The poem occurs as the second stanza of ‘Early kisses’, with variants. The *Clarion* is the preferred text.

Who steals a kiss, he shall not ever rue it,
But he who buys, he bargains with the Devil.
Who steals a kiss shall move in merry places
In all his days he shall see angel faces
Nor ever shall he sink to earth’s low level.
The Spring his life shall take and quite renew it,
He shall go down to Death with all the graces.

THE HARPER PLAYS

‘1908’, 13b-14a (A0167) [JSN], 2 stanzas numbered 1 & 2, drawn off, and 29a (A0185) [JSN], 1 stanza numbered 3, unfinished. The stanza at 29a has a different stanza form, but the same rhyme scheme.

Many of the sweet sweet things to him are lost
 And the few days, dark or fair, how swiftly they perish.
 Why do people sit smugly with cold knees crossed
 While in the world there is so much alive to cherish?
 Here hath God sent a poor blind man to lighten the dark ways,
 Will ye not listen,
 Listen – will ye not listen while the harper plays?

He is not hard for all the evil times bring,
 He thanked God for blue eyes and soft kisses in the morning.
 To him hath been softened the fear of Death, the sting,
 He is full of many loves, he fears not any warning.
 If we could but follow to the unknown ways!
 Will ye not listen,
 Listen, listen, while the harper plays?

No home is made for him by wife or child,
 The boy lies hid deep in him, always a lover.
 He knows the strong scent of the Spring, and once, once he smiled,
 He thought of someone, long-haired, beautiful, that the Earth did cover.

[*Unfinished*]

14 Listen, listen] Listen, listen *MS*

18] He though[t] [of] someone long-haired beautiful that the <Earth> did cover *MS*

Line endings stanza 3 (lines 15-18 of reading text): 1 child || 2 him || 3 lover ||

4 Spring || 5 smiled || 6 cover ||

THE HEART LONGS

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], with the comment ‘Book’ at the end.
Sun (Sydney) 26 January 1913; *GDC*; *HS* 49; *BLP* 59.

JSN - AGS 15 February 1919; 15 October 1922; 7 June 1931; 26 July 1931; 2 August 1931; 22 September 1932. JSN - RHC 19 November 1933, NLA MS 605/30. N advised Stephens in 1919 that he didn’t ‘feel fit to try and alter [any] of the amateurish pieces such as ‘Heart longs’ and ‘Day is thine’ and thereafter negotiated with him to drop the poem from any future collection. This is one of four pieces dropped from *CP* because he thought them ‘inferior and amateurish’ (JSN - RHC).

The typescript is the preferred text.

The warm wind wandering at its will,
 The long grass withering day by day,
 Bring back life’s sunrise promises –
 Full-voiced and rosy-winged were they.
 I feel your eyes’ warm witchery;
 Sweetheart, my longing is for thee.

It seems so clear, the day we met –
 The big sun sauntering up the sky,
 The feathery clouds, afloat, afar,
 On such a day, oh, who could die
 Or think of death – you smiled on me;
 Sweetheart, my longing was for thee.

At every turning of the year
 A madness moves into the hours –
 The roses in the rainy time,
 The frail sweet family of flowers,
 How tenderly they speak to me;
 Sweetheart, my longing is for thee.

Did ever love so burn as ours,
 ‘Mid all tempestuous loves of yore?
 The light that dances from the sky
 Shows for a moment and no more;
 Down in this world of mystery,
 Sweetheart, my longing is for thee.

12 longing was] longing [is] was [AGS] *MS*

THE HEROINE

‘1907’, 16b (A0106) [JSN].

The Clarion 15 July 1908, p. 7, under heading ‘Some Parodies’, with sub-heading ‘Desperate Attempts at the Manner of Arthur Adams’.

‘1907’, 16b is the preferred text.

Breaks from her brightest eye a blob,
A silver tear is on the job.
The Earl has just succumbed to gout
Leaving the hero but a bob.

4 bob] bo[b] *MS*

The *Clarion* reads:

Breaks from her brightened eye a blob,
A silvery tear is on the job,
It seems the Earl has just succumbed,
Leaving the Hero but a bob.

THE HOUR OF THE PARTING

NLA MS 2765 (H. Pearce papers), fair copy [A].

The Bookfellow 15 February 1916, p. 10, entitled ‘The parting hour’; *HS* 86, entitled ‘The hour of the parting’; *BLP* 96, entitled ‘Hour of Parting’; *CP* 77.

The fair copy is the preferred text.

Shall we assault the pain?
It is the time to part:
Let us of Love again
Eat the impatient heart.

There is a gulf behind
Dull voice and fallen lip,
The blue smoke of the mind,
The gray light on the ship.

Parting is of the cold
That stills the loving breath:
Dimly we taste the old
The pitiless meal of Death.

1] How shall we fight the pain *Boo*

2] Now it is time to part? *Boo*

5] Alas! the gulf behind *Boo*

THE JOKE ETERNAL

‘1907’, 34b (A0124) [JSN].

The nations fight, the nations fail,
Poets and Parables grow stale.
There is a joke that never dies,
'Tis Jonah boarding in a whale.

1] The[re is a] nations fight the nations fail *MS*
2 stale.] stale. *MS*

THE KING IS BALD

‘1907’, 29a-30b (A0118-20) [JSN], draft.

Why glides the crystal dew-drop down my cheek?
 Why is my step unsteady, drunken, slow?
 Why do I laugh not nor have words to speak
 At passers-by who hurt and throng me so?
 Why does the bright sun mock me with its glow?
 Too well I know why these rude tear drops scald,
 Broken indeed am I – The King is Bald!

The King is Bald! the Beastly Mob care not,
 They make him butt of their Democracy.
 I feel at times such wretches should be shot
 So do they stab with their disloyalty.
 I think that all Imperialists will agree
 That every jingo should be herewith called
 To shed some tears because the King is Bald.

Out ye vile wretches with your sinful puffs,
 Each Hapless Wash purporting to give vigour!
 Out Liars all – perchance He used your stuffs!
 (Did I hear some vile democrat men snigger?)
 Ah me, my tears fall faster yet and bigger,
 Across my cheek, along my neck, they crawled –
 The King is Bald! I am a broken man!

Title] The King: Edward VII. See ‘The King impetuous’ and ‘The King is dead’.

2 is my step] is [my] step *MS*

4 who hurt] who <hurt> *MS*

5 bright sun mock] brigh[t] sun | «sun» mock *MS*

11 So do] [Th] So do *MS*

12 that all Imperialists] all that Imperialist[s] *MS*

13] That every [Briton wor] «jingo» should he herewith culled *MS*

16 Each Hapless Wash] Each / [Your] Happless Wash *MS*

17 He used] [he] used *MS*

The above lines were written in great agony of spirit just after The Offsider heard the following item in a smart English periodical. ‘Many of King Edward’s personal friends and admirers are not a little distressed to notice the rapidly increasing baldness of his Majesty.’

THE KING IS DEAD

‘1895’, 4b (A0010) [JSN], fair draft.

The King is dead! Long live the King!
There never was a King like him!
It seemeth well his praise to sing
Now that his dear old eyes are dim.
Now that his kindly tongue is still
We’ll love the things he used to say.
Forget him? No, we never will.
He had a kindly winning way.

Title] The King: Edward VII (died 1910). See ‘The King impetuous’ & ‘The King is bald’.

1 dead! Long] dead long *MS*

2 There] The[re] *MS*

3 seemeth well his] seemeth «well» his *MS*

7 him? No] him no *MS*

THE KNIGHT'S TALL DAUGHTERS

‘1908’, 25a (A0179) [A].

The Knight's tall girls went tailor clad
To church and concert, ball and play;
When they are married, said their Dad,
Some other fool will have to pay!

THE LAD WHO STARTED OUT

In '1909', a loose leaf [not part of this notebook] (A0197-8) & ML MS A3038/1, 28a (B0134) [JSN], fair draft, 7 x 8-line stanzas, signed (stanzas 1-6 & part-stanza 7 on the loose leaf and part-stanza 7 and signature at ML MS A3038/1, 28a). '1930', 35a-35b (A0681-2) [JSN], unfinished, 4 stanzas and a part-stanza.

The Australasian 12 December 1925; *Stage and Society* 17 March 1926, p. 18; *Sydney Morning Herald* 30 October 1926, p. 13; *NP* 33; *CP* 144.

JSN - AGS 18 May 1925 ('will send you 'Lad who started out' [at] end of month'). AGS - JSN 30 October 1926 (will 'try 'Lad who started' in Herald'). JSN - AGS 1 November 1926 (says he 'saw 'Lad' in Herald', and reminds Stephens that it was printed in *Australasian* 'last December').

N said in the *Autobiography* (p.69) that this was written c. 1903, and that 'A. G. didn't care too much about this piece as a ballad when I first sent it to him a few years afterwards': he continued, 'I think it was in 1927 that he at last dug it up and got me to make some slight alterations'. N is confused about the date, but the development of the text is clear. The stanzas in the '1930' notebook are a revision of the text which is loose in the '1909' notebook and at ML MS A3038/1, 28a, and N abandoned the revision in favour of the first draft, which he then sent to Stephens in a form which included some of the alterations in the second, unfinished draft.

The version loose in the '1909' notebook has a greater degree of immediacy than the published texts, and it is therefore taken as the preferred text. The texts published in the *Australasian*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *NP* and *CP* all have 7 x 4-line stanzas, and the text in *Stage and Society* has 1 x 16-line stanza and 1 x 12-line stanza. The 7 x 8-line stanza arrangement of the *MS* is retained here.

'1909', loose leaf & ML MS A3038/1, 28a = A. The second, unfinished draft is shown separately in the notes.

October, and the open air
 Put wondrous thoughts in him,
 And he could fight and climb and ride
 And he could shoot and swim.
 The baby was about him yet
 But a mystic fever ran
 In the little lad who started out
 One day to be a man.

1 open] shining *Aus*, *S&S*, *SMH*, *NP*, *CP* line 1

6 mystic fever ran] mystic [ran] fever ran *A*

Continued overleaf...

The Lad Who Started Out (cont.)

Tempting and fair, two furlongs off,
 There rose the forest green
 Where the brown bees had their hidden homes,
 But the river ran between.
 Up from the blazing marigolds
 The homing vagrants flew,
 And the fever spoke in his proud blood
 And bade him what to do.

Ah me – you say that he was mad,
 But madness ever goes
 With all the unheard-of conquerors
 Where red blood ever flows.
 A thousand fathers moved in him
 And showed the world a dream –
 Gravely he cast his clothes aside
 And walked into the stream.

The blue was on his baby eyes
 And the yellow on his hair,
 Bravely he held the good broad chin
 That all the heroes bear.

11-12] Where the subtle bees had hid their homes but the river ran between *Aus, S&S, SMH, NP, CP* line 6

13-14] Out of a gaudy dandelion a whispering pirate flew *Aus, S&S, SMH, NP, CP* line 7

15-16] And the fever spoke in the dear lad and told him what to do *Aus, S&S, NP, CP* line 8 •

And the fever spoke to the dear lad and told him what to do *SMH* line 8

17] Ah me you say [the] that he was made *A*, an error of haste

17-18] Ay 'twas a madness of the heart but of the kind that goes *Aus, S&S, SMH, NP, CP* line 9

19 unheard of] unheard off *A*, an error of haste

19-20] With the kingly men and conquerors wherever red blood shows *Aus, S&S, SMH, NP, CP* line 10

21-22] A thousand fathers stormed in him and drove him in his dream *Aus, S&S, SMH, NP, CP* line 11

23 Gravely] Quickly *Aus, S&S, SMH, NP, CP* line 12

25-26] The babe's blue was on his eye and the yellow on his hair *Aus, S&S, SMH, NP, CP*
line 13

27 Bravely . . . chin] Bravely . . . [<dim>] «chin» *A* • Proudly . . . chin *Aus, S&S, SMH, NP, CP* line 14

Continued overleaf...

The Lad Who Started Out (cont.)

But Oh, too brave and swift and strong
 The snow-fed river ran
 For the little lad who started out
 One day to be a man.

* * *

Small things bring back the taste of him –
 The coats that children wear,
 And the red caps of the toddlers
 And good brown legs and bare.
 And wandering bees and marigolds
 Say piteous things of him,
 And the very sunlight seems to say
 I tempted him to swim.

There is a woman calm and kind,
 A woman quiet and grey,
 And her heart is all for little lads
 In all their boisterous play.
 Often she says, his heart was so,
 So was his pretty chin,
 And she says, my sorrow will run out
 For I dare not keep it in.

28-29] But oh too high and broad and strong the snow-fed river ran *Aus, S&S*, line 15 • But oh too high and wide and strong the snow-fed river ran *SMH* line 15 •

But oh too high and far and strong the snow-fed river ran *NP, CP* line 15

33-34] Ah madly comes the taste of him in coats the children wear *Aus, S&S, SMH, NP, CP* line 17

36 And good brown legs] and ruddy legs *Aus, S&S, SMH, NP, CP* line 18

37-38] The pirates whispering in the gold say grievous things of him *Aus, S&S, SMH, NP, CP* line 19

39-40] And the leaves along the sunshine laugh because he could not swim *Aus, S&S, SMH, NP, CP* line 20

41-42] There is a woman sweet and kind a woman calm and grey *SMH, NP, CP* line 21

43 And her heart is all for] And her hearts is all for *A*, an error of haste •

And her eyes have love for *Aus, S&S, SMH, NP, CP* line 22

44 In all] [And] «In» all *A*

45-46] She says so was his merry heart so was his pretty chin *Aus, S&S, SMH, NP, CP* line 23

47-48] My sorrow must run out and out for I dare not keep it in *Aus, S&S, SMH, NP, CP* line 24

Continued overleaf...

The Lad Who Started Out (cont.)

But when the snowy waters run
 She fears the saffron air,
 She looks not long on the blue sky
 For his blue eyes are there.
 The yellow had not left his head
 When all her tears began
 For the little lad who started out
 One day to be a man.

49 snowy] snow[y] *A*, an error of haste

49-50] But when the snow-fed waters come and the yellow's in the air *Aus, S&S, SMH, NP, CP* line 25

50 the saffron air] the [very] [«yellow»] «saffron» air *A*

53 The yellow] The [yl] yellow *A* • Oh the yellow *Aus, S&S, SMH, NP, CP* line 27

‘1930’, 35a-35b reads:

The winter wind and summer «warmth»
 Had tanned his baby skin
 He had a pair of kingly eyes
 Well worth the looking in
 And he could swim and dive
 And he could climb the tallest tree
 He would rob an eagle in its nest
 So brave a lad was he

Tempting and fair two furlongs off
 There rose the forest green
 Where the subtle bees had hid their nest
 And the river ran between
 Oh he loved well each new peril
 And the scent of honeycomb
 Came back to him and he that day
 Must find the hidden home

Oh youth is like a [sweet] «rare» singer
 Uncertain of his song
 He fears too much to halt who knows
 The silence will be long
 The lad who had the joy of Life
 He laughed and leaped and ran
 Oh the little lad who started out
 One day to be a man

Continued overleaf...

The Lad Who Started Out (cont)

In youth the days are miracles
The eyes are in the dew
[W] [Each tree we see as] «The flowers all tell of» Happiness
The trees that never grew
Over the gaudy dandelions
The brow[n] bees made delay
And the fever spoke in the dear lad
And lifted him away

Ay 'twas a fever of the heart
But of the kind that goes
With men who cannot fear the heat
And will not fear the snows

THE LADY MARGARET

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], with comment 'Never been printed'.

It was the Lady Margaret
Walked out, 'twas then the world was fair,
When strong men's love was all for war
But still the ladies had a share.

Outstepping from the bare blue sky
Came brightness, for the flowers were wet,
But oh, her eyes – there were no eyes
Like those of Lady Margaret.

No lover met her in the wood,
Nor lordly knight by knoll or lea,
Only a little shepherd sighed
Her eyes are Paradise to me.

A gentle lad, and fair of face,
Whose tearful eyes too long would stare
At flowers and faces beautiful
Down in God's country anywhere.

And many a time he creeping came
When green leaves screened him from her view;
He sighed, this little shepherd sighed,
As lovers all are wont to do.

One day she saw his curly head,
His bright eyes bold with love's intent,
Then in a storm my lady rose
And all her pretty anger spent.

He did not speak, he did not move,
Only he loved her once for all.
She looked, and still he stayed, and stayed
Until her bitter words must fall.

Had I a man beside me now
His sword should cut into thy heart!
A shame that God should give thee eyes!
Dog of a beggar boy thou art!

He did not move – she passed along,
High in the air her pretty chin.
The shepherd lad, his eyes cast down,
He saw – it was his only sin.

THE LAMENT FOR LADDIE

‘1907’, 33b-34a (A0123) [JSN], draft.

They stole him craftily:
 With flowers and satin white
 Went my Laddie from me.
 I, struggling in the night,
 Found no fond words to say.
 They bore him down the way
 In flowers and satin white.

Long was my heart afraid,
 He was so white and slim:
 I cried not – God had made
 The world about me dim.
 I could not call or touch
 The lad who took so much
 Of morning down with him.

3] Went / [They took my lad] «my Laddie» from me *MS*

10 cried not –] cried not – *MS*

14 with him.] with him. *MS*

Cancelled stanza 2 reads:

[Laddie is dead and God
 Hath made the whole world dim
 Fall gently – oh thou clod
 He is so fair and slim
 I may not taste or touch
 The lad that took so much
 Of sunlight down with him]

THE LAMENT FOR SADIE

‘1912’, 8a-9a (A0256-7) [JSN], draft. A large angled bracket has been drawn in the margin beside lines 23-24, possibly to indicate intended revision. (The only other occurrence of this mark is at ‘1915’E, 15b against each of four revised lines for ‘The soldier is home’.)

Devaney cites this poem in *UP* as a ‘strange, intense entry – three pages of prose or prose-verse’; Anderson and Blake in *JSN* (pp. 105-106) refer to it as ‘roughly-shaped, unfinished, and violently phrased’; *HI* lists the piece as prose; and Wright describes it as ‘a moving prose poem’ in *WS* (p. 26). In fact, lines and stanzas are clearly discernible, and stanzas 2, 3, & 4 are numbered as such.

She is not here, she is not there – it is her shadow
 They muffled with many prayers, insipid sorrow.
 She is not there – she would keep to the sunlight
 Or leafy place, the cool islands.
 I cannot wait – the night is long coming.
 In the green it is dark, all the green day I suffer,
 All the cries I have cried are unheard –
 Tear my heart out, hear me! Oh God I struggle.

She is not here – her eyes were as wide pansies,
 Mournful and telling of love – Love and his shadow.
 I was with Love – Love with his violins
 Played in the dark to me, mounted the sunlight,
 Put upon me the love of all fragile things.
 My heart was faint at the slow kiss of a child.
 So did my Sadie and Love and his Violins assail me.

She is not here. She will never come.
 Why will the blue bird say to his love, I am your lover,
 All your body is mine, your voice cooing, crying?
 I am athirst with love in a white anger.

2 sorrow.] sorrow. *MS*

4] or / [The] [In] leafy place [and] the cool islands *MS*

8 hear me – Oh God] hear me / Oh God *MS*

9 pansies] pans[i]e[s] *MS*

10 shadow.] shadow. *MS*

12 mounted] [Mounted] mounted *or* [mounted] Mounted *MS* (unclear)

13 upon me the] upon «me» the *MS*

14 My heart] [I did] My heart *MS*

15 me.] me. *MS*

16 here. She will] here [.] She will *MS*

18 is mine] is [mis] mine/ *MS*

Continued overleaf...

The Lament for Sadie (cont.)

She is not here – her eyes were jewels telling
All the kindness that falls and dances
About us in black cities and grey valleys.
No lips were red as the lips of my Sadie –
Tear my heart out, O God, hear me! I struggle.

20 eyes were jewels] were [the] jewels *MS*

22 grey] [gree] grey *MS*

24] Cf. 1 Kings 18:37 (Hear me, O Lord, hear me . . .) and Psalm 111: Koph.145 (I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O Lord . . .). *AV*

THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST

‘1908’, 4b (A0158) [A].

There was a young fellow at Mannan
Who owned some race horses and ran'em.
He said, I don't mind
If they do run behind,
I can make a few hundred per annum.

2 ran'em] ranum «ran em» [JSN] *MS*

THE LITTLE BLACK ROOM

‘1909’, 16a (A0214) [JSN], fair draft.

And ye may be old or ye may be young,
Hoeing a row or busy wi'bloom,
But the slow old horses will dawdle along
To the little black room.

THE LITTLE GIRL WITH BLACK HAIR

ML MS A3038/1, 24a (B0129-30) [A], fair draft, with title [JSN]. One of three discrete versions of this poem, the other two entitled 'Little girl with black hair', q.v.

Millions of singers sing of the white rose,
But there's a little flower that smiles and glows,
None more miraculous – the good God sows.

But there is never flower that I would dare
With your delirious beauty to compare
O little girl – girl with the black hair.

When on the earth the white moon puts its spell
I have so much of tenderness to tell,
Will you not hear me in my parable?

3 miraculous] miraculous – *MS*

6 girl –] girl – *MS*

THE LOVER DIES

‘1909’, 8b (A0207) [JSN].

Over the hills they took him, and black prayers
Fell as a frost on tenderlings a-near:
Dances and devilment and sunlit airs
Were all so full of him, till yesteryear.

THE LOVING TREE

'1915'B, 1a-4a (A0357-60) [?], fair draft, 14 stanzas, entitled 'The sour tree'. NLA MS 1145/60, 71-73 [JSN], poem outline, 12 stanzas, numbered, entitled 'The sour tree'; 79 [JSN], poem outline, 3 stanzas numbered 1-3, entitled 'The sour tree'; 81-84 [A/JSN], unfinished, 10 stanzas numbered 4-13, entitled 'The loving tree'.

The Bookfellow 15 April 1915; *HS* 64; *BLP* 48; *CP* 58.

JSN - RHC 25 February 1934 (a correction to proofs *CP*). JSN - JD 21 October 1934, NLA MS 1145/68 ('I think 'The loving tree' was sent back for alterations and I think I was a few weeks altering it').

The outline at 1145/60, 71-73 corresponds to '1915'B, 1a-4a up to and including stanza 8, and thereafter to none of the extant texts. The outline at 1145/60, 79 is numbered for stanzas 1-3 and relates to the draft at 1145/60, 81-84 which commences at stanza 4, the intervening p.80 being blank. The chronology is uncertain. However, the draft in NLA 1145/60 resembles the *Bookfellow* text more closely than that in '1915'B and the change of title there suggests that this is the second of the two drafts. N's comments to Devaney, in conjunction with the *Bookfellow* text, suggest that the poem was brought to completion over some months.

The *Bookfellow* is taken as the preferred text.

Three women walked upon a road
And the first said airily,
Of all the trees in all the world
Which is the loving tree?

The second said, my eyes have seen
No tree that is not fair
But the Orange tree is the sweetest tree,
The loving blood is there.

1-4] ≠ A 1-4; B ∅

1] Three women there were upon a road *A*. Cf. Luke 24:13 & 15-16: And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus . . . And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. *AV*

2 airily] merrily *A* [sic]

4 loving] tenderest *A*

5-8] ≠ A 5-8; B ∅

5] The second said of all the trees *A*

6] The one most sweet and fair *A*

7] Is the orange tree the loving tree *A*

8] For the sweet blood is there *A*

Continued overleaf...

The Loving Tree (cont.)

And the third said, in the green time
 I knew a loving tree
 That gave a drink of the blood-red milk,
 It was the Mulberry.

Then the first one said, of all the trees
 No sweetest can I name –
 Ask her who yonder slowly comes,
 That woman lean and lame.

Grief like a hideous suckling hung
 Along her hollow breast,
 Pain was upon her as she walked
 And as she stooped to rest.

9-12] ≠ *A* discarded stanza; *B* ∅

13-16] ≠ *A* 13-16; ≠ *B* 13-16

13 Then the first one] The first *A* • The third *B*

15] But see along the road there comes *A*, *B*

16] A woman grey and lame *A* •

A woman old and lame *B*

17-20] ≠ *A* 17-20; ≠ *B* 17-20

17] The grief was written in her hair *A* •

The grief was written on her head *B*

18] And in her hollow breast *A* •

And down her hollow breas[t] *B*

19] And painfully she ever walked *A* •

Pain was upon her in her walk *B*

20] And ever stopped to rest *A*

Continued overleaf...

The Loving Tree (cont.)

Why will you question so, she said,
Is it to mock at me –
For how should I who walk in Hell
Know of a loving tree?

My eyes are not as woman's eyes,
They hope not east or west.
Dull Famine my bed-mate is
And Loneliness my guest.

'Tis not the most delicious flower
That leaves the scent of Spring,
Nor is it yet the brightest bird
That loads his heart to sing.

20-24] ≠ *A* 21-24; ≠ *B* 21-24

21] They asked [her] and she slowly said *A* •

They asked her and she slowly said *B*

22] Why ask this thing of me *A, B*

23] Why ask of one who walks in hell *A* •

Why should I I who walk[ed] in hell *B*

24] To name the loving tree *A*

25-28] a new stanza

29-32] ≠ *A, B* 25-28

29] 'Tis not the sweetest flowers that bloom *A, B* 25

30] That hold the taste of Spring *A, B* 26

31] And it is not all the brightest birds *A, B* 27

31] Nor is it yet] Nor yet it is *BLP*

32] That have the heart to sing *A, B* 28

Continued overleaf...

The Loving Tree (cont)

A tree may dance in the white weather
Or dream in a blue gown,
A tree may sing as a sweetheart
To bid the stars come down.

Some trees are slim and lovable
And some are sleek and strong
But the tree that has the cripple's heart
Will know the cripple's song.

The sweetest death is the red death
That comes up nakedly,
And the tree that has the foiled heart
It is the loving tree.

While ever lip shall seek for lip,
While ever light shall fall,
The tree that has the ruined heart
Is the tenderest of all.

33-36] *A* ∅; ≠ *B* 33-36

33 may dance] may live *B*

34] And dance in [the] «a» blue gown *B*

35] A tree may talk as a full sweetheart *B*

36 To bid] Till all *B*

37-40] *A* ∅; ≠ *B* 37-40

38 sleek] tall *B*

39] But the tree that [has the] crippled heart *B*

40 Will know] Has heard *B*

41-44] *A*, *B* ∅

45-48] ≠ *A* 37-40; ≠ *B* 41-44

45 shall seek] will seek *A* 37, *B* 41

46 shall fall] may fall *A* 38, *B* 42

47 ruined] crippled *A* 39

48] Is the tenderest tree of all *A* 40

Continued overleaf...

The Loving Tree (cont.)

Oh, ye may have your men to kiss
 And children warm to hold
 But the heart that had the hottest love
 Was never yet consoled.

The women three walked on their way;
 Their shamed eyes could see
 How well the tree with the foiled heart
 Is still the loving tree.

49-52] ≠ *A* 49-52; ≠ *B* 45-48

49] Oh ye may kiss your sweethearts brave *A* •

Oh ye may have your own sweethearts *B* 45

50] And hold your children fair *A* •

And ye have children fair *B* 46

51] But the sour tree has the sweet heart *A* •

A tree I know a barren tree *B* 47

52] It has no hope or prayer *A* •

And the hottest love is there *B* 48

53-56] ≠ *A* 53-56; ≠ *B* 49-52

53] The women three were in a mist *A* •

The woman three they spoke no more *B* 49

55 foiled] ruined *A*

55] [How] well the tree with the [f]oiled heart *B* 51

56 Is still] Was still *A*, *B* 52

Discarded stanzas

A stanza 3, lines 9-12:

The third said the tree I love
 It is the tendr'st tree to me
 And holy as heaven's light
 It is the almond tree

A stanza 8, lines 29-32:

It is the starved and sour tree
 Where hope can never call
 Where sunlight brings not any bud
 Tis the tenderest tree of all

A stanza 9, lines 33-36:

For in the dark the withering sap
 Cries like a thing accursed
 But through the shameful stricken bark
 No sullen tear can burst

A stanza 11, lines 41-44:

Some trees there are with cooing birds
 That take the kiss of day
 But the tree that has the stricken heart
 Has hotter love than they

Continued overleaf...

The Loving Tree (cont.)

A stanza 12, lines 45-48:

Some trees are gowned with a great bloom
And wavering tunes are played
[But] While the tree that has the ruined heart
Is sobbing in the shade

B stanza 8, lines 29-32:

A tree I know a sour tree
No hope can ever call
Nor sunlight [fall] upon that tree
And it has love for all

THE LUCKLESS BARD TO THE FLYING BLOSSOM

NLA MS 1145/60, 29-32 [A], draft, 4 stanzas, stanza 3 cancelled and stanza 4 renumbered 3, with title and alterations [JSN].

The Bookfellow 15 July 1915, p. 166; *HS* 75; *BLP* 77; *CP* 67.

JSN - AGS 26 July 1931 (one of 14 pieces N wants to drop from a proposed collection).

The revised draft is the preferred text.

You and I and our kind
 Had glees together,
 Now in our turn shall we find
 Foul friends and weather.
 You had the love of the sky,
 All the world's honey;
 You are a pauper— and I,
 I have no money.

Back in the days that we knew,
 Oh, idle fellow
 You had the heart for the blue,
 The mouth for the yellow.
 You who have scented the sky,
 Sat around honey,
 You are a pauper – and I,
 I have no money.

In the dim place where we go
 No sweet rebelling
 Burns for the eyes never glow
 Down in our dwelling.
 I had the taste of the wine,
 You of the honey;
 Little white kinsman of mine,
 I have no money.

12 The mouth] «The» Mouth [JSN] *MS*

21 the taste] the [thirst] «taste» [JSN] *MS*

22] [Hunger for] «You of the» honey [JSN] *MS*

Cancelled stanza 3:

[Soon is our province the grave
 Where many follow
 What of the laughter you gave
 Hollow all hollow
 You had no seaworthy boat
 No voyage sunny
 Sailor I tell you afloat
 I have no money]

THE MAN AND THE WOMAN

‘1915’E, 19a & 19b (A0306 & A0307) [JSN], fair draft.

How leisurely he walks, how proud, how glad,
Like to an Emperor to his palaces striding.
Over his axe and on his well-worn clothes
The resin of the slaughtered pine tree shows.

Gravely he thinks of her whose lonesome day,
For all his tenderness, he cannot alter.
Will she go softer and take snaps of rest?
Alas, the children – and he knows the rest.
Even his fatherhood doth make him falter.

4 slaughtered] slaughter[e]d] *MS*

9 Even his] [And all] «Even» his *MS*

THE MANURE AGENT

‘1907’, 16b (A0106) [JSN].

The Clarion July 1908, under heading ‘Some desperate attempts at the manner of Arthur Adams’.

‘1907’, 16b is the preferred text.

Calm, consequential, cool, cocksure,
Order, he cries, the best manure!
Glibly he speaks of other brands,
Cloggy, disheartening, false, impure.

4] This line has been omitted in the *Clarion*: a mechanical error.

4 Cloggy] <Cloggy> *MS*

THE MARE'S NEST

'1907', 48a, 48b-49b & 50a (A0137-9) [JSN], draft. There is one stanza at 48a, entitled 'Humbug' [2]; 5 stanzas, untitled, numbered 1-5 at 48b-49a; 2 stanzas and a part-stanza at 49b, numbered 7, 1 & 2 the stanza numbered 2 renumbered 6 and the stanzas numbered 1 & [2] 6 under title 'The mare's nest'; and 2 stanzas numbered 8 (the first of the two cancelled) and a line, untitled, at 50a. The order of the stanzas is conjectural.

In everything I find new zest,
I openly declare
Each time I find a fresh mare's nest
What wondrous things are there.

And if perchance no nest I find
To all the Curious Crew
I give the monster of my mind
And bid them dance and do.

Some shrewd remarks, dull aeons old,
I give with ponderous weight,
Then over half the world is told
The statements that I state.

Morals and all-round Righteousness
I preach and shrilly shriek;
Brimming with oceanfuls of Fuss
I do my best to speak.

Since ever Woman winked at Man
In ages near or far,
Nothing they hear more pleases than
How bad they really are.

1-20] = stanzas 1-5 at 48b-49a

1 new zest] new y est *MS*

14] I preach <in> in shrill shriek *MS*. The formation of the final *l* in *shrill* suggests that a *y* was intended, in which case what appears to be *in* must be intended as *and*.

Continued overleaf...

The Mare's Nest (cont.)

Pulpits I work, and Parliaments,
And Editorial Chairs;
Yea, I have yanked whole continents
And done it unawares.

Marie Corelli I endorse!
Hurrah for Great Hall Caine!
I am not either ass or horse
I hasten to explain.

When every thing is plain as day
And nothing really wrong,
I am discovered by the way
And towards me all men throng.

Lawyers loquacious I trick,
Blindly they bow the knee;
Doctors dull muddling with the sick,
They all kow-tow to me.

21-24] = stanza numbered 7 at 49b

25-28] ≠ stanza at 48a (under title 'Humbug'); = stanza numbered 1 at 49b

25 Marie Corelli] Marie Corelli (1855-1924), an English novelist whose books were very popular.

26] Sir Kewis I love Hall Caine *MS* 48a

26 Hall Caine] Hall Caine (1853-1931) an English novelist, well known for a series of romantic, religious and melodramatic novels.

27] What all men see I shriek and force *MS* 48a

28] Their eyes to see again *MS* 48a

27-28] [Like a[n] old knight || I mount my hor] *MS* 49b, cancelled lines preceding lines 27-28

29-32] = stanza [2] 6 at 49b continued at 50a under second stanza numbered 8

29 every thing] every thing *MS*

32] And towards me «all men throng» *MS*, line following the second stanza 8 at 50a, underneath a drawn line separating the two

33-36] = stanza 8 at 50a

Discarded stanza

At 50a, cancelled stanza 8:

[I work the Platform and the Press
The Editorial Chair
I am always with you more or less
In fact I'm everywhere]

THE MEETING OF SIGHS

The Clarion 1 July 1909, p. 26; *GDC*; *HS* 38; *BLP* 70; *CP* 34. (*HS*, *BLP* & *CP* have the title as ‘Meeting of sighs’.)

The *Clarion* is the preferred text.

Your voice was the rugged
Old voice that I knew;
I gave the best grip of
My greeting to you.
I knew not of your lips,
You knew not of mine;
Of travel and travail
We gave not a sign.

We drank and we chorused
With quips in our eyes;
But under our song was
The meeting of sighs.
I knew not of your lips,
You knew not of mine;
But lean years and lone years
Had watered the wine.

THE MELODY OF BEAUTY

ML MS 3354/2, Item 5, 22a-22b [JSN], fair draft.

A scowling priest can make a million moan
Fouling the very heavens with his lies,
But on some quiet day, tearful, alone,
A warm white girl will listen with glad eyes:
The Melody of Beauty never dies.

A tyrant king can lay a country bare,
Women shall suffer and the children groan,
But some faint youth with forehead wide and fair
Shall see, not for himself alone,
The pity in the paint, the prayer in stone.

Harsh noises shall be in cities' ways,
Disheartening gloom shall be upon the sea,
Whispers shall break through sodden days
And feet will dance and hearts again be free:
God hath not ceased, nor yet, the Melody.

9 Shall see] Shall [rest not] see *MS*

11 cities'] citys *MS*

12 Disheartening] Dishearten[ing] *MS*

THE MOON IS FULL

‘1910’, 14b (A0236) [A] & 17a (A0238) [JSN], draft, with cancelled lines and a replacement line at 14b and a replacement stanza 3 at 17a.

Let us forget all civil things afloat,
 All the embittered hills we learn to climb;
 Let every ghost who has a kindly throat
 Hop for us hornpipes through the silver time.

Let us put happy thoughts away,
 Let us be sorrowful with chastened eyes
 That love may beat upon us as a spray,
 To make more delicate our Paradise.

Full is the moon, and slothfully does climb;
 White flowers are choruses – the red and white
 Outsing the yellow all the wistful time.
 Is it not good to live this holy night?

5 thoughts away] thoughts away away *MS*
 7 upon us as a spray] upon us [as] a spray *MS*
 7] = replacement line following stanza 3 at 14b [JSN] •
 [That happily some homely love may stray] *MS*
 8 more delicate] more [happily] «delicate» [JSN] *MS* 3
 9-12] = replacement stanza at 17a
 12 night.] night. *MS*

Discarded stanza 3 reads:

[The moon is full it is a scented time]
 When God does playfully paint all things white
 Out [of the shadows silly ghosts] with climb [sic]
 Is [it not good to live this holy] night

THE MOON WILL HAVE A SHARE

NLA MS 1145/60, 69 & 70 [FN]. The second stanza continues on a new page as if a new piece under the title 'A woman wise and fair'.

Oh ye will toil in a fierce fight and smile in sun and rain,
And ye will say, as a brave man, the earth is good again –
But ye will dream in a long dream of a woman's silken hair,
But of all ye try, till the day ye die, the moon will have a share.

For a woman's eyes can seldom keep to one beloved thing,
Her waist it is a lissom tree that doth disaster bring –
Oh ye may go as a poor pilgrim and all your heart be bare,
But pray no God to ask you find a woman wise and fair.

6 waist it is a lissom] waist is a a lissome *MS*

THE MOTHER'S SIN

‘1915’E, 10a (A0296) [A]. The title appears at 21a in a list ‘Pieces to finish this year’, with the annotation ‘4 long’.

The Clarion 15 January 1909, entitled ‘Extraordinary resurrection of an apparently dead joke’.

‘1915’E, 10a is the preferred text.

There is a wound that time can hardly heal,
On childhood's face it paints a cloud of care;
What agonies of soul doth he not feel,
That listless lad – whose mother Cuts his Hair.

THE MUMMY

‘1915’E, 3b (A0289) [A], fair draft.

The Clarion 15 September 1908, p. 21; *GDC* untitled (listed in Contents as ‘Triplet’ [1]); *HS* 39; *BLP* 107; *CP* 35. (*HS*, *BLP* & *CP* have the title as ‘Old violin’). ML MS C997 *Heart of Spring* special edition of 25 copies, No.13 has this inscribed on the fly leaf [JSN] and dated ‘26/9/19’.

JSN - AGS 30 November 1919 (following publication *HS*: ‘I notice that Edward Grear likes ‘Old violin’ . . . Years ago when you were in NZ I sent Old Violin in exactly its present form to [the] Bulletin. It came back Declined with Thanks. I tried Australasian – same result. Then I sent [it] to Bedford he put it in’).

The *Clarion* is the preferred text.

Speak not to me old violin!
 Mock not this heart of mine!
 Thou mummy with the glistening skin.
 Speak not to me, old violin,
 For the dead men have shadows thin
 And all their sobs are thine.
 Speak not to me old violin!
 Mock not this heart of mine!

8 heart of mine] heart of thine «mine» *MS*

THE OLD MAN'S WORRYING

There are two discrete versions of this poem, the first written c. 1896 and the second, a revision, post-1906.

THE OLD MAN'S WORRYING [2]

ML MS 3354/2, Item 4, 14b-17b [A/JSN], fair draft, 10 × 6-line stanzas & 1 × 8-line stanza, with stanza 7 cancelled and rewritten immediately following. NLA MS 3772 [WN], fair copy, 9 × 6-line stanzas & 1 × 4-line stanza, with alterations [AGS], entitled 'Worrying'. ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript, 9 × 6-line stanzas, 1 × 8-line stanza & 1 × 4-line stanza, annotated [AGS], entitled 'Worrying'. ML MS A3038/2, 31a, 32a-34a (B0043-7) [FN], transcription, 7 × 4-line stanzas, 3 × 6-line stanzas, 1 × 10-line stanza & 1 × 2-line stanza unnumbered, entitled 'Pioneering days in the Mallee', with sub-title 'The old man's worrying', and a note [FN]. ML MS 799, p. 38, typescript [FN], transcription, 10 × 4-line stanzas, 1 × 6-line stanza, 1 × 10-line stanza, with 5 × 2-line stanzas interspersed as a refrain, entitled 'The old man's worrying', with a note [FN].

This is a later version of a poem first published in the *Australian Journal* 1 March 1897, p. 214, q.v.

FN – JD January 1935, NLA MS 1145/15.

The first 3 lines of ML MS 3354/2, Item 4, 14b-17b and the alterations there are in N's hand. 'Finis' [JSN] appears beneath stanza 5 at the bottom of 15b and the poem continues [A] with stanza 6 immediately following at 16b and with no discernible change in the hand. NLA MS 3772 (the fair copy) has alterations in Stephens's hand and the comment, written for the recipient of the MS, 'Sent to me by author', and the pen-name Horace O'Hazy, Victoria added and cancelled [AGS]. ML MS 4937/10, Item 1 (Stephens's typescript), has been corrected, has the last two lines of each stanza added [AGS], and has two notes relating to the text, followed by the comment 'A few verses of this appeared the Australian Journal some years ago'. The notes and comment are cancelled and a further comment added, 'Part printed in 'Sun' newspaper Sydney' [not located]. Frank Neilson's notes with the transcription and the letter to Devaney ascribe authorship to JSN and his father: 'John wrote the first half of the verse and father the second portion' (ML MS 799); 'written about 1897, by both John Shaw N. and Father' (ML MS A3038/2); 'Dad . . . added some verses picturing the old farmer dying in debt last verse viz. The old man died quite suddenly' NLA MS 1145/15).

ML MS 3354/2, Item 4 is a 26-leaf fragment of a notebook dated c.1893 – 1896 and the very even flow of the handwriting suggests that the poem was completed at this time. The alterations in N's hand and the word 'Finis' following stanza 5 further suggest that part-only was sent to the *Australian Journal* for publication (in 1897). The poem was extensively revised to send to Stephens, most likely after he became N's agent in 1906. Whilst N's father may well have made suggestions for the version at ML MS 3354/2, Item 4, the tone of the revisions strongly suggests composition by Neilson himself.

ML 3354/2-4, 14b-17b = A; NLA 3772 = B; ML 4937/10-1 = C

The fair copy, NLA 3772 (B), is the preferred text. Stanzas 6-11 of ML 3354/2-4 (A) which include very extensive revision are shown separately in the notes.

Continued overleaf...

The Old Man's Worrying [2] (cont.)

The morning star is hardly up, the clock strikes four,
 The frosty air is creeping through the keyhole of the door.
 The neighbouring cocks, around, about, are crowing lustily,
 The old man's hair is snowy white, but up jumps he –
 For the old man's
 Worrying.

The boys have grown and left him, the girls are married now,
 By hard work he reared them, you can see it on his brow.
 Through long years and hard years he struggled on until
 He knows his feet are moving on the run downhill –
 So the old man's
 Worrying.

The crops are very backward, the rains are very late,
 The hens are in the garden (for the bull has smashed the gate).
 The harrow-bar is broken and the buggy mare is lame –

2 creeping . . . of] peeping . . . [of] in *A*

3 crowing lustily] crowing [lustily] «lazily» [JSN] *A*

5] For the old man's worrying a-worrying and hurrying *A*

6] The old man's worrying before the break of day *A*

7] The old man's family all are gone and scattered far apart *A*

8] A lonely feeling creeps about his poor old heart *A*

8 by hard work] by [hard work] hardest toil [AGS] *B*

9 he struggled] he's struggled *A*

10 the run downhill] the short race downhill *A* • the [short] run downhill *B* • the short run downhill *C*

11] So the old man's worrying a-worrying and hurrying *A*

12] The old man's worrying all in the blessed dawn *A*

13 backward, the rains] backward and the rains *A*

14] The hens are in the garden [and the bull has smashed a gate] «they can fly the garden gate» [JSN] *A*

Continued overleaf...

The Old Man's Worrying [2] (cont.)

The old man's angry – he's wondering who's to blame.
 Yes, the old man's
 Worrying.

The weather's dry and dusty, the wheat is all in ear,
 The hot winds play the mischief just about this time of year.
 There's stinkwort on the fallow, there's cockspur on the plain,
 There's a sudden rise in cornsacks – that's a sudden fall in grain –
 So the old man's
 Worrying.

The strippers now are humming, and the old man's got the blight,
 The rust has spoilt the sample and the bags are very light.
 The rain may come tomorrow and knock the whole lot down,
 And last night came a letter from the mortgagees in town –
 So the old man's
 Worrying.

* * *

The old man's in the mallee now – the place where most men go
 When they have failed as most men fail down on the plain below.
 The old man's carting water, it's fifteen miles or more,

- 16 he's wondering] he[s] «is» wondering [AGS] *B*
 16] The old man's [worrying and] «angry, he's» wondering who's to blame [AGS] *C* •
 The old man's worrying and wondering who to blame *A*
 17] So the old man's worrying a-worrying and hurrying *A*
 18] The old man's worrying and wondering who [th] to blame *A*
 19] The old man's worrying the crop is all in ear *A*
 21] The cockspur's on the fallow the the stinkwort's on the plain *A* •
 There's stinkwort on the fallow [the] there's cockspur on the plain [AGS] *B* •
 There's stinkwort on the fallow and cockspur on the plain *C*
 22 cornsacks that's] cornsacks and *A* • cornsacks [that's] there's [AGS] *B* • cornsacks there's *C*
 23] So the old man's worrying a-worrying and hurrying *A*
 24] The old man's worrying all in the blessed spring *A*
 25] The weather's hot and horrid and the old man's got the blight *A*
 25 the blight] Sandy blight, properly, conjunctivitis
 26] The grain is small and shrivelled and the bags are very light *A*
 28 mortgagees] [mortgages] mortgagees [AGS] *B*
 29] So the old man's worrying a-worrying and hurrying *A*
 30] The old man's worrying all in the harvest-time *A*

Continued overleaf...

The Old man's Worrying [2] (cont.)

And now the sand and sweat have made his horse's shoulders sore –
 So the old man's
 Worrying.

The old man's rolling mallee – it stands up tall and rough –
 The old man's wrestling with it, he always finds it tough.
 He builds a hut, he scoops a tank, and half a mile of drain –
 The bright blue sky is hard and dry, there's not a sign of rain,
 So the old man's
 Worrying.

Old Markham mapped the mallee out, a square mile to each plot,
 But Bunny knows not rule or road, he always likes a lot.
 A family man, he takes to heart all Teddy Roosevelt's saws –
 The old man's land is in his track and the old man must show cause.
 So the old man's
 Worrying.

The old man writes the Government and tells them he's dead beat.
 Last year he had no crop at all, he'd like to get seed wheat.
 They made him give a lien on all he had – he didn't mind.
 Perchance he thought I soon shall go and leave the lot behind.
 Poor old man's
 Worrying

* * *

The old man died. Death found him in arrears of rent and rates.
 He met Saint Peter with the keys beside the pearly gates.
 Whence comest thou? the Saint enquired, referring to his book.
 Good Saint, I tilled a mallee block 'way down in Karkarook.
 What further penance so that thou with souls in bliss might rank?

34 have made] [have] has made [AGS] *B* • has made *C*

43 Old Markham] [Old Markham] Surveyors [AGS] *B*

45 Teddy Roosevelt's saws] [saws] <laws> [AGS] *B*. Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919) became president of the United States of America in 1901: he was keen on physical fitness and lived and preached the 'gospel of the strenuous life'.

46 To 'show cause': explain to the board why his land ['block?'] should not be forfeited

51 lien] [....] «lien» [AGS] *B*

55 of rent and rates] of rent [of] «and» rates [AGS] *B*

Continued overleaf...

The Old Man's Worrying [2] (cont.)

Good Saint, I had an overdraft, with the Commercial Bank.
 'Tis not enough, the Saint replied, to 'scape the penal fire.
 Good Saint, for months I worked the pump erected by the Shire.

* * *

Pass in poor soul, Saint Peter said, no man of mortal birth
 Shall suffer more, who had like thee, his share of Hell on earth!
 So the old man's stopped
 Worrying.

60 the Commercial] the «[Van Dieman]» «Financial» [AGS] B. The Bank of Van Dieman's Land, in Tasmania, was the first bank to close in the economic recession of the 1890s and the closure hastened the depression in Melbourne.

NLA MS 1145/15 has two notes:

Note: Karkarook is the name of the main county in the North Mallee of Vic

Note: The Shire Pumps were always cursed by everyone who was unfortunate enough to be compelled to use them.

Version A, stanzas 6-11:

He wrote and told the mortgagees he really couldn't pay
 The mortgagees wrote back and said they'd foreclose straight away
 His other creditors they came and tried to make a row
 The old man said he didn't care how anything went now
 [But] For [JSN] the old man was worrying a | a [JSN] / worrying and hurrying
 The old man was worrying and wondering what to do

* * *

[The old man's in the mallee now with vermin – pests at war
 The local boards inspector has ridden fast and far
 To serve him with a notice for violation of the 'clause'
 Referring to the rabbits and the old man must show cause
 And the old man's worrying a-worrying and hurrying
 The old man's worrying]

* * *

The old man's in the mallee now the place where most men go
 When they have failed as all men [Do] fail down [of] on the plains below
 Dame fortune frowneth on him still she seemeth most unkind
 But if a decent rain would come the old man wouldn't mind
 So the old man's worrying a-worrying and hurrying
 The old man's worrying his dam is nearly dry

With every [ball] rabbit great and small the old man wabeth war
 And yet the boards inspector he rideth from afar
 To serve him with a notice for violation of the 'Clause'
 Referring to the rabbits and the old man must show cause
 So the old man's worrying a-worrying and hurrying
 [The old man] He [JSN] hardly knows the meaning of those [great] «awful» [JSN] words 'show cause'

Continued overleaf...

The Old Man's Worrying [2] (cont)

The drought is at its very worst the furious hot winds blow
 And withers every little blade that striveth still to grow
 The old man's carting water some twenty miles or more
 And now the sweat and sand and have made his horses shoulders sore [sic]
 So the old man's worrying a worrying and hurrying
 The old man's worrying and wonders what he'll do

The old man writes the Government and tells him he's dead beat
 And asks them for to help him in the matter of seed-wheat
 His friends they tell him that its not a bit of use to try
 Because the House they'll never meet till some[thing]-time in July
 So the old man's worrying a-worrying and hurrying
 The old man's worrying and wondering whose to blame

* * *

The old man died quite sudden in arrears of rents and rates
 And met Saint Peter with the keys beside the pearly gates
 Whence cometh thou the Saint inquired referring to his book
 Good Saint I tilled a mallee block way out in Karkaroc
 Pass in poor soul the Saint replied No man of mortal birth
 Is turned away who had like thee his share of Hell on earth
 A long farewell to worrying [and hurryi[ng]] to worrying and hurrying
 The old man slowly muttered as he passed within the Gates

THE OLD MOTHER

‘1915’E, 19b (A0307) [JSN], fair draft.

Madly she runs. Oh clear the way!
Her baby cries!
Old terrors of an ancient day
(Madly she runs. Oh clear the way!)
Of monsters mouthing their sweet prey
Fill up her eyes.
Madly she runs. Oh clear the way!
Her baby cries!

THE PALE NEIGHBOUR

The Bookfellow 15 December 1913, p. 284; *GDC*; *HS* 11; *BLP* 34; *CP* 11.
HS, *BLP* and *CP* have the title as 'Pale neighbour'.

The *Bookfellow* is the preferred text.

Over the road she lives, not far,
My neighbour pale and thin.
Sweet is the world, she cries, how sweet
To keep on living in.

Over the road at night I walk,
'Tis but a little way,
And she will meet me, she it is,
A whiteness in the grey.

Her heart it is a right red heart
That cannot doubt or pine,
Her handclasp is a happiness,
Her welcome is a wine.

Love she will have it, is a lilt
From some lost comedy
Played long ago, when the white stars
Lightened the greenery.

Ever she talks of earth and air
And sunlit junketing.
Gaily she says, I know I shall
Be waltzing in the Spring.

Slyly she prates as women will
Of new-made frocks to wear,
Till with an ache I smile and praise
The splendours of her hair.

5-8] omitted in *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

10 doubt or pine] quail or whine *GDC* • stoop to pine *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

20 waltzing] dancing *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*

Continued overleaf...

The Pale Neighbour (cont.)

Almost I fear her low, low voice
As one may fear the moon,
As one may fear too faint a sound
In an old uncanny tune.

* * *

Over the road, 'twill not be long,
Clearly I see it all
Ere ever the red days come up
Or the pale grasses fall.

There will be crape upon us, and
Within our eyes a dew –
We shall be walking neighbourly,
As neighbours, two and two.

21-24] omitted in *GDC, HS, BLP, CP*
33 crape] black *HS, BLP, CP*

THE PALMY ISLES

‘1908’, 23b (A0177) [JSN].

A missionary youthful ran
An annual head-hunt – just begun
A smoking pot,
A heathen’s jaw,
Awaits a missionary done.

Title] [In] the palmy isles

THE PARTING GLASS

The Clarion 1 June 1909, p. 4; *GDC*, untitled; *HS* 7; *CP* 7. *HS* and *CP* have the title as ‘Greeting’. *GDC* (A & B) has the poem twice; at p. 73 as ‘The parting glass’, with 2 x 4-line stanzas, and at p. 110 as ‘Greeting’, with 1 x 8-line stanza.

The *Clarion* is the preferred text.

Fill up, fill up – the day we meet,
 What of the wind – who knows the weather?
 Shall we be old men in a street
 (Fill up, fill up – the day we meet)
 We who have found the untired feet
 That a kind God is loth to tether?
 Fill up, fill up – the day we meet,
 What of the wind – who knows the weather?

- 1 the day] today *GDC, HS, CP*
- 3 a street] the street *GDC, HS, CP*
- 4 the day] today *GDC, HS, CP*
- 5 the untired] the tireless *GDC* • the eager *HS, CP*
- 6 a kind God] kindly God *GDC, HS, CP*
- 7 the day] today *GDC, HS, CP*

THE PEOPLE IN IT

‘1908’, 24a-25a (A0177-9) [JSN], draft, with title and first stanza [A], under heading ‘After the manner of J.G. Whittier’.

The Bookfellow 20 July 1907, p. 4, signed ‘The Offsider’ but attributed to Neilson in the index, entitled ‘A dreary place’, *HI*: there is no issue dated 20 July 1907 and the poem has not been located.

AGS – JSN 24 April 1927, NLA MS 1145/28 (‘I rather think there is something [payment] coming from “Aussie” for printing “Wicked People” parody some time ago; will look it up’).

A dreary place would be this earth
 Were there no wicked people in it;
 A row would have no chance of birth
 Were there no people to begin it.

Lawyers would find no flaw or fee
 Nor any Law Courts worth attending;
 Judges would die, and each J.P.
 And all Detectives, have an ending.

No lad or lass could wink an eye –
 I wonder how they’d do the courting?
 Always the Editors would sigh,
 Nothing today Sir worth reporting.

Poets no longer drinking wine
 Would praise the Pump, the placid Handle;
 Going to bed much after nine
 Would be considered quite a Scandal!

Man would not curse, but always bless,
 And never would man try to do Man;
 Woman would never talk of Dress –
 In fact she would not be a woman!

Title & gloss] John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892), an American Quaker and Abolitionist and a popular poet, noted for his sincerity and noble character.

15] Going to bed [at half past 9 nine] much after nine *MS*

Continued overleaf...

The People In It (cont.)

But would the Clergy be overjoyed?
There would not be a single sinner.
Parsons would all be unemployed
And Bishops would be thinner.

Six thous and we've had fine fun
Since Eve and Adam did begin it;
I wonder how the world would run
Were there no wicked people in it!

25 Six thous] An allusion, with comic abbreviation, to the popular belief that the world is only 6,000 years old.

27 I wonder] I [would] wonder *MS*

THE PEOPLE IN THE PLAYGROUND

The Clarion 1 April [April Fool's Day] 1909, p. 22. Punctuation is reproduced from the printed text.

See how these little people play,
Loudly as sailors lost in wine;
Long did I watch them yesterday,
And in their shouting sought a sign.

Our cures – our creeds – decrepit – old –
Soon shall they hasten to condemn;
When we are all a-bed and cold,
Our laws will make a laugh for them.

1 See] So *Clarion*, a mechanical error surely
5 decrepit] decrepid *Clarion*

THE PETTICOAT PLAYS

‘1912’, 1a-1b (A0247-8) [A], draft, 8 stanzas numbered, with 2 lines and 4 stanzas cancelled. Alexander Turnbull Library MS Papers 2842 [A], fair copy, dated 5 August 1911 [AGS].
Sun (Sydney) 17 March 1912; *GDC*; *HS* 62; *BLP* 100; *CP* 56.

The *GDC* text is blocked and marked with large crosses in the margins to indicate dissatisfaction with the text.

‘1912’, = A; fair copy = B
 The fair copy (B) is the preferred text.

Teach me not, tell me not,
 Love ever sinned.
 See how her petticoat
 Sweetens the wind.

Back to the earth she went,
 Broken at noon.
 Here is her petticoat
 Flapping a tune.

Have ye not ever heard
 Petticoats sing?
 I hear a mourning flute
 And a sweet string.

1-4] = *A* stanza 1
 5-8] = *A* stanza 2
 6 Broken] [Blindly] «Broken» [JSN] *A*
 9-12] ≠ *A* stanza 3
 9 Have ye] Have you *BLP*
 9] [Have ye not over] heard *A*, third line
 10] Petticoat[s] sing *A*, fourth line
 11] [I hear a hollow] flute *A*, first line
 12] = *A*, second line

Continued overleaf...

The Petticoat Plays (cont.)

Little silk ally in
This her last war,
Know you the meaning of
What she died for?

Mourner most delicate,
Surely you hold
Manna that she has stored
Safe from the cold?

She had the loving blood
Love gave her eyes
And the world showered on her
Icicles – lies.

Speak to her, little wind,
Lovable sky.
Say to the soul of her
Bravo – goodbye.

Teach me not, tell me not
Love ever sinned.
See how her petticoat
Sweetens the wind.

13-16] ≠ *A* cancelled stanza 4

13] Silken accessory *A*

14] This] Of *A*

15 you] ye *A*, *BLP*, *CP*

16 died] fought *A*

17-20] ≠ *A* cancelled stanza 5

17] Little white sentinel *A*

18] Can you still hold *A*

19] Some of the manna *A*

20 Safe] She stored *A*

21-24] ≠ *A* cancelled stanza 6

22] And the [brave] «fierce» eyes *A*

23] And the world offered her *A*

25-28] *A* stanza discarded

28 Bravo] Brava *CP*

29-32 = *A* stanza 8

Discarded stanza *A*, cancelled stanza 7:

[Speak to me little wind
Softly oh sky
Faintly her petticoat
Sings and is dry]

THE PHILOSOPHER

‘1907’, 36b (A0126) [JSN].

This is one of a number of pieces on this theme: see ‘for a country editor’.

No longer sorrowful I sit;
I talk and smoke, I even smile.
Life – I’ve made a mess of it;
It wasn’t really worth my while.

3 Life – I’ve] Life – I’ve *MS*

THE PIONEERS

‘1907’, 18b-19b (A0108) [JSN], fair draft, 1 stanza; 44b-45a [JSN], fair draft, 3 stanzas. The first stanza of the text at 44b-45a occurs as a humorous quatrain with several other similar pieces at 18b-19b.

Our Fathers suffered with the Scab;
 Once-foetid Footrot strove to stab;
 The dray wheel dreary epics made,
 Leaving the Lyrics for the cab.

With consciences extremely tough
 They cried, ‘more land!’ ‘tis not enough
 Running unreasonable risks;
 They sometimes dropped a lot of stuff.

Now they are dead I will not say
 They had no lions on the way:
 Their children, too, have lived to prove
 That nothing ever seems to pay!

2 Once-foetid] One foetid *MS*
 5 consciences] conscience[s] *MS*
 6 ‘more land!’] ‘more land’ *MS*
 11 lived] live[d] *MS*

‘1907’, 18b-19a reads:

Our Fathers suffered much with Scab
 Foot Rot and other Things did stab
 The Dry Wheels dreary Topics made
 Leaving the Lyrics for a Cab

THE PLACE OF DEATH

‘1915’C, 12b–13b (A0324-5) [JSN], draft.

This is a discrete version of a poem entitled ‘The girl with the black hair’.

There is a place where old loves lie
And weary hopes have rest,
And the loud rages of the past
In dead men’s clothes are dressed.

Legs of delightful women dance
No more. The rose’s breath
Gives out no joy, and warm red love
Walks to the place of Death.

When God was on a holiday
Drunken with wine and air,
He made for me and all the world
The girl with the black hair.

To her red lips he gave delight,
He made her mouth to sing,
About her feet he put the ache
And the green lilt of the Spring.

And on a night of red blossoms
One woman was divine,
But the colour of all the hours
Dies in this hour of mine.

I know they come through rain and mist,
I feel their footsteps burn,
These joys that were a part of me
Unto the dark return.

4 men’s] men[’s] *MS*

6] No more, [And] the [red] roses breath *MS*

7 Gives out no joy,] Give[s] out no joy, *MS*

16 of the Spring] of [the] Spring *MS*

17] And on a night [when] «of» red blossoms *MS*

20] Die[s] in [his] this hour of mine *MS*

Continued overleaf...

The Place of Death (cont.)

I feel the sting of dead kisses,
The dance of honeyed hair;
Come back, come back, good citizens,
Leave not the old home bare.

I see no more the mad lovers
Nor the cream girls at play,
All the fierce scent the roses had
The great dark hides away.

25 I feel] [My] I feel *MS*

30 Nor the cream] Nor [the] cream *MS*

THE POWER OF THE BELLS

ML MS A3038/3, 12b (B0074) [FN], 2 stanzas headed 'last verse' and 'first verse' each under title and each cancelled. ML MS A3038/2, 17a & 18a (B0024 & B0026) [FN], transcription, with the comment 'recent verse about 1940 by J.S.N. I think this a good poem with a few weak lines F.N'. Lines 11 & 21 are annotated 'weak line' and 'this line is weak', and stanzas 8 & 9 are annotated '(nice work here)' and '(best verse)', respectively. The 2 stanzas at MS A3038/3 may be revisions, or attempted revisions, by Frank Neilson.

The great bells grow not weary,
They call unto prayer,
They defeat well the Dark One
In the holy air.

With the reposing raiment
Of the fallen sun,
Softly, they still discourage
The Evil One —

That Bat, the deep fallen,
Who craves mankind,
Who puts out his evil on
The opening mind.

The sweet bells persuade us
In the scent of the green
To keep back the Black One
Who rides unseen.

More than all violins
They entreat the sky,
The cool trees, the tall temples,
The pilgrims near by.

They compel the bleak Winter to
Embrace the Spring,
In all Joy they banish
That Evil Thing.

1-4] = cancelled stanza at MS A3038/3, headed 'first verse'

Continued overleaf...

The Power of the Bells (cont.)

As moths move the mystics
Above the hay,
So give they of gladness
On the bride's day.

As children, the innocent,
In the whistling Spring,
In Beauty they banish
The Deformed Thing.

To the lanes of sorrow
They translate the sun,
They toll the defeat of
The Evil One.

33-35] = lines 1-3 of cancelled stanza at MS A3038/3, headed 'last verse'
36] That evil One MS A3038/3, line 4 of cancelled stanza

THE PRINCE TARRIES

‘1907’, 38b-39a (A0128-9), 40a & 41a (A0129-30) [JSN], draft. Stanzas 1 and part-stanza 2 occur at 40a, and the poem continues with part-stanza 2 and stanza [3] at 41a (under title) and stanzas 4 & 5 at 38b-39a (under title).

A maiden's flush was on her face and I
 Looked to her eyes, then up to the blue sky.
 She looked but carelessly down a green way –
 It was the road where all the Princes stray –
 The Prince, she lightly said, comes not today.

Good sir, she said, he is handsome and tall,
 And he could leap the very highest wall,
 So strong in war, so swift in love is he.
 And have a care sir, when he comes for me –
 He will be mad with pride and jealousy.

I saw her when another year had flown,
 With a full woman's glory all her own.
 She looked more keenly down the road, and then
 Turned to me smiling, the old smile again –
 She said he waits – it is the way of men.

I saw her many seasons watch the road,
 The roses in her cheek still fainter grew;
 Yet, when I spoke, the old time brightness showed
 And ay, she spoke proudly, with pretty will.
 The Prince delays – now I more mad shall be
 To watch him riding down the greenery –
 I know the Prince will some day come for me.

Sometimes, she asked faintly, with sad eyes,
 If wars were waged or robbers plundering ran,
 Or if some unknown thing might still arise
 To make delay – the Prince was but a man,
 Careless, but skilled in every manly art:
 Then I talked soothingly for her poor heart
 Did beat so quick it made my own to start.

4 It was] It [is] «is» *MS*

11 saw her when] saw [her] when *MS*

12 woman's glory] woman['s] [flow] glory *MS*

15] [The Prince she] said he waits | it waits [it] is the | way of men *MS*

20 delays now] delays [and] now *MS*

24 robbers] robber[s] *MS*

THE QUEEN I LOVE

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], 3 stanzas, with comment ‘May have been printed’, this cancelled and further note ‘Book’.

Sun (Sydney) 3 December 1911, p. 13; *GDC*.

The *Sun* text and the MS are identical (apart from a typographical error) and the *GDC* text has an additional stanza and variants throughout. It is most unlikely that Stephens would have contributed an additional stanza, but highly likely that he would have made alterations in editing the text for subsequent publication. The MS is therefore taken as the base text and the additional stanza in *GDC* incorporated.

Old as the Garden where four rivers ran
 And Woman first made up her pretty dresses,
 Ere ever strong man learned the arts of war,
 Or ever poets chirped of tears and tresses,
 So old are Queens – but mine is sweet and seven
 With big bright eyes, and not long down from heaven.

Alas for Queens, they wed with Kings and Princes,
 Their lives at best are perilous and uncertain;
 They saunter down a world of Sham and Show,
 They flirt and fret – but let us draw the curtain.
 If Love and Pain are born in golden glitter,
 Still, sweet is sweet, and bitter always bitter.

But my sweet Queen is plagued with wonderment!
 She dreams that I should know why grasses shiver,
 And where the skies have caught their white and gold,
 And why the water-birds so love the river –
 And I cannot tell why the wind is blowing,
 Nor why our friends the buttercups are growing.

There is no room for anger in my heart,
 For hate or greed, or anything forbidden;
 Some lingering laugh of childhood finds a home
 Down underneath all worldly wisdom hidden.
 The Queen I love is soft, and sweet, and seven,
 With big bright eyes, and not long down from heaven.

3 man] men *GDC*

4 Or poets ever chirped of tears or tresses *GDC*

7] Alas for queens! the conquerors and kings *GDC*

8] Made love to them: their joys were all uncertain *GDC*

9 saunter] sauntered *GDC*

10] Until they stepped behind the big black curtain *GDC*

11] They loved a child, a man, a flower, a feather *GDC*

12] And strove a little while in sunny weather. *GDC*

13-18] *MS*, *Sun* Ø; = *GDC*

21] What I have learned I gladly would unlearn *GDC*

22] All I have found I would that it were hidden *GDC*

THE READY TEACHERS

ML MS 3354/3, Item 1, 9/17a-9/17b & 10/19a [JSN], draft, 2 lines cancelled and replacement lines written.

Here is a man who eats our little town,
Explains our God, His movements in the sky;
On this broad pavement where I hasten me
He would most nobly teach me how to die.

* * *

My thanks, strange kinsman, but I need thee not:
I am not fearing God or the Great Sky
And my good vassals here upon the spot
Gladly already teach me how to die.

The hands no longer take the keen delight
In lifting up – in fashioning as of old;
The tune they beat for me both day and night
Is rest, oh rest, and let the world be cold.

The feet decline to wander as of yore,
To find where love in a green world could lie;
They will not dance, however fine the floor:
Ah these, my friend, shall teach me how to die.

The ears take up strange music from the hair
Of some sweet child – but oh, the heavy brain
Loiters until the sweetest songs of air
Die and go deeper even into pain.

1 town,] town, *MS*

2 God,] God. *MS*. A comma is more appropriate here.

3 where] which *MS*

7 the spot] the [sky] spot *MS*

10 lifting up –] lifting up – *MS*

14] To find what love in a green world [might be] «could lie» *MS*

18 some sweet child] some «sweet» child *MS*

19] [Loiters and will not strive to have a share] *MS* •

Loiters until the sweetest of [the songs] songs of air *MS*, added at bottom of page

20] [Love as a coward at the sight] of pain *MS* •

Die and go deeper even into pain *MS*, added at bottom of page

Continued overleaf...

The Ready Teachers (cont.)

The eyes declare we shall no longer vault
Over the wistful rainbow on the sky
And the dull heart will say, I fear me, halt!
Oh these, my friend, shall teach me how to die.

22 Over] [Over] [Across] «Over» *MS*

23] The *MS* is confused and it looks as if three or four attempts have been made to alter this line:

The heart [full oft declares] [«the» time] to halt •

«And / [the] «dull» heart | will say / [no] prayers» •

«And / [the] «dull» heart | will say / I «fear» me prayers» •

«And the dull heart | will say / I «fear» me halt»

24 Oh these] Oh / [All] these *MS*

THE REPORTED MARRIAGE OF MR BENT

‘1908’, 22a (A0175) [JSN].

His eyes are bright and soft his chin,
He tramps through every continent.
Cupid, the little larrikin,
He spares not even Tommy Bent.

Title] Sir Thomas Bent. See ‘He takes off his hat’. Two marriages are recorded: the first, in 1860 to Elizabeth Hanna Hall and the second, in 1864 to Elizabeth Huntley.
1 eyes are] eyes is *MS*

THE SACRIFICE

Another, different, poem with this title occurs in Period 1.

THE SACRIFICE [2]

‘1915’E, 11b (A0298) [JSN], draft; ‘1915’E, 20a (A0307) [JSN], fair draft, signed. A shorter version of this appears as a limerick in ‘1906’, 28a entitled ‘Something new in millinery’ (q.v.) and in ‘1907’, 1a entitled ‘Expecting too much’.

‘1915’E, 20a is the preferred text.

There was a sweet girl living at
Warracknabeal – her name was Brewster:
To have a bird’s head for her hat
She sacrificed her favourite rooster
And when her comrades said, hullo,
Can that old party up there crow?
She sorrowfully answered, no –
He can’t do that now like he ‘uster.

2] Warracknabeal –] *MS*

THE SEVEN YEARS

ML MS A3038/2, 11b (B0018) & '1910', 3b (A0226) [JSN], incomplete. The two leaves have been cut and the last word of line 4 lost as a result. It is quite possible that the two stanzas are the complete poem. *WS* places '1910', 3b with 'There was a dream', but it has a different rhyme scheme from the other stanzas in that poem.

There was a whistling in the lane
 And happenings in the dark and dusk,
 Dancers unterrified by pain,
 And the strong sense of musk.

There was a maze of flowers, and green
 Green Earth, and skipping girls thereon.
 It was a play – through every scene
 We sat till merriment was gone.

4 sense of musk] sense of [musk] *MS* (the leaf has been cut off here)

5] There was a maze of [Seven] flowers [that] «and» green *MS*

7 a play – through] play, through *MS*

THE SMOKER PARROT

Neilson refers to four separate poems by this title: ‘The smoker parrot’ [1], published in *The Clarion* 10 May 1909, p. 22, with a transcription [FN] in ‘1936’, 1a; ‘The smoker parrot’ [2], published in *Shaw Neilson: A memorial* 1942, with a fair draft at La/T MS 8910:1232/5C [JSN]; ‘Smoker parrots’, a fair draft [JSN], ‘1927’C, 18b-19a; and ‘Golden fugitive: To a departing smoker parrot’, with various drafts in ‘1934’ and ‘1935’, with a fair copy at NLA MS 1145/49 [L], and published in *BI*.

Anderson and Blake are confused about the poems, and Devaney seems to have been unaware of them all. Anderson lists ‘The smoker parrot’ in his bibliography (Revised edition) as published in *The Clarion* May 1909 (Anderson, p. 22) and continues the entry: ‘In *John Shaw Neilson: A memorial* (1942). This poem given as hitherto unpublished.’ The poem published in *The Clarion* is not the poem printed in the Bread and Cheese Club memorial volume, nor are these versions of the one poem. Then in the biography *John Shaw Neilson* (p. 99) Anderson and Blake refer to the ‘first of the ‘Smoker parrot’ poems’ as amongst a number of pieces Neilson sent to Randolph Bedford in 1909, and quote:

He is alone; no bird so beautiful
The Northern children know
Gently they say he is not of the Earth
He only falls below.
The settler’s sunburnt child
In him knows all that summer ever smiled.

They continue:

Other versions occur in Chisholm’s collection of 1965 and Judith Wright’s collection of 1970, which prints the 1927 draft with its fine ending:

Oh, up in the dry land no robber
Is surely as bold.
The smokers have washed in the sunlight
And taken the gold.

The lines commencing ‘He is alone’ are not the poem, or part of the poem, published by Bedford in the *Clarion*. They are the first stanza of the text published for the first time in *John Shaw Neilson: A memorial*. This is the poem given to Mary Gilmore by Neilson and, later, by Mary Gilmore to Robert Croll [cf. A & B, p.163].

‘The smoker parrot’ [1] occurs in period 2; ‘The smoker parrot’ [2] and ‘Smoker parrots’ in period 3; and ‘Golden fugitive: To a departing smoker parrot’ in period 4.

The smoker parrot is *Polytelis anthopeplus*.

Continued overleaf...

THE SMOKER PARROT [1]

‘1936’, 1a (A0769) [FN], transcription, with comment ‘This appeared in *Clarion* May 1909’.
The Clarion 10 May 1909, p. 22.

The Clarion is the preferred text. Punctuation is reproduced from the printed text.

He has the full moon on his breast,
The moonbeams are about his wing,
He has the colours of a king;
I see him floating unto rest
When all eyes wearily go west,
And the warm winds are quietening:
The moonbeams are about his wing,
He has the full moon on his breast.

THE SOLDIER IS HOME

ML MS 3354/2, Item 6, 7a-7b [J] & ‘1908’, 29a (A0185) [J], draft, 5 stanzas, numbered, with 2 cancelled lines. ‘1907’, 41b (A0131) [JSN], a part-stanza of 2 lines under heading ‘Last verse’, revision for draft; 42a (A0131) [JSN], 2 part-stanzas, under title, the first ruled off and the second numbered 2, revisions for draft. ‘1915’E, 15a (A0302) [JSN], 3 single lines and a part-stanza, numbered (for stanzas) 1-3 and with large angled brackets in the margin beside each, revisions. ML MS A3038/2, 42a & 43a (B0052), typescript for *CP*, incomplete, 3 stanzas (3-5) with alterations [RHC]. NLA MS 605/34 [L], 1 stanza, under title, with heading ‘New stanza’, revision for *CP* (stanza 3). NLA MS 605/35 [RHC], 1 stanza, with comment [A] and initialed [JSN], revision for *CP* (stanza 1).

The Clarion ‘/4/1909’, *HI*, not sighted [*The Clarion* April 1909 (1, 12, 4th series, Easter number (LaT) has a column of the poetry page cut out and the poem does not appear on any other page]; *CP* 158.

JSN - AGS 2 August 1931 (suggests might use this to replace one of the pieces he wants to drop from proposed collection); 22 September 1932 (repeats the above suggestion). JSN - RHC 19 November 1933 (has sent this amongst some other ‘typed pieces’ for *CP* and now wants to alter one of the verses). JSN - JD 13 January 1935 (‘pieces like ‘The whistling jack’, ‘The soldier is home’ and ‘The ballad of remembrance’ . . . rub some people up the wrong way’).

The draft and the first revisions in the ‘1907’ notebook (c.1907) are part of the initial impulse of composition. However, the revisions in the ‘1915’E notebook (c.1908) appear on a leaf without any other material and may well be a later entry in that book as they relate to the *CP* text more closely than to the draft. Croll made no unauthorised alterations to the texts for *CP* and the text was obviously revised again to send to Croll for *CP*, and then altered again, twice, before printing.

In the absence of the *Clarion* text the draft (A) is taken as a base text and the first revisions only (B & C) are incorporated.

MS 3354/2-6, 7a-7b & ‘1908’, 29a = A; ‘1907’, 41b = B; ‘1907’, 42a = C; ‘1915’E, 15a = D; 3038/2, 42a & 43a = E; NLA 605/34 = F; NLA 603/35 = G

Weary is he, and sick of the sorrow of war,
Hating the shriek of loud music, the beat of the drum.
Is this the shadow called glory men sell themselves for?

1-5] ≠ *G*
3 men] mens *A*

Continued overleaf...

The Soldier is Home (cont.)

How shall he speak to his God, the God that is dumb?
Ay, ay, the soldier is home.

Still doth he think of one morning, the flood of the sun,
The whizzing of bullets – deep darkness, and next to his mind
Came the hours of his terrible torment when the red fighting was done,
And he sighed for the bonny brave leg he left in the desert behind.
Ay, ay, the soldier is home.

Alas for the prating of priest, the low mean manoeuvrings of kings,
The diplomat's delicate lying, the cheers of a crowd;
But he, he has learnt for himself the heart of these horrible things,

4-5] = *C* the first of 2 sets of revised lines, unnumbered

[Bitter indeed is his heart and his eyes they are dumb] *A* •

The pangs in his heart have paled him and stricken him dumb *D*, revised line numbered 1 •

The pangs in his heart «they» have paled him and stricken him dumb *G*, with comment 'Think this stanza will do by putting in 'they' to make the length', *CP*

5] = *A*, *C*

5] Oh! yes, the soldier is home! *G*, *CP*

6-8] = *C*, the second of two sets of revised lines, under number 2

6] Still does he think of one morning oh bright was the sun *A* •

Still does he think of one morning, the march and the sun! *CP*

7 bullets –] bullets – *C*

7] He heard the sharp whiz of a bullet and next to his mind *A* •

A smoke and a scream [an] and the dark and next to his mind *D*, revised line numbered 2 •

A smoke, and a scream, and the dark, and next to his mind *CP*

8] Came the hours of his torment [what h] when all the red fighting was done *A* •

Comes the time of his torment, when all the red fighting was done! *CP*

10] Oh! yes, the soldier is home! *CP*

11 manoeuvrings] maneuepeuries *A*

11-15] ≠ *E* the first of 3 stanzas, numbered 2; ≠ *F* 'new stanza'

11] Alas! for the prating of priests – the low mean manoeuvres of kings *E* •

«He was caught with the valour of words the glory of Kings» [RHC] *E* •

He was caught with the valour of music the glory of kings *F*, *CP*

12 diplomat's] diplomists *A*

13] He[r] rages at all the shrill music the vile vapourings *D* the first of 2 lines numbered 3, following a cancelled line numbered 3 •

He rages at all the shrill music, the vile vapourings – «And now does he hate the dull» [music the vile vapourings] [RHC] *E* •

And now does he hate the dull tempest the shrill vapourings *F*, *CP*

Continued overleaf...

The Soldier is Home (cont.)

He that was young and knew not, now almost his heart cries aloud.
Ay, ay, the soldier is home.

Now shall he sit in the dark – his world shall be fearfully small –
He shall sit with old people who pray, and praise God for fine weather.
Only at times shall he move for a glimpse away over the wall
Where the men and women who make up the world are striving together.
Ay, ay, the soldier is home.

Sometimes the sudden big tears will redden his eyes,
For no one may hear what he hears, or see what he sees.
He shall be mocked by the sunlight, the flush of the skies.
He shall behold the kissing of sweethearts close by him under the trees.
Ay, ay, the soldier is home.

14] He who was proud and no beggar now begs for a shroud *D* cancelled line under number 3, rewritten as the first of 2 lines under second number 3 •

He who was proud, and no beggar now waits for his shroud! *E, CP* •

He who was proud and no beggar now waits for a shroud *F*

15] Oh! yes, the soldier is home! *E, F, CP*

16-20] ≠ *E* the second of 3 stanzas, unnumbered

17 sit with old people who pray] sit with the old people and pray *E* • sit with old people and pray *CP*

19 and women . . . world] and the women . . . worlds *E* • and the women . . . world *CP*

20] Oh! yes, the soldier is home! *E, CP*

21-25] ≠ *E* the third of 3 stanza, numbered 3

21] Simple, salt tears, full often will redden his eyes; *E, CP*

22-23] = *B* 2 revised lines under heading 'Last verse'

22] He shall hear the voice of a boy and know not the joy that he sees *A* •

For no one may [know] hear what he hear[s] or see what he sees *B* •

No one shall hear what he hears, or see what he sees; *E, CP*

23] [[He] shall [shall] «be» mocked in the even when fair the world lies] *A* •

He shall be mocked by a flower, and the flush in the skies! *E* •

He shall be mocked by a flower, and the flush of the skies! *CP*

24 by him under the trees] by him under the [these] trees *A* • by him, here under the trees *E, CP*

25] Oh! yes, the soldier is home! *E, CP*

THE SONG AND THE BIRD

ML MS A3038/1, 1a (B0090) [JSN], fair draft, entitled 'The bird is bold', signed.
HS 88; *BLP* 15; *CP* 78.

The *HS* text drops stanza 2 of the fair draft and introduces a new stanza 1. It is most unlikely that Stephens would have altered the text to this extent and *HS* is taken as the preferred text.

He hath his Heaven got,
 For Love he shakes the tree.
 Happy he heedeth not
 The many gods that be.

He telleth all his mad
 Manoeuvring to the morn:
 The shy slow-footed lad
 Hears him, and is forlorn.

And doth he grieve or think
 In dreaming drab and dim?
 Can aught of dull air sink
 Into the heart of him?

He fears not wind or sky,
 He counts not moon or year,
 Or the many men who die,
 Or the green wheat in the ear.

1-4] *MS* ∅

5-8] ≠ *MS* 1-4

5] He talls of all his mad *MS* 1

6 Manoeuvring] Maneouring *MS* 2

7] He smites a lover-lad *MS* 3

8] With melody forlorn *MS* 4

9-12] ≠ *MS* 9-12

9] But never does he think *MS*

10 dreaming] dreamings *MS*

11] Sour Earth could never sink *MS*

13-16] ≠ *MS* 13-16

15] But in his trance will try *MS*

16] To make his meaning clear *MS*

Continued overleaf...

The Song and the Bird (cont.)

He knoweth the false and fair
And the deeps of deep things:
How shall I know this bird
Who sings and sings and sings?

17-20] ≠ *MS* 17-20

17 knoweth] knows *MS*

18 the deeps] the deep *BLP*

19] He talks to the thin air *MS*

20 Who sings] And sings *MS*

Discarded stanza

MS stanza 2 (lines 5-8) reads:

He sings muffled and low
He shrieks in «his» fierce pain
All fears that lovers know
Fill up his voice again

THE SOUL OF THE SANDFLY

There are three discrete versions of this poem, two with this title. A third version is entitled ‘Not tumbled to’, q.v.

THE SOUL OF THE SANDFLY [1]

‘1915’E, 3b-4a (A0289) [A], draft, entitled ‘Not tumbled to’, with gloss ‘In the wake of Thomas Bracken’; 6a & 7a (A0291-2) [A], fair draft, entitled ‘The soul of the sandfly’, with sub-title ‘Not tumbled to’ and gloss ‘(Inspired by reading Thomas Bracken’s poem ‘Not understood’)’.

3b-4a = A; 6a-7a = B

The fair draft (B) is the preferred text.

Not tumbled to
(Inspired by reading Thomas Bracken’s poem ‘Not Understood’)

I am no anarchist, no red insurgent;
I merely wonder, why do Bishops pray
So much for Edward? – it can’t be so urgent:
 This sort of thing just gives the King away,
 Do you tumble?

If roosters couldn’t crow they would be quieter,
If tortoises could sprint they would be fast;
If woman couldn’t scream – that mouse would bite her
And if she died the race could never last,
 Do you tumble?

Gloss] Thomas Bracken (1843-1898) came to Australia at the age of 12 and later went to New Zealand: a poet, journalist and politician, author of a poem ‘Not understood’.

2] I love the King but why do parsons pray *A*

3] [But why] So much for Edward his case isn’t urgent *A*

4] Then why this fuss prayers give the show away *A*

8] [Still women fears] | If women wouldn’t scream the mouse would bit her *A*

9] This circumstance remains for centuries past *A*

10] Not tumbled to *A*

Continued overleaf...

The Soul of the Sandfly [1] (cont.)

If parsons weren't fogged, they would be clearer;
If undertakers smiled, they wouldn't score;
If cows combined – milk kisses would be dearer!
Will these jokes die like lots that went before
 Not tumbled to?

Great Scot! if newspapers keep getting dearer
And Editors more dense, this world shall see
A Tragedy – this bard shall take a header
Into the void. No joker likes to be
 Not tumbled to!

11 If parsons] If Bishop[s] *A*

12 wouldn't] they'd never *A*

14] Will these jokes snuff out others have before *A*

17] And Editors more dense. The world shall [cease] see *A*

THE SOUL OF THE SANDFLY [2]

‘1915’E, 5a (A0290) [A], fair draft, with sub-heading ‘A psalm of life’ and gloss ‘With apologies to the original psalmist’; 4b (A0290) [A], one stanza numbered 2, an attempted revision, under short title ‘Psalm of life’. The poem parodies H. W. Longfellow’s poem ‘The psalm of life’.

A Psalm of Life

With apologies to the original psalmist

Like some shark too cute to slumber,
Or some tortoise stuffed with steam,
We exploit the Ancient Number
For the Concentrated Cream.

Brother journalists who may not
Know the game – to you we say
Fossick, find out, fish up, pay not,
That’s the way to make things pay!

We find pictures of proud mothers,
Precious infants being smacked,
And Our Unconverted Brothers
In the Great Headhunting Act.

We find views of Alligators,
And of brave men being hurled
From balloons down red-hot craters,
Sometimes half way through the world!

Gloss] W. H. Longfellow (1807 – 1882), a popular American poet.
3-4 Ancient Number . . . Concentrated Cream] The reference is obscure.

‘1915’E, 4b reads:

Brother journalists who may not
Know the little game we play
We’re «are a» [just] fossick [out] we pay not
That[‘s] the way to make things pay

THE STRATEGY OF JONAH

‘1915’E, 10b (A0297) [A].

Old Jonah was by no means slow,
As the whale dipped, he slyly slid
Into the monster’s mouth and hid:
He jumped as prophet never did;
Indeed he was his only show.

5 his only show] his [only] show *MS*

THE SUN IS UP

ML MS A3038/1, 3a (B0093) & ‘1906’, 33a (A0071 – repeated at A0073) [JSN], fair draft. ‘1908’, 3a-3b (A0156-7) [A], fair draft, with alterations [JSN]. ML MS A3038/1, 2a & 2b (B0091-2) & ‘1908’, 10a (A0163) [JSN], fair draft.

Australia (incorporating The Bookfellow) 15 August 1907, p. 101; *GDC*; *HS* 10; *BLP* 11; *CP* 10.

JSN – RHC 25 February 1934, NLA MS 605/62-69 (corrections to proofs *CP*, with an alteration).

A3038/1, 3a & ‘1906’, 33a = A; ‘1908’, 3a-3b = B; A3038/1, 2a & 2b & ‘1908’, 10a = C

The preferred text is the third of the fair drafts, A3038/1, 2a & 2b & ‘1908’, 10a (C). (The draft is unusual in that all lines are heavily marked with stops at the end of each line. These are not shown in the notes.)

Speak not of Death – it is a merry morn,
 A glittering bird has danced into a tree.
 From his abundant heart bravely are borne
 The loves of leafy choristers to me.
 Music is of the sunlight, strong and free:
 The sun is up – the death is far away.
 The first hour is the sweetest of the day.

Blithely a bush boy wanders on a walk,
 Shaking with joy, joyous in heart and limb.
 For his delight, the trees have learned to talk
 And all the flowers have little laughs with him

- 2 glittering] [rippling] «glittering» C
 3 borne] borne C
 3 bravely are] [sweetly] «bravely» is [JSN] B • bravely is C
 3] He doth not speak of any sorrows borne A
 4] He tells the loves of choristers to me A
 5] Music is [with] «of» the sunlight [Love] is free B •
 Music is with the sunlight Love is free A
 6 The sun is up] The blood is [free] up B
 6 the death] and death *Aus*, *GDC*, *HS*, *BLP*, *CP*
 8 walk,] walk. C
 8] A bush boy goes upon his morning walk A
 9 Shaking with joy] Full eyed with joy A
 10 talk] talk. C
 10] For him the very tree[s] have learned to talk A
 11him,] him. C

Continued overleaf...

The Sun is Up (cont.)

Watching the far sky, beautiful but dim.
The sun is up – the death is far away.
The first hour is the sweetest of the day.

12 beautiful but dim] beautiful and dim *Aus, GDC, HS, BLP* • wonderful and dim *CP*
(JSN - RHC 25 February 1934: 'I think wonderful would be much better than beautiful.
Beautiful seems very weak').

12] He loves the sky – beyond the sky is dim *A*

13 The sun] The blood *A*

13 the death] and death *Aus, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

THE SUNDOWNER

‘1907’, 3a-4b (A0092-3) [JSN], fair draft, 6 stanzas numbered 1-6 and a revised stanza 1, with stanzas renumbered; 8a & 9b-10b (A0097 & A0100) [JSN], fair draft, 6 stanzas numbered 1-6 (stanza 6 at 9b, stanzas 1-5 at 10a-10b) & an unnumbered stanza (at 8a, an attempted revision of stanza 2) under title ‘The sundowner’. ‘1908’, 29b–30b & 31b (A0186-7) [JSN], draft, 7 stanzas numbered 1-7, and an additional 3 stanzas, 5 stanzas cancelled and the stanzas renumbered, entitled ‘The passing of the sundowner’. ‘1915’E, 1a-1b (A0286-7) [A], fair draft, incomplete, 7 stanzas numbered 5-11.

‘1934’, 44a–45a (A0733-4) [L], transcription, headed ‘With some apologies to the author of ‘London Streets’, with comment under title ‘This appeared in Clarion 15 September 1908. Clarion copyright’, 13 stanzas, stanza 12 misnumbered and stanza 7 cancelled and rewritten. NLA MS 1145/65, typescript [JD], 11 stanzas, enclosed with letter JSN - JD 17 February 1935. NLA MS 1145/65 [L], transcription, 11 stanzas, enclosed with letter JSN - JD 17 February 1935 and headed ‘The sundowner (Original Version). This appeared in Clarion 15 September 1908’. ‘1936’, 2a–3a & 5b (A0770-1) [FN], transcription, 11 stanzas, with comment ‘this appeared in Clarion 15 September 1908. Clarion copyright’, with a stanza headed ‘Odd verse’ [A], and revisions [L] under heading ‘Alterations. The sundowner’ (with a heading ‘Odd verse’, a stanza headed 2nd stanza, a stanza numbered 4 and a line under heading ‘1st stanza, 4th line’ [L]), revisions for *BI*. NLA MS 1145/65 [L], fair copy, headed ‘The sundowner. Revised version. With some apologies to the author of ‘London Streets’. This appeared in Clarion 1908’, 11 stanzas, with stanza 7 cancelled and rewritten.

The Clarion 15 September 1908, p. 21; *BI* 30.

JSN - JD 17 February 1935, NLA MS 1145/65 (enclosing a typed copy ‘was it you that typed it?’ and discussing poem). JSN - JD 12 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/65; 19 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/67; 27 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/65; 26 April 1936, NLA MS 1145/67; 30 April 1936, NLA MS 1145/65; 3 May 1936, NLA MS 1145/67. JSN E. (Ted) Turner 9 October 1938, NLA MS 2410 (‘It set out to ridicule the swagman as a hero. I think he was made rather too much of in those days. It was also an attempt to parody Arthur Adams London Streets’). Correspondence is given after discarded stanzas.

On 12 January 1936 N told Devaney that he thought he could improve ‘The sundowner’; on 19 January 1936 he said he would do it ‘in a few days time’; on 27 January 1936 he wrote that he was ‘enclosing the revised version’ and explained the background to the piece; on 26 April 1936 and 30 April 1936 he said he had received Devaney’s letters and ‘typed stuff’ and manuscript and said that ‘‘The sundowner’ may need little corrections’; and on 3 May 1936 he sent a list of corrections for *BI* with the comment ‘Page 16 & 17 The sundowner. Correct’.

The poem was conceived first as a short piece of 6 stanzas and extended to 7 stanzas, and then extended to become a longer poem of first 10 stanzas and then 11 stanzas, and the MSS at ‘1907’ (c. mid-1907), ‘1908’ (c.1907) and ‘1915’E (c.1908) are part of the one impulse of composition which resulted in the *Clarion* text. The poem was then revised in 1935-1936 for inclusion in *BI* in 1936.

‘1907’, 3a–4b = A; ‘1907’, 8a & 9b–10b = B; ‘1908’, 29b–30b & 31b = C; ‘1915’E, 1a–1b = D; ‘1934’, 44a–45a = E; NLA MS 1145/65 (typescript) = F; NLA MS 1145/65 (transcription [L]) = G; ‘1936’, 2a–3a & 5b = H; NLA MS 1145/65 (fair copy [L]) = I

The *Clarion* is the preferred text.

Continued overleaf...

The Sundowner (cont.)

I know not when this tiresome man
 With his shrewd sable billycan
 And his huge Nosebags rarely washed
 His Programme of Protest began.

Irresolute, revengeful, grand,
 Majestic'lly he roamed the land.

1-4] ≠ A 1-4 & A [1-4] '1st verse corrected'; ≠ B 1-4; C omitted; ≠ E 1-4; = F 1-4; ≠ G 1-4; ≠ H 1-4; ≠ I 1-4; ≠ BI 1-4

1] I know not how he first began A •

I know not how this tiresome man A 'corrected' •

I know not when this tiresome man B •

[I kn] [There is no date – he just began] | I know not [why] when this tiresome man E •

I know not whence this tiresome man G, H

2] His pilgrimage this tiresome man A •

His programme of protest began A 'corrected' •

With his cantankerous billy can B

3] With his [high] «huge» nose bags rarely washed A •

With his high nosebags rarely washed A 'corrected' •

And his unwashed Democracy E, I, BI

4] And his comodious billy can A •

And his black bottomed billy can A 'corrected' •

His unpaid Pilgrimage began E, I •

His boomed-up Pilgrimage began H, a line under heading 'Alterations' '1st stanza, 4th line', BI •

5-8] A ∅; ≠ B 5-8; C omitted; = E 5-8; = F 5-8; = G 5-8; = H 5-8; ≠ H 'Odd verse'

& H 'Odd verse. 2nd stanza'; = I 5-8; ≠ BI 9-12

5] Floundering Flat-footed through the Land B •

Tall was the grass I understand H 'Odd verse' & H 'Odd verse 2nd stanza', BI

6] Irresolute revengeful grand B •

Then did the Squatter rule the land H 'Odd verse' •

When the old squatter ruled the land H 'Odd verse. 2nd stanza', BI

6 Majestic'lly] Majestic'lly F, Majestically E, G, H & I

Continued overleaf...

The Sundowner (cont.)

Why were the Squatters kind to him?
Ah – the Wax Matches in his hand!

Sometimes he wandered far Out-Back
On a precarious Tucker-Track;
Sometimes he lacked Necessities
No Gentleman would like to lack.

Snugly, beneath some five-wire fence
He slept – next morning loitering hence
Slowly, reluctantly, he humped
His swag, conspicuous, immense.

In the full splendour of his power,
He travelled quite one mile an hour,

7] Why was the Squatter kind to him *B* •

Why were the conquerors kind to him *H* ‘Odd verse’ & *H* ‘Odd verse. 2nd Stanza’, *BI*

8] Ah – the Wax Matches in his hand [*JSN*] *B*

9-12] = *A* stanza [2] 12; *B* omitted; = *E* 9-12; = *F* 9-12; = *G* 9-12; = *H* 9-12;
= *I* 9-12; = *BI* 5-8

13-16] *A* ∅; *B* ∅; ≠ *C* 5-8 (stanza [2] [7] 7); *D* omitted; = *E* 13-16; = *F* 13-16; = *G* 13-16;
≠ *H* stanza numbered 4 under heading ‘Alterations The sundowner’; = *I* 13-16; ≠ *BI* 13-16

13] Where bullockies with oaths intense *H*, *BI*

14] Made of the dragged-up trees a fence *H*, *BI*

15] Slowly he humped resourcefully *C* •

Calmly he slept with snakes then rolled *H* •

Gambling with scorpions he rolled *BI*

16] His swag supremely loud immense *C*

17-20] ≠ *A* 13-16 (stanza [4] 8); *B* omitted; ≠ *C* 9-12 (stanza [3] 8); = *D* stanza 5 [17-20];
≠ *E* 17-20; = *F* 17-20; = *G* 17-20; = *H* 17-20; ≠ *I* 17-20; ≠ *BI* 17-20

17] In the bright heyday of his power *A* •

Full speed ahead going full power *C* •

In the full splendour of his [hour] power *H*

18 quite one] just one *A*, *C*

18] Rarely he touched one mile an hour *E*, *I*, *BI*

Continued overleaf...

The Sundowner (cont.)

Pausing anon, persistently,
For a Pint Pannikin of Flour.

Seldom he worked – he was, I fear,
Unreasonably slow and dear.
Little he earned, and that he spent
Deliberately, drinking Beer!

His clothes, of many a darksome hue,
From time to time he did renew:
Lo! the Proud Patches on his Pants,
Rudely irregular, askew!

19] The slow sun moved at even-fall *C* •

What was the goal historians say *E, I* •

Dawdling at sundown History says *BI*

20] A pile[d] up pannikin of flour *C* •

'Twas the Pint Pannikin of Flour *E* •

For the Pint Pannikin of flour *BI*

21-24] ≠ *A* 21-24; = *B* 13-16; ≠ *C* 21-24, cancelled stanza 6; = *D* stanza 6 [21-24]; = *E* 21-24; *F* 21-24; = *G* 21-24; = *H* 21-24; = *I* 21-24; = *BI* 21-24

21 worked –] worked – *B*

21] Sometimes he [walked] «worked» a month a year *A* •

Sometimes he worked a month a year *C*

22 Unreasonably] [Unsufferably] Unreasonably *D*

22] But an unwritten law austere *C*

23] Courting the Sack he spent his all *A* •

Frowned on [all] // him | as he / [he labour all he] earned | he / [earned]

// spent *C*

24] Deliberately drinking / [He spent in buying mainly] beer *C*

25-28] *A* ∅; ≠ *B* 17-20; ≠ *C* cancelled stanza [6] 11; = *D* stanza 7 [25-58]; *E* omitted; = *F* 25-28; = *G* 25-28; = *H* 25-28; *I* omitted; *BI* omitted

25] He has been mentioned as a mule *B* •

Tho he [did seem a] «was» stubborn as a mule *C*

26] Nay but he was no common fool *B* •

He was not any fool *C*

27] Patches he put upon his pants *C*

28] Bewilderingly beautiful *B, C*

Continued overleaf...

The Sundowner (cont.)

Always we know him at a glance,
This old, rough, recognised Romance!
'Mid the old ornamental gods
Surely our friend should have a chance!

Yet he shall live in Robust Rhyme,
Soliloquies and Odes Sublime!
(Strictly between Ourselves, he was
A rare old Humbug all the time).

In many a Book, or Bushland Dim
Mopokes shall give him greeting grim;

- 29-32] *A* ∅; *B* ∅; *C* ∅; = *D* stanza 8 [29-32]; = *E* 25-28 (cancelled stanza); ≠ *E* rewritten stanza 7; = *F* 29-32; = *G* 29-32; = *H* 29-32; ≠ *I* 25-28 (cancelled stanza 7, rewritten, following cancelled stanza); ≠ *BI* 25-28
29] Hopeless sore-footed child of chance *E* (replacement stanza) •
Cheerful sore-footed child of chance *I* (cancelled stanza & replacement stanza), *BI*
30 rough] [rude] «rough») *D*
30] Sadly sore-footed child of chance *E* (replacement stanza) •
Swiftly we know him at a glance *I* (cancelled stanza & replacement stanza), *BI*
31] Always the Self Compassionate *E* (replacement stanza), *I* (cancelled stanza) •
Boastful «and» Self-Compassionate *I* (replacement stanza) •
Boastful and self-compassionate *BI*
32] Australian Interstate Romance *E* (replacement stanza), *I* (cancelled stanza & replacement stanza) •
Australia's Interstate Romance *BI*
33-36] *A* ∅; ≠ *B* 21-24; ≠ *C* cancelled stanza [9] 12; ≠ *D* stanza 9 [33-36]; = *E* 29-32; = *F*
33-36; = *G* 33-36; = *H* 33-36; = *I* 29-32; ≠ *BI* 29-32
33] Long shall he live in Prose and Rhyme *B* •
So shall he live in prose and Rhyme *C* (cancelled stanza) •
Yea he shall live in Robust Rhyme *D* •
Soliloquies and Odes [divine] Sublime *H* •
Shall he not live in Robust Rhyme *BI* •
34] Yea he shall flourish he shall climb *B* •
And many «an» awkward sand hill climb *C* (cancelled stanza)
35] Between ourselves I think he was *C* (cancelled stanza)
37-40] ≠ *A* 9-12 (stanza [3] 13); *B* omitted; *C* omitted; = *D* stanza 10 [37-40]; ≠ *E* 33-36; =
F 37-40; ≠ *G* 37-40; ≠ *H* 37-40; ≠ *I* 33-36; ≠ *BI* 33-36
37 Book or] Book of *D*, *E*, *I*, *F*, *G*, *H*
37] In Story book of Bushland Dim *A*
38 Mopokes] Mopoke *A*

Continued overleaf...

The Sundowner (cont)

The Bunyip pottering in the reeds
 Shall pass the time-o-day to him.

On many a Page our Friend shall take
 Small sticks his evening fire to make:
 Shedding his Waistcoat, he shall mix,
 On its smooth back his Johnny-Cake.

Amen!

39 in the reeds] 'mid the reed *A*

39 The Bunyip] The old swans *E, I, BI*

40 time-o-day] time of day *BI*

41-44] *A* ∅; *B* ∅; *C* stanza numbered [10] [13]11; = *D* stanza 11 [41-44]; = *E* 37-40; = *F*

41-44; = *G* 41-44; = *H* 41-44; = *I* 37-40; = *BI* 37-40

41 On many] In many *C*

44 On its] On [his] «its» *C*

The *Clarion* text and the transcription *H* finish with 'Amen' after line 44, an addition by Randolph Bedford (JSN - JD 12 January 1936).

Discarded stanzas

A stanza 5, lines 17-20:

By slipping swamp «and» blinding sand
 By a strong sun long dazed and tanned
 Reluctantly year in year out
 Flatfootedly he trod this land

B stanza 3, lines 9-12 & *C* cancelled stanza [5] 9, lines 17-20:

So shall he not unsung expire *B*
 Let him «not» rashly so | so expire *C*
 The sun shall listen to his sire *B*
 Let not thy son hear it from his sire *C*
 Here was a man who held he had *B*
 Here was a man who thought he had *C*
 The right to always start a Fire *B, C*

B an unnumbered stanza following stanza 6, attempted revision of stanza 2;

Floundering flatfooted through the land
 Irresolute revengeful grand
 [A patient strategist he planned] The vile Fat Man's Discomfiture
 This patient strategist he planned

C cancelled stanza 1, lines 1-4:

All up and down this glorious land
 Through the sly salt pen gravelled sand
 [Hand] He walked as walked the Wandering Jew
 By his own bold inertia banned.

Continued overleaf...

The Sundowner (cont.)

C stanza [4] [8] 9, lines 13-16:

Half hidden by the grime and [murl] murk
 Deep in his dismal soul did lurk
 Strange notions neither new or old
 A strong forgetfulness of work

C stanza [7] 10, lines 25-28:

Our Friend is tired the day is done
 Sadly / [Smiling] he slips down with the sun
 Lawson a grim chief mourner stands
 [He is the] A funeral – well there isn't on[e]

E stanza 11, lines 41-44 & E 3 lines following a rewritten stanza 7;

I stanza 11, lines 41-44; and an additional stanza in BI, lines 41-44:

Tumbling [or 'Fumbling'] with leaves and silvery bark E 41
 'Mid the dry leaves and silvery bark E the second of the 2 stanzas, I, BI
 Often at nightfall will he park E 42, omitted in the second of the two stanzas
 Often at nightfall will he park I & BI
 Close to some giggling creek and hear E 43
 Close to a homeless creek and hear E the second of the 2 stanzas, I, BI
 The bunyip paddling in the dark E both stanzas, I, BI

A cancelled line at the end of the MS E reads:

[Move at the sunrise with the moving shade]

This may have been intended for the second of the 2 stanzas at E which has only 3 lines

JSN - JD 17 February 1935:

I am enclosing a typed copy of the 'Sundowner'. It appeared in the 'Clarion' about 1908. Have you already seen this piece? Was it you that typed it? I am sure I forget. The 'amen' is not my idea. Randolph Bedford put that in. Randolph was always rather blasphemous.

Such a line as 'the shrewd sable billy-can' was put in to imitate Arthur Adams' peculiar use of adjectives. The piece is a parody on Adams' 'London Streets'. I like the metre very much and I think Adams did some fine things in it.

JSN - JD 27 January 1936:

I was attempting to parody Arthur Adams' piece 'London Streets'. He used a great many out of the way adjectives which sometimes didn't fit in very well. I was also trying to ridicule the hero-worship of swagmen which Lawson was making rather popular.

Neilson's poem and one by W. P. Brunton, entitled 'A swaggie's growl', were published together under the heading 'The Swagman. Two Points of View'.

THE SURRENDER

ML MS 3354/2, Item 6, 10a [JSN].

Softly he used the lover's art
Till all her wintry ways were gone;
As easily ran out her heart
As butter on a new-made scone.

THE SWEETEST SWEET

‘1915’C, 3a & 4B (A0314 & A0316) [JSN], draft, entitled ‘The sweetest wine’, with title cancelled and retitled ‘The sweetest sweet’; 6a, 7a & 8a (A0317, A0318 & A0319) [JSN], fair draft.

3a & 4b = A; 6a, 7a & 8a = B

The fair draft 6a, 7a & 8a (B) is the preferred text.

Your hat, delightful, sombre, wide,
A softening shadow cast;
Your face, filled up with witchery,
Smiled at me as I passed.
Forgive me, as a thirsty man,
Because a sigh I drew . . .
The sweetest wine in all the world
Would be a kiss from you.

A babe there is about the world,
A busy babe I trow;
His work is here and there and I
Have felt his arrows now.
Forgive me, as a thirsty man,
Whose dull eyes wandering knew
The sweetest wine in all the world
Would be a kiss from you.

Of sweets there are about the world
A hundred thousand kinds,
And some there are, the faintest scents,
That walk upon the winds . . .

- 1 delightful] deligh[t]some *A*
2 softening] Violet *A*
4 Smiled at me] Appalled me *A*
8 kiss] [drink] «kiss» *B*
9] There is a baby in the world *A*
10 babe] [baby] babe *A*
12 now] [more] now *A*
14] Who [only] could not help he knew *A*
15] But oh the sweetest wine I think *A*
17 the world] the Earth *A*

Continued overleaf...

The Sweetest Sweet (cont.)

And some are fair and white flowers
 And saffron, mauve and blue,
 But still I think the sweetest sweet
 Would be a kiss from you.

Oh, some are fond of sunsets red
 And stars that stare and gleam,
 And some sing loud in green days,
 And some in summer dream.
 Oh, there be many kinds of sweets
 Since Eden's garden grew . . .
 But still I think the sweetest sweet
 Would be a kiss from you.

20 winds] wind *A*

21] And some there are as fair flowers *A*

22] Strange <Queens> among the dew *A*

23] But still I know the sweetest thing *A*

26 stare] glare *A*

27 some sing loud] some go mad *A* • some [some] «sing» loud *B*

28 dream] dreams *A*

29 Oh] And *A*

30 Eden's gardens] Cf. Genesis 2: 8: And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden . . . *AV*

THE TIME FOR A TOAST

‘1908’, 21b (A0175) [A], with title [JSN].

When we have swilled a lot of wine
The Empire is our proudest boast;
Our navy never was so fine;
Oh then’s the time to give a toast!

4 then’s] then«s» [JSN] *MS*

THE TIME OF TUMULT

There are three discrete versions of this poem. Two drafts were written c. 1908, and the second of these was then revised and published in the *Clarion* 15 December 1908. The *Clarion* text was then rewritten and sent to James Devaney for *BI* in early 1936.

THE TIME OF TUMULT [1]

‘1915’E, 5b (A0292) [JSN & FN], fair draft, 2 x 6-line stanzas; 6b (A0292) [A], fair draft, 2 x 5-line stanzas.

The MSS show an approach to composition that N used often: that is, a first draft, followed by a second, often of lesser quality, immediately following the first and usually abandoned in favour of the first. The first draft at 5b (A) is taken as the preferred text on this basis.

‘1915’E, 5b = A; ‘1915’E, 6b = B

It is the time when sinners grieve no more
 For all the ghosts that come up from old times;
 When scented air is at the sick man’s door
 And strong men leap, and even cripples climb
 In the green days when little rivers roar,
 And rhymers seek the wilderness for rhyme.

It is the time when cherries lose their green,
 When new-weaned lambs have heavy sorrowing
 And mad maids teach their lovers to be keen:
 Oh time of tumult, when all choirs sing,
 Tempest of all the colours, fierce and clean,
 Oh days of blazing merriment, Oh Spring!

1-6] ≠ B 1-5 rewritten and discarded

7-10] ≠ B 6-9

8 When] [And] «When» A

9 And] When B 8

11] Tempest of colour oh terrific spring B 10

12] B ∅

Discarded stanza B (lines 1-5):

There is a time it seemeth set apart
 For all who would old mysteries explore
 When tender thoughts assail the tender heart
 And scented air is at the sick man’s door
 In undimmed days when little rivers roar

THE TIME OF TUMULT [2]

NLA MS 1145/67 [L], transcription headed ‘Original version | appeared in Clarion 1908’.
The Clarion 15 December 1908, *HI*, not located. (The State Library of Victoria advises a section of the paper has been razored out of the issue on page 9.) A revised version of this was published in *BI*, 23 (see ‘The time of tumult’ [3]).

In the absence of the *Clarion* text the transcription is taken as the preferred text.

Joy in the wilderness, joy in the mart,
A mystery beats at every door:
The tender thoughts assail the tender hearts,
In undimmed days the little rivers roar,
The gaudy flowers amaze us more and more.
It is the time when cherries lose their green,
When new-weaned lambs have heavy sorrowing
And mad maids teach their lovers to be keen:
Oh Time of Tumult, when all choirs sing,
Tempest of all the colours, whispering Spring.

THE TIMES OF SOLOMON

‘1907’, 37a (A0126) [JSN].

They knew not that they didn’t know:
They had strange ways of doing things:
It was a time of Bluff and Blow;
Captains, Kesars, Concubines and Kings.

4 Captains, Kesars] (Cardan Kerors) *MS*.

Cf. Rudyard Kipling’s poem ‘Recessional’:

The tumult and the shouting dies;
The captains and the kings depart.

And also Charles Lamb’s line:

So shall we all look – kings and kaisers – stripped for the last voyage.

THE TULIP IN THE RAIN

ML MS 3354/3, Item 1, 8/15a [JSN], fair draft. ML MS A3038/2, 18a (B0026) [FN], transcription, with notes, 'about 1910' and 'note! just get this!', 'about 70 words'.

The fair draft is the preferred text.

The rain was on her left shoulder
And on her right, the Sun;
Of all the flowers in all the world
She was the tenderest one.

No scent from any loitering flower,
No honey on the tree,
Could add a fragrance to her face
So delicate was she.

The rainbow on her left shoulder
Had cast a heavenly chain;
The low sun on the west did kiss
That tulip in the Rain.

5 loitering] The letter formation is uncertain and the transcription and *WS* have *listening*.
However, the *r* following *e* is the same formation as the second *r* in *fragrance* at line
7 and the *o* is similar to the *o* in *world* at line 3.

THE TURNING OF THE YEAR

The Sun (Sydney) 26 January 1913, *HI*, not at this location, and no other location found. The text is taken from *GDC* (A & B), p.100.

At every turning of the year
A madness moves into the hours;
The roses in the rainy time,
The frail sweet family of flowers . . .
How tenderly they speak to me.
Sweetheart, my longing is for thee.

Did ever love so burn as ours
'Mid all tempestuous loves of yore?
The light that dances from the sky
Shows for a moment and no more
Down in this world of mystery.
Sweetheart, my longing is for thee.

THE UTTER UNREASONABLENESS OF CASABIANCA

ML MS 3038/3, 10a (B0071) [FN], transcription, entitled ‘The burning deck’.
The Clarion 1 March 1909, p. 14, under the heading ‘Condensed Classics’.

JSN – Vivienne [Montgomery] 24 December 1934, NLA MS 1145/72 (giving advice about writing verse, quotes ‘four lines in the ballad metre . . . [‘The boy stood on the burning deck’ by] Mrs Hemans, an English poetess’).

The Clarion is the preferred text. Punctuation is reproduced from the printed text.

The boy on the warm deck was standing,
His manner was cool and commanding;
But why stood he there
In that horrible glare?
And what could he gain by so standing?

Title] A comic parody of Mrs Hemans’s ‘Casabianca’ (‘The boy stood on the burning deck’). Mrs Felicia Dorothea Hemans (1793-1835) was an English author whose writings were very popular.

THE VOICE OF THE STIFF

ML MS 3354/2, Item 5, 23a [JSN], fair draft, 1 stanza cancelled. Lines 9-12 occur (with variants) in the 8-line piece 'From a coffin', q.v.

Don't muster any tears,
Give me no 'Kid';
I drank me many beers,
What if I did?

I saw things beautiful
Kissed lips divine;
I charge you that you pull
No leg of mine.

I want no epitaph,
No sugared rhyme;
I had my little laugh
Once on a time.

2] [Don't make a shine] *MS*, cancelled line preceding line 2

Cancelled stanza following stanza 3:
[Patching up all my ways
Making them sound
I shall have lots of day
Here underground]

THE WAITING OF MARTIN'S WOMAN

NLA MS 1145/60, 49 [FN], fair draft.

Martin is down at the little town drinking his whisky neat,
And many there be that swear by him and steady him on his feet,
And many there be who drink with him and hasten to call him friend –
All will be pleased with the God who made the man who was out to spend.

*

*

*

Three miles west is a little hut where two babes are asleep,
And the little fire and the chimney holds beings that rise and peep.
The night is cold and the night is still, 'tis nearly ten by the clock –
Martin's woman is there at the fire making a baby frock.

THE WEDDING IN SEPTEMBER

NLA MS 1145/60, 87-89 [A], with alterations [JSN], draft, 9 stanzas numbered 1-9, with some renumbering and with cancelled lines, and 1 cancelled stanza unnumbered. '1915'B, 4b (A0361) [A], 3 stanzas numbered 1-3 under heading 'Odd verses'; 10b, (A0367) [A], 3 stanzas, 1 unnumbered and cancelled, followed by 2 stanzas numbered 4 & 6; 11b (A0368) [A], 2 stanzas, unnumbered; 12a-14a (A0368-0370) [A], fair draft, 13 stanzas, unnumbered apart from one stanza numbered 5. ML MS 4937/7, Item 4 [A], fair copy, 16 stanzas.
HS 83; *BLP* 22; *CP* 74.

JSN - AGS 17 August 1919 (following publication of poem in *HS*: 'I never thought the Wedding would be so readable'). JSN - RHC 25 February 1934, NLA MS 605/62-69 (a correction to proofs *CP*). JSN - JD 28 October 1934, NLA MS 1145/68 (discusses 'Wedding in September', 'The cat and the fiddler' and 'Petticoat green').

Correspondence is given after discarded stanzas.

In his letter to Stephens N said that he was pleased the poem had gone into *HS* and added 'I think the notion in it is good but I never could manage to alter it and it is very hard to feel or think the same as one could a few years back'. This seems to imply that he tried to revise the piece some time after he wrote it, perhaps for *HS*. However, he later told Devaney (JSN – JD 28 October 1934) that he 'finished both 'The wedding in September' and 'Petticoat green' in a few weeks' and the MSS occurrences in the notebooks support this statement. The MSS show an approach to composition that N used quite often: that is, a first attempt, followed by a second written with a slightly different perspective, which was then abandoned in favour of the first.

NLA MS 1145/60, 87-89 is the first attempt, stimulated by 'The cat and the fiddler' which occurs in '1915'B at 5a-7a, and the second attempt occurs at '1915'B, 12a-14a. ('The wedding in September' repeats several lines and phrases that occur in *The cat and the fiddler*.) The stanzas at '1915'B, 4b relate to this second draft and appear to be revisions for the stanzas at 13b-14a. N then returned to the first attempt and the stanzas at 10b & 11b extend this draft. Part-lines between stanzas numbered [6] & [7] 8 and [7] 8 and [8] 9 and at the end of a cancelled stanza following the stanza numbered 10 at NLA MS 1145/60, 87-89 are placed there as a reminder (for revision) and the fair copy is derived from these various drafts.

NLA MS 1145/60, 87-89 = A; '1915'B, 10b = B; '1915'B, 11b = C; '1915'B, 12a-14a = D; '1915'B, 4b = E; ML MS 4937/7 – 4 = F

The fair copy (F) ML MS 4937/7 – 4 is the preferred text.

Continued overleaf...

The Wedding in September (cont.)

They talked as neighbours solemnly
Of lambs and wheat and wool:
The stripling said, 'twill not be dark,
Tonight the moon is full.

Into the wedding feast there came
The many psalms of Spring:
The fiddler by the seamstress sat
And said not anything.

The bridegroom was the happiest man
That ever stepped the town
But the little seamstress, she had cried
And made the wedding gown.

Oh ask me not why she has cried,
Nay, ask a simpler thing:
Why do the little birds go out
To meet the kiss of Spring?

* * *

- 1-4] ≠ *A* 1-4
- 1 as neighbours] like neighbours *A* 1
- 2 lambs] lands *A* 2
- 5-6] = *A* 5-6; ≠ *B* unnumbered stanza, cancelled
- 5] [Into the dainty wedding feast] *B*
- 6] There came the blaze of Spring *B*
- 9-12] = *A* 9-12; ≠ *D* 5-8
- 9 happiest] proudest *D* 5
- 13-16] ≠ *D* 33-36; ≠ *E* stanza numbered 2
- 13 Oh] And *D* 33
- 13] Nay ask me not of what she thought *E*
- 14 Nay . . . a simpler] Nay . . . an easier *D* 34 • But . . . a simpler *E*
- 15] Why do the speechless butterflies *E*
- 16 the kiss] the mouth *D* 36
- 16] Tell parables of spring *E*

Continued overleaf...

The Wedding in September (cont.)

In with the dark the dancing came
 In a little yellow room,
 And by the flowers the old folks said
 The young ones love the bloom.

The fiddler was a witless man
 By night or noon or day,
 But the world had need of moistening
 And he had tears to play.

He played the darkness into death
 And stood where joy had been;
 The bridegroom could not see the bride
 Or know what Love could mean.

He played of maids and merriment
 And the young blood of the rover,
 Of sacraments he played, and tolls,
 And the baby joy of clover.

17-20] ≠ *A* 13-16

17-18] *A* has 2 cancelled lines, with replacement lines following line 16 [JSN]:

[After the feast they slowly walked]

[To the little yellow room]

After the dark the dancing came

In a little yellow room

19 And by] Beside *A* 15

21-24] = *A* 17-20

25-28] ≠ *A* 21-24

26 joy] joys *A* 22

28 Love] [love] Love *F* 28

28] His listening was so keen *A* 24

29] A part-line follows *A* 24 [JSN]: He play maids & merriment [sic] •

He played of love that will not love *D*

30] And the whistling of a rover *D*

31] He played of tolls and sacraments *D*

Continued overleaf...

The Wedding in September (cont.)

The fiddler was a handless man
That could not sow or reap.
He did not know the care of kine,
Or the many ways of sheep.

Of water-birds he played and boats
And the white legs in a stream,
Of hot love in the market place
And the spinning of a dream,

He played for timorous worshippers
Who have no God to call,
He played to make the flowers grow,
To make the manna fall.

He played of falls and holiness
And the whistling of a rover,
Of sacraments he played, and tolls,
And the baby joy of clover.

The fiddler played. On lies or hate
He would not waste a tune –
A bridesmaid pale with jealousy
Was patient as the moon.

33-36] ≠ *A* 25-28; ≠ *D* 17-20

34 That could . . . or] He could . . . or *A* 26 • He could . . . nor *D* 18

35 He did] He could *A* 27

37] A part-line follows *A* 28 [JSN]: He play water birds [sic]

37-40] ≠ *C* the 2nd of 2 stanzas

38 And the white] And white *C*

39 Of hot love] Of meetings *C*

40 a dream] the dream *C*

45-48] ≠ *A* 29-32; ≠ *D* 25-28

45] He played of love that will not love *D* 25

47] He played of sacraments and tolls *A* 31 •

He played of tolls and sacraments *D* 27

49-52] ≠ *B* a stanza numbered 6

49 played. On] played. On *F*

50 would] could *D*

Continued overleaf...

The Wedding in September (cont)

The seamstress had the unsoiled heart
That suffers heat and chill
And God had plagued her in the eyes
With pity hot to spill.

He played of all that men call death,
Too deep a thing to end
And Life, the unfilled Reveller
That has a coin to spend.

He played of deeps and loneliness
And the whistling of a rover,
Of merriment he played and maids
And the summer-time in clover.

53-56] = *B* stanza numbered 4

54 heat] [hate] «heat» *F* 54

57-60] = *A* 33-36; ≠ *C* the 1st of 2 stanzas

58] That is to[o] deep to end *C*

58 deep] dear *HS, BLP, CP* 58

59 And life] Of life *A* 35

59] And life that eats of old hope *C*

60 That] And *C*

61-64] ≠ *E* stanza numbered 3

61] He played of skulls and concubines *E*

63] He played of love the death of love *E*

64] And mellow days in clover *E*

Discarded lines and stanzas

A cancelled stanza [9] 10 lines 33-36∅:

[He did not hear as man may hear
When a woman[’s] whispers call
He played to make the flowers grow
To make the manna fall]

A cancelled lines, following the cancelled stanza:

[He played the chills of paradise
And the softening of the moon]

A a part- line under the number 11, following the cancelled lines at the end of the draft[JSN]:

He play Love will <out> bide

D stanza 1, lines 1-4:

There was a little creek that ran
Light-hearted as a rhyme
And ewes who lingered for their lambs
Came crying all the time

Continued overleaf...

The Wedding in September (cont.)

D stanzas 3 & 4, lines 9-16:

Oh the white silk was delicate
 In the gold of afternoon
 And [a] little maid with jealousy
 Went yellow as the moon

The fiddler came he could not smile
 By night or noon or day
 But the evil things that sat by him
 Did move him in his play

D stanzas 6-8, lines 21-32:

He played to make the flowers grow
 To make the manna fall
 The little heart and the lame heart
 [The] «Was» sighing in it all

The bride she had a lissom waist
 And the eyes of melting brown
 But the little seamstress she had cried
 And made the Wedding gown

D stanzas 10-11, lines 37-44:

She dreamed too long of a quiet home
 And in her dreams she smiled
 She did not dream of a long day
 Of the sickning of a child [sic]

It is indeed the cleanest dream
 Since dreaming first began
 Twas all of the white children
 And the lordship of a man

D stanza 12, lines 45-48:

The bride she had the sweetest face
 That ever blessed the town
 But the little seamstress she had cried
 And made the wedding gown

D stanza 13, lines 49-52:

The fiddler pla[ays the] «ayed» of sealed love
 And the whistling of the rover
 He played of tolls and sacraments
 And the baby joy of clover

Continued overleaf...

The Wedding in September (cont.)

E stanza numbered 1:

Perchance she dreamed of a green heaven
Of Singers undefiled
Of raids and rites at the full moon
Or the sickening of a child

JSN - JD 28 October 1934:

Two bits of verse I remember well are ‘The wedding in September’ and ‘Petticoat green’.

I was often struck by the dreadful sounds made by cats during their nightly concerts. I believe I attempted to write something about these evil sounds but I failed. I tried in some way to connect the mysterious sounds from the fiddle with the mysterious sounds from the cat. I don’t remember ever having read any attempt of this sort by any poet. [He is referring here to ‘The cat and the fiddler’ which occurs in the same notebook as ‘The wedding in September’ and which was the stimulus for this poem.]

As I have told you before, one winter I was taking some dope after I had a bad back. I felt in very good spirits and started writing some verse. I finished both ‘The wedding in September’ and ‘Petticoat green’ in a few weeks. The fiddler playing about so many different things all started from the dreadful sounds that came from the cat.

I think I wrote ‘Petticoat green’ because green is such a delightful colour for weak eyes. These two pieces [three pieces] are I think twins in spirit. They ramble about the influence of colour and sound on the human being.

THE WHEAT IS IN THE EAR

‘1912’, 6b (A0255) [JSN], fair draft, one stanza numbered 1.

Delight is at the heart:
Delight is on the eye:
It is no time to part,
It is no time to die.
The taste of gold is here:
We shall not suffer fear:
Let us pause and often,
For the old year’s coffin:
The wheat is in the ear.

9 is in the] is «in» the *MS*

THE WHITE CHILD

‘1907’, 24a (A0113) [JSN], unfinished, 1 × 2-line stanza numbered 1, with the rest of the page left blank; 31a (A0120) [JSN], incomplete (the previous leaf removed), 1 × 6-line stanza numbered 2 and 2 lines following (the lines following separated from the stanza by a row of crosses); 35b-36b (A0125-6) [JSN], fair draft, 3 × 6-line stanzas.

24a = A; 31a = B; 35a-36b = C

The fair draft (C) is the preferred text.

The sun goes high, the summer bird doth tell
 How he doth love his love – and all is well.
 The pleasing petals, every frailest thing
 Runs riding merry races through the Spring.
 Peace in the air – it seemeth every day
 Good for to sleep and dream the world away.

* * *

Red lipped is she, red lipped as tropic flower
 Growing into the glory of her power.
 Blue eyes are hers – she hath the lily’s skin;
 Of our own blood is she – our very kin.
 For such men fought and died, and dying, smiled –
 Fairest of all God’s fairest things, a child.

Love we the Land, the Land wherein she grew;
 Softly she speaks a sermonette to you.
 If thine own foe thou art then who shall be
 Thy friend in thy first grim adversity?
 How can ye fear the shadow men call Fate?
 Lift up your eyes – and Lo, the Unguarded Gate.

2 well.] well. *MS C*

4 Spring.] Spring. *MS C*

6 away.] away. *MS C*

12 child.] child. *MS C*

10 our own blood is she –] our [own] blood is she – *C*

12 child.] child. *MS C*

14 speaks] speak[s] *C*

18] Lift up [thine] «your» eyes and Lo the Unguarded Gate. *C*

Discarded lines and stanzas

A lines under number 1:

Radiant is she red lipped as tropic flower
 Drunken with long delight

Continued overleaf...

The White Child (cont.)

B stanza numbered 2 and two lines following:

Shall we forget when gladness fills the cup
Our Fathers struggling from the long mists up
For these «two» eyes with life[’s] young flood aglow
Mothers have fought with dragons [long] ago
The brave blood gush[ed] the tears ran out like rain
The rugged centuries about their pain
* * *

Oh falling hair oh softened cheek and chin
What kiss comes sweeter [than] the kiss of kin

THE WHITE PLAYER

‘1915’C, 11b –12b (A0323-4) [JSN], unfinished.

It is the old moon Teenie, mellow and tired with tears,
The old compassionate player wise with the weight of years.

It is the old moon sweetheart, that plays to a million cells,
Giving us hope and favours in its maze of parables.

She plays on the pipes of pity, cries on the querulous strings,
Her heart is big with the loving of flutt’ring human things.

She gives her light to lovers, her peace to thriving trees,
She is more than a prayer to the sailor out on the leaping seas.

She gives to the brooding mother love for the child unborn,
She stirs the joy in a young man’s blood and cries with a man forlorn.

It is the old moon Teenie – the pulse of the rushing Spring
Is all in her heart with the winter’s death and the summer’s junketing.

It is the old moon sweetheart, I hear while the hour is mine;
I will kiss to the mellow music and walk in the yellow wine.

Oh, the moon is a white player, kind with a mother’s charm,
Lovers are all – the children may have come to harm.

[*Unfinished*]

1 tears] tear[s] *MS*

3 to a million cells] to [«with»] a million [bells] cells *MS*

4 hope and favours . . . parables] hope and and favours . . . parabels *MS*

5 She plays on] [It] She plays [of] on *MS*

6 flutt’ring] flutt’ring *MS*

7] She gives her light // to lovers | her peace [to] <thriving> trees *MS*

10 man’s] man[’s] *MS*

12] Is all in her heart [and] «with» the winter[’s] death and the summer’s junketing *MS*

14 hear] here *MS*

15 mother’s] mother[’s] *MS*

Cancelled part-line following line 16:

[She gives them peace for a promise]

THE WIDOW MOVES

ML MS A3038/1, 25b (B0131) [JSN], 2 stanzas, unnumbered, & ML MS A3038/2, 11a (B0017) [JSN], 1 stanza, unnumbered, draft. ML MS A3038/2, 12a (B0019) [FN], is a transcription of MS A3038/2, 11a with comment by FN who was obviously unaware of the other stanzas.

In yellow mist of the tempestuous Spring
 Shyly she takes the spice of suffering.
 Making strange music, purple and alone,
 Glistening with merriment, white as a stone,
 The Widow moves.

What man is brave those red lips to resist?
 Brothers, be cautioned, let her go unkissed.
 Lissome her figure, all her face a ruse;
 Softly she steps, the sweetest thing in shoes;
 The Widow moves.

Fair is her forehead and her hair is jet
 With Youth and Mourning strangely set.
 A challenger in purple, calm and deep,
 Doubtful as death, Imperious as sleep,
 The Widow moves.

3] Making strange music [in a daintily she steps the] purple «and» alone *MS*

8 her figure . . . a ruse] he[r] figure . . . [her] a ruse *MS*

11 jet] The writing is not clear and this word may be *yet*: *jet* is more likely, and apposite in this context.

12 strangely set] strangely dimly set *MS*

13 challenger in] challenger [of] [a?] in *MS* (writing not clear)

14 as sleep] a[s] sleep *MS*

15] The leaf has been cut below line 14, but the lettering is just discernible.

The comments at MS A3038/2, 12a read:

Note by Frank :- This fragment is apparently a Quatrain by Shaw Neilson (his own handwriting). I think it is about a dead child just put in a coffin before the lid is <fast>. (It seems striking to my way of thought) [The stanza is then given.]

I don't think the word 'Mourning' is 'Morning'? Perhaps 'Doubtful in Death Imperious in sleep' is more what Shaw Neilson meant? No title was above the verse.

THE WINDOW TO THE HEAVENS

ML MS 3354/2, Item 6, 14a [?], fair draft, incomplete (part of the right edge of the leaf has been torn off), 3 stanzas. NLA MS 1145/76, p.17, typed transcription [FN], 3 stanzas. McKimm MS 21, typed transcription, entitled 'The windows to heaven', *HI*, not located. Typed transcription [FN], 2 stanzas, with a note, entitled 'Early gone', location not noted, probably typed for James Devaney.

HI lists the poem as 'My window to the heavens' and has no entry for 'Early gone'.

MS 3354/2-6, 14a = A; MS 'Early gone' = B

The fair draft (A) is the preferred text.

My Love is not as others – those who sigh,
Whose souls are clogged, who hear not birds singing,
Whose eyes call up the eyes of mild cattle,
Whose feet step not to the uplifting music:
Not as these is my love, my window to the heavens.

Spring in her heart – she hastens as the whirlwind,
To love her is perpetual violence.
Her brown eyes ask so much and there close under
Lieth a land of calls and creeds and shadows:
How fair is my love, my window to the heavens.

For all her scorn yet has she a kind pity.
Once did her tears make rain, fast rain and heavy,
'Twas when a white lamb bleated at the midnight
Striving to find his dumb dead mother:
How did she weep, my window to the heavens.

1-5] omitted *B*. *B* has an introductory line: Oh! dear is my love – my window to the heavens!

1 those who sigh] The reading is conjectural: *those* is followed by the letters *wh* and what may be either an *a* or an *o*.

2 hear not birds] hear [n..] birds *MS*

6-10] = *B* stanza 1

8 brown eyes] brown [ask as] eyes *A*

11 yet has she] yet she hath *B*

12 tears make rain] tears fall fast *B*

14 his dumb dead] his dumb his dead *A*

14] Struggling to arouse his dumb – his dead – mother *B*

Frank's note reads: 'This is the only instance of blank verse – written in his 'late teens' – in Shaw Neilson's notebooks.'

THE WINE

ML MS 3354/2, Item 5, 21b [JSN], fair draft, 2 stanzas.

The Clarion 10 May 1909, p. 12, 3 stanzas.

The Clarion is the preferred text.

The Drink of Life, it is a drink divine
Of an old vintage sometime fallen through.
A glist'ning god, one day, weary with wine
Spilt of his blessing all along the blue.

I drink, I dream upon a thousand rides
In a red chariot all along the green.
Lovers are everywhere, and scented brides
With all their men make merry walk between.

Delightful drink the drinker buys and buys
Ere the inn closes, for the night is near.
With a sweet summer thirst he cries, and cries,
Let us be drunken while the day is here.

3] Some glistening God weary with joy and wine *MS*

6 all along] over all *MS*

8 make merry] made merry *MS*

9-12] *MS* ∅

THE WOMAN DYES

‘1908’, 19b (A0173) [JSN].

Do we forget when Woman dyes
Her beauteous tresses, dark, or fair?
Maybe we’re soft – but we have eyes –
We’ve always noticed Woman’s hair!

3] [Not this] «maybe» we’re soft – but we have eyes *MS*

THE WOODLAND WAY

‘1908’, 20a (A0173) [JSN]. ‘1909’, 5a (A0203) [JSN], entitled ‘In the wilderness’. ML MS 3354/2, Item 6, 12b [JSN].

I walked along the woodland way
Brimming with Love, and big with Hope.
On a mere sapling, softly gray
I read of Skitely’s Shaving Soap.

2 brimming] briming *MS*, an error of haste

‘1909’, 5a reads;

Sweet was the wilderness: the air [sic]
Blessed and balm full of hope
But ah the pester fiend was there
I read of Skitely[’s] Shaving Soap

3354/2-6/12b reads:

The cool bewildering woodland
Gave unto me a heart of hope
On a mere sapling slim and [softly] grey
I read of Skitely’s Shaving Soap

THE WORSHIPPER

‘1910’, 16b (A0238) [A], fair draft, with corrections [JSN].

What should I know of God? he lives so far
In that uncanny country called the blue.
Sweetheart, I cannot worship moon or star,
I’ll worship you.

I shall have miracles of light above,
My church will be an acre of green spring,
And while I pray I’ll see the world you love
Still blossoming.

I shall be lifted with the scent of air
And the strong sun will wash my doubts away;
You will be near me when I go to prayer
To hear me pray.

1 lives] live«s» [JSN] *MS*

4 I’ll] I«’ll» [JSN] *MS*

8] «Still blossoming» [JSN] *MS*

THE YOUNG MAN IN HIS STRENGTH

‘1909’, 8a (A0206) [JSN].

Quietly he caught a horse – he rode all day
By many a yellow lane and sleepy farm.
At night, the old folk looked the other way
And a white girl was circled by his arm.

THERE CAME A WHISPER

‘1915’C, 1b-2a (A0313) [JSN], fair draft.

There came a whisper
On a day to me
Saying, ye shall look far,
Look and fail to see.

Ye shall thirst and hunger
In a Paradise,
Ye shall fear gladness
With the grave, grave eyes.

Ye shall doubt the morrow,
Ye shall hate the day,
And the little home about you
And the field far away.

Ye shall speak to blue winds,
Winds that never tire,
The long cold will claim you
And the old world will maim you
With its flowers of fire.

2 day to me] day to to me *MS*

6 Paradise] Paridise *MS*

THERE WAS A DREAM

‘1910’, 19a-19b (A0240-1) [JSN], draft.

There was a little dream of mine,
In the cold wind it grew and grew
And the ludicrous moonbeams made
Strange countries white and blue –

Where all the citizens were girls,
With most delightsome legs to see;
Bravely they beat about my heart
Stirring the little dream in me.

And in the mist were quiet flowers
That widows in their dim days knew;
Kindness and kisses, and the ways
Of brown hawks listing in the blue –

The red lights and all the blood,
All the green drunkenness of Spring,
And the white girls in the white street
Lisping of love and junketing.

Then did I cry one night,
I am not tired of sun or rain!
But oh! the dream is in me –
It is upon me in its pain.

1 a little dream] a [dream] little dream *MS*

3 moonbeams] moon[made]«beams» *MS*

7 they beat] the[y] beat *MS*

16 junketing.] junketing. *MS*

17 did I] did [I] *MS*

20 upon me] upon [me] *MS*

¶ ‘There was a gentle woman dropping tears’

ML MS A3038/1, 36b (B0151) [JSN], incomplete.

[.....]

* * *

There was a gentle woman dropping tears,
There was a painted girl, wistful and witty;
There was a red lane in a black city
And a green hate eating hilarious years.

There was a strong man with a proud name.
Loving his work, he toiled and he did spend
All his life willingly, for love – but at the end
There at the dark they found his hidden shame.

There was a maid who could not be a bride
And she did ache with Love – there was a child
Sucking dry breasts, but Oh – my heart is wild
[.....]

[*Incomplete*]

4 years.] years. *MS*
10 Love – there] Love – There *MS*
11 Oh – my] Oh – my *MS*

¶ **‘There was a young lady named Alice’**

‘1908’, 7a (A0160) [A].

There was a young lady named Alice,
Exceedingly hardened and callous;
While her maiden aunt slept
Up softly she crept
And pinched her – just out of pure malice!

¶ ‘There was an old farmer at Droun’

‘1907’, 2a (A0091) [A].

There was an old farmer at Droun,
He’d had a brown and a blue’un;
With the brown one he stared,
With the blue one he glared,
And his wife said, I get a fair doing!

2 and a blue’un] and [a] blue’un *MS*

¶ **'They were hanging a man up at Bright'**

'1907', 2a (A0091) [A], fair draft. NLA MS 1145/76, typed transcription [FN], untitled.

They were hanging a man up at Bright –
He had been a temperance light –
When they showed him the rope
He said, I do hope
That it isn't inclined to get tight.

¶ **‘This froggie foolishly would go’**

‘1907’, 54a (A0143) [JSN], unfinished.

A comic parody of the song ‘A frog he would a-wooing go’.

This froggie foolishly would go
A-wooing, though his ma said no.
Why did this youth unfilial roam?
It serves him right! we told him so!

Tramping along he dipped his hat,
’Twas a most influential rat –
Buck up my lad, he said – your ma
Is, well – all women are like that.

Still hurrying on they reached a stream.
The rat remarked that it did seem

[*Unfinished*]

1 froggie foolishly] frog«gie» [he] [wo]foolishly *MS*

2 said no] said [no] *MS*

5 Tramping along] Tramping [out] along *MS*

8 well – all women] *MS*

9 reached] reach[ed] *MS*

THIS KITCHEN OF OURS

ML MS 3354/2, Item 5, 5a-5b [A], fair draft, 3 stanzas, with gloss ‘Original proprietor of this metre not known’. ‘1915’E, 2b-3a (A0288) [A], fair draft, 3 stanzas; 8a (A0294) [A], fair draft, 3 stanzas, signed, with gloss ‘Original proprietor of this metre is not known’.

The Clarion 15 December 1908, p. 26 (2 stanzas).

The texts appear to have been generated within a twelve-month period and may be regarded as parts of the one impulse of composition. Because it is unlikely that an editor would alter the text to the extent seen in the *Clarion* without authority this is taken as the preferred text.

MS 3354/2-5, 5a-5b = A; ‘1915’E, 2b-3a = B; ‘1915’E, 8a = C

Fate like an old cantankerous cook doth rise up
To light the fire for yet another day.
Hope for a season shines things up, then dries up,
And sneaks away.

On Love’s red range are cooked life’s greatest hashes.
Hearts call to hearts from fierce pots overflowed.
And who’s that old chap taking out the ashes?
Death? – Well I’m blowed!

- 1] Youth is the Yeast Fate favours most to rise up *A, B, C*
 - 2] Life’s Little Loaf she bakes for us each day *A, B, C*
 - 3] Hope shines up things and washes up and dries up *A, B, C*
- 5-8] = *A, B, C*

Discarded stanza

A, B & C stanza 2, lines 5-8 read:

In Solemn Saucepans Souls sit singeing stewing *A, B, C*
Our Joys are poached we all prefer them so *A, C*
Joys Poached and Buttered Creeds we can’t forgo *B*
The past comes like a Bailiff we keep shooin *A, C*
We make the Meal nor mind the Trad[es]men suing *B*
But he won’t go *A, C*
For what we owe *B*

THIS LITTLE MILLINER

ML MS A308/1, 4a & 5a–5b (B0095 & B0097-8) [JSN], fair draft. ‘1908’, 14b–16a (A0168-9) [JSN & A], draft. ML MS A849, pp. 128-130 [A], fair copy.

Australia and The Bookfellow 20 June 1907, p. 10; *GDC*, entitled ‘The little milliner’, annotated [AGS]; *HS* 30, entitled ‘Little dead milliner’.

JSN - AGS 15 February 1919 (in response to a question from AGS: N cannot remember what suggestions he had – he thinks ‘they were chiefly about ‘Little milliner’ which [he] shortened’; 15 October 1922 (wants to drop this from *BLP*: ‘I think the ‘Milliner’ is altogether abominable. It is not such bad verse but it is slobbery’ and puts him in mind of ‘a drunken man crying about his mother’). AGS - JSN 28 June 1924, NLA MS 1145/26 [carbon copy at NLA MS 2037] (‘You needn’t worry about “Little Milliner” – I left it out – but I mean to put it in again. Not as well shaped as some others; but more merits than faults’). JSN - RHC 19 November 1933, NLA MS 605/30 (asks Croll to omit this from *CP*).

The text at ‘1908’, 14b–16a is a revision of MS 3038/1, 4a–5b and the fair copy is derived from this revision. N blocked the *GDC* text to indicate the need for revision and Stephens has comments and queries at lines 31, 53 and 55, with the comment ‘You can improve’ at the bottom of the page.

MS 3038/1-4a & 5a–5b = A; ‘1908’, 14b–16a = B; A849, pp.128-130 = C
MS A849, pp.128-130, the fair copy (C) is the preferred text.

She – she is gone from us,
She whom we knew
Of the face beautiful
And the eyes blue.
When the Earth only gives
Heart-ache and toil
The purest will perish, the
Sweetest will spoil.
Tell me, Oh God,

1 She – she] She – she A • So she *Aus*, *GDC*, *HS*

1] She [whom we] she has gone from us B

5] Day a great dragon grew A

6 and toil] and [pai] toil B

6] Night was too long A

7] Is there no one to ask A

7-8 perish the | Sweetest] perish | The sweetest *Aus*, *GDC*, *HS*

8] Who did her wrong A

9 Oh God] O God *Aus*, *GDC*, *HS*

9] Is there no answer no A

Continued overleaf...

This Little Milliner (cont.)

Is there no spirit still in her?
Who has been false to
This little dead milliner?

Blue eyes once showed to her
All the world fair,
Red sunlight made for her
Joy everywhere.
Hearts that are holiest,
Bright eyes and blind,
These make the tragedies
Of humankind.
Is there no answer, no
Sweet spirit still in her?
Who has been false to
This little dead milliner?

Had she been dull and cold
As she was warm,
Had she but loved the calm,
Dreaded the storm,
Had all Creation been
Otherwise planned,
Had not God painted her

- 10] Sweet spirit still in her *A*
12 little dead] little [mi] dead *A*
16][All the world fair] Joy everywhere *B*
21 answer no | No sweet] answer | No sweet *Aus, GDC, HS*
17] Red was her rushing blood *A*
18] Womans one call *A*
19] Heart ache and heart hunger *A*
20] She knew them all *A*
21] Tell me Oh God Is there no *A*
22] «sweet» Spirit still in her *A*
23] Who hath been false to |
24] this poor little milliner *A*
25-36] *A* ∅
25 been dull] been [col] dull *B*
28 Dreaded] Hated *HS*
31 painted] planted *GDC* (all copies), underlined and with a question mark [AGS], *HS*

Continued overleaf...

This Little Milliner (cont.)

With his own hand,
Pain had not pressed her so.
Is there not still in her
Something that speaks for
This little dead milliner?

She in her fevers felt
Many fires burn,
Back to the bitter road
How could she turn?
Stars – white – mysterious,
Lighted the sky;
Dying, she gazed at them,
Did she know why?
Is there no answer, no
Sweet spirit still in her?
Who has been false to
This little dead milliner?

Though in the years to come
We may forget,
Mourning eyes still shall make
All the Earth wet.
Young hearts shall know the
Grim death that she died,

- 33-36] *B* has these lines at the end of stanza 5, with a note ‘for 3rd verse’
 37 fevers] fever *Aus, GDC, HS*
 41] Stars - dim - mysterious *A*
 42 Lighted] Studded *A*
 44] *B* has a line drawn after line 44 and a note ‘4th verse & 2nd verse same ending’
 45-46 answer no | Sweet] answer | No sweet *Aus, GDC, HS*
 46 Sweet] [No] sweet *B*
 48 This little] This [poo] little *B*
 48] *B* has a note following line 48 ‘4th verse & 2nd verse same ending’
 49 Though] Tho – *A*
 50 forget] forget – *A*
 51] Eyes still shall mourn their dead *A*
 52 All] Make *A*
 53] Young hearts shall [know] // pity [‘2 syllable <word> like ‘pity’ [AGS]] *GDC*
 53-54 know the | Grim] know |The grim *Aus, GDC, HS*
 53-55] Young hearts shall | know her pain || Died as she died *A*
 54] Grim [Deal] death that she died *B* •
 The [grim] death that she died [‘leave out ‘grim’ [AGS]] *GDC*

Continued overleaf...

This Little Milliner (cont.)

Fairest flowers are the flowers
Plucked in their pride.
Tell me, Oh God –
Is there no spirit still in her?
Who has been false to
This little dead milliner?

55 Fairest flowers – are the flowers *A* •

Fairest flowers are the flowers // that are [AGS] *GDC*

56 their pride] the pride *B*

56] *B* has a line drawn after line 56 with a note 'also for 1st & 5th verse the same' beside lines [57-60]

57] Tell me [God] Oh God *A* •

Tell me O God *Aus, GDC, HS*

60 This little] This [poor] little *B*

TO A BED-BUG

The Clarion 21 October 1909, p. 9. Punctuation is reproduced from the printed text.

Indecently thou dost secure
For thy sweet feast the rich and poor.
Scented, unsufferable sot,
Ancient, voracious evildoer.

TO A BLUE FLOWER

ML MS A3038/1, 26a (B0132) [JSN], draft, 2 stanzas numbered 1-2, entitled 'Blue flower of the Spring'. '1910', 13b –14a (A0235) [A], fair draft, 5 stanzas numbered 1-5.

Sun (Sydney) Sunday 3 September 1911, p. 11; *GDC*; *HS* 13; *BLP* 17; *CP* 13.

The *Sun* text corrects the awkward reading of the third stanza of the fair draft (B) and, on the evidence of the variants in the *GDC* text, would seem to have been taken from the missing fair copy. On this basis the *Sun* is taken as the preferred text. The first draft (A) is shown separately as notes.

A3038/1, 26a = A; '1910', 13b –14a = B

I would be dismal with all the fine pearls or the crown of a king
But I can talk plainly to you, you little blue flower of the Spring.

Here in the heart of September, the world that I walk in is full
Of the hot happy sound of the shearing, the rude heavy scent of the wool.

Soon would I tire of all riches or honours or power that they sing,
But you are my own, of my own folk, you little blue flower of the Spring.

I was around by the cherries today – all the cherries are pale:
The world is a woman in velvet, the air is the colour of ale.

And I would be dismal with all the fine pearls or the crown of a king
But I can give love talk to you, you little blue flower of the Spring.

1 or the crown] [or] of the crown [AGS] *GDC* • of the crown *HS, BLP, CP*

5 that they sing] that they fling *GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

5] Soon would I tire of all riches or honours or power *B*

6] But you are my own of my own for [folk] you little old common blue flower *B*

9 And I] I would *B, GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

9 pearls or the crown] pearls of the crown *GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

A reads:

I would get tired of | fine linen [or] and | [an] purple of honours | and power
But I can «talk» plainly to | you my old crowning | you little quiet | common blue flower

I would be awkward | with orchids or pearls | or the crown of a king
But you are my own | of my people || You common blue | flower of the Spring

TO A DEBUTANTE

LaT MS 9419/3677, typescript, entitled ‘An attempt at the manner of Charles Kingsley’, under heading ‘Limericks by Shaw Neilson’.

The Clarion 15 July 1908, p. 7, with gloss ‘(After Kingsley)’.

The *Clarion* is the preferred text.

Be chic sweet maid, let those who will be stodgy,
Mash while you may, nor ever think it's wrong.
Time the unmerciful no one can dodge. He
Allows not long.

Gloss] Charles Kingsley (1819-1875). His literary activities were many and varied and included works for children.

TO A DIVINITY

‘1915’C, 1a–1b (A0312-3) [JSN] draft, 2 x 4-line stanzas ruled off, followed by a third stanza of 5 lines, and with cancelled lines. The MS is nearly illegible in places and the reading is therefore necessarily conjectural.

You are the Spring sweetheart, you are the Spring
 Glad green with life, tempestuous and young
 With new-born joys leaping and quivering.
 Oh, such a Song as you was never sung.

You are the Summer love all saffron-wise
 With golden melody, your soul a sun.
 If God should put a pain in your dear eyes
 Would I not curse him fiercely little one?

You are a song, a rose-red song unsung,
 You are a wine and no man may be sane.
 If he should touch you there will rise a storm;
 You are the Spring dear child. Sunlight and rain
 Are with you, and Summer wild and warm.

4] [[But] Oh such a Song as you was never sung] *MS*, line following line 4

5 all saffron-wise] [sm]all saffron wise *MS*

6] With <hold> <and> [golden] melody | [<sung> [Song] of [Soul] «Your soul a sun» *MS*,
 the line is nearly illegible

9] You are [a] song a [red rose] rose red song unsung *MS*

10 You are a wine] You [are a] wine *MS*

11 he] [she] he *MS*

12 child. Sunlight] child. Sunlight *MS*

TO A LOWAN

ML MS A3038/2, 28a (B0037) [JSN], 1 stanza, under title ‘To a lowan’, leaf incomplete, cut off; 29a (B0039) & 30a (B0041) [JSN], 3 stanzas numbered 1, 2 & 4, two incomplete leaves, with stanzas 1, 2 and part-stanza 4 at 29a and part-stanza 4 at 30a; 28b (B0040) [JSN], 3 stanzas, unnumbered, leaf incomplete. ‘1915’E, 3a (A0288) [A], fair draft, 3 stanzas, entitled ‘To a lowan’; ML MS A3038/2, 26a [FN], transcription, with annotation ‘verse of Lowan not included’ and comment ‘note by Frank – This verse belonged to a first manuscript of ‘To a Lowan.’ It was cut down to three verses! ML MS A3038/2, 27a (B0034), transcription [FN], 1 stanza with comment [JD], ‘for ‘Lowan’ (J.D.)’. LaT MS 8910, Box 1232/5(c) R H Croll papers, proof *HS*, entitled ‘Nesting mallee-bird’.

The Clarion 15 October 1908, entitled ‘To a lowan’; *GDC*, entitled ‘To a lowan’, with title change ‘To a mallee bird’ [AGS] (Copy 1); *HS* 21, entitled ‘Lowan’s nest’; *BLP* 18, entitled ‘Lowan’s nest’; *London Times* 13 March 1932, *HI* (no edition [London] *Times* produced for 13 March 1932, & not located); *CP* 21, entitled ‘At a lowan’s nest’.

JSN to Randolph Bedford, draft, ML MS 2576X, p.132 (‘Last week I sent you a bit of verse . . . the first line of the last stanza is I think faulty. This I think would be better ‘This and no other was thy shrine’). JSN - AGS 15 February 1919 (‘I would like you to alter title of ‘To a nesting mallee bird’ to the old style ‘To a lowan’). JSN - RHC 25 February 1934, corrections to proofs *CP* (‘a better title would be ‘At a lowan’s nest’).

3038/2, 28a = A; 3038/2, 29a & 30a = B; 3038/2, 29b = C; ‘1915’E, 3a = D
The *Clarion* is the preferred text.

Here in the rubble and the sand
This Monument by thee was planned.
Great was the Love that in thee hid,
O Builder of the Pyramid.

By no delirious King compelled
But by the Mother-Heart upheld.

Title] *GDC* (Copy 1) has TO A [LOWAN] «MALLEE BIRD» [AGS], with the comment ‘What is a lowan. ?any other name. What does it do? build nests?’ N told AGS when requesting a title change (15 February 1919) that ‘Lowans are sometimes called Mallee hens but Hen is of course impossible’.

2] [Didst] «Hadst» thou thy little nursery planned *B* •

Thou worked when no man was at hand *A*

3] <Th[...] night morn than all <things> did> *A*

5 delirious King] malicious priest *B*

5] part-leaf missing *C*, including this line

6] But/ By the Mother-Heart upheld *D* •

But by the Moth[er] impulse held *C*

Continued overleaf...

To a Lowan (cont.)

Little of pain or toil thou recked,
Brave Builder – eager Architect.

This and no other was thy shrine –
The Monument to Birth was thine.
Great was the Love that in thee hid
O Builder of the Pyramid.

7 recked] ricked *B*

7] Thou laboured ere the brood was born *C*

8] Oh long legged eager Artchitect *B* •

As <War[ior]> leading hope forlorn *C*

9] Of[t] in the dusk I heard thee call *B* •

On many a night <shrill> was thy call *C* [13]

10 The Monument] This monument *GDC, HS* (proof), *HS, BLP, CP*

10] Lest harm should on thy cherished fall *B* •

Lest harm thy cherished should befall *C* [14]

11] Great was the love [with] that in thee hid *C* [15] •

Great was the love within thee hid *GDC, HS, BLP, CP*

Discarded stanza *C*, lines 9-12:

[And many a green leaf] «Green leaves a many» didst thou take
Into thy pyramid to bake
No tomb thou builded on the earth
Thine was the Pyramid of Birth

Stanza numbered 4 at 30a:

Of[t] in the dusk I heard thee call
Lest harm should on thy cherished fall
Great was the love that in thee hid
Oh Builder of the Pyrimid [sic]

Frank Neilson's comment at 26a reads:

Verse of Lowan not included
Of[t] in the dusk I hear thee call
Lest harm should on thy cherished fall
Thou laboured ere the brood was born
Like warrior leading hope forlorn

Note by Frank – This verse belonged to a first manuscript of 'To a lowan'. It was cut down to three verses!

The stanza at 27a reads:

Of[t] in the Dusk I hear thee call
Lest harm upon thy cherished fall
Labouring before the brood was born
Like warrior leading hope forlorn

This is followed by the comment 'for Lowan' (J.D.)'.

The comment at 30a reads:

An early version of 'To a lowan' by Shaw Neilson's own handwriting. Built up from these verses. Interesting relic!

TO A YOUNG LADY: SINGING ('OH TO BE A FLOWER!')

ML MS 3354/2, Item 5, 24a-24b [JSN], fair draft, entitled 'To a soulful young lady. Oh to be a flower'.
The Clarion 21 October 1909, p. 9, entitled 'To a young lady: Singing ("Oh to be a flower!")

The *Clarion* text has new lines 9 & 10 that make less sense than those in the MS and the fair draft is therefore taken as the preferred text. The title of the printed text is retained.

What would it profit you to be a flower?
 You have all hues already in your clothes dear,
 It would not add to your attracting power
 To be a Rose dear.

Young ladies are I, think, inclined to make
 Statements that are astonishingly silly;
 Harken my dearest, and hold on a shake,
 Don't be a Lily.

Don't be a flower at all at any price;
 The wild warm wind would wither you too early.
 Don't be ridiculous, take my advice,
 Just be a Girlie.

Title] Oh to be a [bu] Flower *MS*
 3 attracting] attractive *Clarion*
 4 Rose] [rose] Rose *MS*
 7 Harken] [You] Harken *MS*
 9] Surely you have some honey yet to sip *Clarion*
 10] Still eager arms around your waist would curl dear *Clarion*.
 11 ridiculous] ridiclous *MS*
 11 take my advice] but take my tip *Clarion*
 12 a Girlie] a girl, dear *Clarion*

TO CICELY

NLA MS 1145/60, 24-25 [FN], fair draft, 5 stanzas, entitled 'I seek the perilous cure', with note 'Finis' at the end; 27-28 [FN], draft, with alterations [JSN], 5 stanzas, entitled 'Thou art as sweet as ripe honey' and then retitled 'To Cicely'.

The draft at 27-28 was written as a five-stanza poem with stanzas numbered 1-5 and then changed to a 4-stanza piece with a title change. The 1st line of the stanza numbered 1 is cancelled and a line has been ruled between stanzas 1 & 2 with the new title at the head of the stanza numbered 2. The drafts occur close together and are part of the same impulse of composition. The poem was later rewritten as 'To the loved one in her absence' (c. 1919) and later still as 'Love in absence' (c. 1924).

1145/60, 24-25 = A; 1145/60, 28-27 = B

The draft (B) with N's revisions is the preferred text.

Thou art as sweet as ripe honey
Sipped in the forest air
And as a wine thy kindness doth
Make all thy body fair.

The timorous scent of babyhood
Doth dimly follow thee,
And thou dost spread unearthly spice
For the heavy soul of me.

What time mine eyes behold thee not
I fiercely wish thee near;
The day like a long sickness is
And I count the moon a year.

When thou art gone but a little way
My heart doth take alarm;
I cry, Oh God, her dear body,
If it should come to harm!

1-4] ≠ A stanza 2

1 as sweet] as [sleep] sweet B

1] Oh thou are sweet as ripe honey A

3] And a summer kindness doth abide A

4] About thy face and hair A

5-8] ≠ A stanza 3

7 unearthly] an earthly A, B [JSN]

8 heavy] woodly [sic] A • [woody] «heavy» B [JSN]

9-12] = A stanza 4

13 mine] [my] «mine» A • [thy] «mine» B [JSN]

13-16] ≠ A stanza 5

13 thou art gone] thou doth go A

14] I am in deep alarm A

Continued overleaf...

To Cicely (cont.)

Discarded stanzas

A stanza 1

Oh Cicely from thy pure heard [sic]
I seek the perilous cure
And the little flowers delight in thee
And call thy body pure

B numbered 1 (preceding stanza 2 *B* and ruled off):

[Oh Cicely of thee I learn]
The parables of Spring
And the God that made thy dear bosom
Hath made a perilous thing

TO JOSEPHINE

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], with comment ‘This has never been printed’.

What shall I wish my dimpled friend?
Good yellow gold I'll wish thee dear;
Good health, good luck, a merry heart,
And dainty dresses every year;
Wondrous bewildering silks to shine –
And now, what more for Josephine?

Good friends and lovers, not a few;
Kisses, caresses, all things sweet;
What more? but ah, I know full well,
Impatient as your tripping feet
Your dreams run on – 'twas ever so –
God makes a little girl – to grow.

TO MOTHER

‘1915’E, 13a-13b (A0299-A0301) [JSN], fair draft.

White face of long ago,
Long ere I knew
All that a man must know
I would ask you
Did you too have the dream?
Seek for the sign?
Did you hear devils scream
Mother o’mine?

Seasons to me have brought
Promises fair;
Seasons to me have taught
Parables rare.
We could have lived so long,
Your heart to mine,
Making each other strong
Mother o’mine.

* * *

Blackest of all black hours,
Never quite dim:
White face, and many flowers,
Prayers – and a hymn.

9 Seasons] Season[s] *MS*

TO SUSETTE

ML MS A3038/1, 21a & 22a (B0124-5) [JSN], fair draft, 5 stanzas. ML MS /A3038/2, 5a (B0010) [FN], transcription, 4 stanzas, entitled 'To Suzette', with sub-title 'To a letter carrier, annotated 'by John S. N. about [1911] 1910' and '120 words'.

The transcription omits stanza 5 of the fair draft.

JSN - JD 10 August 1935, NLA MS 1145/68 ('The old rhyme 'Susette' needs another stanza as you say. If I could get another verse out it may be worth considering [for *BJ*]').

When first I saw you in your flapper days
 You were a sly sweet puss, a charming child.
 My faint heart thumped a thousand different ways
 And you – you smiled.

What shall I call you – a bewildering bird?
 Or a proud pansy of delightful hue?
 I'd like to call you something more absurd,
 Will angel do?

This town, I think, has quite a goodly share
 Of blessings and should render thanks profound,
 For in no other does an angel fair
 Take the mail round.

In your dark eyes, brave challenges still dance.
 In your sweet voice, old witcheries still flow.
 You have the temperament of sunlit France
 Where rare wines grow.

Something there is I scarcely can define,
 Something about you men may not forget:
 You must be French – French women are divine,
 My Sweet Susette.

1 flapper days] flapper [stage] days *MS*

4] And you – you smiled. *MS*

8 do?] do. *MS*

15 of sunlit France] of [sunlight] «sunlit» France *MS*

16 grow.] grow. *MS*

17 I scarcely] I [ca] scarcely *MS*

18 about you] about [men] you *MS*

TO THE SUMMER GIRL

ML MS A3354/2, Item 7, 7a & 8a, transcription [FN], with note ‘Appeared in print in Bulletin Dec 24, 1908 page 11 illustrated by N Lindsay’. NLA MS 1145/54 [L], transcription (copied from MS 3354/2-7, 7a & 8a).

The Bulletin 24 December 1908, p. 11.

JSN - AGS 30 November 1919 (‘The piece you enquired about ‘The summer girl’ appeared in Bulletin’). JSN - JD 31 March 1935, NLA MS 1145/46 (sends a clipping and asks JD to type a copy of it for him); 12 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/65 (‘I enclose the copy of ‘The summer girl’. Frank copied it off in the library’); 27 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/65 (listed as 1 of 11 pieces sent for *BI*).

The *Bulletin* is the preferred text.

Have I been blinded with excess of light?
 Have I been charmed with any wild bird’s whistle?
 Have I been routed in a fearsome fight
 Or merely stunned with some most grievous missile,
 Or mocked by thee, thou sun-burnt butterfly?
 Dear Summer Girl, goodbye.

Oh, shady Summer Hat! Oh, Golden Head!
 Oh flimsy frocking, far too faint for flounces!
 They weighed you when your owner went to bed
 And all you weighed was nearly seven ounces.
 Oh, honey lips and eyes extremely shy,
 Dear Summer Girl, goodbye!

Should we two meet in the brown time to come
 (An unkind Fate sometimes such sport arranges)
 Would you be sorrowful? would I be dumb?
 Sweetheart, the game is off, the order changes,
 A keen cool wind is battling through the sky.
 Dear Summer Girl, goodbye!

TRIOLET [2]

ML MS A3038/2, 3a (B0008) [FN], transcription, with note 'Note: may possibly have been sent for a view of AGS don't think it ever appeared in Print! It's a good triolet'. '50 words'.

God left us Love, the mystery,
And it was pure and fair,
It that can make all sorrows flee.
God left us Love, the mystery,
So that of all sweet things that be
We all might have a share.
God left us Love, the mystery,
And it was pure and fair.

**TRIOLET [3]
(For The Bulletin)**

The Bulletin 20 February 1908.

My girl is veiled in gossamer
To meet the kiss of Spring.
Along the world the breezes stir,
My girl is veiled in gossamer.
Fan lightly the sweet face of her
Winds of the evening.
My girl is veiled in gossamer
To meet the kiss of Spring.

UNDER A KURRAJONG

The Bookfellow 15 September 1913, p. 208; *GDC*; *HS* 74; *BLP* 19; *CP* 66.

The *Bookfellow* is the preferred text.

Here is the ecstasy
Of sun-fed wine and song.
Drink! It is melody
Under a kurrajong.

What sweeter space on earth
For glistening youth and maid
To find the quiet mirth
Under the quiet shade?

What sweeter place than this
For loving eyes to see,
For lovers' lips to kiss
Under the lovers' tree?

It is the time to blow
Hot kisses on the Spring,
When dreams begin to g
Under the blossoming.

Let not the mouth be cold,
Love is not over-long.
Only today is gold
Under a kurrajong.

Title] *Kurrajong* spelt *currajong* *Boo*, and throughout • [currajong] kurrajong *GDC*, throughout. *Brachychiton populneus* is generally referred to as the kurrajong.

WE LOVE BUT ONCE After the manner of Ella Wheeler Wilcox

NLA MS 1145/60, 22-23 [FN], fair draft.

The Bookfellow 15 July 1914, p. 163, signed Charlie Chaucer Vic; *Stage and Society* 17 May 1926, p. 18, signed Charlie Chaucer N.S.W.

The *Bookfellow* is the preferred text.

We love but once, in a blaze of passion,
By sulphurous hurricanes flailed and fanned;
We may not move in the leisurely fashion
That Moses moved to the Promised Land.

We boil, we bubble, we singe, we soften,
We squeal and suffer and growl and swear,
As a dead man growls in an ill-shaped coffin
At an undertaker who doesn't care.

Our hearts are hot and our heads are spinning,
We're shy and solemn and shaky-kneed
As Adam was in the Black Beginning
Shortly after that Awful Feed.

We mope and grovel and lamely fish up
Ghostly bodies of dreams long gone;
We look as odd as a thoughtless Bishop
With only one of his gaiters on.

We scowl, we challenge, we foam with fury,
And all for nothing, as one might say –

Gloss] (An attempt at the manner of Ella W W) *MS*. Mrs Ella Wilcox (1850-1919), was an American poet whose work was extremely popular.

1 love] [loved] love *MS*

3] We scorched right on in the reckless fashion *MS*

4 Moses moved] Moses scorched *MS*. Cf. Exodus 13:17-21 and Exodus 14. *AV*

6] We squirm and squabble we growl and swear *MS*

9 our hearts are hot] our red hearts throb *MS*

11-12] The story of Adam and 'that Awful Feed' is told in Genesis 3. *AV*

13 mope] grieve *MS*

17 foam] smoke *MS*

Continued overleaf...

We Love But Once (cont.)

Like a judge impressing a cool, calm jury
Cunningly squared on the previous day.

We storm and stagger, we keep on burning,
Though we hardly know what there is to burn;
We seem like an old dame bent on churning
With never an ounce of cream to churn.

The lightnings leap and the thunders bellow!
We live on frenzy and grope for rhyme,
And often we find that some other Fellow
Is buying her Chocolates all the time!

We love but once, and you ask the reason:
I think it's this, I whisper it low –
It's nothing to do with the Soul or Season
But we have no Cash for another go!

- 21] We mope and mumble and keep on burning *MS*
23 seem] cr..m *MS* (there is a hole in the paper here)
25 thunders bellow] thunder bellows *MS*
26 on frenzy] of[f] frenzy *MS*

WHEN CELIA'S NEAR

'1909', 8a (A0206) [JSN].

How can I talk of work or stilled play,
To blab of blue rain, or the summer shine?
It were impossible – the night – the day –
Are all in paradise – and she is mine.

3 impossible – the night –] *MS*

4 paradise –] paridise – *MS*

WHEN DOES A BURGLAR HAPPEN TO SHAVE

There are two discrete versions of this poem. The first was written c.1913 and the second, derived from this, c.1934, when N was trying to interest Devaney in publishing some of his light verse.

WHEN DOES A BURGLAR HAPPEN TO SHAVE [1]

NLA MS 1145/60, 52-54 [FN], fair draft, 6 stanzas numbered 1-6, stanza 6 cancelled and a replacement stanza following under heading 'The last' [JSN]; 55-57 [JSN], unfinished, under short title 'Burglar', with end words for 4 lines following the 4 lines of stanza 3 (the finishing point) and end words and the space for two stanzas numbered 4 & 5 at 57.

The fair draft NLA MS 1145/60, 52-54 is the preferred text and the unfinished draft is shown separately in the notes.

In days when Maeterlinck's bird of blue
Told us all its garrulous fibs,
I used to read, as a youth will do,
Of burglars bold and the crackings of cribs,
And every burglar I could find
Had shaved some time ago – this thing gave
Rise to a riddle that vexed my mind,
When does a burglar happen to shave?

When he has collared the family plate
He opens the cupboard and eats cold pie.
Juicy and sweet, a tempting bait,
Good to the palate and good to the eye.
A burglar must be a hungry soul,
Always brutally strong and brave;
I think that he somehow lacks control;
When does a burglar happen to shave?

Oh reckless fellow, such risk to run!
The price is surely exceeding high.
A burglar caught is a burglar done
And a pie is really only a pie.
But ah, why linger, let us dismiss
This frivolous thing for a quest more grave –
Answer me, answer me, answer me this,
When does a burglar happen to shave?

1 Maeterlinck] Maeterlinck, Count Maurice (1862-1949): author of a play 'The bluebird' (1909).

Continued overleaf...

When Does a Burglar Happen to Shave? [1] (cont.)

Of all the sorrows that keep man down,
 Render him helpless, hopeless, mean,
 Leave him insipid, and dull, and brown,
 Is a short thick stubble, uncouth, unclean.
 A stubble from two to five weeks old
 Would make an emperor look like a knave.
 But here's a thing I've never been told –
 When does a burglar happen to shave?

But curiosity never stops.
 Is there an hour that he counts as his
 When his stolen razor he sullenly strops
 And carefully scrapes that horrible fizz?
 Even an aeon you must allow
 Is born, ere ever it finds a grave,
 And stubble must start sometime, somehow –
 When does a burglar happen to shave?

I know it's killing me, this delay:
 The chemist chuckles to hear me cough,
 The undertaker was heard to say
 Strange, how Chaucer's putting it off.
 Oh, welcome death – though your ways be sharp,
 If ever I gain the golden pave
 I'll ask some angel twanging a harp
 When does a burglar happen to shave?

Cancelled stanza, numbered 6:

[I'm weary asking the same old thing
 From saint and sinner from young and old
 From those who suffer from those who sing
 Never oh never am I consoled
 Doctors differ and go their rounds
 Emperors cackle reformers rave
 A little stranger is worth five pounds
 But when does a burglar happen to shave]

The unfinished draft NLA MS 1145/60, 55-57 reads:

The world goes on and a summer hat
 Is fairly cheap at an autumn sale
 Though the earth «is round it» is often flat
 And very often uncommonly | Bad luck / [stale] // flails [sic]
 Scientists says that the sun grows cold [sic]
 (An nice way that for the sun to behave [sic]
 But here is a thing that I havent been told
 When does a burglar happen to shave

Continued overleaf...

When Does a Burglar Happen to Shave? [1] (cont.)

In every thing that the | The poor old / public choose
In choosing the worst | court the insipid / they never [fail] // seek the stale
Churchmen cheerfully take broad views
Leaving Jonah without a whale
Earthquakes quiver in old Japan
And somebody else has a tidal wave
But I ask you steadily man to man
When does, etc [sic]

The scholar solemnly takes his swill
Of fired out Roman[s] and dead cold Greeks
The Scotchman skit[e]s to the whole world still
Of Burn and bawbees Haggis and breeks

WHEN THE TIRED WOMEN DIE

‘1909’, 2b-3a (A0201) [JSN], draft, 5 stanzas entitled ‘Will there be love again’ with stanza 3 misnumbered and corrected; 3b-4a (A0202) [JSN], fair draft, 4 stanzas, entitled ‘Will there be love again’, stanza 1 renumbered 1 very prominently, stanza 3 renumbered 2 (similarly) and stanza 4 misnumbered 3 and corrected to 4 in the same way; 5a (A0203) [JSN], incomplete, 1 line and a stanza numbered 3. ML MS A3038/1, 14b (B0113) [JSN], incomplete, 3 lines under numbering for stanza 1, entitled ‘Will there be love again’. ML MS A3038/2, 13a (B0020) [JSN], fair draft, signed, with stanza 3 misnumbered 2 and corrected.

‘1909’, 2b-3a = A; ‘1909’, 3b-4a = B; ‘1909’, 5a = C; A3038/1, 14b = D; A3038/2, 13a = E

The MSS are all part of the same impulse of composition and ML MS A3038/2, 13a the fair draft signed (E), is the preferred text. B & C are keyed to A separately in the notes. The lines D are shown separately.

They have no tears to tell us
Nor any strength to sigh.
I fear me, I tremble,
When the tired women die.

Their lips turn up for kisses
And Oh, their eyes are keen.
As children they know not
What all the dark may mean.

They crave not any pardon,
They fear not any pain,
But in black swoons they murmur
Will there be Love again?

1-4] A ∅; = B 1-4

5-8] ≠ A 13-16; ≠ B 9-12

6 their eyes] their [lips] «eyes» E

7 As children] [And] As E

9-12] ≠ A 9-12; ≠ B 13-16; ≠ C stanza numbered 3

A, B and C read:

A stanza 1, lines 1-4; omitted B:

If you could only know my man
If you were standing by
[Oh] If «but» your heavy ears could hear
When the tired women die

Continued overleaf...

When the Tired Women Die (cont.)

A stanza 2, lines 5-8; omitted *B*:

They cry not for summer sun
 Nor a green world in flower
 They fret not for little sins
 Nor evil day or hour

B stanza 1, lines 1-4; *A* ∅:

They have no tears to tell us
 Nor any strength to sigh
 I fear me I tremble
 When the tired women die

B stanza 2, lines 5-8; *A* ∅:

I know their dreams are sweetened
 With love walks and flowers
 With lads that were so lovable
 In the green green hours

C a line preceding the stanza 3 [line 8 of the missing text]:

Of the roaring green hours

A stanza 3, lines 9-12; *B* stanza [3] 4, lines 13-16; *C* stanza 3:

They «faint not» [make a friend] of | «for» [at] Bitterness *A*
 They pray for no forgiveness *B*
 They crave not any pardon *C*
 They «tremble» [fight a fight] | «not for» [with] Pain *A*
 They fear not any pain *B*
 No peace from any pain *C*
 [And] But whisper [«still»] Oh beseechingly *A*
 But in black swoons they murmur *B, C*
 Will there be love again *A, B, C*

A stanza 4, lines 13-16; *B* stanza [3] (2), lines 9-12:

Their dreams are all of kissing time *A*
 Their lips turn up for kissing *B*
 [And] Their great eyes are keen *A*
 And Oh their eyes are keen *B*
 As children they know not *A*
 As children they know *B*
 What all the dark may mean *A, B*

A stanza 5, lines 17-20; omitted *B*:

If you could only hear my man
 Your tears would run like rain
 For Oh they sigh beseechingly
 Will there be love again

D 3 lines under numeral 1:

Over the road to darkness
 So passively they go
 Having no tears to call us

WHEN THIRTY-SEVEN COMES

ML MS 3354/2, Item 5, 27b & 28a-28b [JSN], draft. Stanzas 1-3 occur at 28b under the title ‘At thirty seven | After the Queen’, stanzas 4-5 and part-stanza 6 at 28a under the title ‘When 37 comes’, and stanza 6 finishes at 27b. The text is annotated [FN] ‘(fair copy in ‘The bloke that is me’)’.

The Summer’s like a doctor
Who leaves us thin and flat,
And the Spring is like a young girl,
Always in a picture hat.

The Autumn’s like a matron,
Stout of figure, green of gamp;
The Winter’s like an old chap
Complaining of the damp.

The pie of Life we’ve opened,
And if we find no plums
We know it hardly matters
When thirty-seven comes.

Our cheek is quite amazing,
Our style is dignified.
We thank the Lord for all things –
But mostly for our Hide!

Our Creditors still haunt us –
Vile of lip from day to day –
But they hear our splendid story
And they sadly slip away.

We get quite used to Sheol
And we don’t yell out for Heaven.
We know that life’s a muddle
At good old Thirty-Seven.

1 Summer’s] summer[’s] *MS*

4 Always] Always[s] *MS*

6 gamp] an umbrella

7 The Winter’s] The [fe] Winter[’s] *MS*

9 we’ve] we’ve *MS*

13 cheek] cheeks *MS*

21 Sheol] The underworld; the abode of the dead.

22 yell] yet *MS*, an error of haste

WHY THE LITTLE FIDDLE CRIED

‘1910’, 5a-5b (A0227-8) [JSN], 4 stanzas, numbered 1 & 2, the third misnumbered 2, and one stanza not numbered; 6a (A0228) [JSN], incomplete. Two leaves have been torn out between 5a-5b & 6a and the top of 6b has been cut out. There are no traces of writing above the lines at 6b and it is probable that the lines at 6b are a revised line 16 and an additional stanza.

’Twas on a night the moon had made a mist
Over our eyes, and left our red hearts calm.
Oh, every hour was holy as a psalm;
Evil and Hate and Doubt were all dismissed.

There was a fiddler – I was by his side
And in my soul he put a pretty storm.
How could I know? I was too soft and warm;
I could not know why the little fiddle cried.

It was a happy world of friends and flowers.
Why should the little fiddle crush me down?
Was it a murmur from some far-off town?
Why did I dream of dark unholy hours?

* * *

’Twas long ago – the many years divide
The warm boy from the man – and here am I
Eager to learn from earth and quiet sky.
I know, I know, why the little fiddle cried.

Love is a little beggar mad with pride:
Love is a little bird fighting for breath:
Love is the pink birth and the pale death:
I know, I know, why the fiddle cried.

3 holy as] holy [as] *MS*

16] But now I know why the little fiddle cried *MS* 5b, replaced with revised line at 6a

17-18] = stanza at 6a

18 love is a] love is [a] *MS*

WHY WILL YE DIE?

The Clarion 1 July 1909, p.3, under heading 'Our medical column'.

Away with the doctors and nurses!
Our anti-die sudden disperses
All ills that you know –
It's the untiring foe
Of the men with the black plumes and hearses.

WIGLEY'S REWARD

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], with comment 'Never been printed'.

Have you ever heard of Wigley?
Have you heard of Wigley's well?
Listen just awhile, I'll tell you –
'Tis a simple thing to tell –
Of the hardy and heroic,
Of the children of the soil,
And the chances that are open
To the men that do the toil.

In the land of tears and trouble,
In the land of Chronic Drought,
Where the wheat is full of deadheads
And the Banks are full of doubt,
Lived a People – suffering – struggling –
Carting water night and day
From our one good decent river,
It was thirty miles away.

In the long days hot and horrid,
Underneath a glaring sky,
Did old Wigley bore for water –
And the world was very dry.
Then the neighbours' heads shook sagely
And they told in solemn style
How the sun his brain had softened
For they often saw him smile.

Wigley – well I'd call him hardy,
And his young ones tough as hide;
Just a dozen with the baby
And he counted them with pride.
Shifting seasons found him poorer,
Working harder, year by year.
He had failed in different places
In the Southern Hemisphere.

He had seen the frost in Springtime
When the North Wind blows to burn,
When the green wheat droops and sickens
And the settler's face is stern.
But he bore it like a Stoic –
No unkind remark he made –
For you can't put down old Wigley
Till you plant him with a spade.

Continued overleaf...

Wigley's Reward (cont.)

* * *

Twenty-seven bores were salty,
 (And the summer days were long)
 On the twenty-eighth he struck it
 And he swore the stream was strong.
 Right around him stood the neighbours,
 They had many things to tell,
 All agreed it would be salty
 If he opened up a well.

But old Wigley he knew better,
 So he sank his little shaft –
 Hewed out good pine slabs and slabbed it
 (For he's not afraid of graft)
 And the water – good as ever
 Then they praised him to his face,
 And old Wigley seemed contented –
 He should die without disgrace.

To the little lignum hollow
 In the centre of his block
 All the neighbours came for water,
 They and all their thirsty stock.
 There were no complaints from Wigley,
 But at times it made him think
 When he almost had to ask them
 Leave to give a horse a drink.

Then they called old Wigley wise man,
 Benefactor of his kind.
 So they got up a petition,
 Fussed around and got it signed.
 Very carefully they wrote it,
 Very humbly did they pray
 To a Great Man's Great Department
 In a fit and proper way.

'Twas a tale of drought and famine
 And of Wigley's months of toil,
 Of the blessing he had brought them,
 All the people on the Soil.
 Yea, they spoke like men and brothers,
 And in figures good and round
 Did they value all the water
 That the honest man had found.

Continued overleaf...

Wigley's Reward (cont.)

But the Great Man never answered
(He had water close at hand)
So he cared not for the People
And he cared not for the Land.
All their hearts began to sicken,
All their indignation grew,
Till they loudly cursed the Great Man –
But the Great Man never knew.

The reply came one warm evening
When their hopes were three months old,
But some other Great Man wrote it
As the outside covering told.
Neighbours sat around and argued
As a simple people may,
That the first Great Man they wrote to,
Well – he must have been away.

All agreed that the Department,
Though it seemed a trifle slow,
Must be meaning something handsome –
P'raps a thousand quid or so –
And no man there would begrudge it
When they thought of Wigley's graft,
All the hard toil he had saved them
With that wondrous little shaft.

It was hard to understand it –
Still, they grasped it in a while –
And it told in stately language
In a tall and off-hand style:
Re allotment eighty-seven
(Wigley looked a trifle blank)
The Department had reserved it
For a catchment for a tank.

Then the neighbours' language varied
(But old Wigley never swears)
Something only did he murmur
About getting land on 'shares'.
For you can't put down old Wigley –
In the next world – who can tell?
He may get some compensation
For the finding of the Well.

WISHES, VAIN WISHES

ML MS 3354/2, Item 6, 4b-5a [JSN], draft, 5 stanzas numbered, stanzas 3 & 4 misnumbered 2 & 3. This appears in 'The fable and fantasy dialogues', by Frank Neilson, p.156 (without attribution), McKimm MS. The draft is the preferred text.

I would I were a blue wren,
That little blot of blue,
Whose voice is mostly merriment,
Whose coat is always new.

But if I were the blue wren
With the blue blue breast and wings,
No doubt I'd have to hustle
For grubs and seeds and things.

I would I were a buttercup
That grows so prettily –
But would a butter cow come up
To make short work of me?

I would I were a wild swan
Producing a sweet song:
But, Ah – my feet would both be wet,
My neck would be too long.

I would I were an angel,
Above all other things:
But if I were an angel
I mightn't like the wings!

10 grows] grow[s] *MS*

11 But would] But [it] «would» *MS*

12 To make] To / [She'd] make *MS*

15 Ah – my feet] Ah – my feet *MS*

16 long.] long. *MS*

YOU AND YELLOW AIR

‘1909’, 5b & 6a (A0204) [JSN], 2 stanzas and a part-stanza at 5b with a part-line at 6b, incomplete. [Six leaves have been removed between 5b and 6a: the writing at 6a corresponds to that at 5b and the part-line is probably from another draft made at the same time.] ML MS A3038/1, 15a (B0115) & ‘1909’, 6b (A0205) [JSN], 1 stanza [1] & a part-stanza numbered 2 at 15a, the part-stanza 2 continued at 6b and followed by stanza numbered 3, incomplete. ML MS A3038/1, 27b (B0135) [JSN], a stanza numbered 5, 2 cancelled lines under number 6, with a further 2 lines under new number 6, incomplete. ‘1909’, 9b-10a (A0208) [JSN], 4 stanzas and a part-stanza, numbered, with cancelled stanzas and renumbering; ‘1909’, 11a-13b (A0209-0212) [JSN], 16 stanzas and part-stanzas, numbered from 4 to 8, with 8 stanzas cancelled and with extensive renumbering, incomplete. ML MS A3038/1, 17b (B0117) [JSN], a part-stanza cancelled, a direction for stanza 9, and a stanza numbered 7; ML MS A3038/1, 17a, 18a & 19a (B0116 & B0118) [JSN], fair draft, signed.

Sun (Sydney) Sunday 4 September 1910, p.9; *The Bookfellow* 1 October 1912, p.254 (in an article by Stephens); *GDC*; *HS* 52; *BLP* 88; *CP* 46.

JSN - JD 21 October 1934, NLA MS 1145/68 (says ‘I wrote ‘You and yellow air’ in a few weeks, but it was sent back and I was about two weeks altering it’)

The MSS include numerous incomplete drafts with extensive revision, including cancelled lines and stanzas, renumbering of stanzas and, in one instance, assigned stanza numbers repeated in the same draft. The published text is derived from the various drafts, with further revision and two new stanzas and the *Sun* is therefore taken as the preferred text.

‘1909’, 5b & 6a = A; 3038/1, 15a & ‘1909’, 6b = B; 3038/1, 27b = C; ‘1909’, 9b-10a = D; ‘1909’, 11a-13b = E; 3038/1, 17b = F; 3038/1, 17a, 18a & 19a = G

The derivation of the published text is shown in the notes first, and transcriptions of the various drafts are shown separately.

I dream of an old kissing-time
And the flowered follies there,
In the dim place of cherry trees,
Of you, and yellow air.

It was an age of babbling,
When the players would play
Mad with the wine and miracles
Of a charmed holiday.

1-4] ≠ G stanza 1 (lines 1-4)

5-8] ≠ F stanza 7 (lines 3-6)

Continued overleaf...

You and Yellow Air (cont.)

Bewildered was the warm Earth
 With whistling and sighs,
 And a young foal spoke all his heart
 With diamonds for eyes.

You were of Love's own colour
 In eyes and heart and hair,
 In the dim place of cherry trees
 Ridden by yellow air.

It was the time when red lovers
 With the red fevers burn,
 A time of bells and silver seeds
 And cherries on the turn.

Children looked into tall trees
 And old eyes looked behind.
 God in His glad October
 No sullen man could find.

Out of your eyes a magic
 Fell lazily as dew
 And every lad with lad's eyes
 Made summer love to you.

It was a reign of roses,
 Of blue flowers for the eye,
 And the rustling of green girls
 Under a white sky.

I dream of an old kissing-time
 And the flowered follies there,
 In the dim place of cherry trees –
 Of you, and yellow air.

9-12] = *D* stanza 2; = *G* stanza 2 (lines 5-6)

13-16] ≠ *E* stanza numbered [7] [8] [5] 4; ≠ *G* stanza 4 (lines 13-16)

17-20] ≠ *E* stanza 7; ≠ *E* stanza [4] [6] 5; = *G* stanza 5

19] The silver seeds are silver cachous, used to decorate cakes, and probably, at that time, wedding cakes.

21-24] ≠ *D* stanza [4] 3; = *G* stanza 3 (lines 9-12),

33-36] = *G* stanza 8 (lines 25-28)

Continued overleaf...

You and Yellow Air (cont)

A three unnumbered stanzas:

At '1909', 5b;

The red red stone the Quarry men
 In all my dreams have share
 There is a town of cherry trees
 Of you and yellow air.

A black colt capered in the green
 Over a grass rise
 And a young foal spoke all his heart
 With diamonds for eyes

A blue bird did his love delight
 With Quip and threat and trill
 Mid the plain a brown Hawk came slyly

At '1909', 6a;

from the hills

B an unnumbered stanza & stanzas numbered 2 & 3:

At A3038/1, 15a;

The red stones and quarrymen
 In all my dreams have share
 In the dim town of cherry trees
 Of you and yellow air.

The velvet virgin flowers beheld
 Brave lover[s] on the dew

At '1909', 6b:

but I held not your little hand
 Nor spoke a word with you

While all the pleading water-birds
 Made love along the Spring
 To you the Princess of the wor[l]d
 I could not dare to sing

C a stanza numbered 5 & lines each under numbering for 6:

At A3038/1, 27b;

In the wilderness [of clear air] «clear» above
 Rode boisterous butterflies
 Gravely a young foal | Spoke his heart
 With diamonds for eyes

[Twas in the heart of kissing time
 With wonderment of green]

The Earth in «an» old kissing time
 Was clamorous in green

Continued overleaf...

You and Yellow Air (cont.)

D stanzas numbered 1 & 2; cancelled stanza 3 (3 lines), followed by numbering for stanza 4 (page left blank); second cancelled stanza 3; stanza numbered [4] 3, followed by numbering for stanza 5:

At '1909', 10a;

Oh / The red stones and quarrymen
 In all my dreams [have share] are there
 [There is a] «In the dim» town of cherry trees
 Of you and yellow air

Bewildered was the warm Earth
 With whistlings and signs
 And a young foal spoke all his heart
 With diamonds for eyes

[A blue bird did his love delight
 With quips and threats and thrills
 Into the plain a brown hawk broke]

At '1909', 9b;

[A blue bird did his love delight
 With [tunes of // sunny songs] sunny «and» kind
 God in his glad October
 No sullen man could find]

Children looked into tall trees
 And old men looked behind
 God in his glad October
 No solemn man could find

E stanzas numbered 4; 5 (cancelled); [5] [6] 4 (cancelled); 7 (cancelled); 6 (cancelled); [7] [8] [5] 4; 8 (cancelled); second stanza 8 (cancelled); 7; 8; [4] [6] 5; [7] 6 (cancelled); 8 (with note 'same as first' & 2 lines); 6; second stanza 7; third stanza 8 (cancelled):

At '1909', 11a;

Oh / The red stones and quarrymen
 In all my dreams [have share] are there
 In the dim town of cherry trees
 Of you and yellow air

[The velvet virgin flowers beheld
 Suave lovers in the dew
 But I held not your little hand
 Nor spoke a word with you]

At '1909', 11b;

[While all the impetuous pleading water birds
 Made love along the Spring
 Twas in my heart down in my heart
 A florid song to sing]

Continued overleaf...

You and Yellow Air (cont.)

[In that uproarious kissing time
When lovers would lean
Too closely to their dear loves
I was where God had been]

At '1909', 12a;

[While all the pleading water-birds
Made love along the Spring
To you the Princess of the World
I could not dare to sing]

Your face was a full parable
And hymns were in your hair
In the dim [town] | place / of cherry trees
Of you and yellow air

[The Earth in an old kissing time
Was clam[or]ous in green
You were the subtlest miracle
The soul of man has seen]

At '1909', 12b;

[The love talk lingered in the grass
And crowned the | the creamy skies
I dreamed of strong arms trembling
And women's velvet sighs]

It was the time for red lovers
When kisses bite and burn
A time of bells and silver seeds
And cherries on the turn

Oh clamorous Oh green time
That quietened too soon
Oh Love that lived delirious
Under the full moon

At '1909', 13a;

It was the time when red lovers
With the red fevers burn
A time of bells of silver seeds
And cherries on the turn

[[In] / [A] that green time and clamorous
That quietened too soon
[A time of aching merriment
Under a white moon]]

Continued overleaf...

You and Yellow Air (cont.)

[Headed 'same as first']

You were the subtlest miracle
Under the white moon

At '1909', 13b;

You were as Eve in innocence
Where the Four Rivers ran
You were the subtlest melody
That ever [moved] «soothed» a man

I dream of the Spring dying
And summer three moons old
And / Of [the] impetuous water birds
Pleading and unconsolated

[Oh [the] «ye» uplifting colours
That stirred these feet of mine
[How can a man be sober
When all the world is wine]]

F 2 cancelled lines; numbering for stanza 9 (with note 'Same as first', cancelled); stanza 7; and numbering for stanza 9 (with note 'Same as first'):

At A3038/1, 17b;

[«Shall» a [morbid] man be sober
When the calmed air is wine]

[Same as first]

Oh ye uplifting colours
That played as players play
Mad with the wine and miracles
Of a charmed holiday

Same as first

G reads:

At A3038/1, 17a;

I dream of an old kissing time
And the enchantments there
In the dim place of cherry trees
Of you and yellow air

Bewildered was the warm Earth
With whistlings and sighs
And a young foal spoke all his heart
With diamonds for eyes

Children looked into tall trees
And old eyes looked behind

Continued overleaf...

You and Yellow Air (cont.)

At A3038/1, 18a;

God in his glad October
No sullen man could find.

Your face was a full parable
And hymns were in your hair
In the dim place of cherry trees
Of you and yellow air.

It was the time when red lovers
With the red fevers burn
A time of bells and silver seeds
And cherries on the turn

At A3038/1, 19a;

You were as Eve in innocence
Ere ever Toil began
You were the subtlest melody
That ever moved a man

I dream of an old kissing time
And the flowered follies there
In the dim place of cherry trees
Of you and yellow air

YOUTH AT WORSHIP

The Clarion July 1908, p. 7, under heading ‘Some Parodies’ and sub-heading ‘(Some Hopeless Attempts at the Manner of James Hebblethwaite)’.

The young lad heard the tender words
Of sermons sweet in monotone –
And straightway dreamed of killing birds
With shanghai and a rounded stone.

John Shaw Neilson: The Collected Verse Period 3: 1917-1927

Edited by Margaret Roberts

**Australian Scholarly Editions Centre,
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AFTER SUNDOWN

‘1927’A, 5a (A0536) [A], fair draft.

You can be far from me
And your feet turned away,
But give me of your heart’s blessing
For a holy day.

The sun was a grave revel,
His crimes decay.
Give me of your heart’s blessing
For a holy day.

The sun and his foiled army
Wander away.
Give me of your heart’s blessing
For a holy day.

5 revel] rebel *WS*. The less common *revel*, linked with *foiled*, meaning *armed with foils* makes sense and the *MS* reading is retained.

APRIL WEATHER

The Bookfellow 15 April 1920, p. 96; *NP* 18; *CP* 123.

JSN - AGS 30 November 1919 ('I am sending you 'April weather' which I wrote last Easter').
The *Bookfellow* is the preferred text.

How long – but nay, it is not long
Since we two chirped together
And oh, we spoke unwittingly
And it was April weather.

The sun did seem as one well past
All jealousy and fretting
And as an old man lonesome smiles
Remembering and forgetting.

The cool wind waited patiently
For all the sun's delaying
And as a fallen player spoke
The bitterness of playing.

Tears were upon us and the pain
Of all the poor misplanted,
Of Famine old and merciless
And children disenchanting.

The sky came up with chronicles
Beyond the blue air blowing.
The bitterness of Love lived on
And Love himself was going.

How long – but nay, it is not long
Since we two chirped together
And oh, we spoke unwittingly
And it was April weather.

2 two] too *Boo*

11 And as] And like *NP*, *CP*

AT THE DANCER'S GRAVE

'1927'A, 30a (A0561) [A], fair draft.

This is no place for stately sorrowing
But for the simple omens and the flowers
And the full hearts that come about the Spring.

'Tis not the wise men of illustrious years
Live in remembrance, but some butterfly
Who in the sunlight made a storm of tears.

'Tis not the chaste, benevolent, the pure
Put the strange glow upon us – here was she –
Lived as a folly – died without a cure.

BE AT THE GARDEN

‘1927’C, 36b (A0471) [A], draft.

’Tis a command that I give you; this bright company,
These kinfolk of ours here assemble, and far may they see:
We are too close to the blackness – but by your wit and my wit
We too shall unravel the Spring.

Our kinfolk have caught all the sorrow that ever came down,
The joy in all courage, the jealousy under the frown:
They stand as the trees do – they cannot go forward to sing –
And by your wit and my wit we too shall unravel the Spring.

3 blackness but by] blackness [but] «by» *MS*, an error of haste

8] And [by your wit] and my wit we two shall unrafel the Spring *MS*, errors of haste, or mishearing

COLLAPSE OF IMPORTANT INDUSTRY AT FOOTSCRAY

ML MS 4937/4, 689a-690, letter, JSN - AGS 30 November 1919 [JSN], with comment 'Here is my latest attempt. I live close to Footscray'.

A Pushing young man at Footscray
Started scent growing in a large way;
But the scents he distilled
Were assaulted and killed
By the other old scents at Footscray.

COLOUR YOURSELF FOR A MAN

‘1925’, 13b-15b (A0402-4) [JSN], fair draft, with title ‘Sermon for Sally’ above the title.
The Australasian Worker 9 February 1927; *NP* 20; *CP* 126.

AGS - JSN 24 April 1927 (advising on length for poems for the *Worker*: ‘24 lines enough . . . ‘Colour’ was all right’).

The stanzas in the MS have 3 long lines and 3 short lines and this gives dramatic point to the piece. Stephens retained this scheme in *NP*; however, Croll departed from both this and the *Worker* in *CP* where the piece is printed with 5-line stanzas. Stanza 3 of the first published text is new and, since it is unlikely that Stephens would have rewritten the entire stanza, the revision is taken as Neilson’s and the *Worker* is taken as the preferred text. The line arrangement of the MS and *NP* is retained.

The seers may chasten, the fools may bid the waters dance uphill:
 The seers may sorrow that little of all in the world can heed their will:
 The hills may fall to the vales and Earth forget where the rivers ran:
 Listen, Sally, stifle your woes,
 Colour your eyes and lips and hose,
 Colour yourself for a man.

Thirst is heaven and thirst is hell and every fire between,
 And famine is old as the winter time and pain is an evergreen:
 Thirst is the maker of thieves, so take every colour you can,
 Every glitter about the day –
 Colour your words on the tiresome way,
 Colour yourself for a man.

Colour is love and hate and heat, and a million joys beside:
 ‘Tis vanity keeps the world awake, and the wealth of a man is pride:
 Thirst is the mother of theft, and theft was old when the world began:
 Listen, Sally, stifle your woes,
 Colour your thoughts and eyes and hose,
 Colour yourself for a man.

1 uphill:] uphill. *MS*
 2 can heed] will heed *MS*
 4 Listen Sally] Listen my Sally *MS*
 5 eyes and lips] eyes «and lips» *MS*
 8 old as the winter] old «as» the winter *MS*
 9 every colour you can] every [dream] «colour» you can *MS*
 13-18] *MS* ∅

Discarded stanza

Colour is love and hate heat and every mothering sound
 The honey is set in the trees and the bird[s] have taught us all they found
 The trees can never go into sleep since honeythirst began
 Sister Sally the young wind blows
 Colour your heart and lips and hose
 Colour yourself for a man

COME ALONG ROSEMARY

‘1927’C, 37b-39a (A0472-3) [A], draft, 8 stanzas with renumbering and 1 cancelled stanza, entitled ‘Invitation to Rosemary’. ‘1927’A, 5b-7a (A0537-8) [A], fair draft, 7 stanzas with 1 stanza cancelled; ‘1927’A, 10b (A0542) [A], 2 stanzas under short title ‘Rosemary’ and heading ‘Odd verses’.

The renumbering at ‘1927’C, 37b-39a is part of the revision for ‘1927’A, 5b-7a which incorporates 5 stanzas from the first draft and adds a new stanza.

‘1927’C, 37b-39a = A; ‘1927’A, 5b-7a = B; ‘1927’A, 10b = C
The fair draft ‘1927’A, 5b-7a (B) is the preferred text.

Come along Rosemary, out for a play,
This proud industrial suburb is a city.
The gentleman who came to take the bottles yesterday
He always tells the world that you are pretty.

Oh, the yard is dark and small and the moss is on the wall,
Your mother thinks so much she cannot utter.
The baby will be crying and the clothes they must be drying
And the World has put your playtime in the gutter.

The great industrial captains in their duties never flinch,
In fact, they really represent your Maker;
And the land they sell so glibly, they will count it by the inch,
It was good for you they bought it by the acre.

1-4] ≠ A stanza [5] [1] [6]

2] In this proud industrial Suburb nay a City A (line 2)

4] Cheered your Mother up and told her you were pretty A (line 4)

5-8] ≠ A stanza [1] 2

6 Your mother] And your mother A (line 1)

8] So [you] come away out to the gutter A (line 4)

9-12] ≠ A stanza [8] 6

9] Oh the great Industrial captains in their work they never flinch A (line 1)

11] And the land they sell so cheaply by the foot and by the inch A (line 3)

12] T was good for you they bought in by the acre A (line 4)

Continued overleaf...

Come Along Rosemary (cont.)

Come along Rosemary and fetch your little ball,
 But don't allow your little heart to flutter.
 Come out in all your innocence like Eve before the fall;
 The World is oh, so generous, with the Gutter.

Come along Rosemary, within our hearts we'll keep
 Your name – the very scent of it will find us
 When dreams that take the blackness and the silence out of sleep
 Like summertime have fallen far behind us.

Come along Rosemary, the good men for you pray,
 And you have need of all the prayers they utter.
 If the God they know could hear me, I would ask him, I would say
 Can a holy thing keep holy in the gutter?

13-16] ≠ A stanza [3] 4

15] Be cool and calm and steady dear like Eve before the fall *A* (line 3)

16] The best this world can give you is the gutter *A* (line 4)

Discarded stanzas

A stanza [2] 3:

The big motors toot and the little motors shoot
 The[y] squirm and the[y] squabble and they splutter
 If you wish to be a woman [lear] tis important learn to scoot
 Your only hope of life is in the gutter

A stanza [4] 5, *B* cancelled stanza 3 & *C* the first stanza:

Take notice dear the motorists come swiftly round the curve *A, B, C*
 The words they use are shameful things to utter *A, B, C*
 And the loudest ones are drunken and they sometimes choose to swerve *A*
 And the loudest ones are drunken they will sometimes choose to swerve *B*
 Like discontented hornets do the motor cycles swerve *C*
 So you better keep down in the gutter *A*
 And your only chance of safety is the gutter *B, C*

A cancelled stanza 5:

[The Pulpit here endorses in his seventh day discourses
 [How] «Our» Conventions which to him are bread and butter
 But his God is far away when I see you strive to play
 In your holy of the holies in the gutter]

A stanza [7] 7:

Come along Rosemary it is the Seventh day
 The Church and State they hear each other stutter
 But their God seems far away when I see you strive to play
 In the place they put your holiness the gutter

C second stanza:

A full mile is the playground but the tannery is near
 And tis the very time you should be smelling
 The young bud and the green leaf but they are not welcome here
 They might disturb the buying and the selling

CONCERNING LITTLE WAITRESSES

‘1927’ A, 44b (A0576) [A], fair draft. The stanza is numbered 1, and leaf 45a is blank, which might suggest that the poem is unfinished. However, Annie almost invariably commenced with numbering, and the fact that the following page is blank does not mean, necessarily, that more was intended. The piece stands as it is, and is regarded as complete.

As glad are they as butterflies
Who walk upon the blue;
They come from heaven, but
I know not where they journey to.
They are as light as thistle tops
That far above us blow;
I see – I see not – waitresses;
I know not where they go.

2 Who] [w]ho[m] *MS*

4 to] to[o] *MS*

7] I see – I see not – waitresses *MS*

DAN KEEN'S HOLIDAY

‘1930’, 5b (A0650) [EN], fair draft.

There will be water, he will hear the birds pray,
Overhead honey eaters shall in sunlight sway:
He shall have colour for his holiday.

He being for a long summer tied tight down
Grew tired and thoughtful, a little man and brown,
Suffering all harshness in the heat of the town.

How first came pity, from whence it blew?
Was it in grass whitening or flowers that grew?
Or in the outgoing birds to the great blue?

Oh, the men marching! Oh, the fine array!
The flowers will be with him, he will learn to play:
Oh, the luck! the fine weather for his holiday!

Title] Dan K[ing's]«een's» *MS*

DISTURBANCE NARROWLY AVERTED AT GEELONG

ML MS 4937/7, Item 4, with initials 'H. O'H. Vic.', proof. Pasted on to a sheet, with 'Weather prophets' (*The Bookfellow* 15 May 1921), with material for *NP*.

Punctuation is reproduced from the proof.

A bullfrog and a centipede
Came into old Geelong:
The centipede said, Worthy friend,
You must forgo your song:
With Death and Sleep in conference
Hilarity is wrong.

DOLLY'S OFFERING

NLA Ms 605/107, typescript with page numbered 9 (for *BLP?*) with some corrections and alterations [AGS].

The Bookfellow 15 December 1919, p. 6; *BLP* 68; *CP* 91.

The *Bookfellow* is the preferred text.

Dolly has fashioned a wee bird home – two white eggs in a nest:
I dare not laugh at a holy thing, or a place where the young may rest.
Rude it is, but the mother love in Dolly beats home to me:
It shouts aloud of the heights of Love and the wells of its melody.

Lips and eyes in the summer time and the faintest feet are bold;
Colours come to the heart and sing the song that is young and old.
The skies salute and the winds salute and the face of the earth is kind;
But Dolly can never come out to see, for Dolly is lame and blind.

Dolly is wise at eleven years old, for the dark has been her law:
Her body is put in a frozen place that only a Love can thaw.
Love is keen in this that her two little hands have wrought for me;
It tells of wooing and joy and pain and the pulse of the greenery.

I go out where the joys awake and the glistening lovers talk;
Joy there is in the young bird's flight and joy in the young child's talk.
Joys alight with the honey bees at the gates of the honey comb;
But it is a piece of the endless dark where Dolly is chained at home.

Dolly is all for love – it speaks in a thousand ways and shrill:
A home she heats with a good red heart, as a woman ever will.
The poor little nest is lined with love as warm as a man may find:
Out of the blackness Light is called – and Dolly is lame and blind.

7 winds] wind *NLA*

16 But it is] But 'tis *BLP*, *CP*

19 as warm] [as] «and» *NLA*

EVA HAS GONE

‘1927’C, 28b-30b (A0463-5) [A], draft, 11 stanzas, numbered. ML MS 3354/3, Item 2, 1/1a & 2/3a [A], fair copy, incomplete, 7 stanzas numbered 5-11, signed, with the comment ‘Perhaps Alexander Kirk is safer’ under the signature.

Aussie 14 November 1931, p. 15.

AGS - JSN, n.d., NLA MS 1145/74B (comments on the rhyme scheme); AGS - JSN 23 May 1931 (‘*Aussie* has taken Eva’). JSN - AGS 7 June 1931 (‘Eva’ . . . is I suppose passable’); 26 July 1931 (asks if ‘Eva’ appeared in June number of *Aussie*: Annie says not in July); 2 August 1931 (suggests ‘Eva’ for proposed collection instead of one of the pieces he wants to drop); 15 November 1931 (received the *Aussie* with ‘Eva’ in it); 22 September 1932 (agrees with what Stephens said ‘some time ago’, that ‘Eva has gone’ is rather poor’: suggests something else for proposed collection).

Correspondence is given after discarded stanzas.

‘1927’C, 28b-30b = A; 3354/3-2, 1/1a & 2/3a = B

The fair copy 3354/3-2, 1/1a & 2/3a (B) is the preferred text and stanzas 1-4 are taken from the *Aussie*. Stanzas 9-10 *A* are shown separately in the notes.

The women they say that her heart was wrong,
 The men that her face was sunny –
 Eva has gone with a sailor-man
 And taken the ready money.

The sailor-man was a tall man
 And of the salt sea smelling –
 There was never a lie of Earth or Hell
 That he was not proud of telling.

1-4] ≠ *A* stanza 1 (lines 1-4)

1] The women they tell how it all began *A*

2 The men] And the men *A*

3 a sailor-man] the sailor-man *A*

4 And taken] She has taken *A*

5-8] ≠ *A* stanza 4 (lines 13-16)

5] The sailor-man he was six foot high *A*

7] On earth or in hell there was never a lie *A*

8 not proud] not [afraid] «proud» *A*

Continued overleaf...

Eva Has Gone (cont.)

She said as she gathered her trinkets up,
 What a fool was I to marry –
 But the ten-pound note and the five-pound note
 Are easy enough to carry.

Long had her husband saved to put
 Those few poor pounds together:
 He had gone to work when many a man
 Would never have faced the weather.

* * *

She left some white things out on the line
 ('Twas a fine warm day for drying)
 The fire was out when the neighbours came
 For they heard her young child crying.

The women said, 'tis the worst of sins –
 And they nodded one to the other –
 She has left her child – and God can hear
 A child when it has no mother.

- 9-12] ≠ *A* stanza 2 (lines 5-8)
 9] She said I am off in a leaky boat *A*
 13-16] ≠ *A* stanza 3 (lines 9-12)
 13-14] [Her husband he was a slow man] || [He put the notes together] ||
 Her husband toiled as a slow man can || To put those notes together *A*
 15 gone to work] stuck to his work *A*
 16 Would] [You] «Would» *A*
 17-20] ≠ *A* stanza 5 (lines 17-20); ≠ *Aussie* 17-20
 17] Some dark things out on the line she hung *A*
 19] Oh cruel was she for her child was young *A*
 20] And the neighbours found [in] it crying *A* •
 They heard the young child crying *Aussie*
 21-24] ≠ *A* stanza 6 (lines 21-24); = *Aussie* 21-24
 21] The women said as they gathered near *A*
 22 And they nodded] And nodded *A*
 23] Her child she has left and God can hear *A*

Continued overleaf...

Eva Has Gone (cont.)

She might at least have gone by the night
 When lovers creep together –
 'Twas a brazen way she went in the day,
 Like a wild thing off the tether.

For such a woman they said there is
 Now neither hope nor pity –
 And they piously spoke of God and wished
 Her open shame in the city.

The women they speak of her laziness,
 And the men that her mouth was honey:
 Eva has gone with a sailor-man –
 She has taken the ready money.

The women they say that her eyes were hard,
 The men that her mouth was pretty –
 And some will say they have gone to the Bush
 And some say into the City.

* * *

25-28] ≠ *A* stanza 8 (lines 29-32); = *Aussie* 25-28
 25] She might have gone by the night said they *A*
 25 She might] [They said] She might *B*
 26 When lovers] When the lovers *A*
 27] 'Twas a shameful way that she went by day *A*
 28 off] of[f] *B*, an error in copying
 29-32] ≠ *A* stanza 7 (lines 25-28); = *Aussie* 29-32
 29] Now [she] «they» said she has lost her all *A*
 30] Not even her God can pity *A*
 31 they] the[y] *B*, an error in copying
 31] And they heavily talked of her dreadful fall *A*
 32 Her] And her *A*
 33-36] *A* ∅; = *Aussie* 33-36
 37-40] *A* ∅; ≠ *Aussie* 37-38
 38 her mouth] her face *Aussie*
 39 bush] [bush] Bush *B* • bush *Aussie*
 40 City] city *Aussie*

Continued overleaf...

Eva has Gone (cont.)

Her husband said as he worked one day
 With his old mate in the quarry –
 The women they make the worst of it
 And the sailor will soon be sorry.

41-44] ≠ *A* stanza 11 (lines 41-44); = *Aussie* 41-44

41] The husband said to his mate near by *A*

42] As they worked away in the quarry *A*

43] The women will talk and the child will cry *A*

44 sailor will] sailor [with] will *A*

Stanzas 9-10 *A* (lines 33-40) read:

The women they [speak] «spoke» of her laziness
 The men say she was pretty
 And fond of dancing and fond of dress
 But ah [it is] «tis» a bad old city

The women they tell how it all began
 And the men that her words were honey
 Eva has gone with the Sailor-man
 She had taken the ready money

AGS – JSN (n.d.) has the comment:

When I say ‘Eva’ is lazy, I mean that the single rhyme in stanza is likely to lead you into slipshod and sloppy writing; the double rhyme makes an effect of formality, not suitable for some themes. Single rhyme enables you to keep a fresh quick touch – if you keep it. Every mode is good if the result is good.

FOR A LITTLE GIRL'S BIRTHDAY

'1915' A, 1a (A0340) [JSN], draft, 3 stanzas numbered 1-3, entitled 'To Georgina for a birthday'; 2a (A0341) [JSN], 2 stanzas numbered 2 & 3, revisions for 1a, entitled 'For a little girl's birthday'. ML MS 3354/3, Item 4, 2/3, typescript (for *CP*). NLA MS 605/186, typescript, *HI*, not located. *The Bookfellow* 15 June 1921, p. 86; *BLP* 55; *CP* 88.

'1915' A, 1a = A; '1915' A, 2a = B
The *Bookfellow* is the preferred text.

Is there a beauty over pain,
Is there of music for a song,
Gentle as sunlight on the rain,
Gentle with crying all day long?

How should a singer of the cold
Seeing strange holiness in air
In his blue famine seek to hold
Vainly your paradise of hair?

Once in a wonderment I prayed.
Earth is upon me – tedious – mild.
Hear me, O hapless God of Aid –
Throw me a heaven round a child.

1 a beauty] of Beauty *A*

5] How shall a singer halting cold *A*

5 How should] How shall *B*

7] Drowsy and drunken seek to hold *A*

8 Vainly . . . paradise] Only . . . Paradise *A*

9] Little Georgina if I prayed *A* •

Little Georgina [have] «This» I prayed *B*

10] I would be praying through the mild *A* •

Halting in summers that you smiled *B*

11-12] [Cloak [of] «o'» the Dark. Oh God of Aid] || [Put me a Heaven round a child] *A* •

Darkness. O hear me God of Aid || Put me a Heaven round a child *A*

12 round] around *BLP*, *CP*

FOR A SWEET SOUND

‘1925’, 23a-24a (A0413-4) [JSN], draft. Stanzas 1-3 have 3 lines and stanzas 4-5 have 4 lines. Three-line stanzas have been adopted throughout.

Pence for his petulant eyelids, and make him his mound;
But he will tremble out over the skyline
For a sweet sound.

Peace be upon him, make the good prayer;
But he walks over white wishes
To the blue air.

He will go lightly, out into strawberry ground;
Haply he may with red kisses
Hear the sweet sound.

He will keep all the sweet colours, lavender, blue;
But he goes seeking the colour
Eyes never knew.

Call him not fool – he is feeling for the profound;
He beats with his foot on the skyline
For a sweet sound.

1 his petulant eyelids] his «petulant» eyelids *MS*

5 over white] over [all the] white *MS*

6 To the blue] [In] «To» the blue *MS*

7 lightly out into] lightly «out» into *MS*

8 Haply] Happly *MS*

10 colours] coulours *MS*

13 feeling for the] feeling [with] «for» the *MS*

Line endings

Stanza 4 (lines 10-12 of reading text): colours || blue || colour || knew ||

Stanza 5 (lines 13-15 of reading text): fool || profound || skyline || sound ||

FOR LINDSAY GORDON

ML MS 4937/5, 26 August 1927, 233-239 [A], fair copy, with alteration [AGS]. A version of this was published as a card by Frank Neilson in 1943 (dated 15 June 1938 on the front of the card), NLA MSS 1145/41 & 1145/42, entitled 'Lines written in memory of Adam Lindsay Gordon'. This later version was printed in the *Border Watch* 20 March 1943 under the title 'Speak slowly of the dead' and in *Southerly* 17 (1) 1956 under the title 'In memory of Adam Lindsay Gordon'.

JSN - AGS 26 August 1927 (discusses Gordon and an article about Gordon by Hoare, and encloses poem). [Benjamin Hoare (1842-1932) became leader-writer for the *Age* in 1890, retired from the *Age* in 1914 and continued writing weekly articles until 1921.]

The fair copy is the preferred text.

It is quite likely that Frank Neilson edited the original text for publication, and the published version is therefore given separately in the notes.

Our rude songs he began:
Youth in a young land – Thinker
Mystic – rustling
With red ways of a man.

Lightly he rode ahead
Listening for bells about the
Blackwoods – listening –
Speak slowly of the dead.

* * *

While dancing Youth abides
In the clean time of the Bewilderment,
Eternally he rides.

Nay, nay, he is not old.
He, the most valiant Dreamer of the Morning,
Has conquest of the Cold.

1 Thinker] Encircled and transposed to beginning of line 2 [AGS] *MS*

8 Speak slowly] Speak – slowly *MS*, with the dash cancelled [AGS]

13 He the most] He is the most *MS*

The card published by Frank Neilson reads:

Lightly he rode ahead
Listening for bells. And is he still not listening? . . .
Speak slowly of the dead!

Our rude rhymes he began,
Reckless he rode, his young life showed us surely
The red ways of a man.

Continued overleaf...

For Lindsay Gordon (cont.)

Nay, Nay, he is not old;
He, the abundant dreamer of the Morning
Hath conquest of the Cold.
While dancing Youth abides
In the clean time of the bewilderment,
Eternally he rides.

Still will his songs unfold,
He is about the blackwoods and he lives
Yet in the wattle gold.

* * * *

Lightly he rides ahead,
Soldier and mystic in his own enchantment; . . .
Speak slowly of the dead!

FROM THE EDGE OF THE CITY

‘1930’, 10a-10b (A0654-5) [JSN], draft.

The stars have come out, bewildering body and eyes,
 Each a world in its own as the stars in the skies.
 I know by each little light rising and falling
 That it is Love, little Love for a long time calling:
 The City was builded of Love.

Many strange men with many proud words on their lips
 New from the delving of souls and the manning of ships,
 Men with their having and hating, selling and buying . . .
 But there was underneath all, little Love at his crying:
 This City was builded of Love.

4 calling] [...] call[ing] *MS*

6 men] m[e]n] *MS*

7 souls] soul[s] *MS*

9 But there was] But [it] «there» was *MS*

GO AWAY OUT LITTLE HEART

‘1930’, 27b & 28a-28b (A0672-4) [JSN], draft. Stanzas 1, 2 & 4 have 3 lines (2 short and 1 long), and stanzas 3, 5, 6 & 7 have 2 longer lines each. The 2-line stanzas are used here throughout.

Go away out little heart and if you would, stay;
I know well your hunger for holiday.

You are not weary – even I dream you are young;
You have not tasted gladness or heard many songs sung.

Often I feel you so fiercely cry as a bell;
Fly not then hastily, woefully, back to a shell.

Walk over honeycups, see all the light that you can;
I would not blame to be slow at filling the shell of a man.

It may be long ere I hear your rebellion again;
You have been living too near to the noises of men.

I will not chide you if you for a century stay;
Full well I know all your hunger for holiday.

Go away out – if the angels in dreams do excel
Come not too hastily back to your place in a shell.

Title] Go [out] | «away out little heart» *MS*

6 hastily] has[t]ily *MS*

12 Full well] Full / Well *MS*

13 away out if the angels] away «out» <if> the angel[s] *MS*

Line endings

Stanza 1 (lines 1-2 of reading text): 1 heart || 2 stay || 3 holiday ||

Stanza 2 (lines 3-4 of reading text): 1 weary || 2 young || 3 sung ||

Stanza 4 (lines 7-8 of reading text): 1 honeycups || 2 can || 3 man ||

GO BY THE RIVERS

‘1927’A, 9b-10a (A0541) [A], draft.

Go by the rivers – and love all the little lakes more;
 You will be speaking quietly to the birds coming ashore.
 The young, you will see them look to the mother then look to the sky;
 ’Twill be a long day until you be having to give us goodbye.

Go by the rivers – under the waters grave tenants are found,
 They that do love and play gently as we over ground,
 They that have the old courage since courage began:
 It will be a long time until you are grown a wearisome man.

Go by the rivers – the friends and the forest call you to go;
 The reeds are all singers and sailors alive in a row.
 They will be giving you dreams for a journey all over the sky
 And ’twill be a long day before you be having goodbye.

3] The young you will see the [lilt] of «look to the mother» [The] the[n] look to the sky *MS*
 9 friends] [fraye] «friends» *MS*

GREEN LOVER

Aussie 15 September 1927, p. 27; *NP* 12; *CP* 114.

AGS – JSN n.d., n.p., no location, [c.July 1924] (a brief note with ‘? Stanza for Lolly Tin’ at end). AGS - JSN [30 October 1926]. JSN - AGS 1 November 1926. AGS – JSN n.d., printed letterhead Austrazealand Press Correspondence, no location [c.1927?] (‘have a memory Annie wrote lover tin in last verse of frog; helps to elucidate a poem obscure to the vulgar, and makes a turn in thought which clinches the piece’). AGS - JSN 16 February 1927; 30 April 1927; 13 May 1927. JSN - AGS 26 July 1931; 2 August 1931.

Stephens acknowledged receipt of alterations to the poem October 1926: ‘Froggy – not good – but it’s hard to warm old stuff up again. The piece is good; but I haven’t sold it yet’, and N replied that he might ‘have another try at Froggy later on’ if Stephens couldn’t get it printed (1 November 1926). Letters from Stephens in February, April and May advise of his attempts to sell it, saying ‘it is too much involved for the editors’ and that he thought ‘space was ‘Herald’s’ and ‘Home’s’ objection’. The letters from N to Stephens in 1931 relate to poems to be dropped from a proposed collection, with N saying ‘I have also put ‘Green lover’ on the black list because so many people object to the word Lolly tin’. He told Stephens that the piece was an attempt at a kiddies rhyme but seemed to grow too serious for that’.

Aussie is the preferred text.

*‘Froggie was caught while crossing a brook
A lily-white duck came and gobbled him up.’*

– Old rhyme.

Ghosts in plenty about the world
Step lightly here and there:
They take a trip in the chimney-smoke,
They cough in an empty chair.
But one I know of, he sets his sail
When the stars run pale and thin;
He sails away at the flush of Day
In a curled-up lolly-tin.

Long ago did he saunter forth
When the trees came out to bloom:
Oh, evil luck, with the lily-white duck!

10 came] come *NP*, *CP*

Continued overleaf...

Green Lover (cont.)

He went to an early doom.
 Crossing a brook he was. His heart
 Was hot with love therein:
 Now he sails away at the flush of day
 In a curled-up lolly-tin.

The peacock's colour was on his back
 And great thoughts in his eyes:
 He would not care for the slow beware
 Of his mother old and wise.
 He hopped elate, but a pitiless Fate
 As a lily-white duck came in —
 Yet Love prevails, and a lover sails
 In a curled-up lolly-tin.

Sugar is Love, and honey is Love,
 And that is the reason why
 He loves to float in a sugary boat
 And he makes no moan or sigh.
 He puts no curse on a race perverse —
 With nothing to lose or win
 He sails away at the flush of day
 In a curled-up lolly-tin.

If ever you rise when the little flowers
 Come shyly one by one,
 Whispering little white thoughts of Love
 And leaning out to the sun,
 When the Laughing-Jacks by the river side
 Their comedies begin,
 Then a ghost in green is plainly seen
 In his curled-up lolly-tin.

The peacock's colour is on his back
 And great thoughts in his eyes;
 He is no trader, he has no need
 Of a thousand worn-out lies.

23-24] —Now he sails away at the flush of Day || In a curled-up lolly tin *NP*, *CP*
 31 He sails] – Now he sails *NP*, *CP*

Continued overleaf...

Green Lover (cont.)

He loses well, and he will not grieve
 For the world nor its weight of sin –
 He sails away at the flush of day
 In a curled-up lolly-tin.

Whenever I read of kings and queens
 And knights and ladies fair,
 Who drank of Life as a goodly cup
 Nor dreamed of a sorrow there,
 I know they were driven of Love for Love;
 They fought through thick and thin
 And fell for Love – like the glistening ghost
 In the curled-up lolly-tin.

The Dawn is ever a creepy time,
 The Mysteries make it so:
 Beauty is broken about the sky
 And into the earth below.
 Shadows go out, and stars go out,
 And the royal red comes in –
 A lover green is always seen
 In his curled-up lolly-tin.

Wise men perish, and old dreams go,
 But many, the great and wise,
 Have told the truth to our golden youth
 That a lover never dies.
 His bones may whiten, his dust may go
 Where new worlds would begin;
 Yet Love prevails – 'tis a lover sails
 In the curled-up lolly-tin.

46 nor] or *NP, CP*

64 lolly-tin] lover tin *NP*

71 Yet Love] And Love *NP, CP*

HALF A LIFE BACK

‘1930’ 21b-22a (A0666-7) [JSN], draft, 3 stanzas (1 × 8-line stanza, 1 × 5-line stanza and 1 × 4-line stanza). ML MS A3038/1, 34b (B0147) & ‘1930’, 35a (A0681) [JSN], draft, 3 × 4-line stanzas, stanza 2 cancelled and rewritten.

The Bookfellow 28 February 1925; *NP* 32; *CP* 143.

AGS - JSN 24 May 1925 (‘I printed ‘Half a life back’, but would like to see additional verses you mention’). JSN - AGS 26 July 1931 (wants to drop this from a proposed collection).

The *Bookfellow* is the preferred text.

‘1930’, 21b-22a = A; A3038/1, 34b & ‘1930’, 35a = B

B is shown separately in the notes.

Half a life back now, the faces, careworn or sunny,
Stare as we knew them, patient with heavy goodbyes;
Yet they give still the good warmth and the taste of the honey –
Neighbour, oh neighbour, the light has gone out of their eyes.

Did we despise them? We made little room for their sorrow.
All that was truth to them seemed to us spotted with lies.
They did so steadily speak of a shining tomorrow –
Neighbour, oh neighbour, the light has gone out of their eyes.

Ruddy men, sallow men, praying and ever rebelling;
Men with their dreams burning out, women unwise
To little white overloved children parables telling –
Neighbour, oh neighbour, the light has gone out of their eyes.

1-4] ≠ A stanza 1

1 back now the faces] back || Faces A (lines 1 & 2).

2] [Move] «Stare» as we knew him || [Mournful] «Patient» with [red money] heavy good byes A (lines 3 & 4)

3] Yea they bring still || The warm «good» taste of the Honey A (lines 5 & 6)

5-8] ≠ A stanza 2

5] Did we dispute «despise» them made little room for their sorrow A (line 1)

6 that was truth] that «was» truth A (line 2)

7 steadily] steadily | [heavily] A (line 3)

9-12] ≠ A stanza 3

10] Men with old burned out dreams women unwise A (line 2)

11 little white overloved] little «white» overloved A (line 3)

Line endings A

Stanza 1 (lines 1-4 of reading text): 1 back || 2 sunny || 3 him || 4 good byes || 5 still || 6 Honey || 7 neighbour || 8 eyes

Stanza 2 (lines 5-8 of reading text): 1 sorrow || 2 lies || 3 tomorrow || 4 neighbour || 5 eyes ||

Continued overleaf...

Half a Life Back (cont.)

B reads:

Those that we supped «with» are taken the years had long yellowed
 The faces and left them as weary trees after | [a storm] // the wind
 The constant disasters that broke on them [merrily] «happily» mellowed
 These souls that [were] « had » [surely some generous task to perform] «were hasty
 and sullen and bitter and kind»

[Kinsfolk and neighbours we knew them all down in the battle
 Fould with them all | with them saw | them grow heavy and grey [sic]
 And some on the pillow we saw [and] and we / heard the last rattle
 Neighbour Oh neighbour | A warmth has been taken away]

Kinsfolk and neighbours we knew them all well in the battle
 Fought with [them] drank with them dreamt with them saw them astray
 And some we beheld on the pillow and heard the last rattle
 Neighbour oh neighbour | A warmth has been taken away

HE SOLD HIMSELF TO THE DAISIES

‘1930’, 6b (A0651) [FN], 4 stanzas under short title ‘Daisies’. NLA MS 1145/74B, 27 & 33, typescript [AGS], 11 stanzas, prepared for printing (for *BLP*), with comments [AGS]; NLA MS 1145/74B, 35, typescript [AGS], (incomplete?), 5 stanzas, heavily marked [AGS]; NLA MS 1145/74B, 34, typescript [AGS], (incomplete?), 3 stanzas, heavily marked [AGS]. McKimm MS, typescript [AGS], with comments [AGS].

The Bookfellow 27 October 1924, p. 9; *NP* 28; *CP* 139.

AGS - JSN 27 August 1924 (‘Daisies – I like first better. Only two lines to alter – want another rhyme for ‘own’). The poem was sent to Stephens prior to publication of *BLP* (pre-November 1923) but not in time to add to the book as Stephens wanted. The prepared typescript 1145/74B, 27 & 33 was then returned to N with the suggestion that he might alter it and return. NLA 1145/74B, 35 is a revision of 1145/74B, 27 & 33 (stanzas 7-11) with comments and suggestions and 1145/74B, 34 is a further revision (stanzas 7-9) which incorporates some of the suggestions made at 1145/74B, 35. MS ‘1930’, 6b has revised stanzas 7 & 8 (numbered 1 and 4) and 2 new stanzas, and these are incorporated in the McKimm MS.

Stephens’s comment that he ‘liked the first better’ and that there were ‘only two lines to alter’ (27 August 1924) is puzzling as it does not seem to make sense in relation to the extant MSS or to the first published text. The *Bookfellow* text drops 1 of the 3 new stanzas from the McKimm text (McKimm stanza 12) and drops one other stanza, common to the McKimm text and 1145/74B, 27 & 33 (stanza 4 of 1145/74B, 27 & 33 and McKimm stanza 6). However, the *NP* text reintroduces the stanza dropped from 1145/74B, 27 & 33 (stanza 4) and drops the 3 additional stanzas that were introduced in the McKimm text.

NLA MS 1145/74B, 27 & 33 has the comment ‘Add to Neilson book | After Heart of Spring | Before The Dream is Deep | Last piece but one’. This was cancelled and a note added for N: ‘JSN | Too late for book’, with a further note added ‘You might alter it <over> and return’. Stephens was critical of stanzas 7 & 8 and underlined 2 part-lines in each of these stanzas, with the comment ‘awkward when said aloud’. He continued to criticise stanzas 7 & 8 and these are bracketed in 1145/74B, 35 with a comment in the left margin ‘Since you believe this spell it out make it good’, and in the right margin ‘Does the furious mean bugles’. He cancelled the first 2 lines of stanza 7, wrote 3 new lines which he then cancelled, and added the comment ‘slangy’ in the margin. Stanza 9 he noted as ‘good’ and stanzas 10 & 11 as ‘right’, and the 3rd & 4th lines of stanza 7 he bracketed and noted as ‘Very good | almost <refrain> [....]’.

The MS NLA 1145/74B, 34 has Stephens’s lines from 1145/74B, 35 in stanza 7 and revised stanzas 8 & 9 and Stephens criticised the stanzas as ‘Undigested’. He said ‘These are too hurried – not sufficiently matured into marriage of sense with sound’ and added ‘Too late to alter now | Keep it a bit and chew over’. Stanza 7 is marked ‘Not bad for idea – fails in melody’ and stanza 8 has the comment ‘Same here – words don’t sound well for meek incendiary daisies’, and stanza 9 is bracketed and has a note ‘previous was better’.

The revisions at ‘1930’, 6b appear in the McKimm MS, with further comments from Stephens. He marked the new stanza 2 as ‘Not right yet | will fix before printing’; suggested that the new stanza 4 might be transposed and added beside the revised stanza 7 (McKimm stanza 9) ‘for free | This aloud might have another meaning’; and there is another comment beside stanza 3, where there is a question mark in the margin, ‘The new daisies are <calling> it a bit’.

Continued overleaf...

He Sold Himself to the Daisies (cont.)

The first published text appears to lack authority and the typescript made from the first fair copy, NLA MS 1145/74B, 27 & 33, (A), is therefore taken as the preferred text.

1145/74B, 27 & 33 = A; 1145//74B, 35 = B; 1145/74B, 34 = C; '1930', 6b = D; McKimm MS = E

He stayed too long in the sunlight,
 He was so thin and shy:
 He sold himself to the daisies
 When no one strove to buy.

They called him hopeless coward,
 They called him dull and mean,
 Because he spoke to the people
 His elders had not seen.

Slow were his eyes and only
 The dull speech on his tongue:
 He sold himself to the daisies
 When a summer day was young.

1-4] = E 1-4; B, C & D ∅; = *Boo*, NP & CP 1-4

5-8] = E 9-12; B, C & D ∅; = *Boo*, NP & CP 5-8

9-12] = E 17-20; B, C & D ∅; = *Boo* 13-16; = NP & CP 9-12

Continued overleaf...

He Sold Himself to the Daisies (cont.)

The daisies came together
And they made no boastful sound,
And the grasses fell as playmates
Over the green ground.

The traders knew no pity,
They called him shapeless clown,
And they put long prayers upon him
And chained him in a town.

But he rose ere the day had broken,
He rose when the stars hung high,
And his heart did hope within him
To die as the daisies die.

The daisies blow no bugles,
They make no furious moan,
Their only life is loving
And the daisies know their own.

13-16] = *E* 21-24; *B*, *C* & *D* ∅; *Boo* ∅; ≠ *NP* 13-16; ≠ *CP* 13-16

13 The daisies] For the daisies *NP*, *CP*

17-20] = *E* 25-28; *B*, *C* & *D* ∅; = *Boo* 21-24; = *NP* 17-20; = *CP* 17-20

21-24] = *E* 29-32; *B*, *C* & *D* ∅; = *Boo* 25-28; = *NP* 21-24; = *CP* 21-24

25-28] = *B* 1st of 5 stanzas; ≠ *C* 1st of 3 stanzas; ≠ *D* stanza numbered 1; ≠ *E* 33-36; ≠ *Boo* 29-32; ≠ *NP* 25-28; ≠ *CP* 25-28

25-28] *E* has a suggested alteration to line 1 with a comment in the margin

25] *A* has 'blow no bugles' underlined and a question mark [AGS] •

« [For the daisies walk together] » [AGS] *B* (line 1) •

For the daisies walk together *C* (line 1) •

For the daisies come together *D* stanza numbered 1 (line 1) •

For the daisies came «climb» together [AGS] *E* •

For the daisies climb together *Boo*, *NP*, *CP*

26] *A* has 'furious moan' underlined and a question mark [AGS] •

« [As people calm and kind] » [AGS] *B* (line 2) •

As people calm and kind *C* (line 2) •

They face not Death alone *D* (line 2) •

They meet not Death alone *E*, *Boo*, *NP*, *CP*

27] « [Their long flight into beauty] » [AGS] *B* •

Their long flight into beauty *C* (line 3)

28] Fell on the dreamer's mind *C* (line 4)

Continued overleaf...

He Sold Himself to the Daisies (cont.)

They make no changeless Heaven,
No God with a furious law,
And the dreamer under his eyelids
Saw that the daisies saw.

The traders saw him loiter
And he had small heart to toil,
They said he was born to evil,
A black weed on the soil.

The clouds came thick, and thicker,
The blue winds one by one
Baffled his hopeless body,
Carried him out of the sun.

29-32] = *B* 2nd of 5 stanzas; ≠ *C* 2nd of 3 stanzas; ≠ *D* stanza numbered 4; = *E* 37-40; = *Boo* 33-36; = *NP* 29-32; = *CP* 29-32

29] They make no needless Heaven *C* (line 1) •

The Daisies came as lovers *D* (line 1)

30] *A* has 'furious law' underlined, with a question mark [AGS] • *B* has 'furious' encircled, with a question mark and comment 'change word' [AGS] •

That no young tear may thaw *C* (line 2) •

That fear not Light or Law *D* (line 2)

31] But they nestle out with the lovers *C* (line 3) •

C has 'nestle out with' underlined [AGS] •

And his eyes grew bright within him *D* (line 3)

32] *A* has 'that the daisies saw' underlined [AGS] •

Burn up every law *C* •

C has 'up every law' underlined [AGS] •

To see that the Daisies saw *D* (line 4)

33-36] = *B* 3rd of 5 stanzas; ≠ *C* 3rd of 3 stanzas; *D* ∅; = *E* 41-44; ≠ *Boo* 37-40; = *NP* 33-36; = *CP* 33-36

33 saw him loiter] saw him linger *C* (line 1) • watched him loiter *Boo*

34 to toil] for toil *Boo*

34] And his dreams outstrode his toil *C* (line 2) with 'outstrode his toil' underlined [AGS]

35] They said He has come of evil *C* (line 3)

36 black weed] black thing *C* (line 4)

37-40] = *B* 4th of 5 stanzas; *C* & *D* ∅; = *E* 49-52; = *Boo* 41-44; = *NP* 37-40; = *CP* 37-40

Continued overleaf...

He Sold Himself to the Daisies (cont.)

They gave to him small pity
 Of priest or prayer or stone,
 But the daisies climbed together
 And the daisies knew their own.

41-44] = *B* 5th of 5 stanzas; *C* & *D* ∅; = *E* 53-56; = *Boo* 45-48; = *NP* 41-44; = *CP* 41-44

Discarded stanzas

D stanza numbered 3 & *E* stanza 2:

The daisies came as players *D, E*
 As children rude with joy *D*
 As children clad with joy *E*
 And the wild hopes of the Daisies *D*
 And the first wish of the Daisies *E*
 Was the wild hope in the boy *D*
 Was the red wish of the boy *E*

E stanza 4:

The daisies came as lovers
 Who will not walk apart
 When the song is out on the eyelids
 And the dance is at the heart

D stanza numbered 2 & *E* stanza 12:

The daisies stood as players *D, E*
 Over the passionate ground *D, E*
 Though a thousand learned men listened *D*
 Though a thousand grave men listened *E*
 They might not hear a sound *D, E*

HEAD FIRST DOWN

‘1927’A, 38a-39b (A0569-0571) [A], fair draft. Stanza 1 has 8 lines and stanzas 2-4 have 5 lines. An arrangement of 8 line stanzas is adopted here as this seems more appropriate to the poem. This may have been intended as a parody of ‘The ballad of Sir Patrick Spens’.

The storm came down on the bonny ship
 And close to the rocks was she:
 Oh, the King was there and the Queen so fair
 And the Knight in his purity.
 Oh, the King was grave – that God could save
 He had strange doubts, and a frown:
 Oh, the King so grave and the Knight and the Knave
 They all went head first down!

For the Knight was bold as a man may be
 And proud of his race and line:
 He loved the Queen with a soul serene
 As he loved the stars that shine.
 His heart would beat at her white white feet,
 At the scent on her rustling gown –
 But the King so grave and the Knight and the Knave
 They all went head first down!

Oh the Knave was fair with his shoulders square,
 A resolute man was he:
 The Queen’s eyes went to his, she loved
 Him most for his knavery.
 The King, he loved in his hard way,
 As he ever loved his crown –
 But the King so grave and the Knight and the Knave
 They all went head first down!

7 Oh] On *MS*

21 loved in his] loved [her] in his *MS*

Continued overleaf...

Head First Down (cont.)

The Queen was angel-white with fear,
 Her eyes could scarcely see:
 She loved them all, but one the most,
 And him for his knavery.
 They saw her heart beat up and up
 And the trembling under her gown –
 Oh, the keen cool fish, they have eaten at her flesh
 For they all went head first down!

28 And him] And [that] him *MS*

Line endings

Stanza 2 (lines 9-16 of reading text): 1 line || 2 shine || 3 gown || 4 Knave || 5 down ||

Stanza 3 (lines 17-24 of reading text): 1 he || 2 knavery || 3 crown || 4 Knave || 5 down ||

Stanza 4 (lines 25-32 of reading text): 1 see || 2 knavery || 3 gown || 4 flesh || 5 down ||

HEARD AT MULCAHY'S

ML MS 4937/7, Item 4 [EN], fair copy, annotated 'Never been printed' [JSN], with additional punctuation and an alteration [AGS]. ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], annotated 'Never been printed'. NLA MS 605/104, typescript [AGS].

The Bookfellow 15 March 1921, p. 28; *BLP* 49.

JSN - AGS 26 July 1931, 2 August 1931 & 22 September 1932 (wants to drop this from a proposed collection). JSN - RHC 19 November 1933, NLA MS 605/30 (suggests Croll look 'with grave suspicion upon four poems which are inferior and amateurish', one of which is 'Heard at Mulcahy's').

ML 4937/7, Item 4 = A; ML 4937/10, Item 1 = B; NLA 605/104 = C

The fair copy, ML 4937/7, Item 4, is the preferred text.

Heard in the depth of the night
 Out where the timid souls go,
 Brief as the life of a spark,
 A lover could whisper as low.
 A sob, or a sigh, or a word,
 What was it now that you heard
 Heard at Mulcahy's?

Was it a woman in pain,
 Or a child at its crying new-born?
 A groan or the hiss of a curse,
 Or the prayer of a lover forlorn?
 What was it now that you heard,
 What whisper, what horrible word
 Did you hear at Mulcahy's?

She shuddered, and looked to the fire;
 She shuddered, and looked to the door.
 Her eyes, they were strange and ablaze
 As I never had seen them before.
 Though I whispered not one little word,
 She trembled, and surely she heard
 What she heard at Mulcahy's?

The wind was a creeping quiet thing
 And the little clock ticked all alone.
 I heard – 'twas a hiss, or a curse,
 And yet 'twas a sob and a groan.
 And she – she was sleeping nor stirred.
 A low evil whisper I heard.
 It was heard at Mulcahy's.

10 the hiss] a hiss *B*

15 to the fire] at the fire *BLP*

22] quiet] [quiet] «slow» [AGS] *A* • slow *Boo*, *BLP*

HIS LOVE WAS BURNED AWAY

‘1915’D, 1a-1b (A0279-0280) [JSN], either unfinished or incomplete, 7 × 4-line stanzas and a part-stanza (numbered [6] 8, with cancellations). NLA MS 605/109, typescript [AGS], 6 × 2-line stanzas. *The Bookfellow* 16 February 1920, p. 63; *BLP* 46; *CP* 86.

JSN – RHC 25 February 1934, NLA MS 605/62-69 (corrections to proofs *CP*).

‘1915’D, 1a-1b = A; NLA 605/109 = B

The typescript omits stanza 5 of the draft (with its 2 awkward lines) and completes the part-stanza 8 but introduces very awkward revised lines in stanzas 1 & 2. Since it is unlikely that Stephens would have altered the text to this extent the typescript NLA MS 605/109 (B) is taken as the preferred text. It is highly likely Stephens altered the stanza form and the 4-line stanza form is retained.

She seemed as one who looks upon
A hill and cannot climb;
The long days burned – she was faint
And white at Christmas-time.

Her lover like a bold spider
Spun love webs night and day;
The sunlight knew no pity – still
It burned her blood away.

She died ere yet the butterflies
Knew all her dreamings thin,
She died a blossom penniless
Of honeythirst within.

He talks into the barren night
That it might hear him pray,
Because it was the long sunlight
That burned his Love away.

3 burned – she] burned her she *A*

5] Her lover by the side of her *A*

7] But the red sun «fell» most heavily *A*

8 It burned] And burned *A*

10 her dreamings] their dreamings *A*

14 That it] That [he] it *A*

Continued overleaf...

His Love Was Burned Away (cont.)

He looks as one who sees too far
 And findeth all things dim;
 I sometimes think the deep night
 May blindly pity him.

He will not love the slow delight
 That tells the birth of day
 Because it was the long sunshine
 That stole his Love away.

He talks into the heavy night;
 It laughs not as the day;
 It dances not as the sunlight
 That stole his love away.

17-20] ≠ *A* 25-28

19] I sometimes think the little flowers *A* 27

20] Are red to pity him *A* 28

23 sunshine] [sunlight] sunshine *A*

25-28] ≠ *A* 29-[31

25] He talks into the [hollow] «sealed» night *A* 29

26] [It will not laugh or play] || It laughs not as the Day *A* 30

27-28] *A* ∅

Discarded stanza

A stanza 5, lines 17-20:

He seems as «one» irresolute
 Or lately dazed with wine
 He says but for the long summer
 She had been surely mine

HOW BITTER ARE THE RAVENS

‘1927’ A, 27b-29a (A0559-0560) [A], draft, with stanzas renumbered, incorrectly.

The ravens, the ravens – as many men have sung
 These birds of hate have tenderness to wait upon their young.
 All that we know may well be false – if love can still be true
 They have the devil’s waltz and they have devil’s work to do.

The ravens, the ravens, the bitter birds are they,
 They fly and talk uncannily about the month of May.
 They have distrust of all that moves all under the heavens blue,
 They have the devil’s heart and they have devil’s work to do.

The ravens, the ravens – around them still has clung
 The evil wish – they take the heart, they eat the eyes and tongue.
 They would not spare a fallen man, they taunt the dying ewe,
 They dance as devils dance for they have devils work to do.

They oft-times meet as devils do, they fall about the air,
 And oft in counsel meditate the things they yet shall dare.
 Their talk is hoarse and far too deep for man to understand;
 They have the devil’s waltz, they have the devil’s work in hand.

As murderers, they live and move and look unto the sky,
 Ever they halt and hesitate, they hardly dare to fly.
 Their coats have all the taste of Death, they are an evil crew;
 They have the devil’s speech, and they have devil’s work to do.

- 2 upon their young] upon [there] their young *MS*
 3 be false if love] be [false] | false [If] | if love *MS*
 8 devil’s heart] devil’s [work] «heart» *MS*
 10 eat the eyes] eat | [The] the eyes *MS*
 11 fallen] fall[ing]«en» *MS*
 19 Death] [death] Death *MS*
 20 devil’s] Devils *MS*

I WILL BE SAYING

‘1927’A, 42b-44a (A0574-5) & 45b-46b (A0577-8) [JSN], draft, 3 × 5-line stanzas and 1 × 4- line stanza. Stanza 2 at 43b, under heading ‘I will be saying to you’, is misnumbered 1. Stanza 3, misnumbered 2, commences at 43b and continues at 45b, the part-line that completes line 1 at 43b showing as a new line. Stanza 4 is misnumbered 3. Four-line stanzas have been adopted here.

The Traders, they cry to the Sweethearts, you tarry too long;
 You are but God’s servants to build up, and let ye be strong.
 They crucify Love with their Reason – and is it all true?
 How young you are growing – ’tis all I am saying to you.

And good morning to you sweet neighbour, and still growing young
 To judge by your foot and your eyelid, the tip o’your tongue.
 ’Twill be a long time till the Summer when Spring is gone through;
 The green is upon you – ’tis all I am saying to you.

The Spoilers and Princes and Traders will make the loud noise;
 They need the young arms and the courage, the flowers of the boys.
 The Kings, they confer with the Traders, and shout as they do
 Come to the killing, God is most willing – I should not now say it to you.

The Traders, they cry ‘to the forest – now mow it all down,
 The birds can all perish, but let us thank God for the town;
 The Lord is above us, and we have our selling to do.’
 The Lord has queer servants – ’tis all I am saying to you.

3 is it all] is [it] all *MS*

9] The Spoilers and | Princes and | Traders will | [sh] they make [*end page 43b*] The loud noise [*page 45b*]

12 not now say] not | now / say *MS*

13 to the forest now mow] ‘To the forest | « [we’ll] «[and]» «now» mow *MS*

Line endings

Stanza 1 (lines 1-4 of reading text): 1 long || 2 strong || 3 Reason || 4 true || 5 you

Stanza 2 (lines 5-8 of reading text): 1 young || 2 tongue || 3 summer || 4 through || 5 you ||

Stanza 3 (lines 9-12 of reading text): 1 make || 2 boys || 3 do || 4 willing || 5 you ||

Stanza 4 (lines 13-16 of reading text): 1 down || 2 town || 3 do || 4 you ||

IN THE LONG GOWN

‘1930’, 17b-18a (A0662) [JSN], fair draft.

I love not the long gowns,
They that increase
All forms of Sorrows
As the willow trees.

Hilda takes not friend with her
From the little town:
'Tis the black journey
In the long gown.

She liked not the long gowns.
Nay, she did please
All eyes with little skirts
Lapping her knees.

On all pretty journeys
She made many cries;
Joys in her toe taps,
Truth in her eyes.

Today she knows not
Frolic or frown.
'Tis a great journey
In the long gown.

1 gowns] gown[s] *MS*

18 frown] frow[n] *MS*

INLAND BORN

‘1915’D, 2a (A0280) [JSN], incomplete, a part-stanza, and 3 stanzas originally numbered 6-8 and renumbered 15-17; 2b-3b (A0281) [JSN], incomplete, 6 stanzas numbered 1-6 under title with heading ‘Additional verses’ and 1 stanza headed ‘verse after 6’; 4a (A0282) [JSN], incomplete, 2 stanzas numbered 11 & 16 (16 renumbered 18) and 1 stanza headed ‘odd verse after 10’ (altered to ‘before’ 10). ML MS A2602 [JSN], fair copy, 18 stanzas.
HS 67; *BLP* 28; *CP* 61.

JSN – AGS 17 August 1919 (following publication *HS*: ‘I notice blend instead of blind in last stanza of Inland born’). AGS – JSN 23 August 1919, NLA MS 6946/21 (‘I note that you want ‘blind’ for ‘blend’ in ‘Inland born’). JSN - RHC n.d. [c. December 1933], NLA MS 605 (corrects error: ‘blend’ should be ‘blind’); 25 February 1934, NLA MS 605/62-69 (corrections to proofs *CP*).

‘1915’D, 2a = A; ‘1915’D, 2b-3b = B; ‘1915’D, 4a = C; ML MS A2602 = D
 The fair copy, ML MS A2602 (D), is the preferred text.

The tall man wooed her in the South,
 They loved along the Sea.
 The tall man caught her to the North
 And she went tearfully.

He talked of all the full seasons,
 The white wheat was his gold,
 But the long fight in the wilderness
 To her he never told.

She saw the cool brown winters pass,
 The heart sick Spring come on,
 And the Summer as a great tyrant
 Till half her hope was gone.

1-4] ≠ *B* 1-4

1 wooed her in] wooed [her] in *B*

2] And/ She [grew beside] «ran by» the sea *B*

5-8] = *B* 5-8

9-12] ≠ *B* 9-12

11] And the summer [come] live to burn and burn *B*

Continued overleaf...

Inland Born (cont.)

Her lips, they were the woman's lips,
 Eager to bless and blame.
 The lean years quelled her, and in them
 Her snow white children came.

* * *

At night she sang them to their sleep
 With cool songs of the sea,
 And in the day her big soft eyes
 Went South eternally.

She sang of boats and merriment
 And ships that come and go,
 Of orchards and the rosemary
 And all the flowers that grow.

She sang of all the miracles
 That in the South are seen,
 Of all the gracious waterfalls
 And all the world of green.

She told them of the blue waters,
 Of all her soul had planned,
 Of the crying birds and the seaweed
 And the music on the sand.

She said, these whom I love shall go
 Where the wind is sweet and free;
 My little inland children
 Shall wander by the sea.

13-16] ≠ *B* 13-16

13 woman's] woman's *D*

13] [Her heart a love-strong woman's heart] Her lips they were the womens lips *B*

17-20] = *B* 17-20

21-24] = *B* 21-24

22 And ships that] And [boats] «ships» that *D*

23 orchards] orchard[s] *B*

25-28] ≠ *B* 'verse after 6'

27] Where gentle waterfalls come out *B* (line 3)

28] To say the grass is green *B* (line 4)

Continued overleaf...

Inland Born (cont.)

* * *

The elder was a five-years girl
 With the blue eyes of the mother,
 And younger by a year there ran
 A flaxen-headed brother.

The North Wind in his War came out
 And ceased not night or day,
 And the little inland children
 Had lost the heart to play.

These two fell ill with a quick fever –
 'Twas in the red ripe weather –
 Kind neighbours came with flowers for them
 When they lay dead together.

Oh, that we love goes lightly out –
 The clouds play in the sky,
 And half the winds say openly
 Oh, what a day to die.

Slowly she saw them and her eyes
 Went South eternally.
 She said, God stole my children –
 They never saw the Sea.

41] *D* has a false start, cancelled: [These two fell ill with a quick fever]

41-44] *C* 'odd verse [after] before 10' reads:

[By day] «How» the sun

[How slowly did the sun go up]

The [North] Wind [was as a <force> «in his war» came out

And <warred> not with the day

[Till] «[And]» «Till» the little inland children

[Upon the furnace lay]

Had lost the heart to play

42 night or day] night and day *HS, BLP, CP*

44 Had lost] Had the lost *D*

49-52] ≠ *C* stanza numbered 11

49 Oh,] Oh, *D*

51] And half the roads say [heavily] openly *C* (line 3)

52 day to die] die to die *C* (line 4)

52] Here is a day to die *HS, BLP, CP*

54-56] = *A* part-stanza at top of page

Continued overleaf...

Inland Born (cont.)

An old man said, your children now
 Shall walk the streets of gold –
 But she said, it is a dim Heaven,
 And merciless and cold.

Then spoke to her an old mother
 Of Love that was Divine –
 But she said, the God of Love, he was
 No God to me or mine.

Then spoke to her a sweet neighbour
 Of good days yet to be –
 But she said, God stole my children,
 They never saw the Sea.

57-60] ≠ *A* stanza renumbered [6] [13] 15

57 An] And *D*

57] [Her man beside her shoulder stood] «An old man said your children now» *A* (line 1)

58] [And spoke of] «Shall walk the» streets of gold *A* (line 2)

59] She said [I have no «Heaven» «it is a dim» *A* (line 3)

60] And merciless [now] and cold [Nor any love to hold] *A* (line 4)

61-64] ≠ *A* stanza renumbered [7] [14] 16

61] [He spoke of all God's tenderness] «Then spoke to her an old mother» *A* (line 1)

62 that was] that is *HS, BLP, CP*

62] [And of his sweet sunshine] «Of Love that was divine» *A* (line 2)

63 he was] he is *HS, BLP, CP*

63] She said take back your God he was *A* (line 3)

64] A foe to me and mine *HS, BLP, CP* •

Not sweet to me or mine *A* (line 4)

65-68] ≠ *A* stanza renumbered [8] [15] 17

65 a sweet neighbour] the kind neighbours *A* (line 1)

67-68] [She said I cannot look to God]

[They never saw the sea]

But she said God stole my children

They never saw the sea *A* (lines 3-4)

Continued overleaf...

Inland Born (cont.)

The tall man spoke in lover talk
 To blind her for the day,
 But the Sunlight was more merciful –
 It had no word to say.

69-72] ≠ *C* stanza numbered 16 18 [sic]

69 The tall] And / The tall *C* (line 1)

70 blind] blend *HS, BLP*. N told Croll that Stephens ‘mistook the writing and put in ‘blend’. He afterwards remarked what a good line it was but I think ‘blind is better’ (JSN – RHC n.d., c. 1933). The formation of the *i* in *blind* is identical to that of the *e* in *her*, following.

71] But the sunlight [had] //sat | in/ [most] tenderness *C* (line 3)

72] It had no [words] «thoughts» to say *C* (line 4)

IT IS A LAKE

‘1927’A, 11a-12a (A0542-3) [JSN], fair draft.

It is a Lake – in the long days before,
The birds went, by sunlight and moonlight, ay, how gladly,
And always out eagerly well away from the shore.

Come now in quietness ere the light goes –
See the birds – calmly, tired of all strength – and the sunlight
Coming out clean, while the water is stained as a rose.

Did I deceive? I should have spoken before –
The Lake is the Life and the birds are the dreams – they sailed to the shadows,
But see them come back without sorrow – the birds are all coming ashore.

2 and moonlight, ay, how gladly] and [a] moonlight «ay how gladly» *MS*

6 Coming out clean] Coming [ashore] «out clean» *MS*

7 before –] before – *MS*

8 sailed to] sailed [into] to *MS*

IT WAS A SCORPION

ML MS 4937/4, 919-931 [JSN], fair copy, signed Horace O'Hazy.

JSN - AGS 4 June 1923 ('Last year I saw where a scientist gave a Sea Scorpion credit of being the first to forsake the Deep where much hunger prevailed. The importance of the poison in his tail was I also think stressed.');

6 July 1923 (asks if Stephens received the piece); 21 January 1924 (comments on lack of response from editors: 'So the 'Scorpion' doesn't seem to be able to crawl in anywhere');

7 June 1931 (asks Stephens to return MS if he still has it: 'I think I could improve it' and 'have only got patches of it in my old books');

13 June 1931, NLA MS 1145/74A (thanks Stephens for return of the poem). JSN - JD 10 December 1941, NLA MS 1145/68 (JD has copy of this); 20 December 1941, NLA MS 1145/68 (JD has copy of this with 'several pieces of [his] light verse').

A version of the poem entitled 'The Scorpion' was published in *The Bulletin* on the Red Page 14 November 1956 under a letter by Frank Neilson who said that the poem was written in 1938, had never been printed, and that he had 'kept the old MSS'. N may have rewritten the poem; alternatively, and more likely, Frank may have edited the piece for publication.

The fair copy is the preferred text and the second version, of doubtful authority, is ignored.

'Scientists consider that a certain sea scorpion was the first to forsake the sea for the Land.'

I am aware you know of all things that matter,
Back to the very Baby Clothes of Time.
It was much previous to our monkeys' chatter
Lived the lone hero of my hapless rhyme.

Briefly, our kinsmen then were all aquatic,
'And though preposterous as it seems to be' –
'Records of course are sometimes most erratic' –
England was not respected much at sea.

1 know of all] know [of] all MS

6 'And . . . be'] 'And . . . be" MS

7] 'Records of course are | sometimes / most erratic' MS

Continued overleaf...

It Was a Scorpion (cont.)

Things were all anyhow, undone, disjointed.
 No one seemed certain how the Race would go;
 Ages elapsed ere Bishops were appointed
 And a few Schisms Lighted up the Show.

'A Watery Age', our Scientists have told us,
 Ere ever Editor cast out a Rhyme,
 Or Doctors bled or Clergymen consoled us
 Or the keen lawyers – 'Six and eight a time'.

Dimly our Scorpion Parent had a Notion,
 Like a Columbus, long he dreamed and planned;
 Stern as an actor wrestling with emotion,
 Proudly he sought a footing on the Land.

He was the first – I crave your close attention –
 Calmly consider his courageous Crawl;
 Clearly he saw that business needs Extension –
 It was a Sense of Business saved us all.

No alderman prepared for him a Dinner,
 There was no Civic Welcome, not a Bow.
 No one remarked he looked a little thinner –
 But to be brief – he landed anyhow.

No Turtle Soup, no Entrees, not a Gravy,
 Nor speech, nor praise – for all his pain, no balm.
 No one proposed *Our Visitor*. *The Navy*
 Too was unhonoured in that awful calm.

12 show.] show. *MS*

13 'A watery Age' 'A Watery [Time] «Age» *MS*

19 actor wrestling] actor [keeping] wrestling *MS*

23 needs] need[s] *MS*

28 brief – . . . anyhow.] brief – . . . anyhow *MS*

31 Our Visitor. The Navy] *MS*

32 Too] To[o] *MS*

Continued overleaf...

It Was a Scorpion (cont.)

Silence – No Ladies – no Bazaar Promoter,
 Silence unmoved by municipal Band.
 Almost as friendless as a Postal Voter
 He climbed momentarily the awful Sand.

Had he but fallen back, undone, disgusted,
 Had his stout heart one moment felt afraid,
 Or his keen feet the slimy slope distrusted,
 Clearly – this Show of Ours had been delayed.

To the stern soul who gives new track or notion
 We must give honour through the centuries long.
 Here is our Friend, who dragged us from Old Ocean –
 Has he not earned at least one little Song?

Others there were, content in Slime and Jelly –
 Was it Monotony he did abhor
 That he climbed gamely on his empty belly,
 Landed and got us safely all ashore?

Does he not now some special mention merit?
 Were we Insolvents – hopeless, it appears,
 But for his Greatness – what would we inherit?
 He was the Daddy of all Pioneers.

He had no Stimulants his Nerves to steady.
 Strange that his glorious Spirit did not fail.
 Ah, it was well for Us that he had ready
 All that important poison in his tail.

* * *

Brothers arise – beyond all creed and faction
 Bareheaded, reverently, here let us stand:
 Honour to Him – the foe of all Inaction!
 He was the earliest Settler on the Land.

33] Silence – No Ladies – no Bazaar Promoter *MS*

40 Clearly –] Clearly – *MS*

44 Song.] Song. *MS*

46] «Was» [It was] «it» Monotony he did abhor *MS*

50 Insolvents –] Insolvents – *MS*

57 and faction] and [party] faction *MS*

59] Honour to Him – the foe of all [reaction] Inaction *MS*

LAMENT FOR EARLY BUTTERCUPS

‘1925’, 1b-2a (A0390) [JSN], fair draft, with a revised line added in the margin.
Sydney Morning Herald 29 May 1926, p. 11; *Stage and Society* 17 June 1926, p. 18; *NP* 31; *CP* 142.

AGS - JSN 18 May 1926 (‘Will try Buttercups on Herald’).

The draft has 8-line stanzas and the published texts all have 4-line stanzas. The *Sydney Morning Herald* text has new lines 3 and 5 (lines 5 & 6 and 9 & 10 of the MS), which are repeated in the subsequent texts, and a new line 8 (lines 13 & 14 of the MS), which is not repeated. It seems likely then that at least some of the revisions were Stephens’s and the fair draft is therefore taken as the preferred text.

The lambs are white and lavender,
 The frost is with the moon,
 The mushrooms go to God and say
 They cannot die so soon.
 Oh, they would see the Love works of the birds
 Who swoop and sway and sing –
 And I – I mourn for buttercups
 Who stay not till the Spring.

Oh, had their peace of gold come in
 With long November days,
 When barley tips are in the dance
 To every wind that plays,
 When old birds lose all that they love
 And young birds feel the wing –
 I mourn – I mourn for buttercups
 Who stay not for the Spring.

Oh, had their gold delayed until
 The last moon of the year,
 When maids bedeck themselves and say
 That princes will appear,
 They would have loved with warm love
 The birds sent up to sing –
 I mourn – I mourn for buttercups
 That stay not till the Spring.

1 white and lavender] white with lavender *SMH*

5] Oh they would see the birds that build // «Love works of the birds» *MS*

5-6] Oh they would see the love-works of the birds sent up to sing *SMH, S&S, NP, CP* (line 3)

8 Who stay] that stay *SMH, S&S, NP, CP* (line 4)

9-10] Oh that they were adventuring in long November days *SMH, S&S, NP, CP* (line 5)

13 When old] When [ye] old *MS*

13-14] With old birds losing all they love when young birds feel the wing *SMH* (line 7)

15-16] *MS* ∅; = *SMH, S&S, NP, CP* (line 8)

21 with warm] with a warm *SMH, S&S, NP, CP* (line 11)

LETTY AT THE GRAVE

‘1927’A, 31b –32a (A0563) [A], unfinished.

Letty came to the yellow grave
(’Twas under a dirty sky);
The ache for a dance was in her feet
And the victory in her eye.

Andy McDonough, she said,
Oh, you would not hear before,
And I often heard that the spirit hangs
Three days to the Dead and more.

’Twas yesterday they buried you
(All night ’twas a bitter rain)
And I laughed to think of the taste you had
Of the bed and the nights of pain.

[*Unfinished*]

LOVE IN ABSENCE

ML MS A3038/1, 6a (B0099) & 7a (B0101) [JSN], fair draft, 3 stanzas, entitled ‘To the loved one in her absence’, with the stanza at 7a under short title ‘Absence’.

The Bookfellow January 1925, p. 64; *NP* 26; *CP* 136.

AGS - JSN 17 November 1919, NLA MS 1145/74B (‘To the loved one in her absence’ will have to wait. It needs three or four more stanzas to finish; perhaps the mood will come some day’).

The poem is a later version of ‘To Cicely’ (NLA MS 1145/60, 24-25, c. 1913) and ‘To the loved one in her absence’ (NLA MS 1145/38, c. 1919). The published text drops one of the three stanzas from ‘To the loved one in her absence’ (the previous version) and adds two stanzas, one of them a completely new stanza. Since it is unlikely that Stephens would have added an entire stanza, the *Bookfellow* is taken as the preferred text.

When thou art gone but a little way
I am in a cold fear:
The day like a long sickness is
And I count the moon a year.

When thou art gone but a little way
I am in deep alarm:
I cry, Oh God – her dear body
– If it should come to harm.

When thou art gone and light is gone
I fiercely wish thee near:
The day like a long sickness is
And I count the moon a year.

Now mournfully I dream – I fall
Where uncouth shadows be.
I foot it on the mist – the heart
Renounces liberty.

1-4] = *MS* 1-4
2 cold fear] [deep] «cold» fear *MS*
5-8] = *MS* 9-12
6 in deep] in a deep *CP*
7 Oh God – her] Oh God – her *MS*
8 – If it] – If it *MS*
9-12] *MS* ∅

Discarded stanza, *MS* stanza 2:

The moments are as old men
Who stoop and stay too long
I see no Grace in God I hear
No softening in a song

LOVE IS A GREAT BREW

‘1927’B, 1a-3a (A0482-4) [JSN], draft, without stanza divisions and with ‘Footscray 26/4/27’ above the title. The text is presented here in 3 x 9-line stanzas.

Some Maltster would impart
 Much of his own heart
 Into this glowing ale,
 Though all courage fail.
 But here now close to you
 There shall be happiness;
 It does all else eclipse
 For thy unsated lips –
 Love is a great Brew.

Some Maltster in old time,
 Ere ever Love made rhyme,
 Took for a speedy Brew
 Leaves of great happiness
 From trees that never grew.
 The red wines pall and fail;
 One thing will still eclipse
 All else for the burned lips –
 Love is the great Ale.

In sorry maids and men
 It feeds the fire again.
 Though you be thin and cold
 Eat of the Leaves of Happiness
 Though Death takes half a hold.
 Ah, here how close to you,
 It does all else eclipse
 For burnt out eyes and lips –
 Love is a great Brew.

4] Let not your | [Droughts of all | time] prevail «Though all courage fail me» *MS*

6] Line inserted in the margin *MS*

10 old time] old [rhyme] time *MS*

19 In sorry] [Th] In sorry *MS*

20] It [calls up once] «feeds the fire» again *MS*

22] «Eat of the leaves of happiness» *MS*

23 Though Death] Tho / [And] Death *MS*

MANDRILLS ALL

‘1930’, 27a (A0671) [JSN], fair draft. NLA MS 1145/54, transcription [FN]. NLA MS 1145/55 typed transcription [FN].

The fair draft is the preferred text.

Something doth urge me still to
Repeat it again –
Men have been too long saying kind things
All about men.

Men may be growing more God-like
(I saw not their fall) –
I work with them, hear them, and feel them
As mandarills all.

Their vanity, small talk and vile talk,
Their Ale and their Wine
Come up as the smell of the fishes
Far cousin of mine.

Title] Mandarills All *MS*, misspelt throughout. The misspelling is retained in the body of the text to maintain the rhythm.

7 work with them] work [with] them *MS*

9 Their] The[ir] *MS*

MAUD FANE DEPARTS

ML MS A3038/3, 3a & 4a (B0063-4) [FN], transcription.
The Bulletin 8 March 1923, p. 36, signed Horace O'Hazy.

The *Bulletin* is the preferred text.

'Maud Fane, everybody's favourite, is about to retire from the stage. She and her sailor husband intend to go in for mixed farming in Surrey (Eng).'

Eggs will be fresh, milk admirably creamy,
 And the soft climate will give added charm.
 In that old country, dim, religious, dreamy,
 How will Maud run her farm?

Ah, she embarks – she leaves our small world dreary –
 Beauty was in her every pout and bow.
 Casting her pearls so long to — Did she weary?
 She will have pollard now.

She could bewitch us lightly without talking,
 With her strange wealth of Eve's eternal guile.
 Even those pigs unto the market walking
 Will give her smile for smile.

As she the Rouen or the Pekin chases
 Will she in dream perhaps come back once more?
 Hear the applause of far outlandish places,
 The footbeats on the floor?

Will she, supremely gowned in blue delicious,
 Keep the young turkeys from all kinds of harm?
 And we shall hope no gobbler old and vicious
 Defies her on her farm.

While she the lanky gosling coaxes, quickens,
 And the spring onion speaks to all the land,

13 Rouen . . . Pekin] Breeds of duck.

Continued overleaf...

Maude Fane Departs (cont.)

Will she amid the cheeping of the chickens
Our worship understand?

Will she, a woman wise, a quick creator
Of gladsome roles, an artist rightly called –
Will she while tending the fierce incubator
See that no chickens scald?

Jokes to the side, she came smiling demurely.
To a dull world she gave a gladdening mind.
Spring was upon her and sweet wisdom surely –
A woman summer-kind.

Farewell, she says, to artifice and hurry.
In the Most Serious Drama now she plays.
May she in that old, calm, salubrious Surrey,
Meet with the happy days.

OF STRAWBERRIES I TELL

‘1927’A, 30b (A0562) [A], fair draft, 1 stanza under number 1.

Of strawberries I tell,
They that can never climb,
But in the summertime
The fiercer winds repel.
All day they drowse between
Great parasols of green:
Of strawberries I tell.

OH EVERGREEN

‘1927’A, 12b-13a (A0544) [JSN], draft, 4 stanzas of varying length. Stanzas 2-4 have been made uniform with stanza 1 here.

Tree of my land – who shall express
In music the extreme flights for all Loveliness?

Tree of my land – who can abide
By thee and know not all of Beauty magnified?

Oh evergreen – thou art not dumb:
At any time thy strength has all dull winter overcome.

Oh evergreen – my own Tree,
Thou art too strong with love to lose the ministry.

1 who shall express] [none] «who» shall express *MS*

2] In music [thy] the extreme [courage] «flights» for «all» Loveliness *MS*

7] Oh evergreen | My own «gre» / Tree [of my land] *MS*

Line endings

Stanza 1 (lines 1-2 of reading text): 1 express || 2 loveliness ||

Stanza 2 (lines 3-4 of reading text): 1 Land || 2 abide || 3 all || 4 magnified ||

Stanza 3 (lines 5-6 of reading text): 1 evergreen || 2 dumb || 3 overcome ||

Stanza 4 (lines 7-8 of reading text): 1 evergreen || 2 Tree || 3 lose || 4 ministry ||

ON THE ONE STRING

‘1915’A, 10b-11a (A0350) [JSN], fair draft.

FN - JSN 16 November 1941, ML MS 3354/1 (glad to hear N intends to go over his old verse and make a book of it: came across ‘On the one string’).

Young lovers, wistfully,
Shy birds a-wing,
Cry to me little love
On the one string.

Mighty men, crowing men,
Heavy of jaw,
Teach their God cheerfully
All the fine law.

Mighty men, heavy men,
Look to the sky,
Say all their prayers and then
Cheerfully die.

Always they crow to me,
What a mean thing
Here all your time to waste
On the one string.

Ships are as miracles,
All the guns roar,
Thunder is music and
Who would ask more?

Softly I listen, then
Feel for the Spring,
Back through the summer time
On the one string.

1] Young lovers [loitering] «wistfully» *MS*

22 Feel] [Then] Feel *MS*

OUT TO THE GREEN FIELDS

‘1930’, 6a–7a (A0650) [A], fair draft, entitled ‘Let the tired eyes go’.
The Bookfellow 29 December 1924; *NP* 11; *CP* 113.

JSN - JD 4 November 1934, NLA MS 1145/68 (thinks he was not very long finishing the poem).

The *Bookfellow* text has extensive revisions and since it is unlikely that Stephens would have altered the text to this extent the *Bookfellow* is taken as the preferred text.

Here there is crying, cruelty – every tone:
 Cruel is iron, and where is the pity in stone?
 The ancient tyrannies tower, they cannot yield –
 Let the tired eyes go to the green field.

Flowers are foreigners here, subdued and calm,
 Standing as children under a heavy psalm.
 My heart is ever impatient of standing so –
 Out to the green fields the tired eyes go.

Out where the grasses hasten the resolute heart of man,
 Out to the place of pity where all his tears began,
 Only down with the young love are the fairy folk concealed –
 Let the tired eyes go to the green field.

The leaves have listened to all the birds so long,
 Every blossom has ridden out of a song.
 Only low with the young love the olden hates are healed –
 Let the tired eyes go to the green field.

1] Here there is [Crime] «Crying» – Cruelty every [time] tone *MS*

2 pity in] pity[ing] «in» *MS*

3] The tyrannies here are old and they cannot yield *MS*

6 under] during *MS*

9] Books that are always old and sure and wise *MS*

10] Cannot be friends because of the dim eyes *MS*

11] But out on the open are fairy folk concealed *MS*

14] Every blossom that rides [have] «has» fallen out of a song *MS*, correction [JSN]

15] Out in the gentle grass the olden hates are healed *MS*

PATRICIA ON A HOLIDAY

‘1927’B, 32a-33b (A0513) [JSN], draft, 16 lines without stanza divisions; 36a-39b (A0517-8) [JSN], revisions, stanzas and lines, several of them cancelled, under short title ‘Patricia’. ‘1927’C, 3b-4b (A0434-5) [A], revisions, 7 stanzas (3 cancelled) and a line, with alterations [JSN].
The Worker 13 July 1927.

‘1927’B, 32a–33b = A; ‘1927’B, 36a-39b = B; ‘1927’C, 3b-4b = C
The *Worker* is the preferred text. The draft (A) and revisions (B & C) are shown separately in the notes.

She is the rare note in the green,
She is the love song in the play –
Call me unsober – I have seen
Patricia on a holiday.

Of excellence her eyelids tell
More than all other eyelids can –
Delightfully her lips expel
Her play-thoughts to the heart of man.

Her eyes conceal, they woo, they weave
New mysteries to the sun and rain –
Her eyebrows like the rainbows leave
Forgiveness on a world of pain.

Her gowns deceive me so, they seem
As songs that stay not in a sound,
Baffling as players in a dream
Or dim thoughts on a holy ground.

Title] Patricia on [her] a holiday *A* • Patricia on [her] «a» holiday *C*

1-4] ≠ *C* stanza 1

5-8] = *B* stanza numbered 2

9-12] ≠ *B* stanza numbered 4, renumbered 3

13-16] ≠ *A* 13-16, ≠ *B* unnumbered stanza, the second of two; ≠ *B* stanza [5] 4, cancelled; ≠ *B* two unnumbered lines, cancelled, following stanza numbered 2; ≠ *B* two lines, cancelled, numbered 4; ≠ *B* stanza numbered 4 with two lines cancelled; ≠ *C* stanza 4

Continued overleaf...

Patricia on a Holiday (cont.)

Time, the unknowable, the lean –
 The Mountebank that rules the Play –
 Laughs at his Riddle – I have seen
 Patricia on a holiday.

17-20] ≠ A 9-12; ≠ C cancelled stanza numbered 5; ≠ C stanza 5

A reads:

Her eyes disdainful opals are [were]
 Uncertain as a young birds tune
 Gravely they go as a red star
 Sets in <the> West with the moon
 Her hands in excellence excell
 As in a play they plead they plan
 Her mouth the touch of it would tell
 All the red history of man
 Time is unlovely old serene
 The mountebank that rules the Play
 What of his wisdom
 I have seen Patricia on a Holiday
 Here gowns if gown they be would seem
 As flowers too delicate[for air] for sound
 Light as the kisses in a dream or whisperings on Holy ground

B reads:

Unnumbered stanza, the first of two:

[Her eyes | disdainful opals | are | proud as the | Summers in a tune]
 [When in the | dark a red star] | sets in the | forest | with the moon

Unnumbered stanza, the second of two:

[Her gowns | if gowns they | be would seem | as flowers | that [fall] «wave» | to a faint sound]
 Trembling as [kisses] «players» | in a dream | or Princes | on the holy | ground

Stanza numbered [5] 4 and marked ×:

[Her frocks if frocks [indeed] they be would seem
 [Of] As flowers that wave to a sweet sound
 Trembling [lik] as players in a dream
 Or Princes on Holy ground]

Stanza numbered [4] 3:

Her eyes [such] «conceal» [eyes] they woo [and] «they» weave
 New mysteries in the sun and rain
 Her ey[e]brows like the rainbows leave
 Forgiveness [in] on a world of pain

Stanza numbered 2:

Of excellence | her ey[e]lids tell | more than | all other | eyelids can
 Delightfully here lips expell
 Her play thoughts to the heart of man

Continued overleaf...

Patricia on a Holiday (cont.)

Lines, unnumbered:

[Her gowns deceive me not they seem
As flowers that feel for a low sound]

Lines, numbered 4:

[Her gowns deceive me not they seem
As leaves in rusling gardens found]

Stanza numbered 4, under short title 'Patricia':

Her gowns regale me so they seem
[As [tunes] «joys» in rustling gardens found]
[As joys in fairy happening found]
As [jo] loves that do bestir astound

C reads:

Stanza numbered 1:

She is the rare note in the green
She is the [spasm] «fire song» in the play [JSN]
Call [the] «me» unsouber I have seen
Patricia on a holiday

Stanza numbered 2:

[Her eyes disdainful opals are
Uncertain as a young birds tune
Gravely they go as a red star
Sets in a forest with the moon]

Stanza numbered [3] 2:

Her hands in excellence excel
As in a play they plead they plan
Her mouth – the touch of it would tell
All the [great] «red» history of man

Stanza numbered 4:

Her gown (if gown they be) would seem
As flowers that wake to a dim sound
Light as the kisses in a dream
Or whisperings on holy ground

Line [JSN];

Her mouth outrageously will tell

Under full title, stanza numbered 5:

[Time is unlovely old serene
The Mountebank that rules the play
Deep is the riddle – I have seen
Patricia on a holiday]

Continued overleaf...

Patricia on a Holiday (cont.)

Stanza numbered 2:

[Her eyes disdainful opal are
Always uncertain as a tune
They have the quietness of a star
Finding a forest with the moon]

Stanza numbered 5:

Time the unknowable the keen
The Mounteback that rules the play
Laughs at his riddle – I have seen
Patricia on a holiday

PRAYER FOR A CHANGE

‘1930’, 26a (A0670) [JSN], draft. ‘1927’C, 20b–21a (A0455) [A], fair draft.
The fair draft is the preferred text.

I who pray little would ask you Creator for one little thing,
Make me a tree then for two yellow moons in the reign of the Spring.

I would have all the pure honey upon me that honey birds know,
And the lovers so close to my feet would be living in honey below.

I would have all the sweet longing to live and to climb
Until I would cast off my dress to be greeting the loud summertime.

3 upon me that] upon [me] [the] that *MS* ‘1930’

5] I would «have» many sweet songs in my «[cool]» leaves and far I would climb *MS* ‘1930’
6 off] of[f] *MS* ‘1927’

6] Right into the purple of heaven [and] to reach me a rhyme *MS* ‘1930’

PRAYER FOR A LARRIKIN

‘1927’C, 41b (A0476) [A], fair draft.

May the courage keep up in his eyes, the fun in his forehead,
The dance in his foot and the dance in his fingers:
If there be any God clearing up troubles and down under the sky,
May He be free to him, good with the meals of His manna.

May there come shaded in muslin softened by heaven, and shaded,
Some little angel to take him up over the tree-tops:
May he have scent of the flowers and the weight of the moon,
And let him go down to his sleep in the green season.

3 clearing up] clearing [of] «up» *MS*

4 manna] manner *MS*

5] [May there come in to him soften and shaded and always out over] *MS*, a false start to stanza 2

RIDE HIM AWAY

NLA MS 1145/22C, typescript [AGS], with comment. NLA MS 605/113, typescript [AGS], (copy for *BLP?*).

The Bookfellow 15 November 1920, p. 200; *BLP* 108; *CP* 108.

JSN - AGS 15 October 1922 (response to Stephens's comment). JSN - RHC 6 March 1934, NLA MS 605/71-75 (corrections to proofs *CP*, with a revised line). JSN - JD 28 December 1934, NLA MS 1145/68 (background to the poem).

Correspondence is given after the notes.

The typescript at NLA MS 1145/22C was sent to N with line 26 marked and a comment beside stanza 3 saying 'This does not run very well' after publication in the *Bookfellow* and preparatory to *BLP*. N replied that he 'must get out another stanza for it' and reminded Stephens that the poem 'had 5 [stanzas] originally but you cast one out'. He agreed that line 26 was not good and suggested a revision which Stephens did not act upon. If N is correct about the dropped stanza, and there is no reason to disbelieve him, this typescript is not the one made first from N's fair copy, because Stephens habitually typed the stanzas as they were presented to him and then marked what he thought should be cancelled.

On this basis the *Bookfellow* is taken as the preferred text.
MS 1145/22C = A; MS 605/113 = B

Now that I weary, lad o'my heart,
I will not say that the sun is cold –
The days go heavily, joys depart,
The feet can never be quite so bold –
But you have the eyes – and the lights of gold
Run like the rivers around the day:
 When I am dead,
 Bound to a bed,
Take my horse, my holiday horse,
 Ride him away!

8 a bed] abed *Boo*, a mechanical error

Continued overleaf...

Ride Him Away (cont.)

He will not tarry where dull men halt
 And long confer of the coming doom,
 But he will loiter (an old-time fault)
 Where shady places of summer bloom
 And whites and yellows defeat the gloom
 While birds speak up to the beat of day:
 When I am dead,
 Heavy as lead,
 Take my horse, my holiday horse,
 Ride him away!

He will tarry long where the children play,
 The young ears listen to sounds that stir.
 When we have travelled too far away
 The clouds come over, the lights demur,
 The red goes into the lavender –
 Yea I have said, but now 'tis Nay:
 When I am dead,
 Nailed to a bed,
 Take my horse, my holiday horse,
 Ride him away!

11 dull men] grey men *A, B, BLP, CP*

14] In shady place where summer bloom *CP* •

N told Croll that he did not like the line as it was and suggested instead 'In shady place and summer bloom' *letter JSN - RHC 6 March 1934*

26] All the shadows their Lord obey *letter JSN - AGS 15 October 1922* •

When Love has fallen oh who would stay *BLP, CP*

Continued overleaf...

Ride Him Away (cont.)

He may stop and linger at some old tree,
 A place of lovers and night come down,
 Where grasses listen and flowers agree
 Till the moon as white as a wedding gown
 Puts her tremor upon a town,
 And little lovers have tears to say:
 When I am dead,
 Straight in a bed,
 Take my horse, my holiday horse,
 Ride him away!

JSN – AGS 15 October 1922:

About 'Ride him away'. I must get another stanza for it. It had 5 originally but you cast one out. I made up a fresh one but I'm not sure that I can write it down. Anyhow its gone. I will make another and send it in a week or so. The line you mention is not good. Instead of 'Yea I have said but now it is Nay' I suggest 'All the shadows their Lord obey'. I suppose the public will understand that Death or Night is the Lord in the case. Put in and in front of all if you want the line longer. You understand the sounds better than I do . . .

JSN - JD 28 December 1934:

About the rhyme 'Ride him away'. The idea of it was not as you supposed my father speaking to myself. I think it was written just after my father's death. [John Neilson died in 1922.] I was feeling pretty old and weary at the time and I did not think I would be able to do a great deal more rhyme. It was probably about the end of 1922. I began to think that it was a pity that I could not lend my holiday horse or rhyming ability or my imagination to some young fellow possessing plenty of vigour to carry on. I was as anxious to warn him as any man is when he lends a horse to another about the steed's habits. You know how horses shy and stumble. One shies at a wheelbarrow another at a white cow.

ROB ME NO MORE

‘1930’, 29a-29b (A0675-6) [JSN], fair draft.

Burn well the eyelids,
And leave the heart sure –
Now fall away over the Skyline
And rob me no more.

Thou who didst bid me reach ever
Away from the ground,
Who urged me out into the midnight
To seek for a Sound –

Who bid me look into the darkness,
To feel not the cold,
Whose chariots always have left me
The footsore and old –

I will speak to thee harshly,
I who was tender before –
Get thee out over the Skyline!
Rob me no more!

10 To feel] [and] To feel *MS*

11 chariots] chariot *MS*

¶ ‘Said a pretty young girl at Irymple’

‘1929’, 44b (A0634) [A], entitled ‘Modern woman triumphs over difficulties’. ML MS 3354/3, Item 2, 7/13 [EN], transcription, entitled ‘Modern woman triumphs over difficulties’. LaT MS 9419/3677, typescript, transcription, untitled.

The Bookfellow 15 May 1923, p. 77, untitled, under the heading ‘Craft and art’, with the author given as Horace O’Hazy.

The *Bookfellow* is the preferred text. Punctuation is reproduced from the printed text.

Said a pretty young girl at Irymple,
I know what I’ll do – it’s quite simple!
I’ll burn out this mole
On my cheek, and the hole
That it leaves will come in for a dimple.

SCHOOL GIRLS HASTENING

The Bookfellow 30 April 1922, p. 40; *BLP* 58; *CP* 90.

JSN - JD 28 October 1934, NLA MS 1145/68 ('must have been written about 1920'); 4 November 1934, NLA MS 1145/67 (was written 'rather hurriedly').

LaT MS 9419/3669-3672 (Victor Kennedy papers) is a copy in N's hand signed and dated 'Melbourne 27/9/28', probably made as a gift.

The *Bookfellow* is the preferred text.

Fear it has faded, and the Night:
The bells all peal the hour of nine:
The school girls hastening through the light
Touch the Unknowable Divine.

What leavening in my heart would bide:
Full dreams a thousand deep are there:
All luminants succumb beside
The unbound melody of hair.

Joy the long timorous takes the flute:
Valiant with colour songs are born:
Love the Impatient Absolute
Lives as a Saviour in the morn.

Get thou behind me Shadow-Death!
Oh ye Eternities delay!
Morning is with me and the breath
Of school girls hastening down the way.

SHOW ME THE SONG

NLA MS 605/108, typescript [AGS] (for *BLP?*).
The Bookfellow 15 January 1920, p. 47; *BLP* 102; *CP* 104.

AGS – JSN 17 November 1919, NLA MS 1145/74B, p.7 (this and ‘His love was burned away’ ‘are good’). JSN - RHC 26 March 1934, NLA MS 605/61 (not in the proofs for *CP*). RHC - JSN 25 February 1934, *HI*, not located [date?], ‘Croll notes these are in a later set of proofs’).

The typescript has typographical errors corrected and the page is numbered, as for copy.
 The *Bookfellow* is the preferred text.

It is of Love and lovers – all the old dream in me:
 Weary am I of Hate and Pride and its finery:
 Summer is soon behind and the Autumn stays not long –
 Is it of Love that you sing, sing, sing? Show me the Song!

Love is not soiled for all they would sully his pretty name:
 Blood that is good and red is on every soil the same:
 Love will be loud as the sunlight, quiet as the moon,
 Sweet as the sigh of a little child that shall waken soon.

Is there a singer would waste his breath in singing Pride
 When little Love can follow wherever a man may bide?
 I would be listening, listening, out on the green,
 But my heart could never come up to tell that my eyes have seen.

Weary am I of Hate that withers the heart of Man:
 I can only dream in a heavy way as a peasant can:
 Summer is gone so soon and the Autumn stays not long –
 Is it of Love that you sing, sing, sing? Show me the Song!

13 heart of man] heart of a man *BLP*, *CP*

SMOKER PARROTS

There are four separate poems referred to by the title ‘Smoker parrots’: ‘The smoker parrot [1], published in *The Clarion* 10 May 1909, p. 22, with a transcription [FN] in ‘1936’, 1a; ‘The smoker parrot’ [2], published in *Shaw Neilson: A memorial* 1942, with a fair draft at LaT MS 8910:1232/5C [JSN]; ‘Smoker parrots’, a fair draft [JSN], ‘1927’C, 18b-19a; and ‘Golden fugitive: To a departing smoker parrot’, with various drafts in ‘1934’ and ‘1935’, with a fair copy at NLA MS 1145/49 [L], and published in *BI*. See ‘The smoker parrot’ [1].

SMOKER PARROTS

‘1927’C, 18b-19a (A0453) [A], fair draft.

The reefs have run out and the little dim villages sit in the cold,
But up in the North-West the Smokers have taken the gold.

It is a dry land and any good morning is spring in the air;
The Smokers come out of the sunlight and leave a love there.

The South and the West have the barley – it is good for the eye
And the oats are up over the fences and seven foot high.

They have all the sheep and cattle the clover can hold
But up in the North-West the Smokers have taken the gold.

’Tis not the dull metal the jewellers spin out for the eye,
But the gold that the Smokers have taken no money can buy.

Oh, up in the dry land no robber is surely as bold;
The Smokers have washed in the sunlight and taken the gold.

Title] [The] Smoker Parrots *MS*

2 taken the gold] taken the [best of the] gold *MS*

5] The South and «the» West «[has] «have» the barley» it is good for the eye *MS*

SO SWEET A MOUTH HAD SHE

‘1930’, 5a (A0649) [FN], fair draft (with title as ‘So sweet a mouth as she’). ML MS A3038/1, 6b (B0100) [A], fair draft. ‘1929’, 26b & 27a (A0615) [A], a part-stanza under number 3 and a revised stanza 3. NLA MS 599/0468, typescript [AGS], entitled ‘Her eyes foretold of happiness’, sent to *The Spinner*. NLA MS 599/1183, typed copy for *The Spinner*.
The Spinner October 1924, p. 1; *NP* 30; *CP* 141 (all with title as ‘Her eyes foretold of happiness’).

JSN - RHC 19 November 1933, NLA MS 605 (will let Croll have alterations).

The fair drafts occur in notebooks dated 1924-1925 and the revisions in a book dated c. 1929 so the latter cannot be regarded as part of the initial impulse of composition. The Stephens typescript reverses the position of stanzas 1 & 2 (a more felicitous arrangement) and introduces 3 new lines in stanza 4, which are discarded in *NP* in favour of the lines in the draft at MS A3038/1, as are some of the other variants, indicating that the *NP* text was taken from N’s fair copy and that the Stephens typescript contains unauthorised editorial revisions.

On this basis *NP* is taken as the preferred text. Punctuation is reproduced from the printed text.

‘1930’, 5a = A; MS A3038/1, 6b = B; NLA 599/0468 = C; NLA 599/1183 = D; ‘1929’, 26b & 27a = E

Her eyes foretold of happiness
 As grapes foretell of wine;
 Her feet were as the lights that fall
 In greeneries divine.

Her forehead seemed a clear Heaven
 Where all the loves agree:
 Her lips were as the flowers’ lips,
 So sweet a mouth had she.

1-4] ≠ B 5-8; ≠ A 5-8

1 Her eyes] Her face A

3 as the lights that fall] as the lights that make A • as the lights that dance B • like the lights that fall C, D, Spi

4] The greenery divine A

5-8]; ≠ A 1-4; ≠ B 1-4

5 seemed a clear heaven] was a fair Heaven A • seemed as clear Heaven B, C, D, Spi

7 were as] were like C, D, Spi

8] So delicate was She C, D, Spi

Continued overleaf...

So Sweet a Mouth Had She (cont.)

Her hair was like the leaves that drape
 The wilderness of rhyme:
 Her bosom was a white morning
 In the keen Summer-time.

She had that old delightsomeness
 Shed by the strawberry,
 And lacked not kisses in her time –
 So sweet a mouth had she.

9-12] *A* ∅; ≠ *B* 9-12

9] Her hair was like the leaves that make *B* •

Her hair was like a joy that walks *C, D, Spi* •

Her hair was like the thoughts that fall *CP*

10] In a long fallen rhyme *C, D, Spi* •

As raiment for a rhyme *CP*

13-16] ≠ *A* 13-16; = *B* 13-16; *C, D & Spi* ∅; = *CP*

13] Her lips had long delightsomeness *A* •

She had that old delightful's *B*, a mishearing

15 And lacked] She lacked *A*

Discarded stanzas

A stanza 3, lines 9-12:

Her hair was tuned to summer time
 And long remembered joy
 She gave ten thousand challenges
 To hearten every boy

C, D & Spinner stanza 4, lines 13-16:

Oh lips that lightly gave and gave
 The laugh to Jeopardy
 I know not how about the world
 So sweet a mouth could be

E 26b (lines under number 3) & 27a [stanza 4, lines 9-12]:

Around her runs a music sweet
 [That stays not in a chime]

She seemed as some uncertain song
 That stays not in a chime
 Her bosom was a white morning
 In the keen Summertime

SONG FOR A HONEYMOON

There are three discrete versions of this poem. The first, written c. 1927, is a short piece of three stanzas, similar in tone and rhythm to ‘Stony Town’, which occurs in the same notebook: the second and third, which developed from this, are longer poems that were commenced in late 1929 or early 1930 and completed in 1931.

SONG FOR A HONEYMOON [1]

‘1927’B, 6a-8a (A0487-9) [JSN], fair draft, 3 stanzas.

I shall not rest till I seek him out, a right red goodly man,
 With a rude man’s hair and on his face the generous touch of tan:
 He shall grapple with God all day – and what shall he crave for boon?
 He hath need of an air for reckless song, a song for a Honeymoon.

He shall grapple all night with night till the reddest star is dim,
 He shall tell old fears to the heart of God and shrill hopes unto Him:
 He shall walk out over the scarlet East till he falls on a rose-red tune –
 And I shall scatter the words to him for a song for a Honeymoon.

I’ll get me a man, a goodly man, with the mist still in his eyes,
 With prayers all over his fingertips and his forehead bold and wise,
 And he shall lead me about the flowers, all flowers that I never knew –
 And every song that I ever heard will trill as a dream untrue.

11 lead me about] lead «me» about *MS*

12 as a dream untrue] as a [...s]l«dream untrue» *MS*

SONG IN THE YELLOW

‘1930’, 31b-32a (A0678) [JSN], fair draft, 3 stanzas, entitled ‘O yellow yellow sweet’. 1927’B, 4b & 5a (A0486) [JSN], revisions, under short title ‘Yellow sweet’, with heading ‘Song for November’. ML MS 4937/5, 167-173 [A], fair copy, 4 stanzas; ML MS 4937/5, 175-176 [FN], a stanza (revised stanza 3); ML MS 4937/5, 177 [AGS], typescript, with comments.

JSN – AGS 25 April 1927 (encloses ‘rhyme’ and says ‘I tried to write it for a song about 2 years ago’). JSN - AGS 27 April 1927 (says ‘I posted piece yesterday but made errors in 3rd stanza’ and adds ‘It’s really a rhyme for Spring – say November’). AGS – JSN 27 April 1927, NLA MS 1145/74B, typescript, with critical comments: ‘I don’t like it much’). AGS - JSN 13 May 1927, NLA MS 1145/74B, (one of several poems which Stephens criticises). AGS - JSN 21 May 1927, NLA MS 1145/74B (asks N to return poem and says ‘Worker might take it’). Correspondence is given after the notes.

Stephens pointed out that the third stanza altered the rhyme scheme and suggested that N make it uniform, and also suggested that he cut out the second stanza. The typescript has 6-line stanzas instead of the 7 in the fair copy because Stephens combined the last 2 lines of each stanza.

The fair copy MS 4937/5, 167-173 (C) is the preferred text and the revision at MS 4937/5, 175-176 (D) is incorporated.

‘1930’, 31b –32a = A; ‘1927’B, 4b & 5a = B; 4937/5, 167-173 = C; 4937/5, 175-176 = D; 4937/5, 177 = E

How shall a poor man sing
 When all the birds compete?
 With young Love, scarlet ripe,
 They have come out to pipe
 Oh, Yellow Yellow sweet –
 Oh, Yellow Yellow Yellow Yellow Yellow
 Yellow sweet.

1-7] ≠ A 1-7; ≠ E 1-6

1-2] ≠ B 2 lines under number 1

1] Tis a bold man would sing B

3 With young] With/ [The] young A

6] Oh yellow yellow yellow A

6-7] “Oh, Yellow, Yellow sweet! || “Oh, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow sweet!” E 5-6

7] Yellow yellow yellow sweet A •

Yellow sweet C

Continued overleaf...

Song in the Yellow (cont.)

How shall a cool man sing?
 He shall not find the heat
 These foresters take up,
 Gold of the honey-cup,
 And chime on Yellow sweet,
 Oh Yellow Yellow Yellow Yellow
 Yellow Yellow sweet.

The impatient Apricot
 Says now remember not
 Songs of a Sorrow. Sing
 Loud to each living thing
 Here in the loving heat,
 Oh, Yellow Yellow Yellow Yellow Yellow
 Yellow sweet.

8-14] ≠ *A* 8-14; ≠ *E* 7-12

9] [When all the birds compete] «He shall not [feed] «sing» the heat» *A*

10 foresters] forester[s] *A*

11] From every honey-cup *A*

12] «They falter not to pipe» *A*, written in the margin

13] Oh yellow yellow sweet *A*

13-14] “Oh, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow sweet!” *E* 12

14] Oh yellow yellow yellow sweet *A*

15-21] *A* ∅; ≠ *E* 13-18

18] Loud to the living heat *C*

19] Oh Yellow Yellow sweet *C*

20] Oh Yellow Yellow Yellow Yellow *C*

20-21] “Oh, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow sweet!” *E* 18

21] Yellow Yellow sweet *C*

Continued overleaf...

Song in the Yellow (cont.)

How shall a dull man sing?
 Shall he the darkness cheat?
 The birds to heaven climb
 In the full Summer time
 And cry on Yellow-sweet,
 Oh, Yellow Yellow Yellow Yellow
 Yellow Yellow sweet.

22-28] ≠ *A* 15-21; ≠ *E* 19-24

22] Sing there is Light to sing *B* under number 3

23 darkness] [darkness] Darkness *C*

23] [Ere Darkness] «That shadow» comes compete «who shall» none may cheat *B* under number 3

24] *B* has a line (or 2 part-lines) at 4 that is illegible

26] Still crying yellow sweet *A*

27] Oh yellow yellow yellow *A*

27-28] “Oh, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow sweet!” *E* 24

28] Yellow yellow yellow sweet *A*

AGS – JSN 27 April 1927:

Dear Neilson, — Don’t like it much. These songs — like Kendall’s — bewailing insufficiency — “the song I cannot sing” — have an essential weakness. It is the bard’s job to sing, without excuses or regrets. And it gives a weapon to the jealous enemy when you call yourself dull and cool . . . The idea is poetical, but people don’t appreciate that kind of idea. Note that third stanza alters the rhyming scheme. Better make it uniform. I suggest cutting out the second stanza, which seems to overload a rather weak backbone without bringing [in] compensating strength of its own . . .

SONG OUT OF CHINA

‘1915’A, 1b-2a (A0341) [JSN], fair draft.

Music played by a Chinese woman in a shop was probably the inspiration for this poem, as Judith Wright suggests (*WS* xvii).

All is so savage – the sound, but not Hate in the song:
Is it a warm wife, a sweetheart waiting too long?
Only of love will she sing, love without scorn.
How strange love should come from the shop that is yellow
 Blown out o’the horn.

Evil and idleness – evil years leaving their grime,
Faces of children dried up too soon in the blossoming time,
But still the voice of a tigress, the woman forlorn.
How strange love should come from the shop that is yellow
 Blown out o’the horn.

Low will she call – as a mother soft to a child:
Then in a moment the beating, the tempest, all that is wild
Breaks in the woman – Love in the tigress new born.
Strange it should come from the little shop that is yellow
 Blown out o’the horn.

6 evil years] evil year[s] *MS*

8 tigress] tigeres *MS*

13 tigress new born] tigress/ [is] new born *MS*

15 out o’the horn] out o[’the] horn *MS*

SONG WITHOUT WINE

‘1925’, 7a-9b (A0395-8) [JSN], draft, 6 x 4-line stanzas. NLA MS 1145/29(d), typescript [AGS], annotated. ML MS 3038/2, 46a (B0055), typescript [AGS], 4 x 2-line stanzas, entitled ‘The magpie in the moonlight’, with comment ‘This is to go in as the first poem of *New Poems*’. *Stage and Society* 17 June 1926, p. 23; *NP*, untitled; *CP* 110 (entitled ‘The magpie in the moonlight’), the published texts all with 4 x 2-line stanzas.

The stimulus for the poem may have been the popular song ‘Mary of Argyll’, by Charles Jeffrys. The first lines read:

I have heard the mavis singing
His love song to the morn

Stephens returned the poem to N with the comment ‘Wants more work’. He questioned lines 14-16 and asked ‘Is this true? Or is it you?’, and cancelled stanza 3 which is omitted in the published texts and the second typescript.

The typescript NLA MS 1145/29(d) (B) is the preferred text.
‘1925’, 7a-9b = A; NLA MS 1145/29(d) = B; 3038/2, 46 = C

Gold he has poured out and silver
On this tent of mine:
He leaves in the last of the moonlight
His song without wine.

Sable and snow-white the bird is
And he would define
Love in the leaves to the moon in
His song without wine.

1-4] ≠ A 1-4; = C, S & S, NP, CP 1-2

1] Gold he has given and silver A

2 On] To A

5-8] = A 9-12; = C, S & S, NP, CP 3-4

7 moon in] moon[light] in A • Underlined [AGS] B

Continued overleaf...

Song Without Wine (cont.)

Man doth he mock – the poor singer
 The patient – the pale
 Who called as an aid to his vision
 The seller of ale.

Old is the love in his music
 And cool to the ear:
 His joy is the width of a sorrow,
 The weight of a tear.

He fails not – the many loud singers
 He will outshine:
 Death he will take into love in
 His song without wine.

9-12] ≠ *A* 13-16; omitted *C, S & S, NP, CP*
 10] [Down-trodden and] «The [prudent] «pat[i]ent» the» pale *A*
 11] [He] «Who» calls as an aids to his vision *A*
 12 seller] [c]«se»ellers *A*
 13-16] *A* ∅; = *C, S & S, NP, CP* 5-6
 17-20] ≠ *A* 21-24; = *C, S & S, NP, CP* 7-8
 17] He prays not he fails not many loud[s] singers *A*

Discarded stanzas

A stanza 2, lines 5-8:

The vintage of years of old sorrows
 He craves it not here
 He speaks into Heaven and knows not
 The aloes of fear

A stanza 5, lines 17-20:

His song is the morning
 the ages how long
 Have filtered up honey and tough[t] him
 The health of his song

A cancelled stanza 6:

[Softly he tells many loud singers
 he will outshine
 Death is with Love and the moon in
 His song without wine]

SPEECH TO A RHYMER

‘1927’B, 22a-24a (A0503-5) [JSN], fair draft, with stanza 5 renumbered 6 and stanza 6 renumbered to read ‘5th & 8th’.

Good fellow of the Song
Be not too dismal – it is you and I
And a few others lift the world along.

And be not overwise:
Suckling of Folly, know your place and know
Reason the outlaw in the forest lies.

Take of the tender joys:
Captains and corporals have great hardihood,
Move with great splendour in an Age of Noise.

Tune for the tenderling:
Summer is shod with wisdom – let them hear
Dances and whistling of the silly Spring.

Oh the beloved lies!
Let us deceive each other – Love is all!
Reason the outlaw in the forest lies.

See Summer – smoky blue
As a grave matron still remembering
Gowns and old dances, riddles of the dew.

Where do the sane men go?
If there be any, then their tears should make
Rain for the weeds that round them grow.

Oh the beloved lies!
Let us deceive each other – Love is all!
Reason the outlaw in the forest lies.

10 corporals] corparals *MS*

19 sane men go] sane «men» go *MS*

21 weeds that round] weed[s] that roun[d] *MS*

SPEECH TO THE LITTLE ONE

‘1925’, 25a-29a (A0415-9) [JSN], draft, 22 stanzas, several cancelled, with renumbering. LaT MS 8486, Box 897/1 [JSN], fair copy, annotated ‘Present for a Good Boy. Shaw Neilson Manuscript sent to me by A. G. Stephens’, and signed P. Serle. ‘1925’, typescript [AGS], between leaves 28 & 29 (A0427-8). (‘The grower of the strawberries’ is derived from this poem.)

The pages and stanzas of the LaT MS are numbered consecutively, and pages 11 and 12 were renumbered after the top portion of each was torn off. On page 11 a part-line of two words ‘He ‹stepped›’ shows above stanza 14, and it looks as if N commenced stanza 14 with a revised line which he then abandoned. The word left above stanza 15 on page 12 is ‘Eleven’, which is an error of haste. The lower half of page 9 has been torn off leaving the numbering for 13 discernible.

‘1925’, 25a-29a = A; LaT MS 8486, 897/1 = B; ‘1925’ (typescript) = C
The fair copy, LaT MS (B), is the preferred text.
The order of stanzas draft A is shown in the notes.

The Honeysuckers make the Honey Tune:
Summer is resting – blue, it is all blue
In February – weary smoky blue.

I speak to you because you cannot hear:
Night your enchantment is and both your eyes
Nourish uncounted Summers down the year.

Title] [Talk to a miracle] *A*
1-3] ≠ *A* stanza numbered 1; ≠ *C* stanza 1
1 Honeysuckers] Honeyeaters *A*
2 resting – blue] resting | blue *B*
3 smoky blue] smoking moon *A, C*
4-6] ≠ *A* unnumbered stanza, cancelled, the first of four; ≠ *A* stanza numbered 2; ≠ *C* stanza 2
4 cannot hear] will not hear *A* unnumbered stanza, cancelled
5 and both your eyes] and your [blue] ‹black› eyes [AGS] *C*
5] To be so beautiful some part of you *A* unnumbered stanza, cancelled
6] Close unto God lies knowing not a fear *A* unnumbered stanza, cancelled

Continued overleaf...

Speech to the Little One (cont.)

Not all the flowers that singers have extolled
Move to a Music such as you call down
To flout the world at nearly nine years old.

Midnight is with you, and upon my Rhyme
Grief has been shaken – you may know it not:
Midnight is but a Chorus of Old Time.

So many feel for God – One who will Slay.
He was the Terrible – but in a Mist
'Twas with the witches that he went away.

Now everywhere his praying men deplore
His meekness – and the Wars light up the sky.
He will not save as in the days before.

7-9] ≠ *A* stanza numbered 2, renumbered 3; = *C* stanza 3

7 flowers] flower[s] *A*

8 call down] call [up] «down» *B*

8] Move to a music such as with your feet *A*

9 To flout] You flout *A*

8-9] N's intention regarding lines is not entirely clear in *B*. *Flout* commences a new line in the MS and the formation of the *f* suggests a capital was intended. The initial letter *f* has a different formation to both the upper case *f* in line 3 and the lower case *f* in line 7. However, the formation closely resembles the lower case *f* in line 20, and the line construction proposed follows that in *A* & *C*

10-12] ≠ *A* stanza numbered 3, renumbered 4; ≠ *C* stanza 4

11 Grief] Greif *B* • Grey *C*

11] Grief has been shaken [You may know it not] «And my dream «arrives» » *A*

12] midnight is [part of you and dipped] «but a chorus of» [in] «old» time *A*

13-15] ≠ *A* stanza 5; = *C* stanza 5

13] Speak to [for] me to a God who feet will slays [sic] *A*

14 was the Terrible] was [most] the Terrible *B*

14] One was most highly honoured | In a mist *A*

16-18] ≠ *A* stanza 6; = *C* stanza 6

16 praying men] agents *A*

17 His meekness and] How meek is He *A*

Continued overleaf...

Speech to the Little One (cont.)

On your sweet head the midnight, old, serene,
Spent with his fables, tells the timorous young
Rudely of Love – and Love the evergreen.

* * *

In that old Century when the wigs were worn
And highwaymen rode hotly, maids and men
Came with their sickles to the mellow corn.

In courtly times old singers would delay
Tempering with Love their songs, and knowing God –
'Twas with the witches that he went away.

* * *

Here would I speak to you – a heavy tune
Weighs on the world and there is murmuring
In February – weary, smoky moon.

19-21] ≠ *A* stanza numbered 8; = *C* stanza 7

20 tells] tell[s] *B*

20] Lies scornfully and your great eyes can hold *A*

21] Wisdom to make all Paradise look mean *A*

20-21] *A* has written in the margin: The love to serve you leaves | All other wishes in the world unclean

22-24] ≠ *A* stanza numbered 10; ≠ *C* stanza 8

22 Century when] [Country] «Century» where *B* • century where *C*

24] Went with their reaping hooks to cut the corn *A* • [Went with their reaping hooks to
cut the corn] || «Came with their sickles to the mellow corn» *B*

25-27] ≠ *A* stanza numbered 11; = *C* stanza 9

25 singers] singer[s] *A*

26] Tempering with | Love/ their songs | [with Love] and knowing God *B* • Long hours in
love | And God was on the mist *A*

28-30] ≠ *A* stanza numbered 12; = *C* stanza 10

28] Here would I speak without a tune *A*

29 Weighs on the world] Weighs [down] «on» the world *B*

29] Heavy the world | Blue in miracles *A*

Continued overleaf...

Speech to the Little One (cont.)

Oh little one, since midnight on your head
Dances so lightly, can it be that Death
Is but a generous playtime for the Dead?

I speak to you – you have no need to pray:
For you the imprisoned flowers were passionate:
'Twas with the witches that he went away.

Some said it was His children wearied Him,
Crying for strength to cut the hated heart
Or the brave body and the eager limb.

How bitterly they burned by Night and Day:
Blood they let out to alter Thought – and then
'Twas with the witches that he went away.

* * *

The Honeysuckers make the Honey Tune
In that Forgetfulness called Summertime,
In February – weary, smoky moon.

31-33] = *A* stanza numbered 14; = *C* stanza 11

32 lightly, can] lightly | Can *B*

33 a generous] a [little] generous *A*

33 the Dead] The [Death] Dead *B*

34-36] ≠ *A* stanza numbered 15, renumbered 12; = *C* stanza 12

34 no need] not need *A*

35] For you the [impassioned] «imprisoned» flowers | [would] flowers «were passionate»
[would cry to God] *B* • But as a flower you lean to God in mist *A*

36 he] [He] he *B*

37-39] ≠ *A* stanza numbered 16, renumbered 13; = *C* stanza 13

37] Some say it was because His Children fought *A*

38] Fainting with rage they called on him until *A*

39] Clouds «in» [of] the cool forgetfulness he sought *A*

39 brave body and] brave body [or the] and *B*

40-42] = *A* stanza numbered 17, renumbered 14; = *C* stanza 14

43-45] ≠ *A* stanza numbered 17, renumbered 15; = *C* stanza 15

43] Smoky it is the honey seekers tune *A* • [Smoky it is] The Honeysuckers make the Honey tune *B*

44] Falls on the blue the midnight on your head *A*

45] Dances in February smoky moon *A*

Discarded stanzas

A unnumbered stanza, the second of four, cancelled:

[Millions of maidens like you climb and climb
Into the world Oh that great giddiness
The thought to think about the width of Time]

Continued overleaf...

Speech to the Little One (cont.)

A unnumbered stanza following, the third of four, cancelled:

[Time was He led [us] on to Victory
Those of His Chosen who by ‹fast› pray [sic]
Crouched on the Earth to serve his Vanity]

A stanza numbered 7:

Oh little ‹one› speak up to God and say
Tired is the world [the aches are in the mist] ‹Give lightning to the mist›
[alteration added in margin]
Twas with the witches that he went away

A unnumbered stanza, the fourth of four, cancelled:

[I speak to you you will not hear or know
The warfare of the world the winter waste
The Spring so green with all his wounds to flow]

A stanza numbered 9, under short title ‘Little one’:

Oh miracle ‹Little one› speak to this God and say
There is a mist offends you | In a mist
Twas with the witches that He went away

A stanza numbered 12, renumbered 13:

I speak to you and you sometime should pray
To God [who wandered out upon the mist] ‹whose wisdom is upon the
mist› [alteration added in margin]
Twas with the witches that he went away

Order of stanzas, draft A:

At 25a: an unnumbered stanza, cancelled; stanza [2] 3; part-stanza [3] 4

At 25b: part-stanza [3] 4; an unnumbered stanza, cancelled; stanza 5

At 26a: stanza 6; an unnumbered stanza, cancelled; stanza 7; a line written in at the side of the page

At 26b: stanza numbered 1; an unnumbered stanza, cancelled; stanza 8

At 27a: two lines written in at the side of the page; stanza 9; stanza 2; a line written in at the side of the page; part-stanza [12] 13

At 27b: part-stanza [12] 13; stanza 10; stanza 11

At 28a: stanza 12; stanza 14; stanza [15] 12

At 28b: stanza [16] 13; stanza [17] 14; part-stanza 15 [17]

At 29a: part-stanza 15 [17]

STONY TOWN

‘1927’B, 12a-18a (A0493-9) [JSN] draft, with cancelled stanzas, renumbering, and extensive revisions; 31b (A0513), 35a (A0516) & 37a (A0518) [JSN], revisions. ‘1927’C, 1a-2a (A0431-2) [A & JSN], fair draft, entitled ‘The stony town’; 5b (A0437) [A & JSN], revisions. ML MS 4937/5, 217-223, 22 August 1927 [A], fair copy, with an additional stanza appended (a new stanza 4) and with renumbering of stanzas 4-9 to read 5-10 [JSN], dated ‘25/8/27’ [AGS].

The Australian Post 17 September 1927; NP 14; CP 117.

JSN - AGS 22 August 1927 (enclosing poem). JSN - JD 4 November 1934 [continuation of 28 October 1934], NLA MS 1145/68 (says ‘It was in a mild protest against hardness that I started to write ‘Stony Town’’); 31 December 1934, NLA MS 1145/1 (came across a letter recently congratulating him on the poem).

Correspondence is given after discarded lines and stanzas.

The draft, fair draft, and the fair copy all have stanzas of 4 short lines and Stephens altered the format to stanzas of 4 longer lines by combining stanzas. The *Australian Post* text omits the additional stanza appended to the fair copy and introduces the equivalent of a new stanza, with other variants, some of which are the result of the change in stanza format. It is unlikely that Stephens would have introduced the new stanza, but very likely that at least some of the alterations are his. On this basis the fair copy (D) is taken as a base text; the appended stanza is dropped and the new stanza is incorporated because these alterations are part of the same impulse of composition.

‘1927’B, 12a –18a & 31b, 35a & 37a = A; ‘1927’C, 1a-2a = B; ‘1927’C, 5b = C; 4937/5, 217-223 = D
The draft A is shown separately in the notes, followed by discarded lines and stanzas at B & C.

If ever I go to Stony Town
I’ll go as to a fair,
With bells and men and a dance girl
With a heatwave in her hair.

I’ll ask the birds that be on the road –
I dream (though it may not be)

1-4] ≠ AP 1-2; = B 1-4

4 a heatwave] the heatwave AP, NP, CP

5-8] ≠ AP 3-4; ≠ B 5-8; ≠ A stanza 2

5 that be on the road] that live on the road for AP, NP, CP

6 I dream] I dreamed B

Continued overleaf...

Stony Town (cont.)

That the eldest Song was a forest thought
And the Singer was a tree.

Oh, Stony Town is a hard town,
It buys and sells and buys;
It will not pity the plight of youth
Nor any Love in the eyes.

No curve they follow in Stony Town,
But the straight line and the square,
But the girl will dance them a royal dance
Like a blue wren at his prayer.

Oh, Stony Town is a bare town,
It sells and buys and sells;
Merry men three I will take with me
And seven and twenty bells.

The bells will laugh, and the men will laugh,
And the girl shall shine so fair
With the scent of Love and cinnamon dust
Shaken out of her hair.

- 7] That the eldest is a forest thought *B*
9-12] ≠ *AP* 5-6; ≠ *B* 9-12
11 plight] plights *D, AP, NP, CP*
11] It has no time for truth nor tears *B*
12 Nor any] Or any *B, AP, NP, CP*
13-16] = *D* 17-20; ≠ *AP* 7-8; ≠ *B* 13-16
15 But the girl will] And the girl shall *AP, NP, CP*
15] So the girl will dance them a jewelled dance *B*
17-20] = *D* 21-24; = *AP* 9-10; ≠ *B* 17-20; ≠ *A* stanza 6; ≠ *A* stanza 9
17 bare] hard *AP, NP, CP*
19] But I shall journey with royal men *B*
21-24] = *D* 25-28; = *AP* 11-12; ≠ *B* 21-24, ≠ *A* stanza 10
22 girl] girl[s] *B*
23] With cloves and Love and cinnamon dust *B*
24 Shaken] Shaking *B*

Continued overleaf...

Stony Town (cont.)

Her skirts shall be of the gossamer,
Full thirty inches high,
And her lips will move as the flowers move
To see the winds go by.

The men will laugh, and the bells will laugh,
To find the world so young,
And the girl shall go as a velvet bird
With a quick step on her tongue.

She shall cry aloud that a million moons
For a lover is not long,
And her mouth shall be as the green honey
In the honeyeater's song.

If ever I go to Stony Town
I'll go as to a fair,
And the girl shall shake with the cinnamon dust
And the heat wave in her hair.

25-28] = *D* 29-32; ≠ *AP* 13-14; ≠ *B* 25-28; ≠ *A* cancelled stanza [5] 4; ≠ *A* stanza [9] 8
25 skirts] skirt *B*
27 will move] shall move *AP*, *NP*, *CP*
28 winds] wind *B*
29-32] = *D* 33-36; = *AP* 15-16; ≠ *B* 29-32; ≠ *A* stanza 7
30 To find] To see *B*
31 go as a velvet] [sing] «seem» like a velvet *B*,
33-36] New lines = *AP* 17-18
37-40] = *AP* 19-20; ≠ *B* 33-36, ≠ *A* stanza 8
39 cinnamon dust] cinnamon [dust] *D*
39] With the lemon light and a girls laugh *B*

The draft *A* reads:

A stanza 1 cancelled, with revision:
[If ever I go to Stony Town
I've heard of the hardness there
I'll take with me 3 royal men
And a girl with [plum-red] dancing hair]

[*In margin*]

3 royal men and a girl
With dust of cinnamon on her hair

A stanza 2:

I'll ask the bird[s] that be on the road
(I dream tho it may not be)
That the oldest song is a forest thought
And the singer is a Tree

Continued overleaf...

Stony Town (cont.)

A stanza 3:

If ever I go [to] Stony Town
 I'll go as to a Fair
 The men will laugh and the girl will put «dust» «shake»
 Cinnamon over «out» as a Prayer

A stanza 4, with revision:

Her hair shall tell of the sunset
 And the whole town she shall chide
 Till they think «no more» their greivous thoughts [sic]
 of a God dissatisfied

[*In margin and at foot of page*]

And the folk shall call on the hard old God
 And take him out of the sky

A stanza [5] 4, cancelled:

[Her skirt shall be of the gossamer
 Full thirty inches high[t]
 [you] Her bosom shall stand for clean thought
 Till all our tears go by]

A stanza 6 cancelled:

[And I will plant me a little flower
 It shall need no aid from me
 [Th] Tis a «blithe» flower And a wholesome flower
 And they know it as Charity]

‘5th also last verse’

If ever I go to Stony Town
 I'll go as to a Fair
 [With a rattle] «bunch» of bells
 [And the royal] «men»
 [And a girl with cinnamon hair]
 Three royal men and bells and a girl
 With a [bronze] «red heat wave»
 [wing in]
 her [hea] hair

A stanza 6

Oh Stony Town is a hard town
 It buys and sells and buys
 It has no time for truth of tears
 or any love in the eyes

A stanza 7:

The bells will laugh
 And the girl shall be
 but 19 Summers young
 Oh she shall shine as a velvet bird
 With a quickstep on her tongue

Continued overleaf...

Stony Town (cont.)

A stanza 8:

The bells will laugh and the men will laugh
 And the girl shall seem so fair
 With the lemon light and the cinnamon dust
 Dancing into her hair A

A stanza 9:

[The seventy and twenty bells shall laugh]
 Till all our souls are clean
 And the girl
 Will give a «soft» blessing
 [That even the dead can hear]

A stanza [9] 8:

Her skirt shall be of the gossamer
 Full 30 inches high
 And her lips will move as the [stars] «flowers» move
 When timorous winds go by

A stanza 9:

Oh Stony Town is a hard town
 It sells and buys and sells
 But I will journey with royal men
 and seven and twenty bells

A stanza 10:

The men will laugh and the bells will laugh
 And the girls shall shine so fair
 With Cloves and Love and cinnamon dust
 S[ha]ken out of her hair

A stanza 11:

The bells will laugh and the men will laugh
 And as the girl goes by
 The folk will talk to their hard old God
 And take Him out of the Sky

A direction follows: '1 [2] 1st verse again'

A discarded lines at 31b:

They hear the Truth «and» they love not Youth
 Nor any Love in the eyes

A 'odd verse' at 35a:

[They suffer not flower[s] to live | they burn all holy things and fair]

They suffer no flower to live
 They burn all holy things and fair
 [Their only God is the Trade God
 He is always reigning there]

Continued overleaf...

Stony Town (cont.)

A 'Lines for Stony Town' at 37a:

They even speak to the rainbows
That they [will] may not linger there
Merrymen three I'll take with me
And seven and twenty bells

Discarded from *B*

B stanza 9:

If ever I go to Stony Town
I['ll] go as to a fair
With the lemon light and a girls laugh
And the heat wave in her hair

B stanza 10;

The men will laugh and the light will laugh
And as the girls goes by
The folks will talk to their hard old God
And take him out of the sky

C not numbered:

They suffer no flower to live they burn
All holy things and fair
And proud are they that the rainbows
Carry no beauty there

They even scowl at the Rainbows
That they may not linger there

D 'Odd verse No 4':

They suffer no flower to live they burn
All holy things and fair
They even scowl at the rainbows that
They may not linger there

JSN - JD 4 November 1934:

[Discussing the use of colour and imagery.]

It is said there is a cause for everything. In later years I have noticed that I have had a great dislike of hard things. I particularly dislike picking stone. It jars the hands. I don't mind loading it. A city seems to me a very hard place mainly because the footpaths and roads are so hard to the feet. In the bush it is different, one walks on the grass or on a soft track.

It was in a mild protest against hardness that I started to write 'Stony Town'.

STRAWBERRIES GROW

‘1930’, 16b (A0661) [JSN], fair draft.

Light is as a gay dancer
But the dark is profound,
Shaped as the hearts of true lovers
On the sweet ground:
Down in the first white beginning
Of Summer they glow,
Sweet leaves as mothers ever caress them,
Strawberries grow.

7 mothers] mother[s] *MS*

STRAWBERRIES IN NOVEMBER

‘1927’C, 6a-8a (A0438-0442) [JSN], fair draft.

Have you heard of the quaint People, part of the Berry clan?
They carry the shape and colour of the cooled heart of a man.

They see of the old sorrow that all have seen before;
The Spring in her last folly is burned on the yellow floor.

Oh, these are the shy people, the fierce light gives them pain;
They cry to the green, Mercy – and they drink of the white Rain.

The red sun knows not Pity, it calls on the grass to die;
It spares not lake or river for it needs them in the sky.

They pray to the green Heavens – are we not timorous too
And we send our hapless wishes on the old roads in the Blue.

They nestle close as lovers, they will not live apart:
If you look at the Crimson People you look at the Human Heart.

4 folly is] folly | Is *MS*

6 Mercy – and] Mercy | And *MS*

7 Pity, it] Pity | It *MS*

8 river] River *MS*

9 Heavens – are] Heavens | Are *MS*

10 on the old roads] [to the old Mis[t]] «on the old roads» *MS*

STROLLER AND DREAMER

‘1927’A, 37a-37b (A0568-9) [A], fair draft.

Some that were thoughtful, the best of the poor human kind,
Would murmur, how lame is the poor man, we leave him behind,
He shows being lame in the body and lame in the mind.

The Devil would say to his servants the crows, being wise,
Now watch for him well at the sundown and see where he lies
And if he should sleep for a moment, then out with his eyes.

But God being up in his Heaven where thieves cannot climb
Would pity the poor man, and give him no threat for a crime,
And the Stroller would dream of the Summer, the sweet Summertime.

SWEETS FOR A BOY

‘1927’C, 20b (A0455) & 21a-21b (A0455-6) [A], draft, 6 stanzas (a revised line at 20b, stanzas 1-3 at 21a and stanzas 4-6 and two revised lines at 21b). ML MS A3038/3 (B0058-9) [A], fair draft, signed, 6 stanzas, stanza 5 renumbered 6 and cancelled followed by stanza misnumbered 7.

‘1927’C, 20b, 21a-21b = A; A3038/3 = B
The fair draft (B) is the preferred text.

I would be with him in the sky,
Close to his little heart I cling.
Give me of oranges, I cry,
And raisins for his comforting.

This innocent, what would he seek,
Dressed in the velvet of the young,
Taste of a woman on his cheek,
Mist of a woman on his tongue?

Flowers will not hold him – he would fly:
I, who can neither pray nor sing –
Give me of oranges, I cry,
And raisins for his comforting.

Of loquats I would take the rare,
They that resemble most the moon,
Of strawberries that scent the air,
As the fulfilment of a tune.

* * *

2 I cling] I’d cling *A*

4] [He is a traveller bold and meek] And raisins for his comforting *A*

5] [He is a traveller bold and meek] • This innocent what would he seek *A*,
replacement line written at bottom of adjoining leaf 20b

9 he would fly] he [will] «would» fly *B*

10 neither pray nor sing] [neyther] neither pray or sing *A*

11] [Of mandarins I take the rare] Give me of oranges I cry *A*

13 would take] will take *A*

15-16] [Of strawberries that be so fair || As children upon a tune] *A* •

Of Strawberries that seemed so fair || As the fulfilment of a tune *A*, replacement lines
written at bottom of 21b

Continued overleaf...

Sweets for a Boy (cont.)

But he will leave me for the sky:
Fearing to lose him, while I cling –
Give me of oranges, I cry,
And raisins for his comforting.

17-20] = *A* 21-24

17] But he will leave me [vainly I] for the sky *A*

Discarded stanzas

A stanza 5, lines 17-20:

What shall I call him Page or Prince
His hair is as a garden curled
All [t]his unsullied thoughts convince
Me of the music of the world

The stanza was repeated in the fair draft (stanza [5] 6), then cancelled:

[What [what] «will» I call him Page or Prince
His hair [will be] «is like» a garden curled
[And] «All» [t]his unsullied thoughts convince
Me of the music of the world]

SWINE SEE THE WIND

‘1927’B, 34a-34b (A0515-6) [JSN], fair draft.

Is it for naught that they look along close to the ground?
They can see what we see not – we seek for a sound;
Their eyes are the eyes of the Father of evil, the first one who sinned;
The swine being rich with the ways of the serpent have sight of the wind.

3 evil the first] evil [of all] the first *MS*

That pigs can see the wind was a well-established belief amongst some of the rural community in parts of the United Kingdom, the belief still prevalent in the 1960s. (See also ‘Songs can be thought of’ and ‘The story of a mulberry’ [2])

THE ASCENT OF DOROTHY

‘1925’, 24b (A0415) [JSN], fair draft.

That night she was uplifted and the air
Did for all ills some clamour healing hold:
Angels took foothold with her – she could dare
That evening she was nearly nine years old.

THE BALLAD OF REMEMBRANCE

‘1927’C, 11a-14b (A0445-0449) [A], fair draft, 24 stanzas, entitled ‘The shooting of a hare’, with 13 stanzas numbered 1-13 first and then some renumbered and followed immediately by 11 stanzas under heading ‘Odd verses’ and numbered 6-15; 31a-31b (A0465-6) [A], incomplete, 3 stanzas, entitled ‘The Englishman’s defence’. NLA MS 1145/66 [L], fair copy, 23 stanzas, entitled ‘The Englishman’s defence’, enclosure with letter JSN - JD 4 September 1933. NLA MS 6946/21 [L], fair copy, incomplete, 21 stanzas (stanzas 1-3 and stanzas 22 and following missing), marked for *CP*. *CP* 169, 25 stanzas.

JSN - JD 4 September 1933, NLA MS 1145/66 (gives the background of the poem and offers to revise it). JSN - FN 29 October 1933, ML MS 3354/5 (says JD ‘seems to think rather well of it’ and ‘has suggested a good few alterations’). JSN - RHC 29 December 1933, NLA MS 605/49-51 (says he is sending ‘the ballad’ and discusses the background); JSN - RHC 1 January 1934, NLA MS 1145/52-54 (he has ‘just got ‘The Englishman’s defence’ completed’); JSN - RHC 10 January 1934, NLA MS 1145/57-60 (says ‘I never liked the title very much’ and suggests alternative titles and discusses an error in one of the lines); JSN - RHC 6 March 1934, NLA MS 605/71-75 (corrections to proofs *CP* and approves Croll’s choice of title from those suggested).

Correspondence is given after discarded stanzas.

There are two versions of the poem: one completed c. 1927, and a revision commenced in the latter half of 1933 and completed in early 1934. The poem was written first as a 13 stanza piece and then extended (‘1927’C, 11a-14b), and the verses at ‘1927’C, 31a-31b are an abandoned attempt at another version, made at that time. N dropped 1 stanza from the fair draft at 11a-14b in the later, revised version sent to Devaney in 1933, and then added 2 new stanzas in the version sent to Croll for *CP*. The revisions do not involve a significant shift in meaning and the two versions are therefore regarded as theoretic versions only.

‘1927’C, 11a-14b = A; ‘1927’C, 31a-31b = B; NLA MS 1145/66 = C; NLA MS 6946/21 = D
The fair draft of the first version, ‘1927’C, 11a-14b (A), is taken as the preferred text.

I met a man out Bathurst way in the middle of the year,
He had an honest, kindly face and eyes without a fear;
A pleasant man to look upon and a pleasant man to hear.

1-3] = C 1-3; = *CP* 1-3

Continued overleaf...

The Ballad of Remembrance (cont.)

And he would talk as men will talk of what his hands had done,
Of plains and hills and wilderness where sheep and cattle run,
The bitterness of frost and rain and the blinding of the sun.

One thing I saw when e'er I talked of England's power at sea,
Of England's pluck in battles fought in all red history –
He listened quietly, but would say no generous word to me.

His quietness did displease me and I did then more and more
Speak of the Empire – there had lived never on Earth before
A race so just and wise and brave – his silence made me sore.

One night, he said, when I did speak of what the English do,
If you will listen, I will tell one little thing to you –
The thing that I saw with my own eyes and all men know it's true.

4-6] ≠ *C* 4-6; ≠ *CP* 4-6

4 his hands had] their hands have *C* • their hands had *CP*

5 and wilderness] and the wilderness *C*, *CP*

6 and the blinding] and the/ blinding *A*

6 The bitterness] Of the bitterness *C*, *CP*

7-9] = *A* stanza 3; ≠ *C* 7-9; ≠ *D* 10-12; ≠ *CP* 10-12

7 of England's power at sea] of all red history *C*, *D*, *CP*

8] Of England's victories on land and her strength upon the sea *C* •

Of England's victories on the land her strength upon the sea *D*, *CP*

10-12] ≠ *C* 10-12; ≠ *D* 13-15; ≠ *CP* 13-15

10 did then more] did «then» more *A*

10 and I did then] then would I *C*

10] The silence of the man was such that I would more and more *D*, *CP*

11 the Empire] the English *D*, *CP*

12] A race so just and merciful his silence made me sore *C*, *D*, *CP*

13-15] = *C*; ≠ *D* 16-18; ≠ *CP* 16-18

13] One night I spoke of English law and what the English do *D*, *CP*

14] Listen he said and I will tell a shameful thing to you *D*, *CP*

15] 'Twas old when I was born this night it comes up ever new *D*, *CP*

Continued overleaf...

The Ballad of Remembrance (cont.)

My father, he had heart, and I am proud to be his son,
I saw him fight two hours or more on old O'Grady's run,
And the man he fought was young and fast and yet my father won.

My father was a tender man, I mind how mournfully
One day when splitting in the bush we fell a heavy tree
And a nest was there with young birds, and he spoke so huskily.

My father was a good neighbour, as all his neighbours tell,
He was not hard on anything, he strove to teach us well.
He said, there's something in a man that they dare not buy or sell.

My father could not read or write, now little children can –
Of things like Death and the back of Death his simple musings ran,
And he said, I can't believe that God is bitter like a man.

16-18] ≠ C 16-18; ≠ D 22-24; ≠ CP 22-24

16 had heart] had the heart C

16] My father he could fight although he was but bone and skin D, CP

17] When he was old he fought two hours and then he was not done C •

I saw him fight with a big man who had the heavy chin D, CP

18 and fast and yet] and fit and still C

18] And the heavy fist. I stood two hours and saw my father win D, CP

19-21] ≠ C 19-21; ≠ D 25-27; ≠ CP 25-27

19] My father was a tender man no softer man than he C •

My father had the slow speech and his words came tenderly D, CP

20] We two were splitting in the bush one day we fell a tree C •

When we were splitting in the bush one day we fell«ed» a tree D •

When we were splitting in the bush one day we took a tree CP

20 fell] Discussion about this word occurs in extracts from letters given at the end of the notes.

21] With young birds in a nest all day he could not speak to me C •

With young birds in the nest all day he could not speak to me D, CP

22-24] ≠ C 22-24; ≠ D 28-30; ≠ CP 28-30

22] An open-handed man he was as all who knew him tell C, D, CP

23 hard on] hard in C, D, CP

25-27] ≠ C 25-27; ≠ D 31-33; ≠ CP 31-33

26 simple musings ran] teachings sometimes ran C

26] Of Death and things at the back of it his simple reasoning ran D, CP

Continued overleaf...

The Ballad of Remembrance (cont.)

My father was a quiet man – they said his eyes were dim.
 Sometimes he drank – his jaws would change and all his face grow grim,
 And the things at the bottom of his heart came tumbling out of him.

There are some things, my father said, I keep remembering:
 A man's body is coarse, he said, though he should be a king,
 But the body of a sweet woman, that is a holy thing.

My father dare not fish or hunt and he did dare to kill –
 Where is the man who will not move his belly's needs to fill?
 It was a hungry land by God, and it is hungry still.

There was the food before his eyes, and why should he be bound?
 The rich men owned each inch of earth and the riches underground;
 They would have owned the soul of man could such a thing be found.

28-30] ≠ *C* 28-30; ≠ *D* 34-36; ≠ *CP* 34-36

28] How quiet he was because he stared they said his eyes were dim *D, CP*

29] Sometimes he drank his eyes would change and his jaws would be so grim *C •*

But when he drank those eyes would change and [those] «his» jaws would be so grim *D •*

But when he drank those eyes would change and his jaws would be so grim *CP*

30 things] thoughts *D, CP*

31-33] ≠ *C* 31-33; ≠ *D* 37-39; ≠ *CP* 37-39

31 There are some things] Some things there are *C, D, CP*

32 man's] man['s] *A*

32 he should] he may *C, D, CP*

33 a holy] the holy *C, D, CP*

34-36] ≠ *C* 34-36; ≠ *D* 40-42; ≠ *CP* 40-42

34] In England my father starved and he did dare to kill *C •*

'Twas in your England that he starved and he would not dare to kill *D, CP*

35] Who made the law that said to him his mouth he must not fill *C •*

He knew the law and the law it said his mouth he must not fill *D, CP*

36] All Wisdom came from God he heard and the hunger was His Will *D, CP*

37-39] ≠ *C* 37-39; ≠ *D* 43-45; ≠ *CP* 43-45

38 each inch of] each «inch» of *D*

39 could such] had such *C, D, CP*

Continued overleaf...

The Ballad of Remembrance (cont.)

Those laws, I said, were harsh, but they have long since disappeared.
Wherever strong men live and think, the English flag is cheered;
That flag is loved and we are proud to know that it is feared.

But the man said, ah, you boast that all England's laws are fair –
Such talk is cheap, I count it like the dust upon the air,
For the English tried my father once for the shooting of a hare.

I am not learned in anything, my reasoning may be raw –
You had a father, would you love so much the English law
If on his back you once had seen the horror that I saw?

They say that England's laws are just, that all her fights are fair,
That there is no other land where men so many good things share –
But the English sent my father here for the shooting of a hare.

40-42] ≠ *C* 40-42; ≠ *D* 46-48; ≠ *CP* 46-48

40 Those laws] These laws *C, D, CP*

41 think] thrive *C*

41] Wherever strong men live and thrive is English law revered *D, CP*

43-45] ≠ *C* 43-45; ≠ *D* 49-50; ≠ *CP* 49-51

43] But the man he said, You boast that all England's laws are fair *C* •

But the man he said, You boast that all the English laws are fair *D, CP*

44] Long have I heard such tales they seem like dust upon the air *D, CP*

45 tried my father once] sent my father here *C, D, CP*

46-48] ≠ *C* 46-48; ≠ *D* 58-60; ≠ *CP* 58-60

46 anything my reasoning] anything [but] my reasoning *A*

46] The man he said I know not much my reasoning may be raw *C* •

The man he said I may be dull you speak of English law *D, CP*

47 You had a father] Had you a father *C*

47] Would you so love it had you seen the shameful thing I saw *D, CP*

48 horror that I] horror «that» *I A*

48] For me that back is always bare those wounds are always raw *D, CP*

49-51] *A* stanza [6] [9] 17; omitted *C, D, CP*

Continued overleaf...

The Ballad of Remembrance (cont.)

Those laws, I said, were cruel laws, they lived in every land.
The English gave you all you have, you fail to understand
That laws are made by the English at the people's own command.

Listen, he said, my father worked long years till he was free.
When I was in my boyhood something he showed to me,
And even now, when I think of it, my eyes can hardly see.

His master was a tyrant such as thrive in every land;
Once in a rage he put a note into my father's hand
And said, take this to Bathurst then perhaps you'll understand.

52-54] *A* stanza [7] 18; ≠ *C* 49-51; ≠ *D* 55-57; ≠ *CP* 55-57

52] These laws I said were cruel laws they were in every land *D, CP*

53 you have, you] you have and you *C, D, CP*

54 made by the English] made [for] «by» the English *A*

54] That laws are made for the English by the people's own command *C, D, CP*

55-57] *A* stanza [8] 19; ≠ *C* 52-54; ≠ *D* 52-54; ≠ *CP* 52-54

55] The man he said, My father said some fierce things when he was free *C •*

One day we were in the deep bush my father's [speech] tongue was free *D •*

One day we were in the deep bush my father's tongue was free *CP •*

56] I was not far into my 'teens and his back he showed to me *D, CP*

57 hardly] scarcely *D, CP*

58-60] *A* stanza [9] [12] 20; ≠ *C* 55-57; ≠ *D* 61-63; ≠ *CP* 61-63

58] [My father was no tenderling to flinch at any pain] *A* cancelled line preceding line 58 •

He was assigned to a squatter here when the squatter ruled the land *C •*

He was a convict forced to work when the squatter ruled the land *D, CP*

59] [One day he said] Once in a rage he put a note into my father's hand *A •*

A letter this old tyrant put into my father's hand *C •*

For some slight fault his master put a letter in his hand *D, CP*

60] And said take this to Bathurst gaol and then you'll understand *C •*

And he said, Take this to Bathurst Gaol they'll make you understand *D, CP*

Continued overleaf...

The Ballad of Remembrance (cont.)

My father was no coward and he would not flinch at pain.
That day he walked to Bathurst gaol, 'twas in the blinding rain,
And they flogged his flesh into his bone and he walked back again.

You say that English laws are good, that all her fights are fair,
We are a part of England and in English freedom share –
But the English sent my father here for the shooting of a hare.

My father was of England and 'tis against my will
Of any nation of the Earth to spread a tale of ill,
But the marks upon my father's back – Oh God, I see them still.

Still did I speak of England's might – I would not lightly yield.
I said, Her laws are just, the poor man she doth shield –
But the man, he said, Those marks I saw – they never can be healed.

- 61-63] *A* stanza [10] [13] 21; ≠ *C* 58-60; ≠ *CP* 64-66
61] no coward and he] no chicken heart he *C*
61] Too well the law my father knew the law of Lash and Chain *CP*
62] That day he walked to Bathurst and 'twas in the blinding rain *C*
63] bone and he] bones and he *C* • bones – then he *CP*
64-66] *A* stanza [11] [14] 22; = *C* 61-63; ≠ *CP* 67-69
64] The man he said I have always heard that English laws are fair *CP*
65] in English freedom] her fighting glory *CP*
67-69] *A* stanza [12] [15] 23; ≠ *C* 64-66; ≠ *CP* 70-72
67] 'tis] it is *C*, *CP*
68] Of any nation on the earth to speak one word of ill *CP*
69] But I know the English by one mark by God I see it still *C* •
But I know the English by one mark – my eyes can see it still *CP*
70-72] *A* stanza [13] [16] 24; ≠ *C* 67-69; ≠ *CP* 73-75
70] lightly yield] likely [to] yield *A*, a probable mishearing
70] Then spoke I still of England I would not lightly yield *CP*
71] Her laws are just I said she does the little nations shield *C* •
England I said is strong she does the little nations shield *CP*
72] marks I saw] marks [he said] «I saw» *A*
72] But the man he said, That thing I saw it never can be healed *C* •
And the man he said some things there are that never can be healed *CP*

Continued overleaf...

The Ballad of Remembrance (cont.)

Additional stanzas

CP stanza 3, lines 7-9:

He had the bushman's ready eye and he heard the faintest sound
The names he knew of all that flew or ran upon the ground
His knowledge was not of the kind that is with scholars found

D, CP stanza 7, lines 19-21:

Too long have I been in the bush my thinking may be slow
But when you praise the English then knowing all I know
If I did not speak then I should feel the lowest of the low

Discarded stanzas

B reads:

[They] «You» call me Chum two years ago I left the mother land
And I have seen your wealth in sheep [and] I have eaten of your sand
But there are some things here that I scarcely understand

Wide is your land your freedom is an ever glorious thing
And yet for all your [wits] «width» your thoughts go it a little ring [sic]
But I seldom meet a man who puts his brain to reasoning

[Oh you are full of sweet talk and full of kindly ways]
Though you are full of merry talk and the roar of holidays
Something there is the scent of it I meet in many ways
Still lives and moves a bitterness a thing of other days

JSN - JD 4 September 1933:

When I was over in N.S.W. I learned that men were actually flogged at Bathurst Gaol sixty years ago, or perhaps it was more.

JSN - RHC 29 December 1933:

In '27 I attempted this ballad and sent it to A.G. He did not seem to like it but he said he would not mind printing it as literature. I therefore put it away and did not bother about it again till last winter when I got my sister to read it to me twice. In the spring I sent it to my friend Devaney for his opinion. He wrote back saying he thought it would make a good ballad, but it wanted some alteration. He marked about eight stanzas, some very lightly.

I have altered all these and also some that he did not mark. I have cut out one of the old stanzas and put in a fresh one. I think it has been improved a good deal.

Neilson advised Croll (10 January 1934) that the word 'took' in line 26 of the *CP* text (line 20 of the first version) was 'wrong'.

The last two lines in one of the stanzas runs like this

When we were splitting in the bush one day we fell a tree

With young birds in the nest all day he could not speak to me

I have marked fell, it should be felled, but no bushman ever uses the word felled. My father always said fell or took and he worked a lot amongst timber in the bush. I think we had better put in took. We always used to say took when we spoke of cutting down a tree for a beehive.

Then in NLA MS 605/71-75 (corrections to proofs) he adds:

2nd line 9th stanza I think felled sounds wrong. I think took would be better, or even fell.

THE BIRDS GO BY

‘1930’, 12b-13b (A0657-8) [JSN], draft, 3 stanzas and two lines, with stanza 1 unnumbered and separated from stanzas 2 & 3 by another poem; ‘1930’, 18a (A0662) [JSN], 1 stanza numbered 1, with numbering for stanza 2; ‘1930’, 30a (A0676) [JSN], draft, 3 stanzas numbered 1-3 and stanza 3 cancelled; ‘1930’, 33b (A0680) [JSN], draft, 3 stanzas, unnumbered. ML MS A3038/1, 12a & 13a (B0111 & B0112) [JSN] (2 part-leaves), fair draft, 3 stanzas numbered 1-3. ‘1925’, 21b (A0411) [JSN], three lines, untitled and unnumbered. ‘1927’C, 40b (A0475) [A], 3 lines, alterations under heading ‘Line for Bird[s] go by’. ‘1927’B, 46b (A0528) [A], 1 line, under heading ‘Line for Birds go by’. NLA Ms 1145/29, typescript [AGS], annotated.

Australasian 1 March 1926, p.1095; *NP* 9; *CP* 111.

AGS - JSN 18 May 1926 (answers a question from N about an alteration to the text). JSN - JD 27 January 1935, NLA MS 1145/65 (answers Devaney’s question ‘How many lines did A. G. Stephens supply for your verse?’).

Stephens put a cross beside line 9 of the typescript, underlined part of the line and wrote below ‘Please improve wobbling line’, and there is another cross beside line 6 which looks like his hand. The *Australasian* text has some rewording of the text and a new line 9 and N must have questioned this because Stephens said in his letter (18 May 1926) ‘I did write ‘height’ – ‘light’ is too soft there – and the thought would be weaker’. This sounds as if N rewrote the line and Stephens altered only one word; but N told Devaney (27 January 1935) that the line was Stephens’s, saying it was ‘the best line of his that he put in any verse of mine’.

The first drafts appear in notebooks dated c. 1924-1925 (‘1930’, MS A3038/1 & ‘1925’) and the revisions, in notebooks dated c. 1927 (‘1927’B & ‘1927’C), are a response to Stephens’s request to improve the lines marked. Given that the poem was published in May 1926, either this dating is incorrect or the lines were written after the poem was published, which is quite possible. N seems to have liked the new line 9 and questioned only the one word.

‘1930’, 12b-13b = A; ‘1930’, 18a = B; ‘1930’, 30a = C; ‘1930’, 33b = D; ML MS 3038/1, 12a & 13a = E; ‘1925’, 21b = F; ‘1927’C, 40b = G; ‘1927’B, 46b = H; NLA MS 1145/29 = I

NLA MS 1145/29, the typescript (I) is the preferred text.

‘1930’, 33b (D) is an abandoned attempt at another version and is shown separately in the notes.

Continued overleaf...

The Birds Go By (cont.)

Westward at even but never, never, to die:
 They do live surely as ever the laugh and the sigh:
 After the flight and the fall, the defeat of the pilgrim,
 The birds go by.

No, not for dying like all the sweet flowers are they
 Giving good heart to mankind in their little stay,
 Failing only as Love fails at the end of the day.

1-4] ≠ *A, B, C, E* 1-4; ≠ *Aus, NP, CP* 1-4

1 but] yet *NP, CP*

1] Birds [«the birds»] go out westward but never never to die *A*

Bravely to westward but never never to die *B* •

Death they shall know it not | Why should they die *C* •

Westward at even but never never to die *E* •

2 They do live surely] Surely they live *Aus, NP, CP*

2] They do live surely as the laugh and the sigh *A* •

Surely they live as surely as the laugh and the sigh *B* •

As all good loves in the laugh and the sigh *C* •

They do live surely | surely as the laugh | and the sigh *E*

3 flight] fight *Aus, NP, CP*

3] Long after the tearful escape of the pilgrim *A* •

The famine and feud the escape of the Pilgrim *B* •

So they live onward and onward *C* •

Long after the [sullen] «fall the» defeat of the pilgrim *E* •

4] Oh but the birds go by *A* • The birds go By *B* • The Birds go by *E*

5-7] ≠ *A, C, E* 5-7; ≠ *Aus, NP, CP* 5-7

5] Never to Death even as flowers are they *A* •

Death they shall know it not as flowers are they *C*

Never to death even as flowers are they *E*

6] Sweetening all the cold humans in their little stay *A* •

Sweetening uncouth neighbours in their little stay *C* •

Giving good heart to the humans in their little stay *E* •

Giving good hope to mankind on their little stay *Aus* •

Flowers giving hope to mankind on their little stay *NP, CP*

6] MS *G* reads:

Flowers that uncover mankind in their little stay

or (Do colour) might be used also (Do mellow) might be a possibility [sic]

6] MS *H* has:

Flowers that [never] «mellow» mankind on their little stay

7] Fading as the [birds] fade | [on the] «Telling flowers love | till the» end of the day *A*

Continued overleaf...

The Birds Go By (cont.)

Green earth and water have gladdening out of their cry:
 All things with white merriment do they purify:
 I dream that they bear to the dead the thoughts of the living:
 The birds go by.

8-11] ≠ *A*, *C*, *E* 8-11; ≠ *F*; ≠ *Aus*, *NP*, *CP* 8-11

8 gladdening] gladening *F*

8] All/ Earth and water take «crave» gladness out of their cry *A* •

[The[y] do ever «call» much sweetness out of the sky] *C* •

Warm earth and water crave gladness out of their cry *E*

9 white] quaint *E*

9] all «things with sweet» merriment [[...er] fallen] do they purify *A* •

[With their quaint merriment they purify] *C* •

They fear not, they fail not they purify *F*

Lifting the eyes of the heart to the height of the sky *Aus*, *NP*, *CP* •

10] [No not for Death they have the wisdom of Loving] *A* (13a) •

[As the and the hope they «live» on[w]ar] [sic] *C* •

Who knows what they bear from the dead to the living *E* •

The dead can take hold of the living *F*

11] [The birds go by] *A* (13a) • [The Birds go by] *C* • The Birds go by *E*

10-11] The dead can | take hold of the | living while the | Birds go by *F*

Lines at *A* 13b under short title may have been intended as replacement lines for those cancelled in stanza 3 at 13a:

They that have spoken [De] the dead

Do speak for the Living

The birds go by

D reads:

[With] «From» their sweet bodies great songs they expel

They are beyond the whistle below the bell

In all ways of loving [they do] «the birds» excel

When the soft sundown is like a sigh

All things under heaven they purify

My heart [is moved | into] and their/ hearts

The birds go by

All joyful innocence they do prolong

The eternal Famine the cruel wrong

These are forgotten in their intense song

THE BITTER MOON

‘1925’, 12a-13a (A0400-1) [JSN], unfinished.

It is no music of the night,
 'Tis but a parody of calm:
 There is impatience in the white
 And a rebellion in the psalm.

There was amazement of the eyes,
 Lips in their valour gave too soon:
 The cypress of the Autumn sighs
 Always, and always to the moon.

Did we call her in old time
 A woman sweet, lissom and fair:
 Loudly in remembered rhyme

[*Unfinished*]

1] It is [not] «no» music of [in] the night *MS*

7] The cypres of the Autumn [...] «sighs» *MS*

8 Always and always] Always «and» always *MS*

10 sweet, lissom] sweet [of] lissom *MS*

THE BITTER WOMAN

‘1925’, 21a-21b (A0410-A0411) [A], fair draft.

Beauty, she said, is a sorrow
Wrapped in a joy;
It ripens, it reddens, it fills up
The kiss of a boy.

It moves, but it will not make merry;
Did ye seek in a song
It would not be there for the shadows
Are shadows too long.

Beauty, she said, is a sorrow;
It leaves the heart bare.
The sun is so cruel it broods on
An old woman’s hair.

The autumn had left her so bitter;
All on a brown day,
She would quarrel with God and her neighbours
Her sorrows to say.

Beauty, she said, is a sorrow,
No heaven born thing:
It lives not as long as a blossom
Enriches the Spring.

15] She would quarrel with her God and he[r] neighbours *MS*

THE BLUE MAN AND THE BARLEY

‘1927’A, 34b-35b (A0566-7) [A], fair draft.

First did I see him in the light
 Ere I had wandered into rhyme
 Or the old fables dulled the sight:
 ’Twas but a moon till Summer-time
 And on the hay-stacks did he climb:
 On a clear night he was revealed –
 Kinsman of God I dreamed he was,
 That blue man in the barley field.

* * *

Let us consider Love, that he
 May be upheld as a sweet child
 Born of a stainless family
 Ere the dull noises have defiled,
 So like a sweet flower on the wild:
 Health shall he give to those unhealed:
 But for white body art thou guest
 Oh blue man on the burning field.

Let us consider Love as Cold
 And the warmth being down in Death:
 Lonely, he wavers in the Cold,
 There is a keenness in his breath.
 Love is all folly, still he saith,
 God is not anywhere revealed –
 Kinsman of God thou art I fear
 Oh blue man in the barley field.

3 Or] [O’er] «Or» *MS*

4 a moon till summer-time] Barley stubble is burnt off after harvesting in late spring and summer.

17 Cold] [cold] Cold *MS*

19 Cold] [cold] Cold *MS*

THE BLUE WREN IN THE HOP BUSH

The Bookfellow 15 July 1921, p. 111; *NP* 17; *CP* 122.

His home is in the wild hop in brown and lemon green,
And all the orange followers of gold that come between.
He often says, to mock me, 'How slow of soul are you!'
And he puts into the broad sunshine his melody of blue.

The bushman's joke is gentle in long November days,
He fears the blue light of his friend may set the world ablaze,
And the blue friend says to mock me, 'How slow of foot are you!'
And he puts into the broad sunshine his melody of blue.

All children who have seen him are gladder for all time,
He spells Romance and Comedy, his body is a chime,
And he often says to my heart, 'How thin of blood are you!'
And he puts into the broad sunshine his melody of blue.

2 And] and *Boo*

6 blue light of his friend] The purity of the bird's song is likened to the purity of blue flame: wax matches, which were commonly used in the bush (at the time N was writing), burn with a blue flame, and farmers had good reason to fear 'the blue light' since bushfires were often started by dropped matches.

THE CHILD BEING THERE

‘1930’, 14a-15a (A0658-9) [JSN], draft, 5 stanzas, first 2 stanzas numbered 1 & 2, stanza 2 cancelled, and remaining 3 stanzas unnumbered; 21a (A0665) [JSN], 1 stanza, under title and headed Last verse’.
 ‘1927’B, 11b (A0493) [JSN], 2 lines under short title ‘Child’; 27b-29b (A0509-0510) [JSN], 2 stanzas numbered 4 & 5 and 1 stanza unnumbered. ‘1927’C, 3a-3b (A0433-4) [A], 1 stanza numbered 4 under heading ‘Odd verses for Child being there’ and 2 stanzas under title numbered 2 & 3.
The Worker 15 October 1927, *HI*, not located; *NP* 27; *CP* 137.

AGS - JSN 13 May 1927. JSN - AGS 24 August 1927. Stephens returned the poem to N with the comment ‘Good idea; not enough strength in treatment. You have the frame and the picture; but not the emotion . . . Keep it for a hot mood, and rewrite with force’, and N replied in August saying ‘I have added two verses’.

There was no issue of *The Australian Worker* (formerly *The Worker*) for the week 15 October 1927 and the poem does not occur in the issues for 12 October 1927 or 19 October 1927. *NP* is therefore taken as the reading text.

‘1930’, 14a-15a = A; ‘1930’, 21a = B; ‘1927’B, 11b = C; ‘1927’B, 27b-29b = D; ‘1927’C, 3a-3b = E

She will be looking at all the bright shops in the town,
 Some like the sunrise, and some like the sun going down –
 Such lights, she says, are in Heaven. Oh, that I might stare
 Right in through the door into Heaven, my child being there.

She being so long a great sinner, ill-spoken, unwise,
 Softly she goes now, and looking at God with both eyes –
 And she will say at the midnight, her heart lying bare,
 Surely I have part of Heaven, my child being there?

1-4] ≠ *A* stanza 1, lines 1-4

1] She will be [looking] at all the «little» bright shops in the town *A* stanza1, line 1

3 Such lights she says are] Such lights «she says» are *A* stanza 1, line 3

4] One [G] hour «in Heaven» [I made] | «Thy» Heaven/ [my] «her» child being there *A* stanza 1, line 4

5-8] ≠ *A* the first of 3 unnumbered stanzas

5] She being so long a sinner grown most wise *A* 3rd stanza (line 1)

6] She goes now softly looking at God with both eyes *A* 3rd stanza (line 2)

8] Surely I gave joy to Heaven | My child being there *A* 3rd stanza (line 4)

Continued overleaf...

The Child Being There (cont.)

Loneliness hangs on her dress, it is now the long worn,
 On the shoes that are broken, the hat that has fallen forlorn – she says, Would God see
 me, I wonder now, if I should stare
 Right in through the door into Heaven, my child being there?

She will be looking at women, the young and the strong,
 And the frocks of the little ones, laughing and dancing along –
 'Tis hard that they have all the riches, she says in despair,
 I helped in the making of Heaven, my child being there.

Poor though her body be, still it is goaded of Love,
 This that can hasten the tiger and moan with the dove –
 This that can make God a shadow – she says, I will dare,
 I will look for a moment in Heaven, my Child being there.

9-12] ≠ *A* the second of three unnumbered stanzas

9] She will go slowly sadly with her dress now long worn *A* 4th stanza (line 1)

10] The hat with the «and the jacket» with the [poor] little feather «shoes» [falling]
 «fading» forlorn *A* 4th stanza (line 2)

11-12] ≠ *C*

11] She will say [would] God [reprove] «might defy» me if I should stare *A* 4th stanza (line 3) •

She says would God see «me» I wonder now if I should stare *C* 1st line

12] Only one hour in Heaven my Child being there *A* 4th stanza (line 4) •

When passing the door into Heaven my child being there *C* 2nd line

13-16] ≠ *D* stanza 4; ≠ *E* stanza 4

13] She will look at «all» the proud women the young and the strong *D* stanza 4 (line 1) •

She will look at all the proud women the young and the strong *E* Stanza 4 (line 1)

14] And the frocks on the little ones [that they are wheeling] «laughing and dancing»
 along *D* stanza 4 (line 2) •

And the frocks on the little ones laughing and dancing along *E* stanza 4 (line 2)

15] They have all riches and she has no share *D* stanza 4 (line 3) •

They they have «th[e]» riches [she cannot] the riches and she has no share *E* stanza 4 (line 3)

16] Not even one look into Heaven | Her child being there *D* stanza 4 (line 4) •

Not even in Heaven her Heaven | Her child being there *E* stanza 4 (line 4)

17-20] ≠ *D* stanza 5; ≠ *E* stanza numbered 2

17 it is goaded] is it goaded *D* stanza 5 (line 1), *E* stanza 2 (line 1)

18 hasten the tiger] master the tigers *D* stanza 5 (line 2)

19 a shadow she says] a shadow [I will] she says *E* stanza 2 (line 3)

Discarded stanzas

A cancelled stanza 2:

[O how cool are the grave men they meet and decide
 That she shall step to the darkness and there abide
 Know nothing of sweetness «or» lights on the blue
 Oh there be cool men that we [must] «be» listening to]

Continued overleaf...

The Child Being There (cont.)

A unnumbered stanza, the third of three:

Nine moons she gave it her | [her] the / hearts blood the watching was sore
 In the small hour she cried too faintly – then cried no more
 When she at the little grave side looked at the cold
 She knew more famine than any God ever was told

B stanza headed ‘Last verse’:

She will «see» sweetness where no | sweetness is She will | see gold
 She will go out upon dream and return being bold
 She will say I the dark sinner my body could dare
 My blood gave a beauty to Heaven | My child being there

D unnumbered stanza, under short title:

She will be looking for hours at the stars in the sky
 She will speak «up» to even a cloud that is hurrying by
 She will say tho a sinner I am I can look at God square
 [In the face for] «For» a part of me has been in Heaven | My child being there

E stanza numbered 3, under short title:

She will be looking for hours at the stars and the sky
 She will say often to some little cloud that is hurrying by
 She will say though a sinner I am I can look at God[s] square
 In the face for I ought to see Heaven my child being there

THE CHILDREN OF GOD

‘1930’, 30b-31b (A0677) [JSN], unfinished.

Still as the mandarills you have the rage in your faces,
 You who dismember, deface, embitter. Cool is your greed.
 You have slain horses carrying loads to your worshipping places –
 As you will have it
 Yea, you are the Children of God.

In fury you slaughter the lamb – for the gold of the butter
 The calf has been robbed – the mother cries for her young.
 There is more prayer in her cry than any you utter –
 But you will have it so,
 You are the Children of God.

Flowers are despoiled and the most holy leaves
 Used for your laughter – the joy of the world been delayed.
 Thou art more fierce than lion or tiger, or forest thieves
 Thou who hast broken down horses,
 Oh Children of God.

You are more persistent than any asses at braying

[*Unfinished*]

1 mandarills] mandarils *MS*

2 embitter. Cool] embitter Cool *MS*

7 robbed –] robbed – *MS*

12 for your laughter] for [thy] «your» laughter *MS*

13 Thou . . . or forest] They . . . of forest *MS*

THE COMING OF THE GOOSEBERRY

‘1927’C, 15b (A0450) [A], fair draft.

Broad were his shoulders and so stout he was in heart and limb,
Soft words were all too close to him and made his body dim,
But the coming of the gooseberry, it was a joy to him.

Strong, the unreason of her eyes made Earth and Heaven young,
Her hair like a great sunrise upon her shoulders clung;
Oh, she was sharp as a gooseberry with the acid on her tongue.

The bravery was on her lips and on her steady chin,
He knew not when her rage would start nor why it should begin.
He said, she is both life and death and purity and sin.

1 Broad were] Broad was *MS*

4 Strong, the unreason] Strong [was] «the» unreason *MS*

An intended alteration is indicated by a heading ‘Second [First] line of first verse’ at the bottom of the page.

THE COOL SAILOR

‘1930’, 15b (A0660) [JSN], fair draft. The first stanza has 3 long lines followed by 2 short lines and the second has 7 short lines. The pattern of the first stanza is retained here in the second.

When little tame tigers make hideous song
 And the moon in great weariness sits up so long
 I see more by dim light than by day,
 But I like not the Sailor
 Who comes my way.

Oh he takes many – mean souls and fair –
 All gods command him this grim work to bear.
 Is there so stern a Sailor ever afloat?
 Cool is the face of the Sailor,
 Black is the boat.

Title] The ‘Sailor’ is Charon, the ferryman of Greek mythology.

1 little tame tigers] The reference is to cats, howling at night.

6 takes] [bears] «takes» *MS*

8 Sailor] sailor *MS*

Line endings stanza 2:

1 fair || 2 him || 3 bear || 4 sailor || 5 afloat || 6 Sailor || 7 boat ||

THE DAYS OF OCTOBER

‘1930’, 20a (A0664) [JSN], fair draft, 3 x 4-line stanzas. NLA MS 1145/74(b), typescript [AGS], annotated ‘Not enough stuff in this: strengthen or extend. Only the first stanza is good: the others are insubstantial and overwritten.’

AGS - JSN 13 May 1927 (asks N to remind him to send this to the *Worker* in September).

The typescript has 3 x 2-line stanzas and this arrangement obscures the slight emphases created by the shorter lines in the fair draft. The fair draft is therefore taken as the preferred text.

The days are all as birds come out,
It is the time to sing:
The Doubts of Winter die to make
The Sacrament of Spring.

The days are all as birds come out,
Compassionate in air:
They plant their loves around the heart
And cool their voices there.

The days are all as birds come out
Whose minds are on the moon,
Whose tongues are wet with gold, who take
The flowers to fit the tune.

4 Sacrament] Sacrement *MS*

THE DIVE

‘1930’, 32b-33a (A0679) [JSN], draft. Line 27 is marked with a cross (indicating revision required) and replacement lines for lines 27 & 28 occur at the end of the text.

Each night I am diving –
 'Tis a blue floor –
 The dead men come lightly
 And walk not ashore.

Each night I go diving –
 I speak with dead men
 But at sunrise come up to
 The fields again.

I love the good light
 More than the dim,
 And there is scarlet
 In the birds' hymn.

But at night I go diving –
 Women walk there,
 Yet no colour bides on
 Old eyes and hair.

The strange, the unseemly,
 Wrap me around –
 Old summer walks up
 On the blue ground.

I who go diving
 Talk with dead men.
 At the sunrise I come up
 To the fields again.

* * *

- 3] Dead «men» come lightly *MS*
 11 [The green and the scarlet] *MS*, cancelled line preceding line 11
 15 Yet no] [But] yet no *MS*
 16 Old eyes] Old/ [The] eyes *MS*

Continued overleaf...

The Dive (cont.)

But I shall go diving
Some day in some year –
In that day I shall have
Palsy and fear.

I shall look into
Great eyes of dead men –
But no more at sunrise
The fields again.

27] Shall I be listening then *MS*, discarded line

28] Dead men to hear *MS*, discarded line.

31-32] But [at sunrise no] | no more [I shall] at | Sunrise/ [Find the scarlet again] | the
fields again *MS*

THE DYING EDITOR

The Bookfellow 15 May 1920, p. 113, signed Horace O'Hazy.

Idle his dauntless scissors hung;
Few did give succour – no one prayed:
Death like an old collector clung
Courteous and callous – and unpaid!

Wild was the night. On such a night
Devils might well confer and grin:
Hark, at the door, a tapping light,
And a dull watcher said, come in.

In His Contemporary came
Stricken with grief – he scarce could stand –
Mutely beseeching in his shame
Pardon, and pressure of the hand.

Mopping the death-sweats off his brow
The sick man grunted as he died –
Never did We, nor shall We now,
Shake hands with Filth Personified.

THE ELEVENTH MOON

The Bookfellow 15 October 1920, p. 181; *BLP* 91; *CP* 96.

AGS - JSN 8 February 1920, NLA MS 1145/30 (has got the poem and sending a typed copy 'for you to look at again'). JSN - AGS 26 July 1931 (adds this to list of pieces he wants to drop from proposed collection 'because you told [me] a certain professor told you that it contained some indecent hidden meaning'). JSN - RHC 25 February 1934, NLA MS 605/62-69 (corrections to proofs *CP*: 'first line last stanza. It should be honey-wet instead of merely honey').

The *Bookfellow* is the preferred text.

'Twas in the eleventh moon I went wool gathering in the dim:
Near by me was a lover lad and the sweetness was on him.

Lightly his eyes went to the east and he with joy was dumb,
His sweet love walked, a miracle out of the moonlight come.

Oh, but he was the fine lover, with a lover's thirsting eye:
When two hearts beat the tune is sweet and knows not how to die.

Her laugh it was the rainbow's laugh delicious to the land,
And she gave to him for close loving her little silken hand.

Her face was made of summer thought joined with the giddy spring:
Gently I said, O heart – she is too heavenly a thing.

The moon did seem as music spilled upon her spotless gown,
And at her height of happiness the summer tear came down.

Night – and the silence honey-wet – the moon came to the full:
It was a time for gentle thought and the gathering of wool.

THE EVENING IS THE MORNING

The Bookfellow 15 March 1920, p. 82; *BLP* 92; *CP* 98.

JSN - AGS 30 November 1919 (asks Stephens if he has received the poem [referred to as ‘The morning is the evening’]).

The *Bookfellow* is the preferred text.

To make my love more delicate I say into her eyes
The evening is the morning dear, but in a sweet disguise.
The morning was too loud with light and the many birds would sing –
Who but the thoughtless would exchange the Autumn for the Spring?

To make my love more beautiful I sing into her ear
'Tis not the morning that I love, it is the evening dear.
No sweets of all the sweets we knew are sweet as those we know –
And tho' she sighs most heavily she says 'tis even so.

To make my love think happily I say the morning wine
Did much disturb thy maiden's heart and put a storm in mine.
The sunlight did so play with us what strength or sight had we?
And tho' her tears will come, she says I speak most faithfully.

I say to make my sweetheart laugh, now all our work is done,
The evening is the morning dear, we shall deceive the sun.
Her hair that once was summer heat is but a bloom in gray,
Still she will tell me Evening is the Morning that I say.

THE FARM SO GREEN

‘1915’A, 3b-5b (A0343-5) [JSN], draft. ML MS 3354/3, Item 2, 3/5a-5b & 4/7a [A], with alterations [FN], draft. ML MS A3038/2, 6a, 7a & 8a (B0011-3) [FN], transcription, entitled ‘The ballad of the farm so green’, with comment ‘early verse by JSN about 1900’ and ‘Note FN:- Could get through on account of ‘early work’.

Spaces have been left blank in the draft at MS 3354/3-2 in places where the draft at ‘1915’A is difficult to read either because of the handwriting itself or because of errors due to haste in writing, indicating that this text was copied from the draft. These spaces have been completed in Frank Neilson’s hand and there are additional alterations in Frank’s hand.

The draft at ‘1915’A, 3b-5b [JSN] (A) is taken as the preferred text.

‘1915’A, 3b-5b = A; 3354/3-2, 3/5a-5b & 4/7a = B

The little white lad in the dusty town, how close to Death was he,
How large and sorrowful were his eyes and his feet went woefully.
His lips no more were red and his cheeks had lost their handsome glow
And a neighbour said, as he shook his head, they will make him a bed below.

But the mother strove as a mother will with many faltering prayers,
She clung to the white of his pretty face and the sweet light in his hair.
She said, I cannot go, but he shall go where the air is clean,
He shall go with Love to my tall sister who lives on the Farm so Green.

Then came tears of many a kind, and kisses grave and long,
And little joys that were olden joys, quiet as a cradle song.
His coats were many, his linen white, his shoes were soft and warm,
And every fear did the mother make of the red sun or the storm.

3 had lost] has lost *A*

4 And a neighbour said] And [h] a neighbour [said] *A* • And the neighbour said *B*

5 many faltering prayers] many faltering prayer[s] *A* . ‘many a faltering prayer’ may have been intended

6] She clung to the white of | his pretty face of | his pretty face and the sweet light in his hair *A*

8 to my tall sister who] to my sister | Who *A* • to my sister who *B*

9 Then came] Then they came *B*

11 his linen] his line[n] *A* • *B* has ‘linen’ added afterwards in space left [FN]

12 did the mother] did the the | mother *A*

Continued overleaf...

The Farm so Green (cont.)

The day was bright and the mail coach came and the father's face was full
 And the eyes of the little lad did seem as a dreamer gathering wool.
 The mother had one long kiss to make and low, low words to say,
 The driver flourished his whip and the lad with the sweet face passed away.

That day he went through the tall tall trees with a brown world all around,
 Summer was out upon the skies and over the sullen ground,
 And the driver swore but the little lad knew not his words could mean –
 When the sun fell low in the sky they came, they came to the Farm so Green.

The tall Aunt came with a mother's arms and a mother's heart aflame,
 His hair she held for a long long time and his white face much the same,
 And the Uncle gray had a laughing way and carried him clean inside,
 And the tall Aunt said, he has need of Love and he shall be satisfied.

That night he slept in the prettiest bed and the clean scent of the air
 Put him out in a world of dream and he journeyed everywhere
 Till the daylight came, and the laughing jack, that jester sweet and bold,
 Put all his pleasance over the leaves while the east came into gold.

13 father's] father['s] face *A*

14 did seem as a dreamer] seemed as [a] dreamer *B*

15 kiss to make and low low words] kiss// to make | and low low words *B*. 'To make' and 'low low' added [FN]

15 to say] to says *A*

16] The drivers flourished his whip | [and] the lad with the sweet face passed away *A*

16 face passed away] face | whirled / [passed] away [FN] *B*

19] [And all day long the driver] *A* false start to line

21 heart aflame] heart [afire] aflame *A*

24 Aunt said he] Aunt [said] he *A*

24] Said the tall aunt he [has need of] «will have our» Love and he shall be satisfied [FN] *B*

25 and] And *A*

26 Put him . . . and] [Gave] Put him . . . And *A*

27 laughing jack] refers to the laughing jackass or kookaburra

28 pleasance] pleasures *B*

Continued overleaf...

The Farm so Green (cont.)

Oh, the tall Aunt took him by the hand, so much was there to show,
 He saw the leaves of the strawberries and the strawberries slept below.
 He saw the red of the red rhubarb and the peach tree by the wall
 Had a thousand thousand things to say and he could not hear them all.

He stroked the nose of the chestnut mare and he petted the big brown foal
 And the cattle looked at him lazily as he went on a morning stroll.
 Tall were the trees and he looked so far to see the Heavens above,
 And every bird that he saw did speak of a childish thing called Love.

29 so] | So *A*

30 strawberries and the strawberries] strawberries [and] «where» the strawberries [FN] *B*

31 and] And *A*

32 and . . . not hear them] | And . . . not «hear» them *A*

32] «And a hundred [lovely] «curious» things near by» [space left and words inserted FN]

[and] «but» [FN] he could [not hear] |see» [FN] them all *B*

34 on a morning] for his morning *B*

35 So far] so fare *A*

35-36] These lines cancelled in *B*. *B* has lines [FN] following cancelled lines:

Tall were the trees and he looked right up and he felt the gentle rain

And [the fairies] «Health» came [with their] «back with her» magic hands and [painted] «kissed» his cheeks
 again

THE FELLOW IN THE MIST

‘1927’ A, 26a-26b (A0557-8) [A], fair draft. The title at the head of the poem at 26a is ‘The fellow in the mist’: this was repeated at the top of 26b and then changed, with *mist* overwritten *dust*. The original title better fits the logic of the poem and is therefore retained.

Slowly he wandered in the dust,
Red was the world and red the sky;
On his gray head his hat was thrust
And weariness was in his eye.

Sitting beside a fence he saw
A tall man, he who would persist
In murmuring things outside the law;
He was the fellow in the mist.

He said my mother did I see,
And though the many call me fool
(It was before the birth of me)
She was a wild flower at the school.

Her feet they were so light, her face,
None was so delicately fair;
They said she grew in a far place
As a geranium in the air.

All the first colours of the earth,
All the white flavours of the sky,
Into her body put the mirth
And the good blessing in her eye.

15 grew in a far] [came from at] «grew in a» far *MS*

THE FLAUTIST

‘1927’A, 30b-31a (A0562-3) [A], fair draft, with stanzas 1 & 2 under title ‘The florist’ and stanzas 3-5 under short title ‘The flout’. The stanzas are interrupted by a cancelled title (‘The wild cherry’) at the head of 31a. The first stanza has 2 long lines and the remainder have 4 short lines. The short lines are adopted here throughout.

He may know too much of
Where life began;
I will not speak – he is too
Hazy a man.

I saw with music
The speech of his pride,
I saw him put tears on
The face of a bride.

I heard him playing
As a bold man plays
For a sweetheart’s journey
On holidays.

* *

But he made sorrow
Outside all sound
For a dead man creeping
To the underground.

He knows too much of
Where Death began:
I will speak no more with
This hazy man.

Title] The title clearly involves a mishearing on Annie’s part.

Line endings stanza 1: 1 began || 2 man ||

THE FLIGHT OF THE WEARY

ML MS A3038/1, 29b & 30b (B0137-9) [JSN], draft 9 stanzas, with cancelled stanzas, revised lines and renumbered stanzas; 31b-32b & 34a (B0141-5 & B0146) [JSN], additional stanzas (including revisions of previous stanzas), with cancelled stanzas and revised lines, under various headings. '1925', 1a (A0389) [JSN], 1 part-stanza and 2 stanzas numbered 1-3 under heading 'Odd verses for Flight of the weary'. NLA MS 1145/74B, typescript, 7 x 8-line stanzas, heavily annotated [AGS].

The Australasian 9 January 1926, p. 105; *Stage and Society* 15 July 1926, p. 16; *NP* 24; *CP* 133.

AGS - JSN 5 January 1926 (the *Australasian* has taken the poem and now thinks 'we had better let it alone; there is a lot of melody and beauty in it, with some thin lines where your nerves struck a ragged edge'). JSN – MG 16 May 1926, ML MS A3267 ('I meant to put in an acknowledgement to Lawson. It contains an idea of his').

The poem was conceived as a 9-stanza piece (A3038/1, 29b-30b) and additional stanzas were then written and the poem extended. There is extensive revision and several lines are marked with a cross and numbered to indicate where replacement lines are to go, with numbering which is often confused, and with drafts written in 4-line stanzas for the most part. The typescript returned to N has 7 x 8-line stanzas and is heavily marked. Stephens considered this a 'Beautiful topic' but 'too personal – that is, it leaves the reader outside; doesn't imperatively call him in'. He thought that stanzas 1, 2 and 5-7 (lines 1-8, 9-16 and 33-36) were good but said that he would be 'inclined to omit stanzas 3 and 4 (lines 17-24 and 25-32) to gain speed and pull together', and added 'you might do something in ONE STANZA'. He cancelled lines 17-20 and lines 29-32, marked with a cross the lines that he thought good (lines 21, 26(?), 27 & 28), questioned some of the wording in lines 17, 21, 23 & 25, and suggested 2 new lines (lines 17 & 22). However, no further revision was made and the poem was published as it stood.

In the absence of a fair draft or fair copy the typescript (D) is taken as the preferred text. The 4-line stanza form of the drafts is retained.

A3038/1, 29b-30b = A; A3038/1, 31b–33b & 34a = B; '1925', 1a = C; NLA 1145/74B = D

The MSS drafts are shown separately in the notes.

Your feet have been made for the fairies,
Your seventeen sorrows are there,
The moonlight has been with the sunlight
And both have misgoverned your hair.

1-4] = A stanza 1; ≠ B stanza numbered 10 in the margin

Continued overleaf...

The Flight of the Weary (cont.)

You love not the noise of the city,
 You love not the scent of the sea,
 And oh, you are weary, how weary –
 And the world is so weary with me.

You cannot go out to the blossom,
 You cannot contend in the play:
 I call you the little white maiden,
 The moon that is out all the day.

The lights in the leaves are of scarlet,
 The colour that comes to redeem:
 The winds are all painted with honey
 And we can escape in a dream.

In moods of unmeasured magenta
 The sun has apparelled the day,
 The leaves are as words in a fable
 Or tears that come out in a play.

Oh, you with a year to a sorrow,
 The cynical Summer and Spring
 Shall both be ashamed of their dancing,
 And you shall hear many birds sing.

5-8] ≠ *A* stanza 2

9-12] ≠ *B* stanza under heading 'odd verse', numbered 8 in the margin

9-12] *D* has a comment 'Alliteration overdone' midway between lines 9-15 [AGS]

13-16] = *B* stanza under heading 'odd verse', numbered 15 in the margin

17-20] ≠ *B* stanza numbered 16 in the margin • *D* cancelled [AGS]

17] *D* has comment 'seems artificial' and suggested line [AGS] In garments of azure and crimson

17-18] *D* has comment 'repeats' [AGS]

19-20] ≠ *B* cancelled lines at 32a marked with a cross and numbered 2, ≠ *B* lines at 34a marked with a cross and numbered 2

19-20] *D* has comment 'looks like [.....]' [AGS]

21-24] ≠ *A* stanza 7 renumbered 5 in the margin; ≠ *B* stanza at 34a marked with a cross and the number 3

22] «Who never may walk with the free» [AGS] *D*

23] *D* has 'both' encircled and 'both be' underlined with a word that looks like 'tea...?' in the margin [AGS]

24] *D* has 'repeated <lower>' in the margin [AGS]

Continued overleaf...

The Flight of the Weary (cont.)

Oh, we have been sorry and soiled by
 The low living scent of the sea –
 Oh, let us escape in the scarlet,
 And you can be weary with me.

The flowers shall have all the sweet voices
 That ever came into the ear,
 And Spring as a mourner shall listen,
 And Summer shall save us a tear.

Out there in beloved October
 Then shall we anoint for a king
 Some little old desolate dreamer
 Who had not the passion to sing.

The wind will be sweet as the kisses
 That come when a maiden is kind:
 The dews out of heaven shall hasten
 And open the eyes of the blind.

The silent shall speak, and the ears of
 The deaf shall be shaken with sound –
 There shall be a forest and lovers
 Shall make it the holiest ground.

25-28] ≠ *A* stanza 6, renumbered 4 in the margin

25] *D* has 'sorry and soiled' underlined with a question mark in the margin [AGS]

26] *D* has line cancelled with '?insolent' in the margin [AGS]

27-28] *D* has the comment 'I like these' in the margin [AGS]

29-32] = *B* stanza numbered 9 in the margin with a cross and the number 1 against lines 31-32 •

D has a line through this stanza and the comment 'weak' beside lines 31-32 [AGS]

29-30] ≠ *B* lines marked with a cross and the number 1 at 32a

33-36] ≠ *A* stanza 9 renumbered 7 in the margin

37-40] ≠ *B* stanza numbered 13 in the margin with 2 lines cancelled and a cross and the number 4 against lines 3 & 4

37 wind will be sweet] shall/ wind [will] be sweet [AGS] *D*

39-40] ≠ *B* lines at 33b numbered 13 in the margin and marked with a cross and the number 4; ≠ *B* lines at the bottom of 32b under heading 'odd verse'; ≠ *B* lines at 34a marked with a cross and the number 4 and cancelled, followed by rewritten lines marked with a cross and the number 4

41-44] = *B* stanza numbered 12 in the margin

Continued overleaf...

The Flight of the Weary (cont.)

The sunlight shall be with the moonlight
 And leave the delight on your hair,
 The birds of the forest shall journey
 And sing the sweet hymns for you there.

The lakes shall be many and gentle;
 The water-birds holy and wise
 Shall put the grief out of your shoulders
 And pull the pain out of your eyes.

Our God shall be drowsy and think out
 His thoughts like a beautiful tree,
 And you shall be weary, how weary,
 With all that is weary to me.

45-48] a new stanza

49-52] ≠ *A* cancelled stanza 8, renumbered 6 in the margin; ≠ *C* stanza 3

51-52] ≠ *B* stanza numbered 11, lines 1 & 2

51 put] *D* underlined, with ‘?push’ in the margin [AGS]

53-56] ≠ *B* cancelled stanza at 31b marked with a cross and numbered 2 in the margin, ≠ *B*
 cancelled stanza at 32b numbered 17 in the margin, marked with a cross and number 1

53-54] ≠ *B* cancelled lines at 32a marked with a cross and numbered 2 in the margin

Draft and revisions *A*

Stanza 1, 29b:

Your feet have been made for the fairies
 Your seventeen sorrows are there
 The moonlight has been with the sunlight
 And both have misgoverned your hair

Stanza 2, 29b:

You love not the noise of the city
 You love not the scent o the sea
 And Oh you are weary | how weary Oh would | you be weary with me

Cancelled stanza 3, 29b:

[We both have been [playmates with] «into the» shadows
 We cannot [comply with] // live | into / the Scheme
 We cannot be glad [with the] dancers «in the shallows»
 Our only escape is a Dream]

Stanza 4, renumbered 3 in the margin, 30a:

«The lights in the leaves do entreaty»
 [The boats are about at the sundown]
 They move in magenta and we
 Shall move away out in the glories
 Oh will you be weary with me

Continued overleaf...

The Flight of the Weary (cont.)

Cancelled stanza 5, 30a:

[Oh let us [escape | with the] «ride up on the» Scarlet | put out with the purple and cream
From noise of the low | living city our | only escape is a dream]

Stanza 6 renumbered 4 in margin, 30a:

Oh we have been sullied [for long | moons] «and spoiled | by» with the | low living scent | of the sea
And you are all | weary how | weary escape | and be weary | with me

Stanza 7, renumbered 5 in margin, 30b:

Your seventeen | sorrows shall journey | out with us
And each had a | Spring
And each had a | summer to mock you | you hear [a] all | the other birds sing

Stanza 8 renumbered 6 in margin:

[The lakes shall be | cool in our regions | the water birds | being so / [patent and] wise [sic]
Shall take your feet | out [you] of [their] | the anguish and | pull / [take] the prayers | out of your eyes

Stanza 9 renumbered 7 in margin:

Out there in beloved October
There shall we anoint for a King
Some little pale | desolate dreamer who | never had [courage] «passion» | to sing

Discarded lines and stanzas *B*

Cancelled stanza marked with a cross and numbered 2 in margin, at 31b:

[The God we shall seek for our Pity
Shall be a Compassionate tree
And we may be happy tho weary

And you can «be» weary with me]

Stanza under heading ‘odd verse’ numbered 8 in margin, 31b (line 4 at 33a):

You cannot go out [wh] to the blossoms
You cannot contend in the play
I call you the little white maiden
[The] «butter cup» moon that is out all the day

Stanza numbered 9 marked with a cross and the number 1 in margin, 33a:

The flowers shall have | all/ the sweet voices | that ever came | into the ear
And Spring as a mourner shall listen
And Summer shall save us a tear

Stanza numbered 10 in margin, 33a:

Your feet they were made for the fairies
Your seventeen sorrows are there
They surely came out | out of Old China
To keep you «so» dumb in a chair

Continued overleaf...

The Flight of the Weary (cont.)

Stanza numbered 11, 33a:

Your shoulders are under the sorrow
 Your eyes run away in [the air] a prayer
 The moonshine has [come | with] «taunted» the sun[down]light and laid | the delight on your hair

Stanza numbered 12 in margin, 33b:

«The silent shall speak and the | ears of the deaf shall be shaken | with sound»
 [The silent shall speak | and the deaf shall hear | all the music «sweet» around]
 There shall be a forest | and lovers shall | make it the holiest ground

Lines numbered 13 in margin, 33b:

The winds will be «sweet» as | the kisses that come | when a maiden is kind

Second of lines numbered 13 and marked with a cross and numbered 4 in margin, 33b:

[The dews shall all | hasten [to soften] «as angels» and | open the eyes of the Blind]

Cancelled stanza unnumbered at 33b:

We too have been [kissing | the] mated with/ shadows the shadows | that lurk in the Scheme
 [The boats will appear at the sundown]
 [Our only escape is a dream]
 The lights in the leaves do intreat us
 Our only escape is a dream

Lines marked with a cross and numbered 1 in the margin, 32a:

The flowers shall have | voices the berries shall | [Cure] «speak» all the days | of the year

Cancelled lines marked with a cross and the number 2 in the margin, 32a:

[Our God shall | be drowsy and soften | his though[t]s like | an evergreen tree]

Stanza under heading ‘odd verse’, numbered 4 in the margin, 32a:

The lights are magenta and purple
 They cannot complain or rebel
 And though they do speak as in sorrow
 How sweet are the follies they tell

Stanza under heading ‘odd verse’, numbered 15 in margin, with a cross and the number 1 beside line 4:

The lights in the | leaves are of Scarlet | the [cl] colour that | comes to redeem
 The winds are all painted with honey
 And we can escape in a dream

Stanza numbered 16 in the margin with a cross and the number 1 beside line 4, 32b:

[The] In moods of unmeasured magenta
 The sun has apparelled the day
 [The leaves that delight us have told us
 But no man shall hear what they say]

Cancelled stanza under heading ‘last verse’, numbered 17 and with a cross and the number 1 in the margin, 32a:

[Our God He shall | speak in His Wisdom | the words of an | evergreen tree
 And you will be happy | and weary Oh | weary how weary | with me]

Continued overleaf...

The Flight of the Weary (cont.)

Cancelled lines under heading ‘Odd verse’ marked with a cross and the number 2 in the margin, 32b:

[The leaves are as | words in a fable | or little one lost | in a play]

Lines following cancelled lines under heading ‘Odd verse’, 32a:

The dews out of Heaven shall | hasten and open the | eyes of the Blind

Lines marked with a cross and the number 1 in the margin, 34a:

Our God shall be | drowsy and think out | his though[t]s like | [an evergreen] «merciful» «beautiful» [gree]

Lines marked with a cross and numbered 2 in the margin, 34a:

The leaves are as words | in a fable or tears that | come into a play

Stanza marked with a cross and numbered 3 in the margin, 34a:

O you of with the | year to the sorrow | the cynicil Summer | and Spring [sic]
 Shall both be ashamed | of their dancing and | you shall hear | many birds sing

Cancelled lines marked with a cross and numbered 4 in the margin, 34a:

[The dews shall be | early to soften | and open the eyes | of the blind]

Lines marked with a cross and numbered 4 in the margin, 34a:

The dews shall have | peace for the eyelids | and open the [eyes] «gates» | of the blind

Discarded lines and stanzas C, at 1a

Lines under number 1 and stanzas numbered 2 & 3, under heading ‘Odd verses for Flight of the Weary’:

We ache with the scorn of the rabble
 Our only escape is a dream

We float where the leaves will invite us
 Our dream is a Lord to obey
 The miles are as music in purple
 Away away and away

The waterbirds being so holy can take
 Sorrow out of [a] «the» storm
 And the greif shall not stay on your shoulders [sic]
 You shall have a beautiful form

THE GENTLE WATER BIRD For Mary Gilmore

ML MS A3267 [EN], fair copy.

Sydney Morning Herald 10 April 1926, p. 11; *NP* 34; *CP* 176.

JSN – MG 21 July 1924 (encloses poem and says ‘I have been at it over eighteen months now and it does not seem to get any better or worse’). JSN - AGS 6 November 1932 (wants ‘Mary Gilmore’ over the title in a proposed collection of verse). JSN - RHC 19 November 1933, NLA MS 603/30 (suggestions for *CP*: ‘For Mary Gilmore should be printed over it as it was originally written for her’).

The fair copy is the preferred text.

In the far days when every day was long,
Fear was upon me and the fear was strong
Ere I had learned the Recompense of Song.

In the dim days I trembled for I knew
God was above me always frowning through,
And God was terrible and thunder-blue.

Creeds the discoloured awed my opening mind:
Perils, Perplexities – what could I find?
All the old terror waiting on mankind.

Even the gentle flowers of white and cream,
The rainbow with its treasury of dream,
Trembled because of God’s ungracious scheme.

And in the night the many stars would say
Dark things unuttered in the light of day:
Fear was upon me even in my play.

* * *

14 unuttered] unaltered *SMH*, *NP*, *CP*

15 even] ever *SMH*

Continued overleaf...

The Gentle Water Bird (cont.)

There was a lake I loved in gentle rain:
 One day there fell a bird, a courtly crane:
 Wisely he walked, as one who knew of pain.

Gracious he was, and lofty as a king:
 Silent he was, and yet he seemed to sing
 Always of little children and the Spring.

God? did he know him? It was far he flew –
 God was not terrible and thunder-blue –
 It was a gentle water-bird I knew.

Pity was in him for the weak and strong,
 All who have suffered when the days were long,
 And he was deep and gentle as a song,

As a quiet soldier in a cloak of grey
 He did commune with me for many a day
 Till the dark fear was lifted far away.

Sober appavelled, yet he caught the glow:
 Always of Heaven would he speak, and low,
 And he did tell me where the wishes go.

* * *

Kinsfolk of his it was who long before
 Came from the mist (and no one knows the shore)
 Came with the little children to the door.

17 courtly] [buoyant] «courtly» *MS*

18 who knew] who knows *SMH, NP, CP*

28 quiet] calm *SMH, NP, CP*

35 (and . . . shore)] (and . . . shore) *MS*

Continued overleaf...

The Gentle Water Bird (cont.)

Was he less wise than these birds long ago
 Who flew from God (He surely willed it so)
 Bearing great happiness to all below?

* * *

Long have I learned that all his speech was true:
 I cannot reason it – how far he flew –
 God is not terrible – not thunder-blue.

Sometimes when watching in the white sunshine
 Someone approaches – I can half define
 All the quiet beauty of that friend of mine.

Nothing of hatred will about him cling.
 Silent – how silent – but his heart will sing
 Always of little children and the Spring.

37 these birds] those birds *SMH, NP, CP*

37-39] Cf. Genesis 1:20: And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. Cf. also Ecclesiastes 10: 20: Curse not the king . . . for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter. *AV*

38 (He . . . So)] (He . . . so) *MS*

41 it –] it – *MS*

42 not thunder-blue] nor thunder-blue *SMH, NP, CP*

44 approaches –] approaches – *MS*

45 quiet] calm *SMH, NP, CP*

47 Silent – how silent –] Silent – how silent – *MS*

THE GIVER OF MILK

‘1925’, 16a-17a (A0405-6) [JSN], fair draft, 2 stanzas, the first unnumbered, the second numbered 2.

The young wife lay with her white babe warm, the black rain rained out hard;
She heard the cry of the mother, the long moan in the yard.
She said, I feel too far and keen, as a fiddle overstrung,
It is the giver of milk who cries – she cries out for her young.

How peacefully slept the man her mate, he could not fear or feel;
A hundred thousand years he had been sullenly taught to steal.
But the young wife said, I feel as if some venomous thing had stung
My heart, and oh – the giver of milk, she cries out for her young.

8 My heart, and oh – the giver] My heart – and oh the Giver *MS*

THE GOLDEN BODY

‘1927’A, 21b-22a (A0553) [A], fair draft.

It has come out of Summer – it will sing
Of burning seas – the glory of the palm
And the quick darkness at the evening.

Here in my lady’s hat it will be seen
By all the cavaliers that fill the day
And every lad that stares upon the green.

The voice that was has melted, but the bird
Stays by the body, dancing over Death
Until some hastening lover’s heart is stirred.

Will the bird waver? nay it cannot be.
He has been lover once and would invite
He who has heart to fill the tragedy.

Lightly she goes – my lady’s feet are fine,
Loud is the hope upon her countenance
And in her eyes the merriment of wine.

Green is her hat with wondrous blossoms stirred.
Love is so manifested here – is Love
Always the golden body of the bird?

2 seas –] seas – *MS*

4 lady’s] ladys’ *MS*

5 cavaliers] cavilliers *MS*

12 tragedy] tradegy *MS*

13 lady’s] ladys’ *MS*

THE GROWER OF THE STRAWBERRIES

‘1927’C, 20a-20b (A0454-5) [A], draft. NLA MS 6946/21 [A], fair copy. The poem is derived from ‘Speech to the little one’, q.v.

‘1927’C, 20a-20b = A; NLA 6946/21 = B
The fair copy (B) is the preferred text.

The honeysuckers made the honey tune
In that Forgetfulness called Summertime,
In February – weary smoking moon.

It was a time when the beloved mist
Hung on the forest and the world did seem
Deep as a maiden most devoutly kissed.

The grower of the strawberries called the sky
Down to the ferns and spoke most mournfully
Of the great Summer teaching all to die.

This little one walks softly. On her head
Midnight was resting and I dreamed that Death
Was but a generous playtime for the Dead.

This rhyme is but for those who feel the mist,
Leaves and the million old impediments
In the world weak’ning as a woman kissed.

Title] Strawberry *A*

1 honey tune] honey[time] «tune» *A*

4 It was] [Twas] «It» was *A*

5 world did seem] [sun did seem] world would seem *B*, a likely error of haste • sun did [sing] «seem» *A*

6 devoutly] devoutly *B*

6] Blushing as someone most devoutly kissed [sic] *A*

7] The grower[s] of the [strawberry] strawberries stood knee [deep] «high» *A*

8] In the red ferns and spoke half mournfully *A*. The *red ferns* may be either *Blechnum cartilagineum*, ‘Gristle fern’ or *Adiantum hispidulum*, Rough maiden hair, known also as five-fingered jack.

9] [As a poor land-bird fearful of the deep] *A* preceding line 9

10 softly. On] softly [on] On *A* • softly. On *B*

11 resting and I] resting I have *A*

15 weak’ning] weak«n»ing *B*

Cancelled stanza *A* numbered 5 at 20b reads:

[This [dream] «rhyme» is but for those | who love the mist
Trees in old amber and the | world
Moistening as a woman | kissed]

THE HEN IN THE BUSHES

‘1930’, 34a-34b (A0680-1) & ML MS A3038/1, 31a (B0140) [JSN], draft, 12 stanzas, 3 cancelled and 2 renumbered. ML MS A3038/1, 29a (B0136) [JSN], 1 stanza under heading ‘odd verse for the ‘Hen’’. ML MS 4937/5, 41-46, fair copy [JSN], with alterations [AGS].
NP 21; *CP* 127.

JSN - AGS 18 May 1925 (encloses poem, and says that ‘Stanzas 7 and 8 refer of course to Love <winning> over population, pestilence, war, Lies’ and comments ‘Will the Public tumble’). AGS - JSN 24 May 1925, NLA MS 1145/14 (received poem: ‘I like Hen – it is of the true breed – the true blue breed of the sky’).

Stephens altered lines 5-6, 9-10, 13-14, 17-18, 19-20, 29-30 and 31-32 by transposing the end word of the first line in each instance to the beginning of the next, thus altering the rhythm, and these changes are repeated in *NP* and *CP*.

‘1930’, 34a-34b & 3038/1, 31a = A; 3038/1, 29a = B; 4937/5, 41-46 = C
 The fair copy, MS 4937/5, 41-46 (C), is the preferred text.

Call me the man seeing
 Too much in air,
 Low by the little hen
 Love it is there.

Winds of the summer, the
 Red, the unkind,
 Tilt at her motherhood
 Resolute, blind.

- 1-4] ≠ *A* stanza 1
 1] Call me the old man seeing *A* (line 1)
 2] [Things made of] «Too much in» air *A* (line 2)
 3] [Close to] «Low by» the little hen *C*
 There is a Hen in the bushes *A* (line 3)
 4 Love] And Love *A* (line 4)
 5-8] ≠ *A* stanza 3, renumbered 2
 5 summer, the] summer, the *C*
 5] All the assaults of December *A* (line 1)
 6 Red,] The red – *A* (line 2)
 7] [Fall on her leave her] «move her not – she is» the mother *A* (line 3)
 8] Resolute – blind *A* (line 4)

Continued overleaf...

The Hen in the Bushes (cont.)

As a Queen guarding her
 Jewels so rare,
 Patiently all the day
 I see her there.

'Tis the Old Tyrant to
 Her body come,
 He who will leave us all
 Weighted and dumb.

He the Old Tyrant will
 Many men slay,
 He will most gladly burn
 Women away.

He turns the peasant lad
 To the raw soil,
 He calls by candle-light
 Slaves to their toil.

He it is urging up
 Cities of sighs –
 Who has seen Pity yet
 Enter his eyes?

9-12] *A* ∅

9 Queen guarding] [Queen] queen [AGS] gaurding *C*

15 who will leave] who «will» leave *C*

17-20] ≠ *A* cancelled stanza 5

17] [It is the same Tyrant] *A* (line 1)

18] [That will man «many» slay] *A* (line 2)

19] [And does for long sad seasons] *A* (line 3)

20] Burn women away *A* (line 4)

21-24] ≠ *A* the first of 2 stanzas numbered 7

21] He puts the dull peasant *A* (line 1)

22] on the «dull» soil *A* (line 2)

25-28] *A* ∅; ≠ *B* stanza headed 'Odd verse'

25] He bids the Lovers make *B* (line 1)

27] Hunger and Battleships *B* (line 3)

28 monuments lies *B* (line 4)

Continued overleaf...

The Hen in the Bushes (cont.)

He it is under the
 War and the moan,
 He it is under the
 Lies on the stone.

* * *

Soon will the thin mother
 With her brood walk.
 Keen is the crow – and keen,
 Keen is the hawk.

Call me the man seeing
 Too much in air –
 Low by the little hen
 Love it is there.

29-32] *A* ∅

33-36] ≠ *A* second of 2 stanzas numbered 6

33] [The] She the poor mother bird *A* (line 1)

34] [Full soon] «Soon» will «she» walk *A* (line 2)

35] [Fearing] «Keen is» the cruel crow *A* (line 3)

36] [Watching] «Red is» the Hawk *A* (line 4)

37-38] ≠ *A* second of 2 stanzas numbered 7

37] Call me the [old] men seeing *A* (line 1)

Call «me» the man seeing *C*

39 Low by] [Close] «Low» by *C*

39] There is a Hen in the Bushes *A* (line 3)

Discarded stanzas

A cancelled stanza 2:

[Pitiless the storm of the Summer
 Reigns all the day
 She the serene [bother] mothers
 Burn all the way]

A cancelled stanza 3:

[Does one little wind whisper
 One evening stir
 There is the great patience
 Hidden in her]

A stanza numbered 2, renumbered 3:

She the intense mother [calls] waiting
 Call[s] for a praye[r]
 Close to the hen in the Bushes
 Love it is there

Continued overleaf...

The Hen in the Bushes (cont.)

A stanza 4:

She seek[s] not the cool water
Nor the sweet crumb
He the too terrible Tyrant
Bids her be dumb

A first of 2 stanzas numbered 6:

He it is tells the vixen
Take the lamb's tongue
Sweet [that your] «Blood will make the» milk [be] //sweet
[Sweeten th] «for» the young

A stanza 5:

Grey dust and famine come
She [has full share] «she can [b]ear»
[But] «And» the old Tyrant still
Bids her be there

THE HUNGRY PLAYERS

‘1927’ A, 40a-41b (A0571-3) [A], fair draft.

This may have been intended as a parody of the popular rhyme ‘Three blind mice’.

We all went up to the farmer’s wife
 And hungry men were we,
 And we prayed for bread
 And we prayed for drink
 And her face was good to see,
 And we were sore in body and mind
 (Oh, the weary miles we had left behind)
 And hungry men were we.

We asked but a little bread and meat,
 And she gave us ale and wine
 And dainties fit for a Lord to eat
 Till our eyes began to shine.
 Honey and butter and fruit were there
 And every manner of homely fare
 For my comrades’ need and mine.

And being full of the ale and wine,
 Of fulsome speech were we.
 Now what shall we offer you Lady fair?
 She said, I brew and I boil and I bake
 But for all I give for the good Lord’s sake
 I have no thought of fee.

But well I know you strolling men
 And players all I see,
 And only one little thing I ask
 Of all you will play to me,
 Play nothing of faint or solemn sound,
 Like the dull mice creeping under ground,
 Of a woeful family.

But all I want is the life run red,
 From goodly men and bold,
 Who fought for women, who fought for bread;
 A thousand things untold
 Of ocean peril and forest fire
 And all that a woman may well desire
 Until her heart be cold.

9 meat] meet *MS*

14 homely fare] homely [face] fare *MS*

THE INSOLENCE OF THE DRUMMER

‘1927’A, 4a-4b (A0535-6) [A], fair draft. Numbering for stanza 4 follows on the next page and is cancelled.

Little birds still do I love thee – the feet have a joy:
The hills are so many – the green is the place for a boy.
Still eager the hands are – they long for the work and the play
But oh, ’tis the insolent drummer – he will not invite you to stay.

The eyes they go up to the scarlet – they follow the green:
The ears, they go out for the music, above the unclean.
Little bird, it is the drummer – he fails by the way,
Insolent – oh, and he trembles – he will not invite you to stay.

Little bird, back in the summer, the season now gone,
How bold was the drummer – he cheered me and carried me on.
Little bird, bird that I see not, hear me today –
Still do I love you – the drummer, he will not invite you to stay.

Title] The insolance of the drummer *MS*

6 they go] the[y] go *MS*

7 fails] *MS*. A possible error in on the part of [A] and *falls* may have been intended.

THE INSOLENT LANDSMAN

‘1927’C, 41a (A0475) [A], fair draft.

Deep down in my soul
I disagree
With all men and fishes
That come from the sea.

I like no Sailorman
Tales that they tell –
How the dull favour
And the old smell.

Fishes go solemnly –
I disagree
With the ways of the fishes,
They stroll in the sea.

Mariners, mighty men
In their own eyes
Fell to dull weaklings
Shipwrecks and lies.

To foolish losses they
Talk harmlessly –
Blue fish and Sailormen
Still weary me.

Title] The insolate landsman *MS*
4 That] [that] That *MS*
12 They] The[y] *MS*
13 mariners] [The m] Mariners *MS*
15 weaklings] weak[*l*]ings *MS*

THE IRISH WELCOME

This was conceived as a 3-stanza poem and then extended to 4 stanzas. It was sent to Stephens 24 August 1927, N saying the poem was ‘Not finished as carefully as [he] would like’. Seemingly, he then sent an additional stanza to Stephens, or another copy of 5 stanzas, soon after, for Stephens replied 4 September 1927, with the comments ‘Irish is better in four stanzas than five’ and ‘I noticed before that your hits are better straight off the bat’. He obviously wrote again making suggestions for improvement, for the MSS show extensive attempts at revision, incorporating at least two of Stephens’s suggestions, referred to by N in a letter accompanying a second fair copy sent 14 September 1927. A typescript prepared for publication has 5 stanzas, as has the text published in *The Australian Worker* 2 November 1927.

N’s later comments to Devaney (27 January 1935) indicate that neither he nor Stephens were happy with the poem, or its later revisions, and the poem is therefore shown as two discrete versions – one of 4 stanzas and one of 5 stanzas.

THE IRISH WELCOME [1]

‘1927’B, 24b–26b (A0506-8) [JSN], draft, 3 stanzas, stanzas 1 & 2 numbered and stanza 3 not numbered; 35b (A0517) [JSN], under heading ‘Irish Welcome | Odd verses’, 2 lines under number 1 (revised lines 1 & 2 for stanza [3] at 24b-26b) with numbering for 2; 43b (A0525) [A], under title, 2 lines under heading ‘2nd stanza 2 first lines’ (revised lines for stanza 2 at 24b-26b), a stanza headed ‘New Verse’ numbered 5 (a new verse) and a stanza numbered 4 (rewritten stanza [3] at 24b-26b); 46b (A0528) [A], under heading ‘Lines for Irish Welcome’, one line (a revised line 2 for stanza 2 at 24b-26b).

‘1927’C 2b-3a (A0433) [A], draft, 3 stanzas under title, numbered 1-3, with numbering for 4 cancelled; 5a (A0435) [A], under title, 2 stanzas numbered 1 & 2 (the stanza numbered 1 is a revision of an unnumbered stanza [3] at ‘1927’B, 24b-26b) and a new stanza. ML MS 4937/5, 24 August 1927, 225-231 [A], fair copy 4 stanzas, signed [JSN], and dated ‘26/8/27’ [AGS].

JSN - AGS 24 August 1927 (encloses poem which ‘is not finished as carefully as I would like’). AGS - JSN 4 September 1927 (comments ‘Irish is better in four stanzas than five’ and says ‘I noticed before that your hits are better straight off the bat’).

‘1927’B, 24b-26b = A; ‘1927’B, 35b = B; ‘1927’B, 43b = C; ‘1927’B, 46b = D; ‘1927’C, 2b-3a = E; ‘1927’C, 5a = F; ML MS 4937/5, 24 August 1927 = G
The fair copy MS 4937/5 (G) is the preferred text.

Continued overleaf...

The Irish Welcome [1] (cont.)

All the good drinks are unworthy, no food is too fine
 (Though you did hate them, you love them, you cannot decline).
 Angels are with you, and ten million fairies and more;
 You can feel all the warmth of the Irish – you tap at the door.

All other handshakes have sorrow, all kisses are pale:
 Words are so stilted and all the fine book manners fail.
 Though you be son of the Enemy, black to the core,
 You will have all the wealth of the Irish – you tap at the door.

1-4] ≠ *A* stanza 1, ≠ *E* stanza numbered 1

1 All the good drinks] All drink[s] *A* • All drinks *E*

2 Though] Those *E*

2] Tho[ugh] you did hate them swift would yo[u] love them you could not decline *A*

3] [All] *A* Angels are with you | [A] «And ten» million fair[i]es and «more» [sic] *A*

4] There be none like the Irish – the real red Irish when you tap at the door *A* •

Do you know the Irish the real red Irish when you tap at the door *E*

5-8] ≠ *A* stanza 2, ≠ *E* stanza numbered 2

5-6] ≠ *C* ‘2nd stanza 2 first lines’

6] ≠ *D* ‘Lines for Irish Welcome’

5] A handshake can be like a sorrow when kisses are pale *C*

6] Words are so stilted and all the [fine] book manners fail *A* •

And words are all frozen [a] then all the fine book manners fail *C* •

When words are half-frozen the elegant book-manners fail *D*

7 Though you be son] I am the son *A* • I am a son *E*

8] but I know the Irish the real red Irish | When you tap on the door *A* •

But I know the Irish the real red Irish when I tap at the door *E*

Continued overleaf...

The Irish Welcome [1] (cont.)

Words are not welcome – 'tis something too deep and too fine –
 'Tis like a fiddle strung up, or the sun in the wine.
 A welcome can come like a famine and leave the heart sore,
 But the warmth will come out with the Irish – you tap at the door.

No matter how humble, the table it cannot be bare,
 Of all that will lift you to Heaven you have the full share.
 You have all the wealth of all Ireland, what could you have more?
 The Irish, they make the world Irish – you tap at the door.

9-12] ≠ *A* unnumbered stanza [3], ≠ *C* stanza numbered 4, ≠ *E* stanza numbered 3, ≠ *F* stanza numbered 1
 9-10] ≠ *B* lines under number 1

9] Words are not welcome a welcome who shall define *A* •

A Deep thing is welcome it neirs the Divine [sic] *B*

A deep thing indeed is a welcome it neirs the divine *F*

10] Tis like a fiddle tigh[t] sprung like a dark days sunshine *A* •

[Th] Tis like a strung fiddle or the storm in the wine *B* •

It is like a fiddle strung up or the sun in the wine *C* •

Tis like a fiddle strung up or the taste in the wine *E* •

Tis like a fiddle strung up or a storm in the wine *F*

11] Tap and the | and the angels | and fair[i]es | [are with] | the[y] fill up | the floor *A* •

A welcome can live like a famine and leave the heart sore *C* •

Tap and the angels and fairies come up on the floor *E* •

Knock and the angels and fairies come [o] up on the floor *F*

12] There be none like the Irish the real red Irish when you tap at the door *A, E, F* •

But the warmth is all under the Irish – you tap at the door *C*

13-16] ≠ *F* stanza numbered 2

14] In all that is best in the world you have the full share *E*

16] There be none like the Irish the real red Irish when you tap at the door *F*

Discarded stanza

'1927'B, 43b 'New Verse | 5'

A welcome is red with the summer it cannot be sold
 Tis something that calls you in out of the dark and the cold
 The Saints are not far in the Heavens the blessing all pour
 The Irish are still with the fairies you tap at the door

THE IRISH WELCOME [2]

‘1927’B, 43b (A0525) [A], 2 lines and 2 stanzas, one of which, a stanza headed ‘New verse | 5’, was written for version 1 and not used there).

‘1927’C, 22a-23a (A0456-7) [A], 2 stanzas and a line at 22a and a draft at 22b-23a.

The first stanza at 22a is headed ‘4th verse of Irish welcome’, (a rewriting of the stanza headed ‘New verse | 5’ at ‘1927’B, 43b); the second stanza is headed ‘5th verse’ (a rewriting of the stanza numbered 2 at ‘1927’C, 5a [Version 1]), and the line is headed ‘First lines of first verse’ (a revised line 1, stanza 1 in previous drafts). The draft at 22b-23a has 4 stanzas numbered 1-4 under title with stanza 1 cancelled.

‘1927’C, 24a (A0458) [A], a stanza under short title ‘Irish welcome’ headed ‘First verse’ (a replacement stanza for cancelled stanza 1 of the draft at ‘1927’C, 22b-23a).

‘1927’C, 25a–25b (A0459-0460) [A], a draft and revised lines. The draft at 25a, under title, has 3 stanzas numbered 1-3 (a revision of the draft at 22b-23a) and is followed by revised lines at 25b (for this revised draft) under short title ‘Irish’ and headed ‘4th line of 2nd verse’, ‘4th line 3rd verse’ and ‘4th line of 1st verse’.

‘1927’C, 39b-40b (A0474-5) [A], 3 sets of revised lines for the draft at ‘1927’C, 22b. At 39b under heading ‘Lines for Irish’, the first two are under the number 1, the second under heading ‘2nd verse last line’, the third under heading ‘4th verse 3rd line’ and the fourth under heading ‘3rd verse 4th line’. The lines at 40a are headed ‘Lines for Irish’, the first two lines without further heading, the next under heading ‘2nd verse [last line] 2nd line’, the third under heading ‘3rd verse 4th line’ and the fourth under heading ‘4th verse 1st line’. A further revised line at 40b is headed with the short title ‘Irish welcome’ and ‘3rd 4th verse’.

ML MS 4937/5, 14 September 1927, 241-247 [A], fair copy, 4 stanzas.

LaT MS 9419/3675, typescript (carbon copy) [AGS], 5 stanzas, prepared for distribution to editors for publishing and this carbon annotated at head of page ‘Not for publication’ [AGS].

The Australian Worker 2 November 1927; NP 19; CP 124.

JSN -AGS 14 September 1927 (encloses poem and discusses alterations: ‘I used the word ‘drag’ one of your suggestions’, and ‘I have also used ‘Leprechauns’’). JSN - JD 27 January 1935, NLA MS 1145/64 (discusses Stephens’s contribution to the piece: in ‘the Irish piece I found it difficult to compromise with him . . . there are two or three lines which are his and which I believe I could have bettered myself’). Correspondence is given after the notes.

ML MSS ‘1927’C 22a-23a, 24a, 25a-25b & 39b-40b are attempts at revision in response to suggestions from Stephens referred to by N in a letter accompanying the fair copy sent 14 September 1927. This fair copy was clearly not regarded by Stephens as an improvement on that of 24 August 1927 (version 1) for his subsequent typescript is composed of stanzas from both the fair copy sent on 24 August 1927 and that sent 14 September and includes a stanza from ‘1927’B, 43b, all with variant readings, some of which are undoubtedly Stephens’s own. The typescript and the *Australian Worker* texts have 5 stanzas and the fair copy has 4. Comments indicate that neither party was satisfied with the revisions.

Stephens’s judgement of the fair copy 14 September 1927 was sound, and the typescript LaT MS 9419/3675 (M) is taken as the preferred text.

Continued overleaf...

The Irish Welcome [2] (cont.)

‘1927B, 43b = C; ML MS 4939/5, 24 August 1927, 225-231 = G; ‘1927’C, 22a-23b = H; ‘1927’C, 24a =

I; ‘1927’C, 25a-25b = J; ‘1927’C, 39b-40b = K; ML MS 4937/5, 241-247, 14 September 1927 = L; LaT MS 9419/3675 = M

The first fair copy, version 1, ML MS 4939/5, 24 August 1927, 225-21 (G), is included here for convenience in tracing the development of the text.

All the good drinks are unworthy, no food is too fine,
 (Though you did hate them, you love them, you cannot decline)
 Angels are with you and ten million fairies and more:
 You will never speak ill of the Irish – you tap at the door.

A handshake can feel like a sorrow – a home like a jail –
 When hearts are half frozen, then all the smart book-manners fail:

1-4] ≠ *G* stanza 1; ≠ *H* cancelled stanza 1; ≠ *I* ‘first verse’; ≠ *J* stanza 1; ≠ *L* stanza 1: = *TAW*
 1-2] ≠ *K* ‘Lines for Irish’ under number 1; ≠ *K* ‘Lines for Irish’ unnumbered
 1] [They tell you the drink is unworthy no food is too fine *H* cancelled stanza 1 •
 They say all their drinks are unworthy no food is too fine *H* ‘First lines first verse’ •
 They tell you the drink is unworthy no food is too fine *I, J, L* •
 Themselves they will tell you the food and the drink is unfit to bestow *K* ‘Lines for Irish | 1’ •
 The drink they will say is unworthy the blood’s at a glow *K* ‘Lines for Irish’ unnumbered
 2] [The riches [is] «are» running over you cannot decline *H* cancelled stanza 1 •
 The words that come out they compel you you cannot decline *I* •
 The words and the hands will compel you you cannot decline *J* •
 Though you did hate them you love them you cannot say no *K* ‘Lines for Irish | 1’ •
 And how could you hate them you love them you cannot say no *K* ‘Lines for Irish’ unnumbered •
 The words and the hands they compel you you cannot decline *L*
 3 Angels] [The Angels] *H* cancelled stanza 1 • The Angels *I, J, L*
 3 million] millions *G*
 4] You can feel all the warmth of the Irish – you tap at the door *G* •
 [Tis warmth you [with] «will» have with the Irish – you tap at the door] *H* cancelled stanza 1 •
 You know by the look if it’s Irish you tap at the door *I* •
 Your eyes will be clean you can see them you tap at the door *J* •
 And clean will your eyes be to see them you tap at the door *J* ‘4th line of 1st verse’ •
 The day you go dim with the Irish you tap at the door *L*
 5-8] ≠ *G* stanza 2; ≠ *H* stanza numbered 2; ≠ *J* stanza numbered 2; ≠ *L* stanza 2; ≠ *TAW*
 5] A handshake can fall like a sorrow and kisses be pale *H, J*
 6] Words are so stilted and all the fine book manners fail *G* •
 When words are half frozen then all the fine book manners fail *H, J, L* •
 When hearts are half frozen, the elegant book-manners fail *TAW*

Continued overleaf...

The Irish Welcome [2] (cont.)

Though you be son of the Enemy, black to the core,
You can warm by the fire of the Irish – you tap at the door.

Words are not welcome – 'tis something too deep and too fine.
'Tis like a fiddle strung up – or the sun in the wine.
A welcome can come like a famine, and leave the heart sore,
But the heat will leap out with the Irish – you tap at the door.

- 8] You will have all the wealth of the Irish – you tap at the door *G* •
[Tis warmth you will have with] the Irish you tap at the door •
«You eat like a prince [like] «with» the Irish you tap at the door» *H* •
You will never say ill of the Irish – you tap at the door *J* stanza 2 •
Tis warmth you will eat with a blessing – you tap at the door *J* '4th line of 2nd verse' •
Tis warm you will be with the Irish you tap at the door *K* '2nd verse last line', *K* '[2nd line same verse] 2nd verse [last line] 2nd line' •
The best of all Ireland is yours if – you tap at the door *L*
9-12] ≠ *G* stanza 3; ≠ *H* stanza numbered 4; ≠ *L* stanza 4; ≠ *TAW* stanza 3
9] No rainbow is quick[er to]«as a» welcome it nears the divine *H* (line 1) •
No rainbow is quick as a welcome it nears the divine *L* (line 1)
10] It is like a fiddle strung up or the [leap] «pulse» in the wine *H* (line 2) •
It is like a fiddle strung up or the pulse in the wine *L* (line 2)
11] You will have all the wealth of all Ireland what could you have more *H* (line 3) •
12 heat] flame *TAW*
12] But the warmth will come out with the Irish – you tap at the door *G* •
The Irish they make the world Irish – you tap at the door *H* (line 4) •
The Irish – they make the world Irish – you tap at the door *L* (line 4) •
But the warmth is all there in the Irish you tap at the door *K* '3rd verse 4th line', heading and line repeated

Continued overleaf...

The Irish Welcome [2] (cont.)

A welcome is red with the summer – 'tis hearty and bold –
 'Tis something that drags you in, out of the dark and the cold.
 The saints are all nigh to the hearthstone – the blessings all pour –
 The leprechauns caper around you – you tap at the door.

13-16] ≠ *C* stanza numbered 5 under heading 'New verse'; *G* ∅; ≠ *H* stanza numbered 3; ≠ *H* under heading '4th verse of Irish Welcome'; ≠ *J* stanza numbered 3; ≠ *L* stanza 3; ≠ *TAW*

13 'tis] and *TAW*

13] A welcome is red with the summer it cannot be sold *C* •

You will not be long on the doorstep a hand will have hold *H* stanza 3, *L* stanza 3 •

A welcome has [something] «more» than the red of the Summer could [n]ever yet hold *H* '4th verse of Irish Welcome' •

You will not be long on the doorstep a hand will [up]«have» hold *J* stanza 3 •

A welcome is red with the summer and hearty and bold *K* '4th verse 1st line'

14] Tis something that calls you in out of the dark and the cold *C* •

And drag you clean in to the climate that «never was» was cold *H* stanza 3 •

It pulls you in clear of all sorrow and out of the cold *H* '4th verse of Irish Welcome' •

And drag you right into that climate that never was cold *J* stanza 3 •

And drag you right into the climate that never was cold *L*

15 all nigh to] at hand to *TAW*

15] The Saints are not far in the Heavens the blessings all pour *C* (line 3) •

The Leprechaunes dance up and you you [can] «could» take to the floor *H* stanza 3 (line 3) •

The joy of the jig is upon you you ache for the floor *H* '4th verse of Irish Welcome' •

The Leprausenne dance – you believe it – you would not before *J* stanza 3 •

The Saints have come in you can feel them the blessings all pour *K* '4th verse 3rd line' •

The Saints are not far you can feel them the blessings all pour *K* '3rd 4th verse' •

The Leprechaunes dance – you believe it you could not before *L*

16] The Irish are still with the fairies you tap at the door *C* •

For the joy of the gig is upon you you tap at the door *H* stanza 3 •

The Leprechaunes tumble around you – you tap at the door *H* '4th verse of Irish Welcome' •

The Irish [are close to the moonlight] «they taste o the moonlight» you tap at the door *J* stanza 3 •

You will «never» say ill of the Irish – you tap at the door *J* '4th line 3rd verse' •

You will never say ill of the Irish you tap at the door *L* stanza 3

Continued overleaf...

The Irish Welcome [2] (cont.)

No matter how humble the table, it cannot be bare:
 Of all that would put you to Heaven you take the full share.
 You will have all the wealth of all Ireland – what could you have more?
 The Irish, they make the world Irish – you tap at the door.

17-20] ≠ *G* stanza 4; ≠ *H* ‘5th verse’; = *TAW*

17] You[r] body can know all the hunger that makes the world bare *H* ‘5th verse’

18] Of all that will lift you to Heaven you have the full share *G* •

But the moment you sit with the Irish it cannot come there *H* ‘5th verse’

19] You have all the wealth of all Ireland what could you have more *G* •

You have all the wealth what could you have more *H* ‘5th verse’

JSN – AGS 14 September 1927:

I enclose Irish Welcome. You will notice that I have altered it a good deal. I have been trying to get some pace into it. I used the word “drag” one of your suggestion[s]. I think it well describes the Irish attitude. I have also used “Leprechauns”. If you do not like it the way I use it you could put in ‘fairies they’ which will be the same length. This word is a stranger to me and I have been thinking that Irish folk might detect something amateurish in my use of it but you can judge better than I can.

THE LIFTING OF THE SIN

‘1930’, 19b & 20b-21a (A0664 & A0665) [JSN], unfinished, 5 stanzas and a cancelled part-stanza, with variable line lengths and a title change at the head of stanza 3 (20b), stanzas 1-4 numbered. The rhymes suggest that couplets were intended.

The grief o'the flowers was heavy – heavy at dawn of day:
The wind came over the Barley ground and lifted her sin away.

It had the taste of a sinner's song and the Red light of a prayer:
'Twas ever only a little sin, nor hate nor greed was there.

Her tongue had been in a wild storm and beaten a man full sore:
Her lies were many – her face had brought sorrow about a door.

But her voice was always honey sweet to a little child at play,
So the wind came over the Barley field and lifted her sin away.

The moon stood out most sorrowful at the baby hour of three;
It was no time for a rude man's laugh or a red man's melody.

[*Unfinished*]

Title] The [withering] «lifting» of the sin *MS*

1 heavy – heavy at] heavy «heavy» at *MS*

4] [In another world or | another time it | might have grown a prayer] *MS*, cancelled line following line 4

7 but her] but here *MS*

10 red man's] [full] «red» mans *MS*

Cancelled part-stanza 5:

[Her lips did utter a hard word

But not to a little child

And the wind came over the Barley field]

Line endings

Stanza 1 (lines 1-2 of reading text): 1 day || 2 ground || 3 away ||

Stanza 2 (lines 3-4 of reading text): 1 song || 2 prayer || 3 sin || 4 there ||

Stanza 3 (lines 5-6 of reading text): 1 storm || 2 sore || 3 many || 4 door ||

Stanza 4 (lines 7-8 of reading text): 1 honey | play || 2 field || 3 away ||

Stanza, unnumbered [5] (lines 9-10 of reading text): 1 sorrowful || 2 three || 3 laugh || 4 melody ||

THE LITTLE ONE UNKNOWN

‘1927’A, 36a-36b (A0567-8) [A], fair draft, 1 x 7-line stanza and 1 x 9-line stanza. The rhymes suggest that a 6-line and an 8-line stanza were intended.

Yesterday I was in the garden where white slabs are –
 On many and many Time had his scar.
 Good women, honest men, had their virtues compiled,
 But a small grave far out of the sun
 Had but three words, all too bitter, on the grave of the little one –
 The sweet child.

This is the heart of all cries – the Mother of Pities –
 Only by it have men ridden the seas and reared the loud cities.
 It has commanded all toiling and loving and sinning,
 It is the blood and the milk and the light at the ruddy beginning.
 The stone is so heavy, the day is too happy, too mild:
 I have longed for a tempest to cover these words,
 The words that are bitter, spoken up over the little one –
 The sweet child.

2 Time] [time] Time *MS*

8 cries the Mother of Pities] cry the Mother of [Pity] Pity’s *MS*

11 ruddy beginning] [ready] «ruddy» beginning *MS*

15 Spoken] [Speaking] Spoken *MS*

Line endings

Stanza 1 (lines 1-6 of reading text): 1 are || 2 scar || 3 compiled || 4 sun || 5 bitter || 6 one || 7 child ||

Stanza 2 (lines (lines 7-14 of reading text): 1 Pity’s || 2 cities || 3 sinning || 4 beginning || 5 mild || 6 words
 || 7 bitter || 8 one || 9 child ||

THE LOSER WINS

ML MS 4937/4, 14 August 1921, 803-804 [JSN], fair draft, with signature 'Moore Noyes'.

A cheerful old cynic named Walker
Met his wife running off with a Hawker:
He roared, my dear fellow,
I don't like to bellow
But you'll find you've got a good talker!

JSN – AGS 14 August 1921:

. . . I begin to think that H O'H is too dignified a person for limericks. [A pen-name.] I have changed his name to Moor Noyes. The public may think he is a cousin of the Englishman Alfred . . . Alfred Noyes (1880-1958) was a popular English poet.

THE LOW LOVE

‘1927’B, 40a-41a (A0521-2) [JSN], fair draft, without stanza divisions under the number 1, with variable line lengths. The text is presented here as 4 couplets, although 2 x 8-line stanzas may have been intended. A transcription of the draft is given as notes.

Your face is like the music that bids us all be young
And the sharpness of the gooseberry is tasted on your tongue.

Oh, some do love the dream ladies that urge them to the Blue;
The angels are too high – I love a low love – like you.

My heart is dull to music, it will not come to stay;
It tells of tears that fell long since, of winds that walk and play.

It will not keep to the green ground, it fades and lives anew;
The angels are too high – I love a low love – like you.

5 dream ladies] dream lad[i]es *MS*

10] «It will not come to stay» *MS*

Your face is | like the music | that bids us | all be young
And the sharpness | of the gooseberry
Is tasted | on your tongue
Oh some do | love the | dream lad[i]es
That urge them | to the Blue
The angels are | too high I love | a low love | like you
My heart is | dull to music
«It will not come to stay»
It tells of tears | that fell long | since
Of winds that | walk and play
It will not | keep to the green | ground
It fades and | lives ane
The angels are | too high I love | a low love like you

THE MAD LISTENER

‘1930’, 19a & 20a (A0664) [JSN], fair draft.

Fiercely he queries the Summer – stares at the Spring
If haply it may harbour some rapture of some hidden thing:
He has heard deeply, how deeply – gone mad listening.

Fearing not darkness or noises of God on the way,
He has gone to lone places – all thoughts decay:
He will be seeking sweet sounds at the back of the Day.

1] Fiercely he queries | the Summer / – Stares at the Spring *MS*
3 deeply – gone mad listening.] deeply – gone mad listening. *MS*

THE MADMAN'S LADY

'1915'A, 11a-11b (A0350-1) [JSN], draft. ML MS A308/3, 5a (B0066) [FN], transcription, with a note 'Never been printed'.

The transcription differs from the draft and may well have been edited by Frank who added a further comment for Devaney's benefit (for *UP*): 'Nearly up to print. It's a weird <thing>. What do you think Jim? Leave it to you.'

The draft in N's hand is the preferred text.

Over all thoughts that man
 Dreams to discover
 She hath a barren smile
 To make a lover.

Old men die nightly,
 Old women croon;
 Oh, the madman's lady
 Is the barren moon.

As a man insipid
 With love gone cold
 Decked out in silver
 And moving gold –

But no blood is in her,
 No kindly thing;
 How could she pity
 Fools in the Spring?

Title Madman's] Madams *MS*

1] Over all <thoughts> that man *MS*

2 Dreams] Dream[s] *MS*

11] [Arrayed] <decked out> in [the] silver *MS*

13 is in her] is [in] her *MS*

Continued overleaf...

The Madman's Lady (cont.)

But the madman spies her;
With his maddest tune
He would be lover
To the barren moon.

When towns fall under
Dull dreams and die,
Then the madman's lady
Creeps o'er the sky.

As a white maid saying
Come Death, come soon,
Oh, the Madman's lady
Is the barren moon.

22] [Sleep and the sky] *MS* cancelled line following line 21

23] Then the Madman Ladys *MS*

THE MELODY IN BLUE

‘1927’B, 5b (A0487) [JSN], draft, with lines of varying lengths and 2 lines in the margin. A transcription of the draft is given as notes.

He had dreamed much of wild countries, oceans unsailed, and deserts grim,
 And the Romance of Thievery would cling, making tempestuous inroads into him.
 Then she appeared,
 A vision white and slim,
 And he succumbed.
 What else was there to do
 When Elsie wore – the Melody in Blue.

1 dreamed] dreemed *MS*

2 unsailed] unsaliped *MS*

4 inroads] inroad[s] *MS*

He had dreemed | much of wild countries | oceans unsaliped | and deserts grim
 And the Romance | of Thievery would cling | making tempestuous | inroad into him
 Then she appeared
 A vision white | and slim
 And he succumbed
 What else was | there to do
 When Elsie wore | the Melody in Blue

THE MISTY MESSENGER

‘1925’, 6a-6b (A0394-5) [A], with 1 stanza and alterations [JSN], unfinished, 7 stanzas, 1-2 & 5-7 numbered and stanzas 3-4 unnumbered, entitled ‘The drowsy messenger’. ‘1927’B, 19a-21b (A0500-3) [A], with a revised line [JSN], draft, 17 stanzas numbered 1-17, with stanzas 1-2 cancelled, and 1 stanza under heading ‘Odd verse for Drowsy Messenger’, the draft untitled. ‘1927’C, 15a & 24b (A0449 & A0459) [A], 2 stanzas numbered 1 & 2, under title ‘The misty messenger’, the stanza numbered 2 renumbered 5, and 3 stanzas under heading ‘Odd verse Misty Messenger’ numbered 2, 2 & 3 and corrected to 2, 3 & 4. NLA MS 1145/67 [A], fair copy, incomplete, 12 stanzas (unsigned).

AGS – JSN 4 September 1927, NLA MS 1145/74B (comments on the poem, adversely). JSN - JD 31 December 1934, NLA MS 1145/1 (discusses poems for *BI* and says that this would take ‘a lot of time’ to ‘turn into something’).

Correspondence is given after discarded stanzas.

The first draft occurs in a notebook dated c. 1925 (‘1925’) and the second in a book dated c. 1927 (‘1927’B), and it is possible that the third draft, NLA MS 1145/67, is a still later revision. The stanzas numbered 1 & [2] 5 at ‘1927’C, 15a were written as replacement stanzas for the cancelled stanzas at ‘1927’B, 19a and then continued at ‘1927’C, 15a and 24b as an attempt at another version. Because there is no fair draft, and because the NLA MS (the fair copy) is incomplete, the second draft at ‘1927’B, 19a-21b (B) is taken as a base text and the NLA MS 1145/67 is incorporated. ‘1925’, 6a-6b = A; ‘1927’B, 19a-21b = B; ‘1927’C, 15a & 24b = C; NLA 1145/67 = D

Sweet was the blackness of the air,
The brown dust melted to the rain:
Slow did old Ellen Morrison
In her long weariness complain.

Grey was her man, grey was the talk,
Always it left him mean and sore.

1-4] = D stanza 1; ≠ B cancelled stanza 1; ≠ C stanza 1
1] [Black was the evening and most like] B
1 blackness] [corners] «coolness» «blackness» C
2] [A tragedy the dismal rain] B
4] [Unto] to [her] heavy man complain] B • Long to her weary man complain C
5-8] = D stanza 2; ≠ B cancelled stanza 2; = C stanza 2, renumbered 5
5 her man] the man B, C
6 Always] All«ways» C

Continued overleaf...

The Misty Messenger (cont.)

What? 'twas a gentle step they heard,
Gentle, how gentle, at the door.

Gravely old Ellen rose and said
Who can it be? ah, who is there?
And when she pulled the door there came
A messenger with the gold hair.

There never came to wife or man
Through mist of flower, or moon or tree,
From the far isles of wonderment,
There came not any child as he.

Old David said, how fair is he –
There is a moonbeam on his hand:
His eyes are too much like the flowers –
He has come out of fairyland.

Old Ellen said, how fair, how fair –
He is from God – he is so wise:
He is not any child of Earth –
He has come out of Paradise.

- 7 What?] What? *D*
7] [When lo a gentle step was heard] *B*
9-12] = *D* stanza 3; ≠ *B* stanza 3
11] In came a little one the rain *B*
12] A messenger [of] with «the» gold hair *D* •
Glistened and glistened on his hair *B*
13-16] = *D* stanza 4; ≠ *B* stanza 4
15] Through all the isles of wonderment *B*
16 child as he] child [and] «as» he *B*
17-20] = *D* stanza 5; ≠ *A* stanza 1; ≠ *B* 'Odd verse'
18] Look at his foot his little hand *A* •
Look at his feet his little hands *B*
21-24] = *D* stanza 6; ≠ *A* stanza 2; ≠ *B* stanza 7
21] Old Ellen said how holy is *A* •
[Old David said how fair he is] *B*, a false start.
22] This messenger from out the skies *A*
23] He is from God full well I know *A*
24] He has been loved in Paradise *A, B*

Continued overleaf...

The Misty Messenger (cont.)

He seemed as some sweet orphan lost,
Whose mother died in the wild spring
And burnt him with her love until
His white feet took to wandering.

* * *

They brought to him the snow-white bread,
Of all the fruits the garden grew,
Sweet almonds and strawberries
And loquats of the golden hue.

They brought to him the gold cake,
The white milk and the chicken's wing,
The honey of old summers caught
In the tempestuous blossoming.

Softly he ate, as does a child,
Drowsy he is – the old wife said
Is he not weary? oh, this love,
He shall be with us in the bed.

* * *

- 25-28] = *D* stanza 7; ≠ *A* stanza 7; = *B* stanza 6
 25] [Old David said h] *B*, a false start
 27 burnt] burned *A*
 28] His white feet «took» to wandering *A*
 29-32] = *D* stanza 8; ≠ *B* stanza 9
 32 loquats] berries *B*
 33-36] = *D* stanza 9; ≠ *A* unnumbered stanza [3]; ≠ *B* stanza 8
 34 white milk] hot milk *A*
 35] And the great saffron oranges *A* •
 The honey that the wild bees [brought] «caught» *B*
 36] And raisins for his comforting *A* •
 In the tall trees adventuring *B*
 37-40] = *D* stanza 10; ≠ *B* stanza 10
 37 as does] as [doth] «does» *D*
 38] Sleep came upon him [and his head] Ellen said *B*

Continued overleaf...

The Misty Messenger (cont.)

Ellen at daylight woke and moved,
 Counting on kisses on his hair,
 But in a moment clear she saw
 The Messenger, he was not there.

The cupboard door was closed, and plain
 There was the cake, the chicken's wing –
 Stoutly they said, he came, he came,
 He may be gone adventuring.

They sought him by the river's edge
 And by the tallest almond tree;
 They sought him by the red ferns
 And by the oldest mulberry.

They sought him while the red sun rose
 Up through the heavy heat of noon –
 They sought for him, nor could they rest
 Until the coming of the moon.

Benevolence came in the east –
 They looked each other in the eyes –
 Old Ellen said, he was too fair,
 He has gone back to Paradise.

* * *

- 41-44] = *D* stanza 11; ≠ *B* stanza 11
 41] Next morning Ellen woke and moved *B*
 42] Wishful for kisses on his hair *B*
 43 clear she saw] [this] «clear» she saw *D* • this she saw *B*
 45-48] = *D* stanza 12; ≠ *B* stanza 12
 47 they said] [he] «they» said *D*
 47] And yet they stoutly said he came *B*
 49-52] = *B* stanza 13; ≠ *A* unnumbered stanza [4]
 51 sought him] sought for him *A*
 52] Near by the oldest mulberry *A*
 53-56] = *B* stanza 14
 57-64] = *B* stanza 15

Continued overleaf...

The Misty Messenger (cont.)

The neighbours heard it all and said
 You are so old, your hearts are sore:
 Mist of old wishes, that he was –
 Dream to a Dreamer – nothing more.

Then would their old lips quickly move,
 The tears their trembling eyes would dim:
 No, they would say, good neighbours, no –
 Once for a night, we slept with him.

61-64] = *B* stanza 16; ≠ *A* stanza 5

63 Mist] [Child] «Mist» [JSN] *B*

63] Woven of wishes that he was *A*

64] [Dream] «Mist» of old dreamers nothing more [JSN] *B* a revised line following line 63 [JSN]

• Child of a dream and nothing more *A*

65-68] = *B* stanza 17; ≠ *A* stanza 6

67] [Nay] «No» they would say good neighbours [nay] no *B* • Nay they would say good neighbours no *A*

68] Last night it was we slept with him *A*

Discarded lines and stanzas

A following stanza 7:

He seemed as some sweet blossom blown
 Out of his homeland one who came

B stanza 5, lines 17-20:

He seemed so like a fair tulip
 Silence was with him and of Love
 His eyes had gathered Wisdom strange
 Old as the Witnesses above

C stanzas 2, [2] 3 & [3] 4:

They quarrelled so long on a small thing
 Some happening that the ear and eye
 Long had forgotten Ellen said
 This that you told me is a lie

David more merciful would speak
 Idly of something in the dim
 Always the old wives lips would move
 Gladly to give the lie to him

Of neighbours they spoke of those
 Welcome and unwelcome some had died
 David said slowly we remain
 Always unlucky Ellen [unlucky] sighed

Continued overleaf...

The Misty Messenger (cont.)

AGS – JSN 4 September 1927:

Returning ‘Messenger’ — good idea — good lines — good stanzas — too many feeble and faltering. Not enough blood in its veins — not enough pulsation of rhythm. The spacing is wrong — want more on the bickering beginning, to contrast with visitor and his effect. The tone is not preserved — there are bits of true ballad and bits of fanciful Neilson — If Quinn wrote ‘Sweet almonds and strawberries and loquats of the golden hue’ in that measure you would [think] he was mumbling his lines. I could fix it, but it might take me a week . . . You feel more than you have expressed to the reader. I can understand children or illiterate people grasping the essence and overlooking the impediments; but that is not enough: you have to make poetry without flaws of expression . . . we must keep up the standards.

THE MOON WAS SEVEN DAYS DOWN

‘1925’, 19b-20b (A0409-0410) [A], with an alteration [JSN] unfinished, 4 stanzas numbered 1-4, entitled ‘Seven days gone’. ‘1927’B, 30a-31b (A0511-3) [JSN], revisions, under short title ‘Seven days’ (a part-stanza and lines). ML MS 4937/7, Item 4 [A], fair copy. ML MS 4937/5, 26 May 1927, 193-203 [A], revised stanzas 1, 2, 4, 5, 8 & 9, annotated ‘Corrections’ [AGS].
NP 22; *CP* 129.

AGS - JSN 21 May 1927 (‘returned the Peter ballad – which you do not acknowledge – asking some revision’). JSN - AGS 26 May 1927 (encloses ‘Ballad’ revised’ and comments). JSN - JD 4 November 1934, NLA MS 1145/67 (gives background to the poem).
 Correspondence is given after the notes.

The *NP* text incorporates only some of the revisions N sent Stephens and also contains apparently unauthorised editorial revisions. The fair copy MS 4937/7, Item 4 (B) is therefore taken as the preferred text.

‘1925’, 19b-20b = A; 4937/7-4 = B; ‘1927’B, 30a-31b = C; 4937/5, 193-203 = D

Peter, she said, the clock has struck
 At one and two and three,
 And you sleep so sound, and you sleep so long,
 You will not listen to me.
 I suffered long and I suffered sore –

1-8] ≠ *A* stanza 1; ≠ *C* a part-stanza, unnumbered; ≠ *D*; ≠ *NP*, *CP*

1] Peter she said the hours the hours *C*, *D*

2] «At» [One] and two and three [JSN] *A* •

They seem who[le] nights to me *C* •

They seem so black to me *D*

3] And you sleep so sound and you sleep so [soft] «long» [JSN] *A* •

You sleep so sound and I count them all *C* •

You sleep so sound and the clock comes round *D* •

You sleep so sound and the lonesome hours *NP*, *CP*

4] And you will not listen to me *A* •

The one and two and three *C* •

To the lonesome hour of three *D* •

They seem so black to me *NP*, *CP*

5] I have suffered long and I suffered sore *A* •

I’m thinking all that the children thought *C* •

I am thinking all that the children thought *D*

Continued overleaf...

The Moon was Seven Days Down (cont.)

What else can I think upon?
I fear no evil, but oh, the moon –
She is seven days gone.

Peter, she said, the night is long,
The hours will not go by.
The moon is calm, but she meets her death
Bitter as women die.
I think too much of the flowers. I dreamed
I dressed myself in a gown –
'Twas a white one, and oh – the moon,
She is seven days down.

Woman, he said, my ears could stand
Much noise when I was young
But year by year you weary me;
Can you never rest your tongue?
And here am I with my broken rest
To be up at the peep o'day –

- 6] [I have carried the good race on] «'Tis all I can think up[on] [JSN] *A*
7] I feel no evil but fear the moon *A* •
I fear . . . *C*, unfinished line
9-16] ≠ *A* stanza 2; ≠ *D*; ≠ *NP*, *CP*
9 the night is] the hours are *D*
11 but she meets] but meets *A*
13 of the] o'the *D*
13] I am thinking all too much of the flowers *A* •
I am thinking too much of the flowers. I dreamed *B*
14] I [drest] dressed myself in a gown *A*, *B* •
I walked in a wedding gown *D*, *NP*, *CP*
15 oh – the moon] ah – the moon *A*
15] Or was it a shroud – the moon – the moon *C* (a line under number 2), *D*, *NP*, *CP*
17-24] ≠ *A* stanza 3; *NP*, *CP*
17 Woman] Women *B*
19] But every year you weary me *A* •
But year by year you have wearied me *NP*, *CP*
20 rest your] stop your *NP*, *CP*
21] Here am I with my broken rest *NP*, *CP*
22] To be up at the peep [at] «of» day *A* •
To be up at the break of day *NP*, *CP*

Continued overleaf...

The Moon was Seven Days Down (cont.)

So much to do and the sheep not shorn
And the lambs not yet away.

Peter, she said, your tongue is rude,
You have ever spoken so—
And it would not spoil your rest if I
Should into my coffin go.
You talk of your lambs and sheep and wool,
'Tis all that you think upon —
I fear no evil, but oh — the moon,
She is seven days gone.

Peter, she said, the children went
And I knew that they would not stay:
By the harsh word and the hard work
You have driven them far away.
I suffered back in the ten years
That I never saw a town:
Oh, the moon is over her full glory —
She is seven days down.

Woman, he said, I want my rest —
'Tis the worst time of the year.
The weeds are thick in the top fallow
And the hay will soon be here.
A man is a man, and a child a child;
From a daughter or a son

- 25-32] ≠ *A* stanza 4; ≠ *D* stanza numbered [3] 4; ≠ *NP*, *CP*
27] My aches and ills they trouble you not *D*, *NP*, *CP*
27-28] No trouble of mine would break your rest || And that too well I know *C* under number 3
28] This many a year I know *D*, *NP*, *CP*
29] You talk of your lambs and your sheep *A*
31] I [feel] fear no evil but ah the moon *A*
33-40] ≠ *D* stanza numbered 5; ≠ *NP*, *CP*
33] Peter she said you sent them out *D*
33-34] [Peter she said] They all have gone || My children would not stay *C*, lines under number 4
34] My children would not stay *D*, *NP*, *CP*
35 harsh word] hard word *D*, *NP*, *CP*
39 Oh —] Oh — *B*
41-48] = *NP*, *CP*
41 Woman] Women *B*

Continued overleaf...

The Moon was Seven Days Down (cont.)

Or a man or woman I want no talk
For anything I have done.

Peter, she said, 'twas told to me,
Long back in a happy year,
That I should die in the turning time
When the wheat was in the ear,
And I should go in a plain coffin
And lie in a plain gown
When the moon had taken her full glory
And was seven days down.

* * *

Peter, he rose, and lit the lamp
At the first touch of the day;
His mind was full of the top fallow
And the ripening of the hay.
He said, she sleeps – but the second look –
He knew how the dead can stare
And there came a dance of last beauty
That none of the living share.

How cool and straight and steady he was!
He said, she seems so young.
He said, her face was all too fine,
But aw – by God, her tongue!

49-56] = *NP, CP*

57-64] ≠ *D* stanza numbered 8; = *NP, CP*

61 she sleeps –] she sleeps – *B*

63] And oh the strange white liberty *D*

63-64] There [had fallen a proud] «was a new white» liberty || That none of the living share
C under the number 8

65-72] ≠ *D* stanza numbered 9; ≠ *NP, CP*

65] How cool and straight «and steady» he was *B*

67] Her face is fine it was always fine *D, NP, CP*

68] But aw – by God – her tongue *B •*

But ah by God her tongue *D •*

But oh by God her tongue *NP, CP*

69] She always thought as the children thought *D, NP, CP*

Continued overleaf...

The Moon was Seven Days Down (cont.)

She thought so much o'the children – 'tis
 What a woman thinks upon –
 And the moon was out in the clear sky –
 She was seven days gone.

* * *

He sauntered out to the neighbour's place
 As the daylight came in clear.
 The wheat, he said, it is filling well,
 And he stopped at a heavy ear.
 He said, a good strong plain coffin
 Is the one I am thinking on –
 And the moon was over his shoulder,
 She was seven days gone.

69-70] She always thought as the children thought || Her mind was made for a town *C*, lines under number 9

70] Her mind was made for a town *D*, *NP*, *CP*

71 clear sky] pale sky *NP*, *CP*

72 days gone] days down *D*, *NP*, *CP*

73-80] = *NP*, *CP*

JSN - AGS 26 May 1927:

In 'Ballad' the line with a good strong plain coffin seems very wooden but I have left it. Could easily alter of course. I know pretty well how men and women on the land express things. One has to dodge too much of the old conventional Ballad speech but must avoid the other extreme. I don't know about the 4 line stanza.

JSN - JD 4 November 1934:

I started to write [the poem] mainly in memory of a woman I once knew. I worked for her husband when I was in the early twenties. She had a good husband, was fairly well-off, but I think the hard work had told on her health. She was a fine character, a true lady.

THE MOPOKE AND OTHERS

The Bookfellow 15 January 1920, p. 49, signed Horace O'Hazy.

A variant of stanza 1 occurs in a typed collection of limericks at LaT MS 9419/3678 (Victor Kennedy papers), under the heading 'New treatment for mysterious foot trouble'.

Gruesome and goggle-eyed, absurd,
The Mopoke is a tiresome bird!
He is the prince of pessimists,
The uncrowned king of Calvinists.

The Curlew has his bilious moods
(But happily lighter interludes).
Often he calls in white moonshine,
Calls like a devil filled with wine!

The Dingo has his daybreak moan
But he has pleasures of his own:
Always he dines, I understand,
On the best mutton in the land.

The Frog, despite his chronic croak,
Looks on existence as a joke:
In his secluded swim he finds
Distractions of various kinds.

But the grim Mopoke is a blot
Of bitterness – a bilious sot!
He is the prince of pessimists,
The uncrowned king of Calvinists.

16 kinds] kind *Boo*

THE MULBERRY GREW

ML MS 3354/2, Item 6, 11a [JSN], two stanzas numbered 1 & 2; ML MS A3038/1, 13b (B0113) [JSN], a part-stanza, unnumbered [3]; ML MS 3354/2-6, 11b [JSN] a part-line (line 4, stanza [3]), a stanza numbered 4 and a part-stanza numbered 5; and '1930', 25a-25b (A0669-0670) [JSN], a part-line (line 4, stanza 5). A draft.

The stanzas are of variable form; however, 4 of the 8 are triplets and the rhymes in the others support this arrangement throughout.

'Twas in the Autumn the bitterness broke him in two,
'Twas for the white ones he shuddered. He saw – and he knew:
Death in a mulberry met him – the mulberry grew.

She who had fought with him knew not, and hours by the door
She would speak most of the Springtime, the sheep that he shore,
And the hard wood – the wet days – the winter before.

The white ones, all long hair and weakness – clearly he saw
Soon in the dark day under some ominous claw;
Love, even Love, as an enemy knowing no Law.

Having no God to fear he did more freely curse men,
All who were hasty all heartily showed pity when
Looking upon him they brought up new horrors again.

Often on Sunday the white ones with ribbons of blue,
Mournfully, foolish, would sing little hymns that they knew.
It was Death as a mulberry met him – the mulberry grew.

Oh, the white blooms so tender no brother had they,
And there would come to them peril by night and by day
While his ears and his eyes and his hands would be hidden away.

- 2 shuddered. He saw –] shuddered || He saw – *MS*
6 wood] <wood> *MS*. *Wool* and *mood* are possible readings.
10 God] [god] God *MS*
11 who were hasty all] who were <hasty> <all> *MS*
13 white ones with] white ones [in] with *MS*
14 little hymns] little long hymns *MS*

Continued overleaf...

The Mulberry Grew (cont.)

Early, he told me, when first the red sorrow began;
 The horror within him all over me shuddered and ran,
 And he even smiled, for there was a good heart in the man.

The last day I saw him – yes, even the little ones knew,
 And still did his eyes keep them hoping, 'twas all he could do
 When Death as a mulberry met him – the mulberry grew.

20 ran] ren *MS*, an error of haste

22 him –] him – *MS*

Line endings

Stanza 1 (reading text lines 1-3): 1 two || 2 shuddered || 3 knew || 4 him ||
 5 grew ||

Stanza 2 (reading text lines 4-6): 1 door || 2 Springtime || 3 before ||

Stanza 3 (reading text lines 7-9): 1 saw || 2 claw || 3 Law ||

Stanza 4 (reading text lines 10-12): 1 men || 2 when || 3 Him || 4 again ||

Stanza 5 (reading text lines 13-15): 1 blue || 2 knew || 3 grew ||

Stanza 6 (reading text lines 16-18): 1 they || 2 day || 3 away ||

Stanza 7 (reading text lines 19-21): 1 began || 2 ran || 3 man ||

Stanza 8 (reading text lines 22-24): 1 knew || 2 hoping || 3 do || 4 him ||

5 grew ||

THE NIGHT OF MUSIC

‘1915’A, 8a-8b (A0347-8) [JSN], draft.

Into the whiteness round above
God could not praise or blame
All that assailed me – was it Love,
The night the eternal music came?

Long past such early sickening I
Lay peacefully – the small hours
Went as a schoolchild, charmed and shy,
Exploring too dreamily a flower.

All hate went shadowless – the damp
Sweetness did fill me and the shame
Of the long discords could not come,
That night the eternal music came.

2] [There was no good] God could not [to] praise or blame *MS*

3 assailed me was] assailed «me» was *MS*

8] Exploring [plucking half] «too» dreamily a flower *MS*

12 That night] [All] «That» night *MS*

THE NIGHT SHALL DIVIDE US

‘1930’, 13b (A0658) [FN] & ‘1927’B, 4a-4b (A0485-6) [JSN], draft.

He having Reason the white ghost chained up to a fear,
 He would be mournful – his mourning would go to her ear,
 And as she spoke right bravely at the fall of the day
 He would cry like a little lame bird, and the thing he would say,
 The Night shall divide us.

She being redder would speak of some workaday thing,
 Would look to the garden or listen – a child that could sing
 Would make her a Heaven – but he, having fallen away
 And lost the old courage, and hoarse, would he say
 The Night shall divide us.

1] He having [reason] Reason the white ghost chained [shrouded with] «up to a» fear
 [JSN] *MS*

7] Would look to | the garden – or | listen | [Her heart to the playground would] «hasten» a child that could sing *MS*

THE OLD WIVES SAT AT THE TABLE

‘1925’, 2b-3a (A0391-2) [JSN & FN], fair draft, stanzas 1-5 [JSN] and stanzas 6-9 [FN].

Black was the night where the wind went
 And blue and black the rain:
 They said, poor thing she was pretty
 But aw – her shroud is plain.

The old wives sat at the table,
 They said their hearts were sore:
 The pennies were on her eyelids
 That moved so fine before.

These old wives all had daughters
 But none so fair as she,
 And the bitterest thing in the bitter
 Is a woman’s jealousy.

She had craved for the sweet colours,
 So many flowers she wore –
 She had laughed in many a garden
 And cried at her own door.

She spoke of Love to the roses
 So mad a maid was she –
 She lived so long with the lilies
 And the plaintive rosemary.

Her lips were the clean crimson,
 Oh, love wet was her tongue:
 On the velvet of her white shoulders
 All night the glory hung.

She had as fair a bosom
 As ever fired a man:
 The sunbeams of her sweet spirit
 A-down her forehead ran.

4 aw – her] aw – her *MS*

Continued overleaf...

The Old Wives Sat at the Table (cont.)

The old wives by the table sat
And sourly did they pray:
They envied her no more for now
Her beauty slipped away.

* * *

Blue was the night on the wind's walk
And blue and black the rain:
They said her love was finery,
But aw – her shroud was plain.

30 sourly] sourally *MS*

THE ORANGE TREE

The Bookfellow 15 February 1921, p. 11; *BLP* 94; *CP* 100.

JSN - JD 28 October 1934, NLA MS 1145/68 (discusses stimulus for the poem).
Correspondence is given.

The Bookfellow is the preferred text.

The young girl stood beside me – I
Saw not what her young eyes could see.
A light, she said, not of the sky
Lives somewhere in the Orange Tree.

Is it, I said, of East or West?
The heartbeat of a luminous boy
Who with his faltering flute confessed
Only the edges of his joy?

Was he, I said, borne to the blue
In a mad escapade of Spring
Ere he could make a fond adieu
To his love in the blossoming?

Listen, the young girl said. There calls
No voice, no music beats on me;
But it is almost sound – it falls
This evening on the Orange Tree.

Does he, I said, so fear the Spring,
Ere the white sap too far can climb,
See in the full gold evening
All happenings of the olden time?

Is he so goaded by the green?
Does the compulsion of the dew
Make him unknowable but keen
Asking with beauty of the blue?

Listen, the young girl said. For all
Your hapless talk you fail to see
There is a light, a step, a call,
This evening on the Orange Tree.

Is it, I said, a waste of love,
Imperishably old in pain
Moving as an affrighted dove
Under the sunlight or the rain?

Continued overleaf...

The Orange Tree (cont.)

Is it a fluttering heart that gave
Too willingly and was reviled?
Is it the stammering at a grave?
The last word of a little child?

Silence, the young girl said. Oh, why,
Why will you talk to weary me?
Plague me no longer now, for I
Am listening, like the Orange Tree.

JSN - JD 28 October 1934:

‘The Orange Tree’ was finished the year before that [about 1919]. It started out of an old piece that I had discarded. I was trying to describe the people who visit St Kilda at the week-end holiday-making. I failed very badly.

When I was working up in Merbein I could not help noticing the very beautiful light on the trees in the afternoon. I used the metre I had used in the St Kilda piece. I may have used one or two of the same lines.

The poem is discussed in the autobiography, p.106:

I have said before that I got some of the ideas when I was weeding oranges at Merbein. There was also something which I tried to drag in, some enchantment or other. I have seen prints of Botticelli’s wonderful picture ‘Spring’ . . . It has lovers, it has maidens and greenery and I think a robber in the background.

THE PLAYERS AND THE MOON

‘1927’A, 24b (A0556) [A], unfinished.

Golden are they in the morning, and brave in the noon;
They tell me at sundown the sorrows are coming up soon;
Our Lord has departed and hidden away in the moon.

And who is the Lord then, I query, who dies with the day?
They said he goes out in the blackness – but where can he stay?
We know that the moon is upon him and hides him away.

[*Unfinished*]

1] Golden are they in the morning | [They tell me at sundown] | [And] and brave in the noon *MS*

THE POOR, POOR COUNTRY

‘1927’C, 16a-18a & 19a(A0450-2) & 23b (A0458) [A], draft, 10 x 4-line stanzas, with cancelled stanzas, renumbering of stanzas, and numerous revised lines; 26a-28a (A0460-2) [A], fair draft, 9 x 4-line stanzas; 32a-33b (A0466-8) & 34a (A0468) [A], fair draft, 8 x 3-line stanzas. NLA MS 6946/21 [L], fair copy, for *CP*, 6 x 4-line stanzas.

CP 160.

JSN - RHC 19 November 1933 (sent to AGS but not published); 20 November 1933 (comments, and suggests might be worth considering for *CP*).

N told Croll that Stephens ‘didn’t seem to like [the poem]’, mainly because ‘the last line in each stanza seemed to jar on him’, and added that Stephens ‘said that the piece was rather like a catalogue’. He told Croll that he had been ‘altering the last line a little’ and said that he thought ‘it runs better now’.

The poem was written first as a draft of 8 stanzas. Stanzas 1 & 7 were cancelled and stanza 8 was renumbered 9 after two additional stanzas and revised lines were written and one of the additional stanzas rewritten (‘1927’C, 16a-18a, 19a & 23b). A fair draft of 9 stanzas was then written (‘1927’C, 26a-28a). A second fair draft with a change in stanza form (‘1927’C, 32a-33b & 34a) was written in response to Stephens’s comment as reported to Croll (JSN – RHC 19 November 1933). This draft attempts to correct the awkward final line in each stanza and the catalogue-like approach that Stephens criticised. N later returned to the earlier of the first two drafts and rewrote this for *CP*.

The poem is therefore treated as two discrete versions.

THE POOR, POOR COUNTRY [1]

‘1927’C, 32a-33b (A0466-8) & 34a (A0468) [A], fair draft, 8 x 3-line stanzas.

Oh, ’twas a poor country – in autumn it was bare,
In the buck shot and the spear grass the sheep found little there,
But the water-birds had golden words and I, a goodly share.

In the black morning dingoes made their old malicious cry:
I saw the young lamb in the wind and the brown hawk on the sky:
Oh, the crows were keen and the ewes were lean, and bitterly would die.

1 autumn] [summer] «autumn» *MS*

3 I, a] I [had] a *MS*

Continued overleaf...

The Poor, Poor Country [1] (cont.)

Oh, the wheat was sick in the low ground, but fought most valiantly,
 And the ripening oats on the high land came only to my knee,
 But water-birds had golden words and I, no poverty.

My riches was the glow that lives forever in the young,
 It was on the brown water, on the green leaves it hung:
 It was so old it was never told, nor could be ever sung.

The blue cranes fed their young all day (they lived in a tall tree)
 And the young ducks in the lignum pools, they swam so peacefully,
 Oh, the water-birds had golden words and I, no poverty.

The mountain ducks each morning made their dull ungracious sound
 And on the precious islands there, the plover's nest I found.
 I saw in sleep the bunyips creep from waters underground.

I waded out to a swan's nest, and the reeds were thick and high,
 I looked into a teal duck's nest and I saw the spoonbill fly:
 Oh, the water-birds had golden words – no poverty had I.

* * * *

The New Year came with thirst and heat, and the little lakes were low,
 The blue cranes were my nearest friends, and I mourned to see them go.
 I saw them die on a far sky, as far as I could know.

14 lignum] lignum[s] *MS*

17 there the plover's] there [a] «the» plovers *MS*

18 I saw] I[n] saw *MS*

24] Oh the water-birds had golden words that all the young can know *MS* (the replacement line for this occurs at 34a)

THE POOR, POOR COUNTRY [2]

‘1927’C, 16a-18a & 19a (A0450-2) & 23b (A0458) [A], draft, 10 stanzas, stanzas 1 & 7 cancelled, two additional stanzas (one of which rewritten), stanza 8 renumbered 9 and numerous revised lines; 26a-28a (A0460-2) [A], fair draft, 9 × 4-line stanzas. NLA MS 6946/21 [L], fair copy (for *CP*).
CP 160 (with 6 × 4-line stanzas).

JSN – RHC 19 November 1933 (sent to AGS but not published); 20 November 1933 (comments on poem).

N told Croll that Stephens ‘didn’t seem to like [the poem]’, mainly because ‘the last line in each stanza seemed to jar on him’, and added that Stephens ‘said that the piece was rather like a catalogue’. He told Croll that he had been ‘altering the last line a little’ and said that he thought ‘it runs better now’.

‘1927’C, 16a-18a, 19a & 23b = A; ‘1927’C, 26a-28a = B; NLA MS 6946/21 = C
 The fair copy (C) is the preferred text.

Oh ’twas a poor country, in Autumn it was bare,
 The only green was the cutting grass and the sheep found little there.
 Oh, the thin wheat and the brown oats were never two foot high,
 But down in the poor country no pauper was I.

My wealth it was the glow that lives forever in the young,
 ’Twas on the brown water, in the green leaves it hung.

1-4] ≠ *A* stanza 4; ≠ *B* stanza 4

1] Oh it was a poor country in summer it was bare *A, B*

2] In the buck shot and the spear-grass the sheep found little there *A, B*

3] The ewes were weak [at] «by» winter time [And] and they suffered grievously [sic] *A* •

The ewes were weak in winter time || And they walked so mournfully || [With the d] *A* ‘4 | Third line’ •

The ewes were weak when the cold came and they died so bitterly *B*

4] But the poor poor country made no pauper of me *A, B*

4 But down in the] But «down» in [that] «the» *C*

5-6] ≠ *A* stanza 5 (ll. 1-2), ≠ *B* stanza 5 (ll. 1-2)

5] My riches was the glow that lives forever in the young *A* •

My riches [were] «was» the glow that lives for ever in the young *B*

6] It was upon the brown water on the green leaves it hung *A* •

It was on the brown water on the greens leaves it hung [sic] *B*

Continued overleaf...

The Poor, Poor Country [2] (cont.)

The blue cranes fed their young all day – how far in a tall tree!
And the poor, poor country made no pauper of me.

I waded out to the swan's nest – at night I heard them sing,
I stood amazed at the Pelican and crowned him for a King,
I saw the black duck in the reeds, and the spoonbill on the sky,
And in that poor country no pauper was I.

The mountain-ducks down in the dark made many a hollow sound,
I saw in sleep the Bunyip creep from the waters underground,

7-8] ≠ *A* stanza 6 (ll. 3-4); ≠ *B* stanza 6 (ll. 3-4)

7] The blue cranes fed their young all day they lived in a tall tree *A* •

The blue cranes fed their young all day they lived in a [high] «tall» tree *B*

8] Oh the poor poor country made no pauper of me[n] *A* •

Oh the poor poor country made made no pauper of me [sic] *B*

9-10] ≠ *A* stanza 6 (ll. 1-2); ≠ *B* stanza 6 (ll. 1-2)

9] I waded out to a swans nest and the [pi] wild doves in the Spring *A* •

I waded out to a swan[']s nest and the wood-doves in the Spring *B*

10] They moan so much I dreamed the sound | Was some unearthly thing *A* •

They moaned so much I dreamed the sound was some unearthly thing *B*

11-12] ≠ *A* stanza 5 (ll. 3-4); ≠ *A* '2 last lines for 5th verse'; ≠ *B* stanza 5 (ll. 3-4)

11] I looked into the black ducks nest I heard the plovers cry *A* •

I looked into the teal ducks nest and I saw the spoon bill fly *A* '2 last lines for 5th verse' • I looked into the teal[s] ducks' nest and I saw the spoonbill fly *B*

12] In the poor poor country no pauper was I *A, B* •

[But] «Down» in that poor country no pauper was I *A* '2 last lines for 5th verse'

12 And in that] [In the poor] «And in that» *C*

13-16] ≠ *A* 'Odd verse | 7'; ≠ *A* unnumbered stanza; ≠ *B* stanza 7

13] The mountain ducks went [clumsily along] «heavily upon» the swampy ground *A* 'Odd verse | 7' •

The mountain ducks went clum[s]ily upon the marshy ground *A* unnumbered stanza •

The mountain ducks went heavily twas in the swampy ground *B*

14-16] ≠ *A* 3 lines under heading '2nd line of 7th verse'

14] And on the tiny islands there the plovers nest I found *A* 'Odd verse | 7' •

The song they made was a [gray] «grave» song as any ever found *A* unnumbered stanza • And on some little island

there the plovers nest I found *A* '2nd line of 7th verse (line 1 of 3) • And on some precious island there a plovers nest I found *B*

Continued overleaf...

The Poor, Poor Country [2] (cont.)

I found the plovers' island home, and they fought right valiantly.
 Poor was the country, but it made no pauper of me.

My riches all went into dreams that never yet came home,
 They touched upon the wild cherries and the slabs of honeycomb;
 They were not of the desolate brood that men can sell or buy:
 Down in that poor country no pauper was I.

* * *

- 15] The black duck layed in the Ligmin and the brown hawks hovered nigh *A* 'Odd verse | 7' •
- The black ducks layed in the Ligumn and the scented duck[e] were [sky] shy *A* unnumbered stanza •
- The young come in the Ligmin «and» the brown hawk hovered nigh *A* '2nd line of 7th verse' (line 2 of 3) •
- With the ducks brood in the Ligmun and the brown hawk on the sky *A* one line under number 7 at 23b
- 16] Down in that poor country no pauper was I *A* 'Odd verse | 7', *A* '2nd line of 7th verse' (line 3 of 3) •
- Down in the poor country no pauper was I *A* unnumbered stanza •
- In that poor country no pauper was I *B*
- 16 Poor was] [Oh] Poor was *C*
- 17-20] ≠ *A* cancelled stanza 1, ≠ *B* stanza 1
- 17-18] ≠ *A* 'first 2 lines of first verse'
- 17 The only offering I could bring to the treasury of home *A* cancelled stanza 1 •
- My offering I brought into the treasury of home *A* 'First 2 lines of first verse' •
- There did I take my gifts into the treasury of home *B*
- 18] Was the green eggs of the mountain duck and the slabs of honey comb *A* cancelled stanza 1 •
- I cut from box and peppermint the slabs of honey-comb *A* one line under heading 'Second line for first verse' •
- From box and peppermint I cut the slabs of honeycomb *A* 'First 2 lines of first verse', *B*
- 19] Twas little that we ever grew and little could we buy *A* cancelled stanza 1, *B*
- 20] But I spoke so much to water-birds – No pauper was I *A* cancelled stanza 1, *B*

Continued overleaf...

The Poor, Poor Country [2] (cont.)

The New Year came with heat and thirst and the little lakes were low,
 The blue cranes were my nearest friends and I mourned to see them go;
 I watched their wings so long until I only saw the sky;
 Down in that poor country no pauper was I.

21-24] ≠ *A* stanza [8] 9; ≠ *B* stanza 9

21] = *A* one line under heading 'First line of 9th verse'

21] At the coming of the New Year the little lakes were low *A* [8] 9 •

The New Year came with «heat» and thirst and the little [lakes were low] «lakes were low» *B*

22] And for my friends the water-birds the time had come to go *A* [8] 9 •

[And for my friends the water-birds] | Then did my friends the water birds put out their wings to go *B*

23] In many a dream I went with them [half way across the sky] «to the far end of the sky» *A* [8] 9 •

In many a dream I went with them to the far end of the sky *B*

24] In the poor poor country no pauper was I *A* [8] 9 •

Twas but a poor country no pauper was I *B*

Discarded lines and stanzas

A stanza 2; *A* 'Last 2 lines of No 2'; *A* 'Last 2 lines of 2nd verse'; *B* stanza 2:

In «the» black morning dingoes made their old malicious moan *A* stanza 2

In the black morning dingoes made their old malicious moan *B*

And crows were cruel enemies and I fought them much alone *A* stanza 2

And the crows were cruel enemies and I fought them much alone *B*

[They warred upon the June lambs they took out heart and eye] *A* stanza 2

They took the eyes from the young lambs and the old ewes could not cry *A* 'Last 2 lines of No 2'

They took the eyes from the young lamb and the old ewe could not cry *A* 'Last 2 lines of 2nd verse'

They took the eyes from the young lambs and I strove – I would not cry *B*

[But in that poor country no pauper was I] *A* stanza 2, *A* 'Last 2 lines of No 2' (not cancelled), *A* 'Last 2 lines of 2nd verse' (not cancelled)

Down in that poor country no pauper was I *B*

A stanza 3; *B* stanza 3:

The wheat was [thick] «sick» on the low ground and the high ground it would bake *A*

The wheat was sick on the low ground and the high ground it would bake *B*

The thin wheat perished in the flood that would not kill the drake *A*

And the thin wheat perished in the flood that would not kill the drake *B*

[The oats] You could see the hunger in the oats they were never two foot high *A*

The hunger stood in the brown oats they were never two foot high *B*

But in that poor country no pauper was I *A, B*

Continued overleaf...

The Poor, Poor Country [2] (cont.)

A cancelled stanza 7; *A* 'First line for 7th verse'; *A* stanza '8 [7] Odd verse'; *A* 'First line of 8th verse'; *B* stanza 8:

Twas in November mother turned her thoughts to Xmas fare *A* cancelled stanza 7

We bound the sheaves by by «hand» and then there came the Xmas [time] fare *A*

'First line for 7th verse'

We made loose hay at Xmas time | [And] «and» oh the Xmas fare *A* '8 [7] Odd verse'

We bound the sheaves in the old way twas Xmas oh the fare *A* 'First line of 8th verse'

[The sheaves we bound at Xmas] | The sheaves we bound in the old way at Xmas.

Oh the fare *B*

The Angels food and the Black bun and the honey-beer was there *A* cancelled stanza 7

The Angels food and the black bun | [A] «and» the honey-beer was there *A* '8 [7] Odd verse'

The angels food «and» the black bun and the honeybeer was there *B*

The strawberries we strove to grow | [We] «we» plucked them tenderly *A* cancelled stanza 7

[Was] Twas little that we grew to sell and little could we buy *A* '8 [7] Odd verse'

Twas little that we grew to sell [twas] and little could we buy *B*

Oh the poor poor country made no pauper of me *A* cancelled stanza 7

But in that poor country no pauper was I *A* '8[7] Odd verse', *B*

THE QUARREL WITH THE NEIGHBOUR

NLA MS 75/52 [JSN], fair copy. NLA MS 605/101, typescript [AGS].
The Bookfellow 15 March 1921, p. 28; *BLP* 35; *CP* 83.

MS 75/52 = A; MS 605/101 = B
 The fair copy (A) is the preferred text.

Clear was the morning
 ('Twas the time o'the hay)
 The little birds running heard
 All we could say.

The quarrel came so quickly
 ('Twas a sweet sunshine)
 'Twas the straying of cattle,
 His rights and mine.

Then spoke we fury
 In the white morning air –
 Never again to my doorstep
 Should his body dare.

And he with his big eyes
 By the Great God swore
 Never again should my feet
 Come in at his door.

Then did the blood rush
 Beset me, and I
 Told of good I had done him
 In the years gone by.

2 o'the] o'the *A*
 4 say.] say. *A*
 quarrel] quarrel[1] *A*
 6] ('Twas a sweet sunshine) *A*
 8 mine.] mine. *A*
 9-12] omitted *B*

Continued overleaf...

The Quarrel with the Neighbour (cont.)

In his eyes glitter
 Vile threats could I see
 And he spoke of past favours
 In the old days to me.

'Twas a clear morning
 In the time o'the hay –
 With a shut fist my neighbour
 Rode grimly away.

* * *

At the end o'the harvest
 Sickness burned me,
 Yet always of my neighbour
 I thought bitterly.

Oh the night – the hot anguish –
 The poor fight with pain –
 But I craved not for my neighbour
 At my door again.

'Twas morning – the sunlight
 Ran round at the door:
 The voice was an old voice,
 Long loved before.

In came my neighbour,
 Shook me by the hand –
 He smelt of the morning,
 He smelt of the land.

Of markets and weather
 We spoke cheerily
 And I saw his big eyes
 Look squarely at me.

22 threats could] threats [goo] could *A*

23 favours] favour *CP*

24 the old days] the «old» days *A*

33 night –] night – *A*

39 an old voice] [and] «an» old voice *A* • an old one *B*

Continued overleaf...

The Quarrel with the Neighbour (cont.)

Of my little sickness,
Of men we had known,
Of old folk gone under,
Children all grown –

So spoke we and slowly,
Of days yet to come,
But at his going, why,
Why, was I dumb?

When at the doorway
He laughed good bye,
How great was my neighbour,
How mean was I.

THE SALAD MAKER

‘1930’, 11a (A0655) [A], fair draft.

For greens we'll take the green of all the Spring,
Of all green waters on the old earth running,
Of peacocks in their dull adventuring,
Of jealousies in Paradise, the funning
Of birds, of play and sleepy serpents sunning.
Too old am I for song or strenuous ballad:
Let me I pray then serve to thee a salad.

4-6] Of jealousies in Paridise || [Of] The funning] [Of] *MS*

THE SAUCEPAN OF THE CENTURIES

The Bookfellow 15 July 1920, p. 146, signed Horace O’Hazy.

Down in the kitchen a tired-out maid
Is greasy and worried and badly paid –
This is a photo that soon must fade.

Washing the saucepan – this is the source
Of gloom and sorrow and mad remorse,
It will make her hands and her whole life coarse.

Trouble is brewing – this is the malt,
This is the cause of the sex revolt –
The age is ripe for a summersault!

THE SCENT O' THE LOVER

HS 89; BLP 85; CP 79.

JSN - AGS 17 August 1919 (glad this was included in *HS*). AGS – JSN 23 August 1919, NLA MS 6946/21 ('Tell me what you mean by mushrooms 'hoping' in the cool June. I don't quite get the meaning').

The preferred text is *Heart of Spring*.

I saw the mushrooms hoping
In the cool June:
It is the scent o'the lover
Sweetens the tune.

May the good men mock me
That I dare to say
I have seen buds at kissing
On a holy day.

'Tis no unsalted music
The moons bestow;
'Tis the untaught eternal
So long, so low.

Time is the old man crying
Lives on a string;
In the eyes of a child fallen
We fear the Spring.

I am assailed by colours
By night, by day:
In a mad boat they would take me
Red miles away.

Love is the loud season:
Tears fall too soon:
It is the scent o'the lover
Sweetens the moon.

THE SCENTED BIRD

‘1915’A, 2b-3a (A0342) [JSN], draft.

Amid the moon the impatient mushrooms die;
 With the keen lambs the evening air is stirred.
 Some evening by the lake the children cry
 He has come back to us – we know the scented bird.

The blue crane is but slow of wing but he
 Rides in the air – the black duck and the swan
 Fly gracefully, swift upward from the sea;
 Gladly we greet them as they journey on.

But he, the scented bird, must slowly make
 His inland walk quietly by night or day,
 Till some bright morning on a big brown lake —
 Oh, the sweet bird! the laughing children say.

The magpie and the whistling jack can tell
 Strange bits of love, cool music ripe and rare.
 Our scented friend is silent – it is well
 He can so sweeten all the winter air.

Title] A note in *WS* (p. 27) from James Devaney to Judith Wright identifies this as the Musk Duck. The birds are rarely seen in flight and usually seen in small numbers on sheltered freshwater lakes and swamps throughout southern Australia.

10] [But day or dark his walk] His inland walk quietly by night or day *MS*

12 sweet bird] sweet [scent] «bird» *MS*

13 whistling jack] The grey butcher-bird.

THE SMOKER PARROT

Neilson refers to four separate poems by this title: ‘The smoker parrot’ [1], published in the *Clarion* 10 May 1909, p. 22; ‘The smoker parrot’ [2], published in *Shaw Neilson: A memorial* 1942, p. 18; ‘Smoker parrots’, a fair draft, ‘1927’C, and ‘Golden fugitive: To a departing smoker parrot’, published in *BI*. See ‘The smoker parrot’ [1].

THE SMOKER PARROT [2]

LaT MS 8910, Box 1232/5(C), fair draft [JSN] and typescript [RHC].

John Shaw Neilson: A memorial, Bread and Cheese Club Publication, Melbourne, 1942, p. 18.

JSN - MG 9 October 1919, ML MS A3267.

Correspondence is given after the note.

The fair draft is the preferred text.

He is alone – no bird so beautiful
 The Northern children know.
 Gently they say, he is not of the Earth,
 He only falls below.
 The settler’s sunburnt child
 In him knows all that summer ever smiled.

Full moon and buttercup lie on his wing.
 He is supremely dressed
 With the unpainted happenings of the East,
 The proud lights in the West.
 He has made blithely bold
 To claim for his magnificence of gold.

1 so beautiful] so | so beautiful *MS*, an obvious error

Neilson wrote to Mary Gilmore:

I am sending a rhyme for your very own as the children say. It is about the Smoker Parrot – a beautiful yellow bird rare in this part of the Mallee but more common towards the South Austr[alian] border.

He added in a postscript:

Managed the Smoker on very bad paper. I once wrote a few lines about the same bird of Heaven but I don’t think A.G. thought much – only six lines. Bedford may have it printed but this thing is distinct from them.

THE SOFTEST QUARRYMAN

‘1930’, 1a-3a (A0645-7) [EN], 24 stanzas numbered 5-10 & 18-36, with numbering and alterations [JSN]; 12a-12b (A0656-7) [FN], 7 stanzas under heading ‘Odd verses for quarryman, numbered 14-17 [JSN] (the first three numbered 1-3 [FN] and renumbered 14-16 [JSN]) with numbering continued 11-13 [JSN]. ‘1927’B, 8b (A0490) [JSN], 1 stanza headed ‘Odd verse for quarryman’. ML MS3354/3, Item 2, 5/9a [A], 2 stanzas numbered 16 and 17, revisions of stanzas numbered 16 & 17 at ‘1930’, 12a.

JSN - JD 31 December 1934, NLA MS 1145/1 (sending some ‘old letters’ [post-1924] and says ‘You will see by some of the letters how [AGS] guarded me against putting inferior stuff out. I think ‘The Quarryman’ which he speaks of might still be turned into something if I had the time’).

The stanzas in the ‘1930’ notebook stand as a complete poem and it is likely that the numbering and renumbering of stanzas was done as part of an attempted revision in response to criticism from Stephens. The two stanzas at ML MS 3354/3, Item 2, 5/9a also indicate an attempt at revision. ‘1930’, 1a-3a = A; ‘1930’, 12a-12b = B; ‘1927’B, 8b = C; ML MS 3354/3 – 2, 5/9a = D

Calm was the night, and on that night
The summer moon was full,
And every thought that came to him
Did seem as white as wool.

Into the widow’s house he walked,
The widow rose and smiled.
The tall man spoke right merrily
Unto the timorous child.

The saddler and his sweetheart sat
As neighbours come to make
Sweet thankfulness, and furthermore
To keep their love awake.

1-4] = A stanza 5
5-8] = A stanza 6
9-12] = A stanza 7

Continued overleaf...

The Softest Quarryman (cont.)

And in there came the widow's friend,
A woman warm and thin.
Bravery was in her eyes and mirth
Upon her steadfast chin.

Her face too much of summer spoke
And had forgotten spring.
Oh, she was but a wild woman
Who did not wear a ring.

She looked upon the quarryman,
She said, he is my own.
He is the softest quarryman
That ever spawled a stone.

* * *

Oh she did smell as wild honey,
Or as a flower that grows
Upon a mountain top and all
The light of heaven knows.

The lies were on her face, the lies
Sat safely on her chin.
He knew not where the lies could end
Nor where they could begin.

The truth came as a cold blossom
When half the spring has gone
(Her dress was white with gentle spots
Of lavender thereon).

13-16] = *A* stanza 8

17-20] = *A* stanza 9

21-24] = *A* stanza 10

24] The break following this line is in N's hand.

25-28 = *B* stanza 11

26 That grows] That[s] grows *B*

29-32] = *B* stanza 12

29 on her face] on «her» face [FN] *B*

33-36] = *B* stanza 13

Continued overleaf...

The Softest Quarryman (cont.)

The saddler, whose face was round,
Told some unseemly tale.
The saddler and the quarryman,
They drank the yellow ale.

They spoke of heat and thirstiness
And hunger and the cold,
Of men who died for love of life
And some who died for gold.

Of wild things on the wilderness,
Of love birds in the air,
Of little women wise and old
And all that men may dare.

* * *

They spoke of low black murderers
Who could not sleep or smile,
Of wine that came in strange colours
That did a man beguile.

* * *

The saddler's sweetheart rose to sing
To move the night along –
She had not ever learned to sing,
But sang a summer song.

Perchance it was the moon that said
This night she shall not sleep,
She shall dream on discovering
The playgrounds of the deep.

37-40] = *B* stanza [1] 14

41-44] = *B* stanza [2] 15

45-48] = *B* stanza [3] 16; ≠ *D* stanza 16

45 on the] in the *D*

47] Of wisdom close to weariness *D*

48] All that men may dare *D*

49-52] = *B* stanza 17; ≠ *D* stanza 17

52 That did] And did *D*

53-56] = *A* stanza 18

57-60] = *A* stanza 19

Continued overleaf...

The Softest Quarryman (cont.)

Perchance it was the moon that said
 She is in the old pain
 Of love that burns us into life
 And burns us out again.

How gladness came by turns and left
 White fear on everything –
 It was a summer song she sang,
 She had not learned to sing.

Full many are the arts that burn:
 Some move the heel and toe
 And some do speak on clarinets
 And some in violins low –

And some do give sweet offerings
 To love in wood and stone,
 And some with joy of loud colours
 For half their sins atone.

Some with the lips, some with the eyes,
 Dispute that time is long;
 But the saddler's sweetheart only loved;
 She had not learned her song.

The quarryman and the wild woman
 Walked slowly side by side
 Upon the garden path – the song
 It came and died and died.

61-64] = *A* stanza 20

65-68] = *A* stanza 21

66 on everything] [and] «on» everything [JSN] *A*

69-72] = *A* stanza 22

69 arts that burn] arts [to live] «that burn» [JSN] *A*

71] And some do [move] «speak» on clarionets [JSN alteration] *A*

73-76] = *A* stanza 23

76 For half] [Do for] «For half» [JSN] *A*

77-80] = *A* stanza 24

79 only loved] [had not learned] «only loved» [JSN] *A*

81-84] = *A* stanza 25

Continued overleaf...

The Softest Quarryman (cont.)

Why was it that the quarryman
 So much did dream of spring?
 The saddler's sweetheart sang and sang,
 She had not learned to sing.

The thin arm of the wild woman
 Upon his shoulder clung –
 Oh, she was as sharp as a gooseberry
 With acid on her tongue.

Her eyes did seem as two bright follies
 With wholesome joys therein.
 A smile did flit about her lips
 And on her steady chin.

Her dress was white with gentle spots
 Of lavender thereon,
 Her eyes churned up the quarryman –
 How soon his heart was gone.

She said, he shows no wavering.
 His heart is all my own.
 He is the softest quarryman
 That ever spawled a stone.

The quarryman, he could not speak.
 He moved into the spring.
 The saddler's sweetheart sang and sang –
 She had not learned to sing.

85-88] = *A* stanza 26

89-92] = *A* stanza 27

93-96] = *A* stanza 28

97-100] = *A* stanza 29

97 gentle spots] gentle flowers *A*. Line 35 has *spots*.

101-104] = *A* stanza 30

105-108] = *A* stanza 31

Continued overleaf...

The Softest Quarryman (cont.)

The quarryman he had not learned
 How God forsook the sky.
 How dull was he – he still would pray
 For little girls nearby.

* * *

The saddler and his sweetheart sat
 As lovers side by side.
 The quarryman and the wild woman
 Their pretty strife denied.

The saddler and the quarryman
 They neither spoke nor smiled.
 The women three gazed steadfastly
 Upon the sleeping child.

She seemed most like a white rosebud
 Come early in the spring;
 Her hair was silken as the thought
 That did about her cling.

All that they ever hoped did fall
 As in a holy glow.
 They looked as Mary surely looked
 On Jesus long ago.

109-112] = *A* stanza 32

113-116] = *A* stanza 33

117-120] = *A* stanza 34

117] [The quarryman and the wild woman] *A* preceding line 117

118 nor smiled] or smiled *A*

121-124] = *A* stanza 35

125-128] = *A* stanza 36

125] All that [the three had] <they ever> hoped did fall [JSN] *A*

126] [In holiness aglow] As in a holy glow [JSN] *A*

Discarded stanza at '1927'B, 8b:

The sweetheart was a gentle girl
 Who stood as in a dream
 The saddler had the resolute eyes
 That well contented seem

THE SONG FOR THE SPRING

‘1925’, 19a (A0408) [A], fair draft.

When I am old and the fears are upon me
I shall have no heart to journey
Nor blood to be bold:
I shall take up the hush of the heart,
The noise of the wing,
And honeycomb dripping to death:
'Twill make a fine Song for the Spring.

7 Song] [Song] *MS*, omitted in haste

THE SWEETENING OF THE YEAR

‘1915’A, 9a-9b (A0348-9), [JSN], draft, with 1 stanza cancelled and renumbering.
The Bookfellow 15 August 1921, p. 122; *NP* 10; *CP* 112.

The Bookfellow is the preferred text.

When old birds strangely-hearted strive to sing
 And young birds face the Great Adventuring –

When manna from the heaven-appointed trees
 Bids us to banquet on divinities –

When water-birds half-fearing each blue thing
 Trace the blue heavens for the roving Spring –

When school-girls listening hope, and listening, fear –
 They call that time the sweetening of the year.

When school-boys build great navies in the skies
 And a rebellion burns the butterflies –

Sunlight has strange conspiracies above
 And the whole Earth is leaning out to Love.

When joys long dead climb out upon a tear
 They call that time the sweetening of the year.

1-2] ≠ *MS* stanza 1

1 strive to sing] strive and sing *MS*

2 birds] bird[s] *MS*

3-4] ≠ *MS* stanza 3

4] Comes faintly «Fall[s] on us» with the floating [of the] bees *MS*

5-6] ≠ *MS* stanza 4

6] Trace [Ask] the blue Heavens of the [vagrant] «roving» Spring *MS*

7-8] ≠ *MS* stanza [7] 2

7] When [schoolgirls] white «listening girls» come out to goad and [shear] «fear» *MS*

8 sweetening . . . year] Sweetening . . . Year *MS*

9-10] ≠ *MS* stanza [6] 5

9] When lads build[s] «up» [grand] great navies in the skies *MS*

11-12] *MS* ∅

13-14] = *MS* stanza [5] 6

Cancelled stanza 2:

[When snow-white lambs persist and long complain
 And crying ewes are deep in mother pain]

THE UNEVEN PLAYER

‘1930’, 8a-9a (A0652-3) [A], fair draft, stanzas 1-5 at 8a, an unnumbered stanza at 8b and stanzas at 9 misnumbered 6-10.

Have I not clearly seen him
At the foot of a song?
Oh, the Uneven Player,
Playing so long.

He who from all tremors
Awoke the day,
Shall he not know full many
Proud tunes to play?

Church men full glibly
Tell all that they know,
Sit fast in high places
As the cocks crow.

Oh, the Uneven Player,
Him have I seen
Playing harsh tunes and mellow
With the unclean.

On stricken lovers
He will play so fair;
In the dark or the moonshine
He shakes the air.

He plays the loud Scarlet
In the Blue so dim;
Sunlight cannot tell us
The Heart of him.

6 Awoke] A / Woke *MS*

9 glibly] [glimmering] glibbering «glibly» *MS*

12] Cf. Luke 22:34: And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me. *AV*

14] [He] Whom have I seen *MS*

Continued overleaf...

The Uneven Player (cont.)

Where seas thunder,
Where lights are low,
His unfeared fingers
Will pity show.

Yet have I not seen him
Weak with his pain
On a girl's body
In a dark lane?

He who plays quietly
Still questioning
The light winged sailors
About the Spring?

The Churchman's crying
Still takes the ear
Of the Player playing,
How sweet and clear.

But have I not seen him
Burned with his song?
Oh, the Uneven Player
Playing so long.

33 plays quietly] plays [so] quietly *MS*

35 winged] wing«ed» [JSN] *MS*

38 the ear] my ear *MS*

43 Uneven] [un....] *MS*

THE UNLOVELY PLAYER

NLA MS 605/111, typescript [AGS], with corrections.
The Bookfellow 15 August 1920, p. 171; *CP* 95.

The typescript is the preferred text.

Over his petty mouth, his sorry chin,
 There runs a carnival – a summertime
 Of follies men call sin.

What thing is on his soul he will not say:
 Come on, come on, ye keen of wit and hear
 The unlovely fellow play.

Playing and loving much, he seems so hot
 He could show sweetness to a sunbeam and
 He would offend it not.

Have ye within your soul so faint a joy?
 He will put diamonds on it though he be
 A dull grey-headed boy.

His heart has done a warfare with old Time
 And he moons deep as ballad-maker who
 Tracks up a vagrant rhyme.

He has been long with Summer, and the gold
 Of memory props him up to be a man
 And quite defy the cold.

Sweethearts and fools who have the best of day
 Come on, come on, ye quick of wit and hear
 The unlovely fellow play.

13 has done] [has] hath done [AGS] *MS* • hath done *CP*

16 He has] He hath *CP*

THE VICTOR

‘1927’ A, 32b-33a (A0564) [A], fair draft.

Tightly she holds him – the sleeper;
Firmly and proud;
Holding a Victor for he has
Defeated the crowd.

Heavy men see him and know not
Why a thought stirred;
Was the light failing or was it
The Death of a bird?

Peace, is it peace, or the light on
The edge of a cloud?
Frail as a blossom and he has
Defeated the crowd.

The crowd is about her, she gives out
The light of a rose;
The Victor is on a deep journey
The mother love knows.

1 him,] him – *MS*

3 Victor] [victor] Victor *MS*

15 Victor] victor *MS*

THE VINE IS A FRIEND

‘1927’ A, 25a-25b (A0556-7) [A], fair draft. Stanza 1 was written down as a 6-line stanza and corrected to read as 4 lines.

He is so young, and my neighbour – he seeks to inspire
Me with his dreams – his blood is already on fire.
He has so much to govern and so much to spend,
And I say to the beat of my neighbour, the vine is a friend.

His eyes will uphold me – I tell of the vines in a row,
How they for our welfare as diligent vassals will go
Into the red-rock and gravel, their wealth to extend.
I say with the heart of my neighbour, the vine is a friend.

They are most ready for music and soft marriage bells,
All that is golden the vine as a prophet foretells.
The poor man, the stranger, he smiles at the day’s weary end.
I hasten, I drink as my neighbour, the vine is a friend.

3 He has] He he has *MS*, an error of haste?

THE VIXEN HAS SPOKEN

‘1925’, 4a-4b (A0392-3) [FN], fair draft.

The vixen has taken the lamb for its tongue:
She said, I am needing more milk for the young.

Full well I know famine and mother pain too;
My heart shall not pity the heart of the ewe.

* * *

The women are mournful, they meet and they pray.
The long war has taken their treasures away.

They walk in the morning, the dead lamb is there.
How cruel is the vixen their voices declare.

* * *

The vixen has heard them – she holds a reply;
Their mothers are fiercer and redder than I.

These mothers do chide me – a mother I am
And have not they eaten the heart of a lamb?

5 mournful] [mourning] mournful *MS*

10] There mothers [do hate me a mother] «are fiercer and» redder [am] «than» I *MS*

THE WEIGHT OF THE MIST

‘1930’, 22b (A0667) [JSN], fair draft, under what is assumed to be a short title.

Love, they have called it, Life, they have called it,
Give me your face to be kissed:
 ’Tis at our heels,
 Our foreheads have feared it –
 The Weight of the Mist.

God, they have called it, Death, they have called it,
Though we long seasons persist:
 Search it for sweetness
 It will not deceive –
 The Weight of the Mist.

Title] [The] Weight of the Mist *MS*

1-2] Love they have called | it Life they have | called it *MS*

5 foreheads] forehead[s] *MS*

7-8] God they have called | it Death they have | called it *MS*

THE WOMAN OF IRELAND

ML MS 4937/4, 903-909, 20 May 1923 [JSN], fair copy. ML MS 3354/3, Item 4, 9/17, typescript, incomplete (for *CP*?).

The Bookfellow 15 June 1923, p. 81; *BLP* 104; *CP* 106.

JSN - AGS 20 May 1923 (encloses poem which he has 'had nearly 12 months'); 6 July 1923 ('glad that you like Woman of Ireland better on looking into it'). JSN - RHC 26 March 1934 (questions absence of this and 3 other poems in the galleys of *CP*).

Correspondence is given after the notes.

MS 4937/4, 903-909 = A; MS 3354/3-4, 9/17 = B

The fair copy (A) is the preferred text.

It was a woman of Ireland in old days I knew
Being far down was embittered – her little voice grew
Loaded with all the sweet honey and having love too.

So would she sit in the long days and mad to the core
Shrill would she say to her Michael to make his heart sore,
How slow would she say to her Michael, 'now love me no more.'

Her man would be telling and telling the thing he had told
How she would be always a sweetheart – but never consoled
Was she with the little feet falling down into the cold.

Sometimes she would say that the angels did stay at the door
And sometimes she spoke to the fairies seen long before;
Then slow would she say to her Michael, 'now love me no more.'

How strange it did seem that a woman too weary to sigh,
That a woman should take all her honey to sweeten a lie,
That a woman should call to her lover to let his love die.

3 too.] too. A

6 'now love me no more.'] "now love me «no» more." [insertion «no» AGS] A

7 thing] things B, *BLP*, *CP*

9 she with the little feet] she [was] with the little «feet» A

10 at the door] at «the» door A

12 'now love me no more.'] "now love me no more" A

13 woman too weary] woman [tho weary] too [die] weary A

15 die.] die. A

Continued overleaf...

The Woman of Ireland (cont.)

She would be thinking too long o'the flowers and the dew
 And of all striving and loving the young lovers do;
 'Ah, sure,' she would say, 'it's a famine up there in the blue.'

How often at even came little blue boats in the sky
 And she would be knowing their meaning – would make not a sigh
 But taking up all her sweet honey would call a good bye.

* * *

Long would she sit in the summer and mad to the core
 Slow would she say to her Michael to make his heart sore,
 How slow would she say to her Michael, 'now love me no more.'

16 long o'the] long of the *Boo, BLP, CP*

17 all striving] all [the] striving *A*

18 it's] 'tis *Boo, BLP, CP*

18] ('Ah sure') she would say 'it's a famine up there in the blue' *A* (the brackets were probably intended as a correction to the single inverted commas)

19 came little blue boats] come little blue boats *Boo* • come little blue clouds *BLP, CP*

20 she would be] she would [would] be *A*

21 honey would call a good bye] honey [and] would [saying] «[say]» «call a» goodbye *A*

24 'now love me no more.'] "now love me no more" *A*

JSN - AGS 20 May 1923:

I enclose some verse. I have had it on hand nearly 12 months. I don't seem to get it to my satisfaction.

Anyhow you will spot the weak points quicker than I do. Don't be in a hurry to print it unless you think it pretty near the mark. I could easily alter it but this form of verse seems tricky. It is easy to write but gets down to doggerel so easily.

I knew an old Irish lady a few years back. She had a beautiful voice. (You know the beautiful honeyed speech some Irish women use). She was badly crippled with some rheumatic trouble. Of course you understand the blue boats in the sky! The Public may not tumble. Sometimes near sundown one can notice boat-shaped clouds. Some are like coffins. The idea is all right – perhaps I ought to make more of it. Perhaps the one stanza doesn't explain enough. On the other hand it seems dangerous to make things too plain. ...

JSN – AGS 6 July 1923:

... Glad that you like Woman of Ireland better on looking into it. I had great misgivings about it. I wrote it 12 months ago much as I sent it you. It seemed too thin and too slovenly and it was hard to alter ...

THE WOMAN OF THE FOREST

‘1927’C, 8b-10b (A0443-5) [JSN], fair draft

She has not peace – she hungers still for the clean air:
She did not grow in the City but was wickedly taken there.

She has not peace in the City – Oh she is strangely stirred
With the green leaves and the manna and the low voice of a bird.

The tied-up folk in the city they say she has never smiled,
But she will talk to a little bird as a mother to a child.

Ever in noise of Folly she wanders ill at ease:
Only in dream she travels for a playtime with the trees.

Oh, the trees are a proud people and they have proud ways
And the leaves have a strange courage in the moistening of the days.

* * * *

The tied-up people see her – they laugh at her shoes and gown
For she is a Forest woman who was carried into the town.

9] Oh [they] the trees are a proud people and they have a proud [hymn] «[song]» «ways» *MS*

11 The tied-up] [She] The tied up *MS*

THE WORLD AS A RHYME

‘1925’, 22a-22b (A0412-3) [JSN], fair draft, stanza 1 written as two lines.

Call Him old Destiny
Blue Death or Time –
I know not the Rhymer,
I know but a part of his rhyme.

He will moan fiercely,
He will shout pain,
In a girl’s body
In a dark lane.

He will have Beauty budding
In all the grime –
Oh the good red fever
He puts in his rhyme.

Line endings stanza 1 (reading text lines 1-4): 1 Time || 2 rhyme ||

THOSE SHADED EYES

‘1930’, 3b (A0648) [JSN & FN], draft, 5 stanzas, with renumbering, entitled ‘Shaded eyes’; 4a-4b (A0648-9) & 8b (A0653) [EN, JSN & FN], 9 stanzas, numbered 1, 2, 7, 6 & 5 and cancelled stanzas, unnumbered, entitled ‘Shaded eyes’; 9b-10a (A0654) [FN & JSN], 4 stanzas, unnumbered, with heading ‘Odd verses’ under title. ML MS 4937/7-4, typescript [AGS], 9 stanzas with 2 additional stanzas (1 typed & 1 holograph [AGS]), with comments [AGS & JSN]. ML MS 4937/7-4, typescript [AGS], 3 stanzas, with comment [JSN].

The Bookfellow 31 January 1925, p. 80; *NP* 16; *CP* 120 (all 8 stanzas).

The poem was written first as a 5-stanza piece (‘1930’, 3b, numbered 1-5) and then extended, and the original stanzas then renumbered. A second version was attempted (‘1930’, 4a-4b) and abandoned. Stephens’s typescript was sent to N with comments, and N returned it with his comments and with an additional stanza enclosed. Stephens then added two additional stanzas to this typescript and numbered the stanzas, re-ordering them. (N wrote on the MS ‘fresh stanza enclosed’: however, both the stanzas sound like his work so he must have added another, or sent another one soon afterwards.) The *Bookfellow* text omits the 4th & 5th stanzas of the 9-stanza typescript and prints one of the two additional stanzas in their place, and the *New Poems* text drops this additional stanza and prints the 4th & 5th stanzas of the typescript. Stephens returned the typescript with the comment (cancelled), ‘Good. Perhaps stanzas 5 & 6 will improve’. He encircled ‘give’ and underlined ‘grew’ in the 5th stanza and commented ‘Word not quite right for flowing sound. Bit heavy and I do not like the G’. He asked ‘do you mean | lights grew into flowers = became? or propagated = <saved>?’ beside stanza 6. N responded by marking the 5th stanza with a cross and the number 5 and wrote beside it ‘fresh stanza enclosed’. Stephens also underlined the second line of the 6th stanza and encircled ‘To me’, and N wrote beside this ‘I suggest Mystery instead of To me’. A second typescript (3 stanzas) has a suggested alteration [JSN] which has been cancelled.

‘1930’, 3b = A; ‘1930’, 4a-4b & 8b = B; ‘1930’, 9b-10a = C; MS 4937/7-4 (9stanzas) = D; MS 4937/7-4 (3 stanzas) = E

The 9-stanza typescript (D) is taken as the preferred text.

Eyes of a damsel
In the ungoverned Spring
Would send me the long roads
Adventuring.

1-4] *A, B, C* ∅; = *Boo, NP, CP* 1-4

3 Would send] [Would send] «would send» [AGS] *D*

Continued overleaf...

Those Shaded Eyes (cont.)

Reason the unwelcome
As a coward cries
Look not too long under
Those shaded eyes.

Eyes so shaded
Do me inspire,
As the falling water,
The blue ways of fire.

Full eyes burn over
The fallen mind,
Bid the dumb utter
Thoughts to the blind.

Such eyes give dreaming
Of lights that grew,
Flowers in the darkness
Ere the wind blew.

5-8] *A, C* ∅; ≠ *B* stanza 2; = *Boo, NP, CP* 5-8

5] My heart says to my heart *B*

6] Thou overwise *B*

7] Look not too long now under *B*

9-12] = *A* stanza [1] 3; ≠ *B* the second cancelled stanza; *C* ∅; = *Boo, NP, CP* 9-12;

11] As light on lone water – *B*

12 The blue] [And] «The» blue *A*

12] Sullen ways of fire *B*

13-16] ≠ *A* stanza 5 [3] 4; *B, C* ∅; *Boo* omitted; = *NP, CP* 9-12;

13] Eyes so shaded *A*

14] Salute the mind *A*

16 to] for *A*

17-20] *A, B* ∅; ≠ *C* unnumbered stanza (the second of four), rewritten at 10a; *Boo* omitted; ≠ *NP, CP* 17-20

17] I feel the darkness *C* (both stanzas)

18] Of flowers that grew *C* (both stanzas)

19] I [move in] «go to» shadows *C* (first of the 2 stanzas)

• All flowers in shadow *C* (second of the 2 stanzas)

19 in] on *NP, CP*

Continued overleaf...

Those Shaded Eyes (cont.)

Eyes so shaded
To me display
Doves in the white of Heaven,
Death in his day.

Eyes so shaded
To me declare
Heights and the birds loving,
Hollows of prayer.

Reason the unwelcome
As a coward cries
Look not too long under
Those shaded eyes.

But my heart is singing,
Oh, the green gown!
The woe – the sweet weather –
The tears on a town.

21-24] *A* ∅; ≠ *B* stanza 7; *C* ∅; = *Boo* 13-16; = *NP*, *CP* 21-24

22 To me] Marked with a cross in *D* with comment [JSN] ‘I suggest Mystery instead of To me’

23 in . . . Heaven,] and . . . Heaven – *B*

24] Serene delay. *B*

25-28] ≠ *A* stanza [7] [5] [8] 9; ≠ *B* unnumbered stanza (the fourth of four), cancelled; *C* ∅; = *E* first stanza; = *Boo* 17-20; = *NP*, *CP* 25-28

27 Heights] Height *A*

27] Leaves and the cool of Heaven *B*

29-32] *A*, *C* ∅; ≠ *B* stanza 2; = *E* second stanza; = *Boo* 25-28; = *NP*, *CP* 29-32

29] My heart says to my heart *B*

30] Thou otherwise *B*

31 long under] long now under *B*

33-36] *A* ∅; ≠ *B* stanza 6; ≠ *C* third unnumbered stanza under heading ‘Odd verses’; = *E* third stanza; ≠ *Boo* 29-32; = *NP*, *CP* 33-36

33 is singing] cries dimly *Boo* • *D* has ‘cries dimly’ [JSN] in the margin • *E* has ‘Perhaps ‘Cries dimly’ would be better than ‘is singing’ [JSN], in margin

33] My heart cries loudly *B* •

But my heart speaks under *C*

35] The woe the high weather *B*

36 on] of *C*

Continued overleaf...

Those Shaded Eyes (cont.)

Discarded stanzas

A stanza [4] [2] 5:

Eyes so shaded
 Softly look down
 As great stars [strengthen] soften [JSN]
 [A fallen town]
 Tears in a town [JSN]

A stanza 6 [4]:

Eyes so shaded
 Call up the blue
 And the f[e]ar some darkness
 Ere the wind blew

B stanza 1:

Joy I perceive as sorrow
 Painted to sing
 Counting himself too tardy
 At Withering

B unnumbered stanza (the first of 4), cancelled:

[Did they forsake all Heaven
 Mournful as dew
 They who were old in wisdom
 Ere the wind blew]

B unnumbered stanza (the third of 4), cancelled:

[Tears come to my house
 They will not flow
 For the eyes so shaded
 Speaks pity to them so]

B stanza 5 and stanza added to *D* (typed in margin):

Eyes of a damsel
 Proudly compel
 Thoughts that the lightning
 of Diamonds tell

C first of four unnumbered stanzas under heading 'Odd verses':

I fear me [this] 'tis moon's folly
 That finds me here
 But of the dark and holy
 It comes not near

D stanza headed 'Additional stanza' [AGS], repeated in *Boo* (lines 21-24):

Eyes so shaded
 As bells that chime
 Hold the heart gently
 At even-time

'TIS THE WHITE PLUM TREE

ML MS 4937/4, 9 November 1923, 957-963 [JSN], fair copy.
BLP 83; *CP* 94.

JSN - AGS 9 November 1923 (encloses poem, and comments); JSN – AGS 9 December 1923 ('few papers in Melb[ourne] would put in a bit of verse like Plum Tree'). JSN - JD 4 November 1934 [continuation of 28 October 1934], NLA MS 1145/68 (this and 'The schoolgirls hastening' were both written rather hurriedly').

Correspondence is given after the notes.

The fair copy is the preferred text.

It is the white plum tree
 Seven days fair
 As a bride goes combing
 Her joy of hair.

As a peacock dowered
 With golden eyes
 Ten paces over
 The orange lies.

'Tis the white plum tree
 Her passion tells,
 As a young maid rustling
 She so excels.

The birds run outward,
 The birds are low,
 Whispering in manna
 The sweethearts go.

It is the white plum tree
 Seven days fair
 As a bride goes combing
 Her joy of hair.

3 a bride goes] a «bride» goes *MS*

9 'Tis] It is *BLP, CP*

12 excels] excel[s] *MS*

JSN - AGS 9 November 1923:

. . . You know the feeling of joy that the white plum in full bloom gives. Everyone must feel it. [It takes seven days for the tree to come into full bloom and an old greengage, with branches spreading low and covered in blossom, looks surprisingly bridal. Editor] There is so much that I ought to say. I've said nothing. Later on I shall try something larger about trees. I'm not satisfied [–] I feel sure I've got something better . . .

It's correct about oranges looking like peacock's eyes – yellow against the dark green of the tree.

TO A CONCERTINA GRUB

The Bookfellow 15 February 1920, p. 10, signed Horace O'Hazy.

Tender thy Tint is as a rich Maizena,
Calm and most unpretentious are thy Ways,
And thou art ribbed up as a Concertina
Some boisterous Bushman plays!

Noisy the World is as a Drunk arrested;
Good old Publicity goes in to bat;
Is thy main Thought to curl up unmolested?
I too have felt like that.

Loud the Land Agent shrieking half compels us,
Drapers implore us to be rightly dressed,
And the audacious Undertaker tells us
His Price, to be – At Rest.

Sky-Pilots cool, predict for us hot weather
Some time, some place, in many a mournful tune;
Patriots, Reformers, all bark up together
Their Mud-Fights to the Moon.

Oft have I thought, when I have found thee snuggling
Safe in thy woody Home securely curled,
Smooth-faced Hypocrisy, eternal juggling
Comes not to thy calm World.

Thou dost not gad about to find brief Pleasure
In these Distractions that are merely Foam;
A Gentleman thou art, taking thy Leisure
Well wrapped up in thy Home.

Alas, some day, some heedless Sleeper-Cutter
Will root thee from thy Nest with rude Remark,
And a keen Bird will swoop — without a Splutter
Thou shalt invade the Dark.

1 Maizena] A cornflour (or cornstarch), used in cookery; very white in colour.

TO A LITTLE GIRL IN THE PLAY

ML MS 4937/7, Item 4 [JSN], fair copy, incomplete (stanzas 1-3 missing).
Stage and Society 19 January 1926, p. 21.

The fair copy is taken as a base text and stanzas 1-3 are taken from *Stage and Society*.

No dance was in you, there was no song you would sing,
 But it was you pulling Winter back into the Spring.

Mean were your fellows there – low, low and how mean,
 Often their noisy quips falling down into obscene.

But all the lilies were with you – the light and the dew,
 All birds of Heaven came saying much love to you.

* * *

Wisely the Bishops go, heavily, drowsing away,
 But you of the clean heart, you took us down into the Play.

Many dull-hearted men, frozen down under a year
 Heard as the little white people in wonderment hear.

Did I see colour – Oh, the too timorous sound!
 Did I not see little flowers coming out of the ground?

* * *

The cool men are Bishops – I fear them – as cool men they pray,
 But you with the heart took us headlong down into the Play.

11 colour – Oh, the too] colour – Oh the too *MS* • colour? Oh, the low *S&S*

12 Did I not] Did I [did] not *MS*

TO A LODGING HOUSE CANARY

NLA MS 599/0469, typescript [AGS] (sent to *The Spinner*). ML MS A3038/2, 39a & 40a, typescript [JD?]

The Spinner Vol. 3, No. 4, April 1927; CP 147.

JSN - AGS 2 August 1931 (suggests this as a substitute for one of the poems he wants to drop from a proposed collection).

The typescript NLA 599/0469 is the preferred text.

In you are all the good jigs of the Irishman out for a day;
Little one, close to the Maker you whistle away.

Prisoned, and born in a prison, and yet in your song
Out to the top o'the twilight you take us along.

The goodman has need of sweet noises – he calls to his dame
And she being barren, she knows but the edge of the flame.

You dance into heaven O, rude one, and higher and higher
You mock at the craven who eats not his fill o'the fire.

Free men we are not, we cannot come out of the fear;
Call the dead, let the dead march in your merriment here.

Soldier you are and good neighbour – you come not to cry
Of any dull ache in the body or doubt in the sky.

In you are all the good jigs of old Irishmen out for a day;
Little one, close to the Maker you whistle away.

TO A RUDE PHILISTINE

‘1927’C, 19b (A0454) [A], fair draft.

You, you were rude to me, but ’twas the wealth in your blood like a wine
Calling up, fearing not – so do I call you a sweet philistine.

All that we sing is too weak for you – oh, the dull rhymers are we;
’Tis a rich world you inherit – you like not our cool poverty.

You have the red men, the builders that bring up the wool and the corn,
You laugh when we tell you of mist on the skyline where sorrows are born.

Oh, you have the blood and you love the loud trumpet, the clamorous bell,
In the beat of the drum and the shake of the banner your heart would excel.

Title] [Phillistine] Phillistine *MS*

1 You, you were] You [were] you were *MS*

8 drum] d[ream]«rum» *MS*

TO A RUNAWAY SOUND

‘1925’, 10a-11b (A0398-0400) [JSN], fair draft.

Nay but I love you not – who set you free?
From what mad prison came you to hasten the cool heart of me?

Go away out then where lovers would sweeten the ground;
No law will heed you, for you are a runaway sound.

You would have angels to listen where thought cannot climb;
Fall away over white dresses in holiday time!

Did you lie deep in a forest or down in a dark sea?
For all your light step you call up slow things to me.

Go away – eat of the colours – rattle the ground!
But stoop not my dull heart to hasten, you runaway sound.

Title] To a runaway [song] sound *MS*

1] Nay but I | love you not || Who set you | free *MS*

3 away out then] away «out» then *MS*

5 listen where] listen «where» *MS*

6] Fall away over | white dresses || In holiday time *MS*

7 in a dark] [in] a dark *MS*

8 call up] call [me] up *MS*

TO A SCHOOLGIRL IN HER FOURTEENTH YEAR

NLA MS 605/105, typescript [?].

The Bookfellow 15 July 1921, p. 111; *BLP* 76; *CP* 93 (*BLP* & *CP* with the title as ‘To a schoolgirl’).

JSN - AGS 30 November 1919 (‘I got a copy of ‘To a schoolgirl’ from my brother Frank but I think you were right at the time when you said it needed extending. I may be able to put a stanza or so to it’). JSN - RHC 25 February 1934, NLA MS 605/62-69 (corrections to proofs *CP*: ‘2nd line of 1st stanza. An A is left out. It makes the line short’).

The Bookfellow is the preferred text.

O, most unconscious daisy,
 Thou daybreak of a joy,
 Whose eyes invade the impassioned man
 In every wayside boy –

Can I, walled in by Autumn,
 With buoyant things agree,
 Speak all my heart to a daisy
 If one should smile at me?

Out of the Summer fallen,
 Can I of Summer sing?
 Call that I love on the deep yellow
 Between me and the Spring?

3 impassioned] impassionedated *typescript*

5 by Autumn] my Autumn *typescript*

TO A WINTER SNAKE

The Bookfellow 15 May 1921, p. 70, with signature Horace O’Hazy; *Stage and Society* 21 August 1924, p. 22-23, with signature Neil Shawson.

JSN - AGS 7 June 1931 (thinks it would be unwise to publish his ‘Comic Verse’ during his lifetime: only a few pieces like ‘The winter snake’ have merit). JSN - JD 20 December 1941, NLA MS 1145/68 (left this and other pieces of light verse in Brisbane).

The Bookfellow is the preferred text.

How cold – stiff as the Handle of a Pump is
Art thou – near Death – ‘condition very low’.
Canst thou be that same Chap that made a Rumpus
 In Eden long ago?

Billions of Lies long Centuries have collected
Against thee, in that Scandal of the Fall;
But there had been, hadst thou thy work neglected
 No Drapers Shops at all.

The brimmed-up Bagman and the emphatic Hawker,
The Gents who sell transparent Hosiery,
That Candid Exquisite, the faint Shopwalker,
 Should all give thanks to thee.

All Milliners who speak in Flower and Feather,
All Countermen who pawn their Souls to please
Delirious Girls with Silk for Summer Weather,
 Should greet Thee on their knees.

2] Art thou and near to Death exceeding low *S&S*

3-4] Cf. Genesis 3: 13-14: And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed . . . upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. *AV*

9 Bagman] An itinerant, carrying his possessions with him.

11 Candid] candied *S&S*

Continued overleaf...

To a Winter Snake (cont.)

If in that sweetest Garden under Heaven
 Thou hadst not played thine unassuming Role,
 How could the keen Suburban Five-and-Eleven
 Fend the glad Camisole?

Laces and Fabrics I know not the name of
 Woman employs against the Heart of Man;
 Lovers are like the children – Love, a Game of
 Come catch Me if you can!

Joy without Blokes? why not cut out September
 (Also October) to improve the Spring!
 Love will be dressed – and Love, let us remember,
 Is a fastidious thing.

Ah, could I cheat like thee Dull Days and rotten!
 Could I shut up like some Insolvent Firm!
 My Creditors forget – and be forgotten
 By every fellow Worm!

Oft have I seen Thee thro' the Summer streaking;
 Gladly I would have spoken long ago;
 But Thou wert restless – and my style of speaking
 Was ever somewhat slow.

Kinsman of mine thou art – loaded with Cunning –
 Quite as some other Kinsmen in my mind;
 Over-suspicious always – ever shunning
 Our puffed-up human kind.

Some time back, Friend, when we fine folk were jelly
 We could not even creep, or slide, or fall;
 We had been proud, like thee to have a Belly –
 How dignified, to crawl!

20 Fend] Find *S&S*

23 Love] Love's *S&S*

37 loaded with] chock full of *S&S*

38 Quite] Cute *S&S*

39 always – ever] and for ever *S&S*

42 We could] That could *S&S*

Continued overleaf...

To a Winter Snake (cont.)

All honesty of thought today compels us
 To the Back Look, through the long Path we steered.
 We had no Backbone, and as Haeckel tells us,
 We – well, we Commandeered.

Teachers at every School, at every College,
 Humbly should mention how we found our Frame:
 Statesmen who brag of Backbone should acknowledge
 First how that Backbone came.

Neglect of Thee annoys me, and I fish up
 From out my soul sharp thunders many a time.
 But Thou and I and Bottle-Oh and Bishop
 Have had an awkward climb.

I must be going Friend. Perchance I bore Thee –
 Thou hast been sorely slandered. Thou hast played
 Right well thy part. That Drapers still ignore thee
 Shows Dullness in the Trade.

47 Haeckel] Haeckel, Ernst (1834-1919), was a German biologist and supporter of 'Darwinism'.

51 who brag of Backbone] proud of their Backbone *S&S*

52 First] Just *S&S*

54 sharp] Loud *S&S*

55 But Thou . . . Bottle-Oh] For Thou . . . Bottle-Oh *S&S*. A 'bootle-oh' was an itinerant dealer in empty bottles.

TO AN ELUSIVE MAIDEN

‘1927’ A, 19a-21a (A0550-2) [JSN], fair draft, 1 stanza cancelled and rewritten.

Never so faint a maiden
 You will not stay,
 By the wind of the sunlight
 You are blown away.

As a wind the sunlight
 Will not delay,
 And so faint a maiden
 Is blown away.

Flowers know the sweetness
 Upon you – the sun
 Makes the world’s honey
 For you little one.

May I while dreaming
 Wash with the dew
 My words when whispering
 To such as you –

Lest there be in them
 Thoughts that despoil
 Little loves dancing
 On the Holy Soil.

One day in seven,
 My heart being slow,
 In the white dress with roses
 I see you go.

If birds came near you
 They would shake the air
 Crying aloud for gold hidden
 Deep in your hair.

Your foot touches lightly
 The red ground,
 Your lips have strange sweetness
 Dying in Sound.

11] Make[s] the world[’s] honey *MS*

15] My [world] words when whispering *MS*

22] «My heart being slow» *MS*

23-24] These lines transposed in *MS*, an error of haste

29 Your] You[r] *MS*

31] You[r] lips have [all the] «strange» sweetness *MS*

TO ANYONE'S LIVER

'1915'A, 6b-7a (A0346) & 8b (A0348) [JSN], draft, with a revised stanza 2.

Oh thou deep tyrant under all mankind,
 Bilious, unseen, behind the eternal Croaker,
 With the Wet Blankets thou wouldst seek to bind
 Each joyous joker.

In every creed thou art behind the priest
 Building thy heaven up, tedious and gloomy;
 I much prefer thy hells – they seem at least
 Vigorous and roomy!

What though my Brain should ache, my Heart should throb,
 My Lungs take fright, my cautious Kidneys shiver?
 Each one is friendly – performs his little job
 But thee, Oh Liver.

All may be well financially, good friends,
 Good fame and cheer – and though we should petition
 The gods to let us laugh, that thing depends
 On thy permission.

Often I deem that underneath all War
 Thou hast been prompting Kings, and tracing treasons –
 So the blood lettings come – all we abhor
 In saner seasons.

Art thou alas that spirit that doth miss
 No evil chance to gleefully discover
 Sin everywhere, when some sweet girl may kiss
 Her honest lover?

- 1 deep tyrant] deep «tyrant» *MS*
 5-8] = revised stanza 2 (8b)
 10 fright, my] fright [and] my *MS*
 11] Each «[will]» «one is friendly» performs in fact at his little job *MS*
 14 Good fame and cheer] Good fame «and cheer» *MS*
 15 laugh, that thing] laugh. That things depends *MS*
 18 prompting Kings,] prompting Kings, *MS*
 21] Art / «Thou» [Thou art] alas that spirits that doth [his] miss *MS*

Discarded stanza 2:

What is thine Heaven an [unwholesome Yeast] «but a dull man's feast»
 «Where the Tasteless and feeble struggle to be» [Bloodless and] gloomy
 Better thy Hell is it would seem at least
 Vigorous and roomy

TO THE FATHER OF MANY

‘1930’, 23a-24b (A0667-9), 25b (A0670) & ML MS A308/l, 12b (B0110) [JSN], draft.

There are 10 stanzas numbered 1-10 at ‘1930’, 23a-24 b, 1 stanza unnumbered at ‘1930’, 25 b, and 2 stanzas numbered 11 & 12 at MS A3038/l, 12b. The reading is conjectural in places.

Even the cold fishes in love-madness wonders perform:
It is with pain they creep on the beds of blue rivers
Oh Father of many, out in the Red Storm.

It is with pain little birds in a tall tree
Falter in love. Cut out their hearts and throw them,
Children of thine, flinching most violently.

Seven supreme sons thou hast with passion dyed;
As sailors I see them, with all the loves of the Sailor
Knowing not where they shall for a season abide.

Little maids rising from white pillows do every where
Cry for the sailor’s kiss that it may soften
The gown for the bosom, the sweet braid for the hair.

I too am child of child of thine, fearing, undone,
Still with some grain of the burden, storm-bidden,
Father of many whom we have loved as the Sun.

Mad men in search of music leap from the ground:
Is it thy fire that they feel, Oh Father of many?
Is it thy moaning, all over the sweet sound?

2 creep on] creep [in] on *MS*

5 love] love[r] *MS*

6 love. Cut] love | Cut *MS*

7] The reference is obscure but may relate to Revelations 8: 2 and following: And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. *AV*

10 maids] maid[s] *MS*

11] Cry for the sailors | Kiss[es] that <[its]> smiles may soften *MS*

15] Father of many | who[m] we have [feared] «loved» | as / [«called»] the Sun *MS*

17 they feel] the[y] feel *MS*

18 all over] [down under] «all over» *MS*

Continued overleaf...

To the Father of Many (cont.)

Darkness doth not dismay. How old thou art!
The moonlight is but some mournful speech of thy early folly,
Smiles do but cover the sickness close to thy heart.

By moon rays the little tame tigers chorus and cry:
There is some hideous love challenge amid them,
They are even as fishes and as a dull fish am I.

Everywhere in cities little white mothers swarm;
Love drags them down. Thy rage is a mantle upon them
Oh Father of many out there in the Red Storm.

Painters strive long at prayer, strive to behold
Something more than beauty in the manifest body of woman;
It is her joy – thou hast lifted her out of the cold.

The dancing of maidens 'tis more than a man's heart can say:
Is that delight but a part of thy sermon of sorrow?
Dost thou too feel the ominous hands of Decay?

Oft have I marvelled at thy Chorister Spring
And I had ale from thy desperate handmaiden Summer:
In them I saw the Unreason that crowns thee a King.

Is there escape? Thy rage is uniform –
And there is Death. I see but a black Summer
Oh Father of many, out in the Red Storm.

19 dismay. How] dismay | How *MS*

20] The moonlight is | but some mournful | [lov] speech of [thine] thy early | [loving]
folly *MS*

22 By moon] [At m] By moon *MS*

23 hideous] hiedous *MS*, an error of haste

26 down. Thy] down | Thy *MS*

27 out there in] out «there» in *MS*

30 hast] has[t] *MS*

35 I had ale from thy] I [hate] had ale from the *MS*

36] [In them I saw all] thy [fire] fury still wakening |

In them I saw the Unreason that [made] «crowns» thee a King *MS*

TO THE HUNTER SAFFRON

‘1927’C, 35b-36a (A0470) [A], fair draft.

Smoothly, oh Saffron, you leap as a warrior can,
But you bear something more precious than penniless man.
Smoothly, oh Saffron, you will not, you dare not offend –
’Tis by the courage of women the race can ascend.

Bravely, oh Saffron, you leap as a child of the sun,
You float as the far parrots float when the day is near done.
Bravely, oh Saffron, the fences are ever too low –
Keen, you are keen, as a violinist chained to his bow.

Title] The name may refer to a bird, in which case the usage is local or personal. Birds Australia (formerly the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union) advise that no reference can be found.
5 child of the sun] child [at] «of» the sun *MS*

TO THE LITTLE RED MESSENGER BOY

‘1930’, 16a & 17a (A0660-1) [JSN], draft.

Red of the sundown I love
 And the burning sunrise:
 The south lights of red have my heart,
 Their speech never dies.
 You with your red coat, I loved you,
 You walked as a joy –
 But one day ’twas Death that you gave me
 You little red Messenger Boy.

Little girls talk to you slowly,
 The sun lives to burn:
 The Love time and Death time of grasses
 Have taken their turn.
 Death teaches you merriment,
 All you employ –
 I like not your smile or your coming
 You little red Messenger Boy.

2 the burning sunrise] the [...] «burning» sunrise *MS*

10 lives] [comes] «lives» *MS*

11 Love] love *MS*

13] Death teaches «glad step» you merriment «[slyly]» «[rudely]» *MS*

14] [You love his] «All you» employ *MS*

16 You] You / [Oh] *MS*

TO THE LOVED ONE IN HER ABSENCE

NLA MS 1145/38 [JSN], fair copy.

AGS - JSN 17 November 1919, NLA MS 1145/74B (‘To the loved one in her absence’ will have to wait. It needs three or four more stanzas to finish; perhaps the mood will come some day’).

The poem is a still later version of ‘To Cicely’, revised and published in the *Bookfellow* in 1924 as ‘Love in absence’.

The tim'rous scent of babyhood
Doth dimly follow thee
And thou art like a new-born song
In a sheltering melody.

When thou art gone and Light is gone
I fiercely wish thee near;
The day like a long sickness is
And I count the moon a year.

Though thou art gone but a little way
I am in deep alarm;
I say, Oh God, her dear body
If it should come to harm!

1 tim'rous] tim'rous *MS*

5 When thou] And thou *MS*, an error of haste

TO THE RED LORY

‘1930’, 8b (A0654) [FN], 1 stanza under heading ‘Odd stanza for Lory’. ML MS A3038/2, 9a [FN], 1 line and a note, ‘About 1910’ . . . ‘One of John’s best lyrics’. NLA MS 1145/74(B), typescript [AGS], with comment. ML MS 3354/3, Item 3, 2/3a, typescript (a carbon copy of NLA MS 1145/74(B)).

AGS - JSN 31 March 1924 (returns poem typed, with comment about the naturalist Linnaeus and the Lory).

The preferred text is NLA MS 1145/74(B).

At the full face of the forest lies our little town:
Do thou from thy look-out to Heaven, O Lory, come down.

Come charge with thy challenge of colour our thoughts cool and thin;
Descend with the blood of the sunlight – O Lory, come in.

The clouds are away – 'tis October, the glees have begun:
Thy breast has the valour of music O passionate one.

O thou of intrepid apparel, the song in thy gown;
Translate the proud speech of the sunlight – O Lory, come down.

Title] The red lory, or red-winged parrot, is *Aprosmictus erythropterus*.

7 the song] [the] thy song [AGS] *MS*

8 the proud] [the] thy proud [AGS] *MS*

Stanza headed ‘Odd stanza’ at ‘1930’, 8b reads:

The rhythm is thine the beloved
The Unreason of Spring
How royal thy raiment no sorrow
Is under thy wing

TO THE THICK DARKNESS

‘1915’A, 7b-8a (A0347), 9b (0349) & 10a (A0349) [JSN], draft, 9 stanzas with stanzas 1-3 at 7b-8a, cancelled stanzas 4 and 5, stanza renumbered [6] [7] 5 and stanza 6 at 10a and stanzas numbered ‘Odd verse 7’ and 4 at 9b.

All colours that delight the heart,
Blue o’the green, Green o’the blue,
Droop at the Sundown, fail, depart
Into the bitterness with you.

All joys that ever shook or ran
Under the rain, above the tree,
Go steadily until the man
Says it is going – all I see.

Always I feel you as the breath
Of a dull tyrant in the dew:
I have been questioning long – is Death
But a poor journeyman for you?

All songs that smote upon the sky,
All feet that ever fought the ground,
All the sweet happenings for the eye
You with your centuries wrap around.

Flowers are but shadows – their breath
Lies mournfully upon the dew.
Yea I would question still – is Death
Only the journeyman for you?

8] Says it is going [far] | all I see/ [from me] *MS*

9 the breath] a breath *MS*

10 dull tyrant in] dull [tempest of] «tyrant in» *MS*

15 happenings] happening[s] *MS*

17-18] Flowers are but shadows | hold their breath || Lie mournfully upon the dew *MS*

Continued overleaf...

To the Thick Darkness (cont.)

All hates, the pinnacles of Pride,
Building of cities fair to burn,
Hungers of Beauty long denied
Sought you for pity in their turn.

Oh, Jester, merciless with the Dead
That as a hastening child I knew,
In the impatient deeps ahead
How shall I make a friend of you?

24 Sought] Sight *MS*

Cancelled stanzas numbered 4 & 5 read:

[All lips that ever sought delight
All feet that ever ached for joy
Have you not halted these Oh Night
Fools by the million girl and boy]

[Did I not fear you as a child
Colours no more could call to me
Till the white moon a mother smiled
Have I not feared you bitterly]

TO THE UNTUNEFUL DARK

‘1930’, 11a-11b (A0655-6) [JSN], fair draft.

All beauty falls to you early white love,
 The Reason that draws for us splendours blazing above,
 The lightning of dancers, all the journeys of song –
 Ah well – I know you – you speak too long –
 Out of you came God.

Into you falls tenderness coated in prayer,
 And the red heart of those seeking the fair,
 All those whose gladness puts them upon the blue –
 Ah well – I know you – who so angry as you?
 Out of you came God.

3 lightning] ligh[t]ning *MS*

4] Ah well – I know you – you speak too long *MS*

6 falls] fall[s] *MS*

TRIBUTE TO A FIGHTER

ML MS 4937/4, 810a-810f [JSN], fair copy, signed Horace O'Hazy.
The Bookfellow 30 November 1921, signed Horace O'Hazy.

JSN - AGS 2 October 1921 ('Light verse enclosed. Written badly').

The fair copy is the preferred text.

Lovers delight us, children play,
 Old farmers are making hay;
 Listen, good neighbour, while we chant
 Our tribute to the Bull-Dog Ant.

He is alive, alert, intense,
 A citizen of Consequence;
 In his dumb underworld the dim
 Creatures avoid the eyes of him.

See him insult, approach, attack
 All the Wayfarers in his track!
 Rage from his body spurts and pours:
 Death he emphatically ignores.

Though in a dying anguish curled,
 Though he is passing from the World,
 Nothing in Death will he recant,
 This good red Jingoistic Ant.

Title] *MS* has a sub-title '(The Red Bulldog Ant)'
 1 delight us,] delight us, *MS*
 2 farmers are] Farmers are *MS* • Farmers all are *Boo*
 4 Ant.] Ant. *MS*
 7 underworld,] underworld, *MS*
 8 of him.] of him. *MS*
 11 pours] [pores] «pours» *MS*
 12 Death] [Dot] Death *MS*
 15 recant] re«ca»[a]nt *MS*

Continued overleaf...

Tribute to a fighter (cont.)

In his make-up with our X-rays,
 We can discover no delays;
 His whole red business life is spent
 Disparaging Disarmament.

In his unpitying lifted eyes
 All the perpetual Warrior lies;
 In his tempestuous legs vibrate
 Crimson corroborates of Hate.

His life – his death – might well afford
 Lessons to us when we are bored
 By Pacifists – then let us chant
 Our tribute to the bull-dog ant.

* * *

Lovers delight us, children play,
 Old farmers are making hay:
 The worn-out bilious centuries plant
 Their bickerings in this Bull-Dog Ant.

25 His life –] His life – *MS*

27 By Pacifists –] by Pacifists, *MS*

28 our tribute] [This] «Our» tribute *MS*

29 delight us] delight us, *MS*

30 farmers are] farmers they are *Boo*

32 in this Bull-Dog Ant] in [the] this bulldog Ant *MS*

UNCLE TO A PIRATE

‘1934’, 33b (A0723) [A], 1 stanza under heading ‘First line of ‘Pirate’’. ‘1935’, 8a (A0749) [A & L], 3 stanzas numbered 6, 1 & 2 under heading ‘Alterations to Pirate’. ML MS 3354/3, Item 2, 23a-27a [A], fair draft, 9 stanzas. ‘1936’, 6b-7a (A0775) [L], fair draft, 9 stanzas. NLA MS 1145/67 [L], alterations; NLA MS 1145/67 [L], alterations.

The Bookfellow 15 January 1921, signed Horace O’Hazy; *BI* 20.

JSN - AGS 22 September 1932 (offers ‘a light piece called Uncle to a Pirate . . . a kiddy piece which might pass muster’ as one of a number of poems as substitutes for pieces he wants to drop from a proposed collection). JSN - JD 31 March 1935, NLA MS 1145/46 (glad Devaney liked it: ‘My nephew Jack was a great admirer of screen villains when he was six or seven years old’); 10 August 1935, NLA MS 1145/68 (‘thanks for the typed copy’); 3 September 1935, NLA MS 1145/67 (‘I have altered one stanza of ‘the Pirate’ and have also put in a fresh verse’ [= E]); 19 January 1936, NLA MS 145/67 (‘Of course the ‘Pirate’ appeared in ‘The Bookfellow’ years ago and could not be sent anywhere’); 27 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/65 (listed as 1 of 11 pieces now sent ‘for the booklet’); 26 April 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (pleased to get letter with the ‘typed stuff’ and has ‘made alterations as you suggest’); 3 May 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (alterations for *BI*: ‘I suggest a new 5th stanza. I have it here in one of the books’ [taken from MS 3354/3-2 (C)] . . . ‘This is slightly different from a stanza which I may have sent you’); 28 June 1936, NLA MS 1145/34(b) (Lothians have rejected the manuscript [*BI*]); 12 July 1936, NLA MS 1145/65 (‘interested in what you say about the inclusion of the light verse’: thinks ‘a good many’ of his friends ‘would object to ‘The Sundowner’ and ‘The Pirate’ being in with the serious stuff’).

The poem was revised for *BI* which drops a stanza from the *Bookfellow* text and adds 2 new stanzas.

The Bookfellow is the preferred text.

‘1934’, 33b = A; ‘1935’, 8a = B; ML MS 3354/3-2, 23a-27a = C; ‘1936’, 6b-7a = D; NLA MS 1145/67 (1935) = E; NLA MS 1145/67 (1936) = F

Often at Eventime we go
To a catchpenny Picture Show;

1-4] ≠ A ‘First line of Pirate’; ≠ C, D, *BI* 1-4

1 Eventime] eventide A, C, D & *BI*

2 a catchpenny] the unriotous A • a tempestuous C, D, *BI*

Continued overleaf...

Uncle to a Pirate (cont.)

Gently I hold his restless hand
As we encounter Wonderland.

Pistols we see, and Big Blue Knives,
Bad Men in Trouble with their Wives,
Burglars intruding, Life and Death,
And Humbug struggling for his Breath.

Still he has hair of Baby Gold,
A Pirate nearly eight years old.
Oh, but his Eyes – I am, I fear,
An Uncle to a Buccaneer.

When Virtue in the Worn-out Play
Is in distress, he shouts Hooray!
But when the rascal Villain dies
Tears have uprisen in his eyes.

Sometimes I feebly go with him
To the Old Centuries grave and dim;
Proudly aloft he waves his Hand,
His orders to a Blood-red Band.

3 Gently] Softly *A*

3 restless] heedless *D, E, BI*. *F* has the comment 'I like next best 'ruffian' or 'rascal' but the 'hold' and the 'heedless' make a bit of a chime'

4] In the delirious Wonderland *A* •

In that preposterous Wonderland *C, D, BI*

5-8] = *C, D, BI* 5-8

9-12] = *C, D, BI* 9-12

13-16] ≠ *C, D, BI* 13-16

13] When the Pure Woman in the play *C, D, BI*

15 rascal] keyed-up *C, D, BI*

17-20] ≠ *C, D, BI* 17-20; ≠ *F*

19] Almost at times I understand *C, F, BI*

20 His orders] His muttering *C, BI* • His mutterings *F*

21-24] = *B* stanza numbered 6; omitted *C, D, BI*

Continued overleaf...

Uncle to a Pirate (cont.)

His grim Ship saunters slowly by,
 His Cutlass sharp is seldom dry;
 Sharply he moves – he counts again
 Slow Agonies of Dying Men.

* * *

Ah, it is gone – the Street again –
 Hustling of Women, noise of Men,
 The young Girls simmering for a joke,
 The keen Lads and the lighted smoke.

How hopeful is the Street – we stop
 At his beloved Lolly Shop.
 Oh, but his Eyes! I am, I fear
 An Uncle to a Buccaneer!

25-28] ≠ *C, D, BI* 29-32

27 young girls] young [girls] *C*, an error in copying, or in haste

28 and] in *C, BI* • in «and» *D*

28 smoke] (smoke) *E*. *E* has the comment ‘The way I wrote it originally was smoke meaning not the lighted cigarette but the smoky atmosphere which is noticeable where many men light up at once in the street’. *F* has the comment ‘You will notice alteration in 4th line of the 2nd last stanza. What I meant was the lighted smoke, the atmosphere, the fog of smoke in the street.’

29-32] = *C, D, BI* 33-36

Discarded stanzas and stanzas additional to *BI*

B stanza numbered 1; *C, D* & *BI* stanza 6 (lines 21-24):

Deep he goes down through mysteries
 Fearless he rides the ungoverned seas
 He with a gesture of his sword
 Waves his uncounted gold aboard *B*
 Waves the uncounted gold aboard *C, D* & *BI*

B stanza numbered 2; *C, D* & *BI* stanza 7 (lines 25-28):

Any who would his will defy
 Meet with no pity all must die
 Proudly he hears them as they drown
 Gurgling and cursing all go down

F (corrections to proofs *BI*) has the comment:

Uncle to Pirate. I suggest a new 5th stanza. I have it here in one of the books. I may have forgotten to send it to you amongst the other alterations.

Sometimes I feebly go with him
 To the Old Centuries grave and dim
 Almost at times I understand
 His mutterings to a blood red band

This is slightly different from a stanza which I may have sent you. Without this new 5th stanza I think the piece is rather disconnected.

You will notice alteration in 4th line of the 2nd last stanza. What I meant was the lighted smoke, the atmosphere, the fog of smoke in the street.

WE SOUGHT FOR THE BUNYIP

ML MS A3038/2, 10b (B0016) & '1927'C, 42a (A0476) [A], incomplete.

The moon was upon us, the lake by our side,
 And though we were walking we dreamed of a ride.
 We two, we were knights, neither heart-sick nor pale,
 But men of some mettle – we sought for the Grail.
 A touch of green hovered far out in the sky;
 We sought for the Bunyip, Canary and I.

Canary we called him – his head was all gold,
 His chin was a pirate's, his feet were so bold;
 His hands were so cunning he
 [leaf cut at this point]
 saw the green sky;
 We sought for the Bunyip, Canary and I.

We saw by the nettles the white square of sheep
 And out on the water the swans all asleep,
 And deep in the bushes we thought we could hear
 Some heavy thing moving – we paused, half in fear.
 It seemed by the green of the sky and the moon
 That the devil was finding some holiday tune.

3 neither] [rather] «neither» MS

4 Grail] [grail] Grail MS

9] His hands were so cunning | he [loved the brown water] MS. The leaf is cut below the first part of the line, with some of the rest of the line just discernible.

17 of the sky] of «the» sky MS

WEATHER PROPHETS

ML, MS 4937/7, Item 4, with initials 'H. O'H. Vic.', proof.
The Bookfellow 15 May 1921, p. 70.

The Bookfellow is the preferred text.

In ceaseless Almanacs they beat about
(The old Star Humbug waxes till it wanes)
One thing annoys them – when they fix a Drought
Comes the glad Season of perpetual Rains.

WHEN KISSES ARE AS STRAWBERRIES

NLA MS 605/112, typescript [AGS], with corrections. ML MS 3354/3, Item 4, 2/3, typescript (prepared for CP).

The Bookfellow 15 May 1920, p. 106; *BLP* 56; *CP* 89.

NLA MS 605/112 is the preferred text.

When bees are hot with honey-thirst
And hastening with the Spring,
When kisses are as strawberries
And Love is more than king —

When quiet birds have merriment
By waters brown and blue,
And little maids wool-gathering
Will murmur, I love you —

When blossoms dance in carnival
To hearten maids and men,
And kisses are as strawberries,
Who would be sober then?

WHEN LIPS ARE SCARCELY SCARLET

The Bookfellow 15 July 1920, p. 154, signed Horace O’Hazy.

(Mingling the manners of Algernon Swinburne and Charles Kingsley.)

When lips are scarcely scarlet
And every duck is blue,
And skies no more are starlit
And eyes are all askew —

When old Doubt introduces
His club-mate, old Decay,
And lavenders and puces
Are merely brown and gray —

When love is like a geegaw
Upon a panto dame
And life becomes a see-saw,
Unreasonably tame —

When Joy goes down to jail with
No friend to pay the fine —
What gladness shall we hail with
A funeral – yours or mine?

Gloss] Swinburne, Algernon Charles (1837-1909) was a British author noted for his mastery of melodious verse.
2 duck is blue] In Australian slang a ‘blue duck’ was anything that didn’t come up to expectations; a dud, a ‘write-off’.

WINIFRED ALL IN GRAY

‘1927’A, 8a-9a (A0539-0540) [A], fair draft.

Stanzas 1-4 are written as 8-line stanzas and the form was altered at stanza 5 to 4-line format. Four-line stanzas have been adopted throughout.

Now Winifred sat on the gray door-step and the birds came down to see,
 And they said, there is not in the world so sorry a child as she.
 The mother she lived in the iron law that loves no bright array
 And her child she dressed in the morning hours, as Winifred all in gray.

Over along the eastern sky the seven sailors came,
 Wherever their young feet touched they left the red song of the flame.
 Mothers went out and took the blood and dyed the garments gay
 And gave to their loves – but Winifred sat, as Winifred all in gray.

The birds came up with a golden song and the face of the earth was gold,
 The locusts leapt and the butterflies as strolling players strolled.
 The sailors travelled as merry men and fell at the death of day,
 But Winifred sat on the brown door-step, as Winifred all in gray.

* * * *

The mother, she looked at the gray daughter, and she said in the clear sunshine,
 Now where will I get a proud husband for a precious girl like mine?
 How modest is she, how well she works, she is both good and wise,
 And never have I through grace of God put vanity in her eyes.

My neighbour’s girl has satin shoes and a silken frock has she,
 And the green and yellow and scarlet has completed her vanity.
 This life is all too short for pride and the flutter of false array,
 I heed them not though they call to my child, oh Winifred all in gray.

8 Winifred sat] Winifred [said] sat *MS*

9] The little ones ran in gold and green *MS*, a false start not cancelled

10 strolled] stroll[ed] *MS*

11] [The little ones ran is red and green] *MS*, line preceding line 11

17 neighbour’s girl] neightour[’s] girl *MS*

20 call to my child] call «to my» child *MS*

Line endings

Stanza 1 (reading text 1-4): 1 door-step || 2 see || 3 world || 4 she || 5 law || 6 array || 7 hours || 8 gray ||

Stanza 2 (reading text 5-8): 1 sky || 2 came || 3 left || 4 flame || 5 blood || 6 gay || 7 sat || 8 gray ||

Stanza 3 (reading text 9-12): 1 green || 2 song || 3 gold || 4 butterflies || 5 stroll || 6 day || 7 door-step || 8 gray ||

Stanza 4 (reading text 13-16): 1 daughter || 2 sunshine || 3 mine || 4 wise || 5 eyes ||

WOE IN THE MERRIMENT

‘1915’A, 12a (A0351) [JSN], fair draft.

Give me of Passion, flutes, and bells,
All the white sacraments to see;
Sound the magician, comes and tells
Woe in his merriment to me.

How cheerfully my heart went down
Into a slumber – while the sky
Gave me strange beauties with a gown
Crimson, uncertain to the eye.

I was delivered to the bells:
Flutes did appal me – I could see
Sound, the magician, he who tells
Woe in his merriment to me.

2 white sacraments] [bold] «whites» sacraments *MS*
4 to me] to see *MS*
10 me – I could] me I | «I» could *MS*

YOU AT THE DOOR

‘1927’B, 9a-11a (A0490-2) [JSN], draft. Line lengths vary and words have been omitted in haste in line 2. A transcription is given as notes.

Your feet, they were made for the music – I know by your eye:
 Your heart will be still a big heart on the day that you die:
 You look for the short cut to Heaven – I’ve trod it before:
 It’s the fine feet you have then, Oh pretty foot, you at the Door.

The sweet eyes you have for tired women and all the tired men,
 All those who made short cuts and turned to the long road again:
 Your foot is the one that the queens would all envy – what can I say more?
 Pretty foot, you with the pretty foot, you at the Door.

Your feet will be always on journeys to love and to do
 —A wound to a little one calls up the tiger in you:
 Your feet have the pride of the neck of a charger – what can I say more?
 Pretty foot, pretty foot – you with the pretty foot, you at the Door.

You[r] feet they | were made for | the music
 I know by | your eye
 Your heart will | be still a | big heart on | the day that [you die]
 You look for | the short cut | to Heaven
 I[’]ve trod it | before
 It[’]s the fine | feet you | have then | Oh Pretty foot | you at | the door

The sweet eyes | you have for | tired women | and all the | tired men
 All these who | made short | cuts and turned | to the long | road again
 Your foot | is the one | that the queen[s] | would all envy
 What can I | say more
 Pretty foot you | with th the | pretty foot | you at the door [sic]

Your feet | will be | always on | journeys to | love and | to do
 A wound to | a little one | call[s] up the | tiger in you
 You[r] feet have | the pride of | the neck of | [a] charger
 What can | I say more
 Pretty foot
 Pretty foot
 You with the | pretty foot
 You at the | Door

¶ **'You can feel the full worth'**

'1927'B, 44a (A0525) [A], fair draft.

You can feel the full worth
Of the land of your birth
And the pluck that her men have displayed –

By the shake of the hand
Of the man on the land
You can learn how a nation is made.

John Shaw Neilson: The Collected Verse Period 4: 1928-1942

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A FRIVOLOUS COMPLAINT BY A SUSTENANCE WORKER

LaT MS 9419/3678, typescript.

To him Fortune had been unkind;
His trousers were shiny behind:
But he said, I'm all right,
And my future seems bright,
But I can't turn around in my mind.

ANOTHER EARLY MARTYR

NLA MS 605/26 [JSN], fair copy, with comment 'You punctuate to please yourself'.

A cooking class student named Aggie
Got married and lived in Wonthaggi;
But her husband soon died,
Then the neighbours all cried,
We knew that her puddings were claggy.

APOLOGY TO A CENTIPEDE

‘1929’, 6b (A0596) [A], fair draft.

Heedless I was ('twas in the rain)
A Conqueror – I did not care;
My great feet sprawled and you were there
And it may cause you life-long pain.

You wriggled and my boot you bit,
And your offence I must esteem;
Your patriotism is no dream,
Your failure is but part of it.

ASTONISHING GROWTH OF WEEKEND INTEMPERANCE

‘1929’, 45a (A0634) [A], with title ‘[Extraordinary] «Astonishing» growth of weekend intemperance’. LaT MS 9419/3678, typescript, untitled. NLA MS 1145/76, 21, typed transcription [FN], entitled ‘Alarming growth of intemperance’.

The preferred text is ‘1929’, 45a.

There was a young lady named Dicker,
She gave the glad eye to the Vicar.
She said, my dear friend
Let us have a weekend
And both go away on the Shicker.

5 Shicker] A slang expression for liquor.

AUTUMN AND MOONLIGHT

‘1936’, 13a (A0781) [L], fair draft, numbered 1 as for subsequent stanzas, but complete.

These wines can so deceive us
They lift us as we cling:
How far it is to happiness,
Beyond remembering.

BEAUTY IMPOSES

‘1934’, 42b (A0732) & 45b (A0735) [L], fair draft, 2 stanzas numbered 1 & 2 and a third stanza headed ‘2nd stanza for ‘Beauty Imposes’’. A loose leaf with a subheading ‘Revised version’ [L], fair draft, 3 stanzas, which *HI* places at ‘1934’ and which was in ‘1927’A in October 1988, but which was missing from that location at 1 May 1989. ‘1935’, 11b (A0753) [A], fair draft, 3 stanzas (stanza 2 cancelled and rewritten); ‘1935’, 16b (A0758) [A], fair draft, 2 stanzas; ‘1935’, 21b (A0763) [L], fair draft, 3 stanzas. NLA MS 1145/33 (enclosure with letter JSN - JD 19 January 1936) [L], fair copy, 2 stanzas. NLA MS 1145/67 (enclosure with letter JSN - JD 3 May 1936) [L], a correction to typescript for *BI*. *BI* 34 (3 stanzas).

JSN - JD 19 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (encloses poem); 20 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/33 (comments on poem). JD - JSN 16 February 1936, McKimm MS (‘The new poem ‘Beauty Imposes’ is a splendid thing’); 8 March 1936, McKimm MS (‘I have also noted your new line for ‘Time of Tumult’, also new revise of ‘Beauty Imposes’). JSN - JD 26 April 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (encloses first and last stanzas); 3 May 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (a correction to typed copy); 10 October 1937, NLA MS 1145/68 (ranks this first in a list of 7 pieces for consideration for entry in a competition); 17 October 1937, NLA MS 1145/68 (comments on length: it may be too short for the competition). Notes from correspondence are given after discarded stanzas.

Some of the correspondence is obviously missing, for the copy sent to Devaney on 19 January 1936 had 2 stanzas, and then on 26 April 1936 N wrote saying he was enclosing the ‘first and last stanza[s]’ and added ‘you have the middle one’. The version first sent to Devaney is the same as ‘1934’, 42b, and the version published in *BI* is the same as ‘1934’, 42b & 45b and the same as the loose leaf headed ‘Revised version’.

The loose leaf headed ‘Revised version’, with 3 stanzas, (B) is taken as the preferred text. ‘1934’, 42b & 45b = A; loose leaf headed ‘Revised version’ = B; ‘1935’, 11b = C; ‘1935’, 16b = D; ‘1935’, 21b = E; MS 1145/33 = F

Beauty imposes reverence in the Spring;
Grave as the urge within the honey-buds
It wounds us as we sing.

1-3] = A stanza 1; = F stanza 1

2] ‘In 2nd line in 1st stanza you have honey-birds. I dictated honey-buds to Lisette but it is just possible she may have put ‘honey-birds’. JSN – JD 3 May 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (corrections to proof *BI*).

Continued overleaf...

Beauty Imposes (cont.)

Beauty is joy that stays not over-long;
Clad in the magic of sincerities
It rides up in a song.

Beauty imposes chastenings on the heart,
Grave as the birds in last solemnities
Assembling to depart.

4-6] = *A* '2nd stanza for 'Beauty Imposes''

7-9] = *A* stanza 2; ≠ *C* stanza 1; ≠ *D* stanza 1; ≠ *E* stanza 1; = *F* stanza 2

7] Beauty imposes [happiness] «happenings» on the heart *C*

8] Wistful as birds in calm bewilderment *C* •

Thoughts like the birds in Autumn elements *D* •

Mournful as birds in burnt out Autumn days *E*

Discarded stanzas

C cancelled stanza 2:

[Beauty imposes thirst that shall not die
Though it should drink the stars for merriment
It would consume the sky]

C stanza 2, *D* stanza 2 & *E* stanza 2:

Beauty imposes thirst that will not die *C*

Beauty imposes thirst upon the eye *D*, *E*

Though it consumes all white magnificence *C*, *D*, *E*

That stands up in the sky *C*, *D*, *E*

Neilson described this as 'an attempt to describe in a few lines the thing that so many rhymers tackle. Beauty does create in us a strange wonderment and awe. It is difficult to describe in words the effect that a beautiful nude has upon one's feelings' (20 January 1936). He later commented that he had 'a great fancy for these short things, which are like the Japanese poems only about 30 or 40 words' (17 January 1937).

BEFORE THE DYING FIRE

LaT MS 9419/3678, typescript.

‘For a country editor’, ‘For a tired poet’, ‘From a coffin’ and ‘Before the dying fire’ are all responses to Landor’s ‘I strove with none, for none was worth my strife’. See ‘For a country editor’.

As the fire dies, a fear into me flashes.
Is it a ghost I feel? I hold my breath.
Who is this old chap waiting for the ashes?
Can it be death?

BOYS WILL LISTEN

‘1927’ A, 42a-42b (A0573-4) [A], fair draft.

Oh, come along with me, my pretty little boy
 Till I show you the thirsty land:
 There is heat and toil, unfriendly soil,
 And sorrows on every hand —
 But the lad will listen when the red man calls
 And the mother will be waiting at the door —
 And the father he will know it, though he hides it all the time;
 He will never come back any more.

Oh, come along with me, my pretty little boy
 Till I show you the shining gold:
 Oh, your life is poor and narrow, will you stay to wheel a barrow
 When your place is with the big men and the bold?
 There is gold in hidden gullies, there is silver in the hills,
 There are mountains that were never climbed before —
 You will be amid the princes, you will laugh at any ills;
 You will never come back any more.

3 toil unfriendly] toil [and] unfriendly *MS*

11 your life] you[r] life *MS*

13 There is] There are «is» *MS*

CONFUSION

‘1934’, 14a (A0703) [L], fair draft.

I am encouraged by the falling bees;
'Tis the deception that the flowers can make;
There is some strange endowment of the trees.

'Tis not the manna whitening all the Spring;
'Tis not a fragrance such as men extol;
Deep – it is deep – but tells not anything.

DISASTROUS COLLAPSE OF LAND VALUES AVERTED

LaT MS 9419/3677, typescript.

There was an old man at Casino,
He played an immense concertina;
He made such a din
The police ran him in —
He was fetching down rents at Casino.

EAST OF THE HOSPITAL

There are two discrete versions of this poem. The first was written in 1930 and sent to Stephens in January 1931, and then abandoned: the poem was then rewritten, between mid-1933 and June 1934, when it was sent to Croll, with the title ‘The road to the hospital’, q.v.

‘1929’, 20a (A0608) [A], 3 × 3-line stanzas, unnumbered, under heading ‘Odd Mother Love’; 20b (A0609) [A], 2 stanzas, numbered 7 & 8, the stanza numbered 7 renumbered 2, and the stanza numbered 8 cancelled, with numbering [JSN], under title ‘Mother Love’; 21a & 21b (A0609-0610) [A], 2 stanzas, cancelled, numbered 5 & 6, stanza 6 renumbered 7, under title ‘Mother love’; 22b-23a (A0611) [A], 3 stanzas, one numbered 6, a second (unnumbered) cancelled and rewritten and numbered 8, under title ‘Mother love’; 23b (A0612) [A], 2 stanzas numbered 4 & 5, under title ‘East of the hospital’; 24a (A0612) [A], 1 stanza headed ‘last verse’, cancelled; 24a-26b (A0612-0615) [A], draft, 10 stanzas, the first headed ‘first verse’, the rest numbered 2-9 (with a rewritten stanza 9), and stanzas 1, 5 & 9 (including the rewritten stanza) cancelled, entitled ‘East of the hospital’; 27a (A0615) [A], 1 stanza, unnumbered, under title ‘Mother love’; 28a (A0616) [A], 2 stanzas, one headed ‘1st verse’, and the other numbered 5, under short title ‘Hospital’; 28b & 29a (A0617) [A], 2 stanzas numbered 7 & 8, each under short title ‘Hospital’.

Loose leaves in ‘1908’ [A], fair draft, signed, 7 stanzas, numbered 1, and 3-8, with numbering for 2 and a space left, and with renumbering; stanza 4 renumbered 2, stanza 5 renumbered 3, the number for stanza 6 cancelled, stanza 7 renumbered 4 and stanza 8 renumbered 5.

JSN - AGS 31 December 1930 (is fixing poem which will ‘be ready tomorrow’, and discusses); 4 January 1931 (says ‘could not get ‘East of the hospital’ finished till today’); 5 January 1931 (‘Second line, first verse ‘Hospital’ is short of word: put in ‘steady’ or ‘a proud’); 26 January 1931 (says ‘Thanks for the School-book and for the opinion on hospital piece . . . I may be able to do something with it later on’). JSN - RHC 17 June 1934 (Stephens ‘thought rather poorly’ of this and advised N ‘to cut the piece down to four or five stanzas’).

Correspondence is given after discarded stanzas.

The fair draft, loose in ‘1908’ (K), is the preferred text. The order of the stanzas in the fair draft is reproduced but this is necessarily conjectural, because of the confused renumbering. The various revisions, rewritings and the draft at ‘1929’, 24a-26b are all shown separately in the notes.

‘1929’, 20a = A; ‘1929’, 20 b = B; ‘1929’, 21a-21b = C; ‘1929’, 22b-23a = D; ‘1929’, 23b = E; ‘1929’, 24a ‘last verse’ = F; ‘1929’, 24a-26b = G; ‘1929’, 27a = H; ‘1929’, 28a = I; ‘1929’, 28b-29a = J; loose leaves in ‘1908’ = K

Continued overleaf...

East of the Hospital (cont.)

Over the road it is the nest where the many wounded go,
 In the Mothers' eyes all day I see the bravery and the woe.
 Oh, some that go with the heavy lids shall in the darkness stay,
 But the nest was built with Mother love that all the birds obey.

They tell me that the City dust has filled the trees with grime
 And the flowers are pale – I will not have such heresy in my rhyme,
 For the mist that ever wraps the young has washed them sweet and fair;
 There is no grime in the clean gardens when Mother love is there.

Hard is the nest outside but in great mercy doth abound,
 And though there be the sternest pain the sweetest laugh is found.
 But for the nest I am in fear full many a bird would die,
 There is no grime in the clean gardens when Mother love goes by.

All bells will toll for the warrior who did not lightly yield,
 And a million singers build their songs about a battle field:
 Much noise there is of sword and shock and the cold hate in the eye,
 But it will not live in the clean gardens when Mother love goes by.

Some tell me all God's thoughts, and all He wills that I should do,
 Profoundly still they point to where He watches in the blue;
 But I wonder does He always know when the wounded birds will cry?
 There is no grime in the clean gardens when Mother love goes by.

1-4] = *K* stanza numbered 1; ≠ *G* cancelled stanza 'first verse'; ≠ *I* '1st verse'

2 Mothers'] Mother[s'] *K*

5-8] = *K* stanza numbered 3; ≠ *G* stanza 3

5 City] [city] *City MS*

6 pale -] pale - *K*

9-12] = *K* stanza numbered [4] 2; ≠ *E* stanza 4; ≠ *G* stanza 4

13-16] = *K* stanza numbered [5] 3; ≠ *D* stanza 6; ≠ *G* stanza 6

13 likely] [likely] *MS*

16 the clean] the «clean» *K*

17-20] = *K* stanza numbered [6] 7; ≠ *C* stanza numbered [6] 7; ≠ *G* stanza 7; ≠ *J* stanza 7

Continued overleaf...

East of the Hospital (cont.)

Who knows of God? He may be scarce of his Pity in the sky,
 So much He needs in the blossoming and for all the birds that fly.
 The Pity grows in the whiteness in the long moons of the year
 And a bloom there is in the clean gardens when Mother love is near.

If this should fail all splendours of the Passionate would pass
 As quickly as the rainbow rides in farewell to the grass;
 Man as a miracle would leave no smoke stain on the sky;
 Oh, the gardens take the Calm of God when Mother love goes by.

21-24] = *K* stanza numbered [7] 4; ≠ *D* cancelled stanza [8], ≠ *G* stanza 8, ≠ *J* stanza numbered 8
 24 is near] is [there] near *MS*
 25-28] = *K* stanza numbered [8] 5; ≠ *G* cancelled stanza 9 (the 2nd of 2), ≠ *H*

‘1929’, 20a-21b under heading ‘Odd Mother Love’

There is no end to poverty the poverty of mind
 That will not dare to look before and will not look behind
 The hate that keeps us mean and poor and leaves us dumb and blind

With heading ‘fresh verse’:

Hate is the old time tyrant he rides up in the sky
 But his strength is all as weakness «is» and he dare not breathe a lie
 For Heavens things are on the Earth when mother love goes by

With heading ‘another verse’:

If this should but one moment fail the stoutest ships at sea
 Should also fail there would not come the honey for the tree
 And all we love should pass away and leave not light or key

Under heading ‘Mother Love’

Stanza numbered [7] 2:

The mother birds go tenderly and ever much afraid
 Lest by some trembling foot or hand [there] their trust should be betrayed
 They fear the hardness of the Earth and the far ways in the sky
 I have been close to wounded birds when [love] Mothers love goes by

Cancelled stanza with heading ‘another verse’ and the number 8:

[If this should but one moment fail the stoutest ship at sea
 Should also fail there would not come the honey to the tree
 And birds and men should go to dust | All life that is should die
 How good it is in the clean gardens when mother love goes by]

‘1929’, 21a-21b (with a leaf removed between leaves 20 & 21) under heading ‘Mother Love’

Cancelled stanza numbered 5:

[Where is the end of poverty the poverty of mind
 That has no heart to look before and dare not look behind
 Tis hate that draws all curtains down that the young eye may not see
 But oh how good is Mother love as it passes close to me]

Continued overleaf...

East of the Hospital (cont.)

Stanza numbered [6] 7:

Some men do speak so much of God and all that I should do
 They al[ways]«most» seem to know the place where he watches in the blue
 And I sometimes dream he may be close when the wounded birds will sigh
 There is no grime in the clean gardens when Mother love goes by

‘1929’, 22b-23a

Stanza numbered 6:

Great praise they give to the warrior that will not likely yield
 And a million singers build their songs about a battle field
 M[ust]«uch» noise there is of sword and flame and | [And] battle smoke and fear
 But I love the calm of the clean gardens when Mother love is near

Unnumbered stanza, cancelled:

[I dreamed that God is searching long for the pity in the sky
 He needs it for the flowers that fail and all the birds that fly
 He needs it sore for all the moons till the last moon in the year
 The store I know in the clean gardens when Mother love is near]

Stanza numbered 8:

I sometimes dream God must be scarce of his pity in the sky
 So much he needs amid the flowers and all the birds that fly
 He put in low in the white [west] rest in the long moons of the year [sic]
 And a store there is in the clean gardens when Mother love is near

1929’, 23b-24a

Under heading ‘East of the hospital’

Stanza numbered 4:

Hard is the nest outside but in great mercy doth abound
 And though there be the sternest pain the sweetest laugh is found
 But for the nest I fear me that full many «birds» would die
 There is no grime in the clean gardens when mother [love] goes by

Stanza numbered 5:

Slowly [they] «the birds» go and painfully and heads and feet are bare
 But the trust is ever in their eyes and the glories in their hair
 Oh some are tight in the Mother arms and some go shoulder high
 The meanest men do reverence when Mother love goes by

Cancelled stanza headed ‘last verse’:

[If this should fail farewell to man and all he wills to be
 The bridges and the towers would fail and the honey for the tree
 There would be neither strength nor pain [n]or any song or sigh
 My thoughts go far in the clean gardens when Mother love goes by]

Under heading ‘East of the Hospital’

Cancelled stanza headed ‘first verse East of the hospital’:

[Over the road there is the nest where [in] the many birds do go
 In the Mothers eyes all day I see the bravery and the woe
 How stern it is and a hard nest it stands in red and grey
 [And the little ones go in and some [come] «are» not again to play]
 Of the wounded ones not all again shall ever come to play]

Continued overleaf...

East of the Hospital (cont.)

Stanza numbered 2:

The mother birds go tenderly and ever much afraid
 Lest by some trembling hard or foot their trust should be betrayed [sic]
 They know the taste of tears [they hear] and they can tell the faintest sigh
 I have been close to wounded birds when mother love goes by

Stanza numbered 3:

They tell me that the city dust have «has» filled the trees with grime
 And the flowers are pale I will not have such heresy in my rhyme
 For the many tears that mothers shed have washed them sweet and fair
 [Tis good] «The mean» [to be in the clean | gardens when mother love is | there] || «There is no grime in the
 clean gardens when Mother love is there»

Stanza numbered 4:

Hard is the nest [bu] outside but in great mercy doth [about] abound
 And though there be the sternest pain [gre] the sweetest laugh is found
 But for the nest I am in fear that [many] the stricken birds would die
 There is no grime in the clean gardens when mother love goes by

Cancelled stanza numbered 5:

[Slowly they go the little heads the little feet are [bear] bare
 But the trust is big within their eyes and the [glory] «joy» is in their hair
 Oh some [lie] «are» tight in the mother arms and some ride shoulder high
 [Tis good to be in the clean] | «The meanest men do reverence» | gardens when mother love goes by]

Stanza numbered 6:

Great praise they give to the warrior who [would] «will» not likely yield
 And a million singers build their songs about a battle field
 Much noise there is of sword and shock and battle smoke and fear
 How calm it is in the clean gardens when mother love is near

Stanza numbered 7:

[Some «tell» men do speak so much]
 Some tell me all God[’s] and all he will that I should do
 They almost seem to know the place where he watches in the blue
 I often wonder does he know when the wounded birds will cry
 How goods it is in the clean gardens when mother love goes by [sic]

Stanza numbered 8:

I sometimes dream God must be scarce of His Pity in the sky
 «So much he needs amid the flowers and all the birds that fly»
 [Put] He puts it low in the whiteness of the long moons in the year
 And a store there is in the clean gardens when mother love is [there] near

Cancelled stanza numbered 9:

[If this should fail all strength should fail [all] «far» over land and sea
 The bridges and the towers would fail and the honey for the tree
 There could be neither hope nor pain nor any song or sigh
 Oh gentle arms that hold so much when mother love goes by]

Continued overleaf...

East of the Hospital (cont.)

Cancelled stanza numbered 9, following the first numbered 9:

[If this should but one moment fail then all we know should pass
As quickly as the rainbow runs in farewell on the grass
Man as a miracle would leave no smoke stain on the sky
There is no thought but reverence when Mother love go[es] by]

‘1929’, 27a, under heading ‘Mother Love’, unnumbered stanza:

It this should fail the «all» splendours of the passionate [should] «would» pass [sic]
As quickly as [a] «the» rainbow rides in farewell to the grass
Man as a miracle would leave no smoke stain on the sky
[Deep [in] «is» the time for reverence when Mother love goes by]
How calm it is in the reverence when Mother love goes by

‘1929’, 28a under heading ‘Hospital’

Stanza headed ‘1st verse’:

Over the road it is the nest where the many wounded go
In the Mother eyes all day | I see the bravery and the woe
O some that go with the closed eyes shall in the darkness stay
But the nest was built with Mother love that all the birds obey

Stanza numbered 5:

I see the little heads they droop and the faces pale and fair
The arms that take the wounded in have all the world to bear
Oh the Mothers heart is the red heart that has not feared to die
And the meanest men do reverence when Mother love goes by

‘1929’, 28b & 29a, under headings ‘Hospital’

Stanza numbered 7:

Some tells me all Gods thoughts and all he wills that I should do [sic]
They in their wisdom [ma] know the place where he watches in the blue
I often wonder does he know when the wounded birds will cry
There is no grime in the clean gardens when Mother love goes by

Stanza numbered 8:

I am in doubt God may be scarce of his pity in the [blue] sky
So much he needs in the blossoming and for all the birds that fly
Some pity grows in the whiteness in the long moons of the year
And a bloom there is in the clean gardens when Mother love is near

JSN - AGS 31 December 1930:

I have just been fixing the verse up and it will be ready to go tomorrow. I will explain, less anyone should misunderstand (East of the Hospital [sic]. If sending to a Melb[ourne] paper the title and the foot-note should explain everything, if to a Sydney paper it would be necessary to add Melbourne to the foot-note. The verse is of course rather on the cool side for such a subject. A part of the Exhibition gardens is directly east of the Children’s Hospital.

For over two years now I have seen Mothers struggling along with sick and crippled children. They leave the tram at Nicholson Street about a quarter of a mile away. It is a long way for a little woman with a big burden. Some of the children appear to be 8 or 9 years old.

At one time I believe they were carried across in a motor, but that fell through possibly for want of funds. In the early part of this year there was a big cry that some of the wards would have to be closed, but some Melb[ourne] man came forward with money to keep them going for a time.

I get a good view of the Mothers and children in the morning and at the lunch hour.

It is easy enough to alter this verse but I don’t know whether I could improve it much. You will notice the weak lines quicker than I would . . .

FLOWERS DO INHABIT

‘1940’, 9b (A0825) [L], fair draft. ML MS A3038/2, 24a (B0032) [FN], transcription.

The fair draft is the preferred text.

They live in the desert, they climb on the mountain,
They stay for a swift moment, they measure not time by the day;
They who give joy to the weary give light to the blind;
Flowers do inhabit the eyelids, the insteps, of womankind.

Women are therefore as birds that go forth in a great storm;
The cold cannot stay them, they sing that the season is warm.
Their fingers are eager for blessing their eyes cannot find;
Flowers do inhabit even unto darkness the warfare of womankind.

FLOWERS DO INVADE US

‘1936’, 15b (A0785) & ‘1936’, 22a (A0791) [FN], fair draft, with 3 stanzas at 15b numbered 1-3 and 2 stanzas at 22a numbered 1-2.

At noonday or midnight we know that the flowers do invade us;
Not alone with sweet colour nor any quick speech that they know
They tell us in haste of the wish of the God that has made us.

In sunlight, in conquest, as songs in a drink so they find us;
They tell us to dance; though we move not
We strive to be happy and here is the bloom that can blind us.

In shadows, the blackest of shadows, the flowers do invade us;
They bid us remember the things that can never be told.
They speak for the dead – and the dead with the flowers can upbraid us.

Though the years and the sorrows the close prisoners have made us,
Though the hills that we climb not they laugh at how long they delayed us,
But whispering here in the gloom still the flowers do invade us.

They are not bitter at all who have fallen before us;
Now diligent are they forever in quiet chorus;
They sing without lips, and still without speech they implore us.

FLOWERS IN THE WARD

ML MS 3354/2, Item 7, 6b [A], fair draft.

They speak not of torment
Nor blackness, nor sin:
Quietly as Angels come
Do the flowers come in.

Forgetting all frailties
Of humankind
With sweet scent they give back
Sight to the blind.

See, they come quickly
As rainbows come:
Beckoning they give back
Speech to the dumb.

From green hills they journey
Where joys first came:
Whispering they give back
Young feet to the lame.

FOR A DEAD RHYMER

‘1929’, 15a (A0603) [A], fair draft.

Was he ill-loved because
He did discover flaws
While he himself knew not
Which way to turn? He got
Strange rest by going far
Where the great heavens are
And small things matter not.

FOR THE LITTLE BOYS OUT OF HEAVEN

‘1934’, 31b-33a (A0721-2) [A], draft, 10 stanzas, with one cancelled. The draft consists of 4 stanzas numbered 1-4, with stanza 2 cancelled, under the title ‘For the little boys out of heaven’, with a new stanza 2 written under the short title ‘Little boys’. This is followed by the heading ‘Odd verse’ and 1 stanza, a further heading ‘Odd verse[s] boys’ and 3 stanzas, and a second heading ‘Odd verse boys’ and 1 stanza. The 9 stanzas make a sensible whole and the headings ‘Odd verses’ should be taken here as indicating breaks in dictation and meaning ‘further verses’.

On the serene day, first of the seven,
I ache for innocence – I walk to hear
The little boys who have come out of Heaven.

Lustre of women is around them falling
As a remembrance of unearthly meadows,
While from their lips the heavenly thoughts are calling.

Listening, I say, they have defeated sorrow:
With a new beauty round them dreaming
Hastening or evil will not come tomorrow.

They have not fear – the bells they are at seven:
Peace did they bring with all the flowers of the meadow:
Calm are the boys who have come out of Heaven.

There is no darkness that they will not leaven:
Out of their lips is spread forgiveness:
The little boys, they have come out of Heaven.

’Twas sundown and the bells came in at seven:
Sweet were the foreheads, sweet the unwavering eyes:
I saw the boys who had come out of Heaven.

I was as one entombed in a bright dwelling:
There were angelic flavours that did hover:
Only of joy they told and still were telling.

5 As a] As a[n]

12] Calm are the [little ones] «boys» [the boys] «who have come» out of Heaven *MS*

16 bells came in] bells [chanted] «came in» *MS*

Continued overleaf...

For the Little Boys out of Heaven (cont.)

Tears did come in – the bells came up at seven.
What did I hear? What thought, but innocence.
I saw the boys who had come out of Heaven.

Loud was the organ, but a thing of sorrow:
It was of man, but all the forgiveness
Came with the boys and could not die tomorrow.

23 hear? What] hear what *MS*

27] [Came with the boys who had come out of He] *MS* preceding line 27

Cancelled stanza 2:

[Lustre of women [is] «in» remembered calling
Out of [some] «a» far country over quaint meadows
While from their lips the heavenly thoughts are falling]

FROGS I ADMIRE

‘1927’B, 27a (A0508) [JSN], fair draft.

Bishops beg loudly,
Really they give us no peace:
They bring in such out o’way words,
Just take diocese.

GOLDEN FUGITIVE

To a departing smoker parrot

‘1934’, 36a-36b (A0725-6) [L], fair draft, 4 stanzas, entitled ‘To a smoker parrot’; ‘1934’, 38b-39a (A0728) [L], fair draft, 5 stanzas, entitled ‘The golden runaway’: Words to a homeless smoker parrot’. ‘1935’, 9a (A0750) [A], fair draft, 3 stanzas, entitled ‘To a homeless smoker parrot; ‘1935’, 9b-10a (A0751) [A], fair draft, 4 stanzas, entitled ‘To a homeless smoker parrot’. NLA MS 1145/49 [L], fair copy, entitled ‘Golden fugitive. To a departing smoker parrot’, annotated ‘Revised version’ [L]. *BI* 24.

JSN - JD 12 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/65 (glad JD likes the title ‘The golden fugitive’: N thinks that it ‘might be better without a ‘The’’, and that ‘the words ‘To a departing smoker parrot’ would explain the piece to most readers’); 19 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (‘will get the poem ready’ at the Australia Day long weekend); 27 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/65 (enclosing ‘the new version of ‘Golden fugitive’’: ‘wrote the new stanzas to the ‘Parrot’ piece before the New Year’, and has added a footnote); 26 April 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (comments on JD’s suggestions for alterations to poems for *BI* and returns typed copies of this and ‘The theme eternal’: thinks a footnote would ‘explain how the mallee was ruined by the clearing’); 30 April 1936, NLA MS 1145/65 (asks JD to return typed copies of this and ‘The theme eternal’ because he has ‘no other correct copies here’); 3 May 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (corrections for *BI*: ‘You have this piece in hand. I think that a footnote might be put in’); 10 October 1937, NLA MS 1145/68 (places poem 4th according to merit in a list of 6 unpublished pieces that might be considered for entry in a competition, with the remark, ‘does not seem quite natural’); 14 November 1937, NLA MS 1145/68 (says he thinks this would have the best chance of the 3 pieces JD picked for the competition: ‘It has a pull by being a nature piece. The first verse is fairly good, but it falls away at the finish’).

This is one of four separate poems that N refers to as ‘The smoker parrot’. See ‘The smoker parrot’ [1] and [2] and ‘Smoker parrots’.

‘1934’, 36a-36b = A; ‘1934’, 38b-39a = B; ‘1935’, 9a = C; ‘1935’, 9b-10a = D; MS 1145/49 = E
The fair copy, MS 1145/49 (E), is the preferred text and Devaney’s footnote is used.

Continued overleaf...

Golden Fugitive (cont.)

Moonlight and sunrise ran about your wing,
 Lightning and sundown, every joy in yellow
 Came for your raiment and your comforting,
 Oh most victorious fellow.

Beauty was yours, all beauty folly fed,
 Quickening for love with every old misgiving,
 Deep as the faint remembrance of the Dead
 Called half-way to the living.

Joy was upon you, that of old was planned
 Over the gentle hill, the flowery hollow;
 Lightly you gave enchantment to the land
 Where no dull man could follow.

Down the green honey you came out in gold,
 You could not see the tempest of tomorrow
 Nor the approach of man, tyrant of old,
 With espionage and sorrow.

1-4] = *A* stanza 1; = *B* stanza 1; ≠ *C* stanza 1; ≠ *D* stanza 1; = *BI* stanza 1

1] Moon[light]«rise» and sunrise were about your wing *C* •

Lightning and sundown were about your wing *D*

2] Moonrise and sunrise every joy in yellow *D*

3] Swiftly you seized on each beloved thing *C*

4] Oh most fastidious fellow *C* • Oh most luxuriant fellow *D*

5-8] ≠ *B* stanza 2; *A*, *C*, *D* ∅; = *BI* stanza 2

6 with every] and every *B*

9-12] ≠ *A* stanza 2; = *B* stanza 3; ≠ *C* stanza 2; ≠ *D* stanza 2; = *BI* stanza 3

9] Ere the loud invitation to the sand *A*, *D* •

Ere the loud invitation to the dust *C*

10 gentle hill] gentle hills *C* • gentle hill[s] *D*

11] In the clean time you saild nor had mistrust [sic] *C*

12] Of shad[e]less days to follow *C*

12 could] might *D*

13-16] ≠ *A* stanza 3; ≠ *B* stanza 4; *C*, *D* omitted; = *BI* stanza 4

13] Over green honey you came out in gold *A* •

Down the green honey you came out with gold *B*

14] In the sweet shade you saw no fierce tomorrow *A*

15] Ere the advent of man evil and old *A* •

Man with his pent-up tyrannies of old *B*

16 With] All *A* • And *B*

Continued overleaf...

Golden Fugitive (cont.)

* * *

Man with his axe, his old contentious plough,
Grieves in the dust, a grey ungracious fellow:
He who has warred with Heaven, can he allow
Faint emperors in yellow?

NOTE. The wholesale destruction of timber in the Mallee, which has brought about terrific dust-storms now almost threatening to drive the settlers off the land, has also been the cause of the departure of many birds.

17-20] ≠ *A* stanza 4; ≠ *B* stanza 5; ≠ *C* stanza 3; ≠ *D* stanza 4; = *BI* stanza 5

17] Man with his Rule his undisputed plough *A* •

Man with his rage his undisputed plough *B* •

Man with his axe his old portentous plough *D*

18] Grieves on the land an ill audacious fellow *A* •

Grieves on the land a grey ungracious fellow *B* •

Stalks in his rage a most delirious fellow *C* •

Stalks in a rage a shrill delirious fellow *D*

19] Trees he has hated nor will he allow *C* •

He who consumed the leaves shall he allow *D*

Discarded stanza *D* stanza 3:

On birds and boughs there fell the sweet content

Tw'as a dim time with trees and many a halo

[Ere the sweet good Earth saw with bewilderment]

«Ere the good Earth saw with the red lament» *D* 'Odd line for 3rd stanza'

The insult of the fallow

E has the footnote:

The wholesale destruction of timber in the mallee has caused terrific dust storms, which now almost threaten to drive the settlers off the land.

HE SAW THE JIG

‘1935’, 17b-18a (AO759) [A & L], fair draft, 6 stanzas, entitled ‘The wise man saw the jig’. ‘1936’, 13b-14b (A0782-4) [L & A], draft, 9 stanzas, numbered 1-7 with stanzas 7 & 8 run together (with a line omitted) and stanza 1 cancelled and a revised stanza 1 written; 16b, (A0786) [A], 2 stanzas numbered 1 & 2, under short title ‘Jig’. NLA MS 1145/67, typescript [JD], 11 stanzas, annotated. NLA MS 1145/67 [L], 2 stanzas under heading ‘Alterations to ‘He saw the jig’’, headed ‘New 7th stanza’ and ‘New 11th stanza’.
BI 26

JD - JSN 17 April 1936, McKimm MS (has received: ‘the jig piece is decidedly a success and full of delightful lines’). JSN - JD 26 April 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (returns typescript with alterations, ‘New 7th stanza’ & ‘New 11th stanza’); 30 April 1936, NLA MS 1145/65 (‘You have my suggestions for alterations’); 3 May 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (corrections to typescript for *BI*).

N altered the 7th and 11th stanzas in response to Devaney’s comments: however, the readings of the version Devaney received (the typescript, NLA MS 1145/67) are much stronger, and less monotonous, and on this basis the typescript (D) is taken as the preferred text.

‘1935’, 17a-18a = A; ‘1936’, 13b-14b = B; ‘1936’, 16b = C; MS 1145/67 (typescript) = D; MS 1145/67 [L] = E

He saw the jig, he said, an emerald thing
With speech of love, whose blood is liberty;
It lies beyond the fiddler and the string.

Hotly it tells how innocence and mirth
Came into love in uncorrupted days,
Ere the loud greed was thick upon the earth.

It has the green of goodness at the glow,
Proud as an Emperor of the elements
It is the bird that will not see the woe.

1-3] *A, B* ∅

4-6] *A, B* ∅; = *C* stanza numbered 1

7-9] *A* ∅; ≠ *B* stanza 7

7-12] *B* has stanzas 7 & 8 run together, with a line omitted

8 an Emperor] the Emperor *B*

9] line omitted in *B*

Continued overleaf...

He Saw the Jig (cont.)

It has the stammering of the held-up rain,
It has the hint of old magnificence,
It is the bird that rides above the pain.

How eloquent it is. It shakes the door,
It turns and tells, and then returns to tell
That cowardice can chill the world no more.

Slowly he said, this in my people ran;
It is the top of all extravagance,
It is the blood that beats about a man.

'Tis is in the feet that must surmount the tune;
It is a Summer of uncertainties
And a white burst of brilliance in the moon.

It has no wisdom that the wise man knows;
Whistling it comes in shrill impertinence,
Whistling it runs where all the whistling goes.

10-12] *A* ∅; = *B* 22-24

13-15] *A*, *B* ∅

16-18] ≠ *A* stanza 1; ≠ *B* cancelled stanza 1 (lines 1-3) & revised stanza 1

16] 'Tis mine but not for me to foil or fan *A* •

[He said this needs not any fool to fan] *B* cancelled stanza 1 •

He said tis this that in my people ran *B* revised stanza 1

18 It is the] 'Tis in *A*

19-21] ≠ *A* stanza 2; ≠ *B* stanza 2; ≠ *E* 'new 7th stanza'

19 must] will *A*, *B*

19-21] *D* has the comment [JD]: 'Verse 7. Could you make line 2 begin with 'Tis' to go with line 1? Such as "'Tis like a Summer of uncertainties" or "'Tis a wild Summer of uncertainties"'

20] ['Tis in the fi] | It is the far off feel of Summer time *A*, *B* •

'Tis like a summer of uncertainties *E*

21] And the remembered brilliance of the moon *A* •

And the remembered brilliance o' the moon *B* •

Or a white burst of brilliance in the moon *E*

22-24] = *A*, *B* stanza 3

Continued overleaf...

He Saw the Jig (cont.)

It is no dance for cowards – it has scorn
Of the unclean – it is for Godliness:
It has the scent that all the flowers have borne.

Gaol it you cannot – 'tis the butterfly
That for the moment lives and dies, and tells,
Tells to the world that Beauty shall not die.

* * *

Kindly and wistful as a folly rhyme
It is no friend of piracy or crime:
Nay — 'tis the offspring of a golden time.

25-27] ≠ *A* stanza 5; = *B* stanza 5

25 scorn] scorn[ed] *A*

26 it is for] it has the *A*

27 It has the scent] Of all the scents *A*

28-30] ≠ *A* stanza 6; ≠ *B* stanza 6

29] That for the moment comes impertinent *A*

30] Calls to the blood the heart will never die *A* •

Tells to the world the heart can never die *B*

31-33] *A*, *B* ∅; ≠ *C* stanza numbered 2; ≠ *E* 'New 11th stanza'

31-33] *D* has the comment [JD]: 'Last verse: I think the second line should not rhyme here, because the ear has become so used to the non-rhyme'

32 no friend] not friend *C*

32] Tis of the ripening red of manliness *E*, *BI*

33] It is the God-child of a golden time *E*, *BI*

Discarded stanzas

A stanza 4, lines 10-12:

It has the wish of sunbeams and the rain
Though it should lift you out into the blue
Twill in the green come back and dance again

B stanza 4, lines 10-12:

It will come up with sunbeams and the rain
It has a truce with sorrow and it will
Out of all darkness bring the light again

HONOURABLE UNDERSTANDING ENSURES EARLY RISING

‘1929’, 44a (A0633) [A], fair draft. NLA MS 605/23 [A], fair draft, entitled ‘Gentlemen’s agreement to ensure early rising’. ML MS 3354/3-2, 7/13 [EN], transcription. LaT MS 9419/3677, typescript, entitled ‘Ingenious device to ensure early rising’.

‘1929’, 44a is the preferred text.

An eccentric old farmer at Euston
Arranged with his poultry to roost on
His hallstand – and so
When the rooster would crow
It aroused that old farmer at Euston.

3-4] The MS has these lines written as one.

HOW CAME THE LIGHT

‘1934’, 14b (A0704) [L], unfinished.

There was no hope on his forehead,
No strength on his chin:
How came the light to the poor man
On the violin?

The wise men told much of princes
Blinding each other's eyes,
Of dull men going downwards
That kingdoms might rise.

[Unfinished]

I COULD NOT SPEAK OF HAPPINESS

‘1940’, 9a (A0824) [L], fair draft.

This happiness so called me
I knew not how to turn;
I could not sing of happiness,
It would not cease to burn.

For all the thirst of morning
No drink was ever found;
I dreamed – it was the Honey Tree
Leaned heavily to the ground.

This merriment appalled me;
Its storm was in the sky,
The lightnings of the moment made
A darkness for the eye.

*

*

I sit with cold enchantments;
I dare not now delay:
I could not sing of happiness,
It burns so far away.

7 I dreamed –] I dreamed – *MS*

I SPOKE TO THE VIOLET

There are two discrete versions of this poem. The first version was written between mid-1935 and early 1936, and the poem was revised some time later and published in July 1937.

I SPOKE TO THE VIOLET [1]

‘1934’, 39b (A0729) & 41a (A0730) [L], fair draft, 4 stanzas, with a revised stanza 3 at 41a. ‘1935’, 12a (A0753) [L], unfinished, 2 stanzas and a part-stanza. ‘1936’, 11b (A0780) [L], fair draft, 4 stanzas; ‘1936’, 18a (A0787) [L], 1 stanza, under heading ‘Odd couplet for violet. NLA MS 1145/68, 1 stanza headed ‘New couplet’ (with letter 7 June 1936).

JSN - JD 3 May 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (corrections to typed copy for *BI*: ‘Page 19. I spoke to the violet. Correct’); 7 June 1936, NLA MS 1145/68 (‘Frank thought that the piece about the violet was too short’: has written another couplet (enclosed) which ‘could go in between the 2nd and 3rd couplet’).

The drafts at ‘1934’ & ‘1935’ were written about mid-1935, with a second version attempted (‘1935’, 12a) and abandoned in favour of the first (‘1934’, 39b & 41a), which was then revised in early 1936 (‘1936’, 11b). The poem was then sent to Devaney, who typed it in preparation for *BI* and N confirmed the text as ‘Correct’ in a letter dated 3 May 1936. N decided to extend the poem shortly afterwards and sent another stanza, to go between the second and third stanzas (‘1936’, 11b & MS 1145/68, enclosed with letter dated 7 June 1936).

‘1934’, 39b & 41a = A; ‘1935’, 12a = B; ‘1936’, 11b = C; ‘1936’, 18a = D; NLA MS 1145/68 (7 June 1936) = E

The fair draft at ‘1936’, 11b (C) is the preferred text.

Shy one, I said, you can take us away with a breath,
But I like not the coat that you come in – the colour of death.

The silence you come with is sweeter to me than a sound,
But I love not the colour – I saw it go into the ground.

1-2] = A 1-2

1 Shy one] Thy one C, an obvious error

3-4] = A 3-4

Continued overleaf...

I Spoke to the Violet [1] (cont.)

The shyness of love is upon you – you cannot be old;
And yet you would have me go dreaming down there in the cold.

Your scent does encompass all beauty in one loving breath,
But I like not the coat that you come with – the colour of death.

5-6] ≠ A 5-6; ≠ A '3rd stanza' (at 41a)

5] Sweet is your silence oh shy one the heart being old A •

Sweet is your silence oh shy one but silence is old A '3rd stanza'

6] You put me to dream of the many down there in the cold A •

It puts me to bed with the many down there in the cold A '3rd stanza'

7-8] = A 7-8

Discarded stanzas

B ('1935', 12a):

I spoke in the morning the shy one had made not a sound
But the colour she gave was of those that go into the ground

I said to the shy one I like not the joy of your breath
You do remind [me] of all the last colour of death

You do remind me of silence that goes in a prayer
Of God in His anger [*unfinished line*]

D 'Odd couplet for Violet':

A shade is upon you it steals on the joy in the bloom
It lives as a murmur in velvet a hint of a doom

E (enclosure, 7 June 1936):

I turn to the Visitor sorrow who stares in the bloom
Who leaves as a murmur in velvet the hint of a doom

I SPOKE TO THE VIOLET [2]

ML MS A3038/3, 19a (B0081) [FN], transcription, entitled ‘The violet’.
Sydney Morning Herald 31 July 1937; *BI* 33.

JSN - JD 4 July 1937, NLA MS 1145/68 (suggests Devaney send this piece or ‘The crane is my neighbour’ to the *Sydney Morning Herald* and adds, ‘Since you have enquired for the ‘Violet’ couplet I will send it’); 22 July 1937, NLA MS 1145/67 (corrects a mistake in the couplet he sent to JD: ‘I notice the word Native instead of Naked. I dictated naked to Annie’); 22 August 1937, NLA MS 1145/68 (received cheque for the poem from the *Sydney Morning Herald*; 4 January 1938, NLA MS 1145/68 (concerning publication of *BI*: ‘[The only correction I can think of off-hand is in ‘The violets’ in the revised edition «version» that appeared in the S.M.Herald.] If I can find it, I will put it on a separate piece of paper.’ [Enclosure dated ‘4/1/38’ is attached to letter JSN - JS 22 July 1937]).

N decided to extend the poem after he first sent it to Devaney and confirmed the text as ‘Correct’ (3 May 1936) and an additional stanza was sent shortly afterwards (7 June 1936). However, this stanza was not used, and the piece was published 31 July 1937 as a 4-stanza poem, with a couplet which does not appear in the MSS and which may be the one sent on 4 July 1937. N’s letter dated 22 July 1937, which corrects a mishearing, certainly suggests that this is the case. The enclosure with his letter dated 4 January 1938 accepts the published reading as correct (another mishearing or misreading on Annie’s part), and this note is annotated ‘corrected to ‘naked’ by S.N.’ [JD].

The *Sydney Morning Herald* is the preferred text, and N’s correction has been incorporated.

Shy one, I said, you can take me away in a breath,
 But I like not the coat that you come in – the colour of death.

The silence you come with is sweeter to me than a sound
 But I love not the colour – I saw it go into the ground.

And though you haunt me with all that is health to a rhyme
 My thoughts are as old as the naked beginning of Time.

Your scent does encompass all beauty in one loving breath
 But I like not the coat that you come in – the colour of death.

6 naked] native *SMH*, a mishearing corrected in letter 22 July 1937

IN PRAISE OF THE WIND

‘1939’, 10b-11a (A0807-8) [L], fair draft, title cancelled and retitled ‘The vassal of God’ [FN]. ML MS A3038/3, 7a (B0068), transcription [FN], entitled ‘The Vassal’, with a note [FN].

The note at the head of the transcription reads ‘Jock did not proceed with this poem, but I like it. Frank N. Never in print: about 1938’. A further note was added, ‘(Appears in print in ‘Unpublished Poems’) (F.N.)’.

The fair draft has a row of crosses between stanza 1 & 2, and the crosses, a large cross cancelling stanza 1, and the cancellation of the original title and the new title are all in Frank’s hand. This is the only instance of Frank’s hand in the texts in this notebook, and, given the further title change in the transcription, it is likely that these changes embody Frank’s editing of the text, possibly to send to Devaney. The original title and the first stanza are therefore retained.

God is so weary in counting up all who have sinned;
His vassal I know well – I cannot speak ill of the wind.

He slew the young lamb and the mother – he burned up, he ruined the hay,
But once at the midnight he caught all my sorrows away.

The sorrows were thick at the fireside and thick on the floor;
They would not walk out of the window nor look at the door.

I rose, I implored the good vassal – so urgent was I
He took all my sorrows and scattered them out to the sky.

The quiet little vassal, who cools in the joy of the tree,
He roars at the midnight, he shakes on the face of the sea.

He put my despair on the water, he lifted it clean;
He ran to the edges of Heaven where no man has been.

We wait, as the trees in the forest – how soon to be thinned:
This vassal had pity – I cannot speak ill of the wind.

IS IT A JIG

‘1939’, 13b-14a (A0811) [A], unfinished, 1 × 8-line stanza and 1 × 4-line stanza. The 4-line stanza is presented here as 8 shorter lines.

Nothing is better than merriment:
 God being Maker of all
 Never made anything braver than this that
 Comes when you give it the call.
 So in the name of your Maker
 I bid you to come in and stay with me, stay
 Larry McGublen – then get out your fiddle man –
 Is it a jig that you play?

The servant of God you are surely
 And I cannot offer you wine;
 To offer you water 'twould be an insult
 And surely the last wish of mine.
 But the ale that I have and the cheese
 And the scones that I turned out today
 Are yours – and forgive me, but take out that fiddle –
 And is it a jig that you play?

[*Unfinished*]

5 So in] So [when] in *MS*

6] Maker I [tell you to come in] «bid you to come» and stay with me stay *MS*

Line endings, stanza 2

1 wine || 2 mine || 3 today || 4 fiddle | play

IS LOVE THEN BUT A SLEEP

‘1934’, 6b (A0696) [A], fair draft, 1 x 4-line stanza and 1 x 7-line stanza, the first stanza subsequently altered by the addition of stops and capitals [A] to form a 7-line stanza. A transcription of stanza 1 is given as notes.

It is so old a thing,
 Unfed by fish or kine.
 It is unclothed by sheep,
 Uncomforted by wine.
 A bird too long on wing
 No promise can it keep:
 Is Love then but a Sleep?

It sees all things go by,
 Little of Earth it knows.
 It cares not who shall reap
 In poisonous repose.
 It sees all leavening die,
 It can no promise keep:
 Is Love then but a Sleep?

9] [It knows n] *MS*, preceding line 9, a false start
 14 a Sleep] asleep *MS*

Stanza 1:

It is so old a thing. [unfed] Unfed by fish or kine
 It is unclothed by sheep. [uncomforted] Uncomforted by wine
 A bird too long on wing. [no] No promise can it keep
 Is [then] Love then but [asleep] a Sleep

IT HAS COME IN THE CORN

‘1929’, 19b (A0608) [A], fair draft.

There is the sorrow of lambs and of ewes that are shorn,
But here at the gate of the Summer a new love is born:
It is fine – and too fine for the telling – it is out of the corn.

The heads of the barley can whisper, but never could sing,
And the oats only rustle, as many birds out on the wing:
The wheat is in laughter – it cannot be calm in the Spring.

The vines are so deep in their glory, as people who scorn
The sluggard who says that our wisdom has left us forlorn:
This joy I am telling – the joy has come out of the corn.

KEEPING SO THIN

‘1936’, 18b-19a (A0788) [A] & 19b-20a (A0789) [FN], draft, 10 stanzas, with stanzas numbered 1-6 at 18b-19a (stanzas 5 & 6 cancelled), a revised stanza 5 (cancelled) and stanzas numbered 6, 7 & 5 at 20b (with renumbering), and a note at 19b. NLA MS 6946/21 [FN], fair draft, 9 stanzas, numbered 1-4, stanza 4 renumbered 5, stanzas 6-7, stanzas renumbered to 8 & 6 and stanza 4. NLA MS 1145/63 (JSN - JD 30 October 1938) [FN], fair copy, 8 stanzas; NLA MS 1145/63 (JSN - JD 15 November 1938) [FN], revisions; NLA MS 1145/63, typescript [JD], with revisions (JSN – JD 15 November 1938) added in margin); NLA MS 1145/63 (JSN - JD 29 November 1938) [A], revisions; NLA MS 1145/63 (JSN - JD 26 December 1938), typescript [?]; NLA MS 1145/63 (JSN - JD 26 December 1938) [FN], revisions. *Herald* (Melbourne) 14 January 1939.

JSN - JD, NLA MSS 1145/63: 30 October 1938 (encloses poem, and comments); 15 November 1938 (response to a comment from JD, with a revision, and asks JD to type the poem); 29 November 1938, continued on 30 November 1938 (response to comments from JD, with revisions); n.d. [‘19.12.1938 – JD’] (response to further comments by JD concerning the revisions, with comment ‘I feel confident that I can fix this piece up in a few days’); 26 December 1938 (encloses a ‘revised version’, discusses revisions, encloses revised stanzas 3, 4 & 7, and asks JD to send him a typed copy); 8 January 1939 (incorrectly dated 1938) (is sending poem to the *Herald* ‘today’; discusses another comment by JD); 19 January 1939 (discusses caption with published text and the misreading of the poem, and an alteration to the text). JSN - Beatrice Fowler 18 January 1939, NLA MS 2022/1/743-744 (incorrectly dated 1938) (‘The Herald people have altogether misunderstood ‘Keeping so Thin’’). JSN - E (Ted) Turner 19 January 1939, NLA MS 2410 (incorrectly dated 1938) (discusses the misreading of the poem, alteration to the text, and the illustration which accompanied the poem, which he did not like, and says he has ‘written a very mild protest to the editor’). JSN - E (Ted) Harrington 24 January 1939, NLA MS 1145/70 (discusses the *Herald*’s ‘mistake’).

Correspondence is given after discarded stanzas.

The draft occurs in a notebook dated 1936; however, it is likely that this was written some time later, as it comes after material that was being prepared for *BI* and occurs amongst lists of titles and blank pages (with two other poems, which do not appear in *BI*) and a poem outline. N told Devaney in the letter with the poem that he had not ‘done much rhyming for about 2 years now’ (the period during which he and Devaney were trying to get *BI* published), and the poem was probably written not long before he sent it to Devaney.

The revisions are part of the one process of composition: the typescript, NLA MS 1145/63 (26 December 1938) (G), is therefore taken as a base text and the revisions appended to this (H) are incorporated.

‘1936’, 18b-19a & 19b-20a = A; NLA MS 6946/21 = B; NLA MS 1145/63 (30 October 1938) = C; NLA MS 1145/63 (15 November 1938) = D; NLA MS 1145/63 (typescript, 29 November 1938) = E; NLA MS 1145/63 (29 November 1938) = F; NLA MS 1145/63 (typescript, 26 December 1938) = G; NLA MS 1145/63 (26 December 1938) = H

Continued overleaf...

Keeping so Thin (cont.)

The red cow will come, it is even
 With frost in the air;
 The white blood she gives for the little one
 Keeping so fair.

The father will say at the sundown,
 How white is her skin!
 He looks for the smile of the little one
 Keeping so thin.

The red cow is out on the rushes,
 The old swans near by;
 They see all the turns in the weather,
 The scowl in the sky.

The land is all buckshot and sorrow,
 It cries like a prayer.
 The rubble it writes in the cutting grass:
 Famine is there.

1-4] = *A, B, C, E, Her*

5-8] = *A, B, C, E, Her*

5 at the] [to] «at» the *A*

9-12] = *A, B, C; ≠ E, G; = Her*

10 go by] near by *H* • go by *E* • [near] «go» [JD] *G*

13-16] *A* ∅; ≠ *B* stanza 4; ≠ *C* stanza 4; ≠ *D* 'alteration to 4th stanza | in 1st line of 'Keeping so thin'; ≠ *E* stanza 4; ≠ *F* 'Keeping so thin | 4th stanza'; ≠ *G*; = *H* '4th stanza'; ≠ *Her*

13] It is down in that hard country *B, C* •

It is down in that unkind country *D*, preceded by '?' [JD] •

It is down in the grave country *D*, preceded by '? or' [JD], and followed by 'etc' •

It is down in that unkind country *E* •

The land is all buckshot and sorrow *F* transposed to *E* [JD], *G, H, Her*

15] The buckshot agrees with the cutting grass *B, C, D, E* •

The rubble it speaks in the cutting grass *F*, transposed to *E* [JD], *G* •

The rubble it writes in the cutting grass *H, Her*

16 Famine] That famine *B* • The famine *Her*

Continued overleaf...

Keeping so Thin (cont.)

The young lad has toppled the sheoak,
The red cow comes in;
She eats of the leaves for the little one
Keeping so thin.

The lean year it is for the honey
When half the trees fail,
But the red cow is good to the little one
Keeping so pale.

The father has fears at the sundown
What grave night can bear
To the little one having no mother,
And seeming so fair.

The young girl who watches at nightfall
Old dreams will obey
Of dim time – the fairies – the moonlight –
The lifting away.

17-20] = *A* stanza 4, = *B* stanza [4] 5, *C*, *E*, *Her*

17 sheoak] sheoak* *A*, *B*, with a note: 'In the eighties sheoak leaves were still used for feeding cattle in parts of Victoria'

19] [she eats of the long leaves] *A* cancelled and rewritten

21-24] *A* ∅; = *B*, *C*, *D*, *F*, *Her*

25-28] ≠ *A* stanza numbered 5 [5]; ≠ *B* & *B* cancelled stanza 6 [5] [6], *C*; = *E*; ≠ *F* '7th stanza'; ≠ *G*; = *H* '7th stanza', *Her*

25] The hard man will watch at the sundown *A*, *B* cancelled stanza •

The father he knows what the Blackness *F*, transposed to *D* [JD], with note, 'feels or fears': *F* has: 'In first line put fields [feels] or fears if you like either better than knows'

26] His eyes full of care *A* •

His eyes [full of] «have the» care *B* cancelled stanza •

The Untold can bear *F*, transposed to *D* [JD], with 'Unseen' added as an alternative •

E has comment 'In second line try Unseen if you like it better than Untold' •

What the long night may bear *B*, *C*, *E*, *G* •

What grave Night can bear *H*, *Her*

27 To the] For the *A*, *B* cancelled stanza

28 seeming] keeping *A*, *B* cancelled stanza, *E* transposed from *F* [JD], *F*

29-32] ≠ *A* stanza numbered 7 [6] [6]; ≠ *B* stanza 8 [7] [6]; = *C*, *E*, *G*, *Her*

30 will obey] [would] will *A*

31] Of old time, and fairies; the moonlight; *A*, *B* •

Of [old] «dim» time . . . [and] «the» fairies . . . the moonlight . . . [sic] *C*

Continued overleaf...

Keeping so Thin (cont.)

Discarded stanzas

A cancelled stanza 5 & cancelled stanza 'verse 5':

The young Aunt will call her the Angel *cancelled stanza 5*
 The Young Girl will call her the angel *cancelled 'verse 5'*
 And slow will she say
 Twas such as she once that the fairies *cancelled stanza 5*
 Of old would the fairies have lifted *cancelled 'verse 5'*
 Did call far away *cancelled stanza 5*
 This sweet one away *cancelled 'verse 5'*

A cancelled stanza 6 & stanza numbered 6:

The hard man will watch at the sundown
 The red [cow] come in
 The white blood is all for the little one *cancelled stanza 6*
 For the little one having no mother *stanza 6*
 Keeping so thin *cancelled stanza 6*
 And keeping so thin *stanza 6*

JSN - JD 30 October 1938:

I am enclosing 'Keeping so Thin'. I have in mind some of the rather poor country where I was raised. Just below Minimay there was some cutting or sword grass country. There was very little sheoak where we were for it had been fallen years before. It usually flourished on sand rises near the swamps. If a man took an axe and chopped at any tree, a bullock or anything else, the cattle would come away from the floating grass and the rushes in the swamp expecting a feed on the dry land. The sheoak tops were devoured greedily by the cattle.

In 1889 I was post splitting in the western district and I know the bullockies had nothing for their bullocks except the sheoaks. One could understand how important the sheoak was when the cow was depending almost entirely upon it and on the cow depended the life of the young child without a mother.

The last stanza seems rather vague but we are dealing with a very misty subject. The reference to the 'lean' year for the honey is in order. Some dry years there is very little bloom of any sort. I haven't done much rhyming for about 2 years now, and I don't feel very confident – I would like to have your opinion.

P.S.

Note re. poem: Buckshot or iron stone gravel was generally on very poor country in the Minimay district.

Continued overleaf...

Keeping so Thin (cont.)

JSN - JD 29 November 1938:

I got your letter, and the typed verse. You are right. The 4th and 7th stanzas are the poorest. In this kind of irregular verse one gets a better notion of it by hearing it all off several times. My memory is very poor, and I can't see how my verse looks. The trouble with the 4th stanza, the 3rd line in it is too long. In this sort of verse I think the 1st and 3rd line should be 9 syllables and the 2nd and 4th, 4 or 5. Even at their best they are a little bit uneven.

KEEPING SO THIN

4th Stanza

The land is all buckshot and sorrow
It cries like a prayer
The rubble it speaks in the cutting-grass
Famine is there

7th Stanza

The father he knows what the Blackness
The Untold can hear
To the little one having no mother
And keeping so fair

P.S. In first line put fields [feels] or fears if you like either better than knows.
In second line try Unseen if you like it better than Untold.

JSN - JD 30 November 1938:

I could not finish the verse last night. I am afraid I was in too much of a hurry: I have used the word rubble which is the word we have often used instead of gravel. The ironstone rubble is forced up by the roots of the cutting grass and shows very plainly the poor character of the soil.

If you think this rhyme will pass muster you can type it when you find time.

JSN - JD [19 December 1938]:

Frank read the revised version of 'Keeping so Thin' several times to me. I think that you are right in the main about the alterations ... I sometimes had this experience with A.G.S. He often very truthfully pointed out that my alterations were not happy. I feel confident that I can fix this piece up in a few days. I will send it in to you some time before Xmas. You could then at your leisure, after New Year get it typed again. I could get one of the girls in the office to type it but I am always anxious about the punctuation.

JSN - JD 26 December 1938:

I enclose a revised version of 'Keeping so Thin'. Re the 3rd Stanza

In the 2nd line I have put in 'Near by' instead of 'go by'. In the 1st place I dictated 'near by' but the change has come in somehow. The 'go by' presents the picture of the swans flying past. My idea was the swans were sailing slowly round among the reeds; possibly nest building. As you know they have the reputation of having uncanny wisdom about the weather.

Re the 4th Stanza

I prefer the present 1st line to the other version. In the 3rd line I have put in writes instead of speaks. I think it runs better with rubble. It seems to be more vivid.

7th Stanza

I have stuck to the original 1st line. I have shortened the 2nd line: it measures right now: I think the word 'grave' chimes well with 'having' in the 3rd line.

Continued overleaf...

Keeping so Thin (cont.)

When you have plenty of time you can type the piece and send it back.

4th Stanza

The land is all buckshot and sorrow
 It cries like a prayer
 The rubble it writes in the cutting grass
 Famine is there

7th Stanza

The father has fears at the sundown
 What grave Night can bear
 To the little one having no mother
 And seeming so fair

KEEPING SO THIN

3rd Stanza

The red cow is out on the rushes
 The old swans near by
 They see all the turns in the weather
 The scowl in the sky

JSN - JD 8 January 1939:

I am sending 'Keeping so Thin' to the Herald today. I note what you say about may instead of can. I believe that may conveys the meaning better, but I am retaining can because I think it runs better.

JSN - JD 19 January 1939:

I sent 'Keeping so Thin' to the Herald about New Year and they put it in on Saturday 14 January. You will see that they have made a rather ridiculous mistake.

The rhyme has nothing to do with the want of rain at all. Down in the poor buckshot country it is the rain that actually causes the famine. The Herald people were mixed up with the heat wave and the bush fires and so made the mistake.

I had thought of putting a footnote explaining about the falling of sheoak for cattle, but I decided not to do so. I thought it might seem clumsy, and possibly appear that I was taking myself very seriously. You will notice they have put the in front of famine and made the line too long. This metre seems rather tricky. One has to count the 1st and 2nd line and make it equal to the 3rd and 4th. I believe that in the typed copy they were correct right through. We must expect this sort of thing from newspapers generally.

I wrote a very mild protest to the Editor of the Magazine Section. I told him he could publish it if he liked, but if he did not care to, it did not matter. Holt of the Herald has been exceptionally kind to me in reviews. I must remember that.

LOVE IS A BERRY

‘1934’, 29a (A0718) [L], fair draft, 5 stanzas. This is a second, discrete version of ‘The ways of the wildflower’, q.v.

It loves not the garden nor the quiet row;
To the bare hillsides it will turn to go.

On it is grafted all the laws of man
But ’tis a wild thing of the berry clan.

It has been bound up by every lie,
Shorn by the sharp shears and left to die.

It will leave the garden and the quiet row;
To the hard soil and evil it will turn to go.

Still ’tis the outcast who laughs at man:
Oh, the poor wild thing of the berry clan.

6 and left] and [made] «left» *MS*

MAKING CHURCH SERVICES ATTRACTIVE

‘1929’, 45a (A0634) [A], entitled ‘Extraordinary conduct of youthful parishioner’. NLA MS 605/25 [A], fair draft. ML MS 3354/3-2, 15b [EN], transcription. LaT MS 9419/3677, typescript, entitled ‘Danger of undue optimism’.

NLA MS 605/25, the fair draft, is the preferred text.

There was an old Bishop called Gault,
Solemnity was his main fault;
So he screwed up a smile
As he hopped down the aisle
Then he turned a profound somersault.

NATIVE COMPANIONS DANCING

CP 148.

Constance Robertson - JSN c. October 1933, NLA MS 1145/30 (this is one of several MSS amongst A.G. Stephens's papers which may or may not have been published). *HI* has an entry: 'Title among list of 11 poems headed 'Poems in which the Author has complete rights and ownership, in A.G.S's hand, [McKimm MSS]', not located.

Punctuation is reproduced from the printed text.

On the blue plains in wintry days
These stately birds move in the dance.
Keen eyes have they, and quaint old ways
On the blue plains in wintry days.
The Wind, their unseen Piper, plays,
They strut, salute, retreat, advance;
On the blue plains in wintry days,
These stately birds move in the dance.

NINE MOONS IN A SONG

‘1936’, 17a [A], fair draft. NLA MS 1145/47 [L], fair copy, annotated ‘Where does this appear?’ [Chaplin?].

JSN - JD 26 April 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (enclosing poem, and says ‘I dare say you have seen the idea of the moons piece before’); 10 May 1936, NLA MS 1145/33 (received typed copy of ‘The moons’ with JD’s comments).

Correspondence is given after the notes.

The fair copy is the preferred text.

‘1936’, 17a = A; MS 1145/47 = B

The tears come quick in Springtime,
The joys roll in between,
And unrehearsed amazement falls
With questioning on the green.

The Summer is the answering,
It tires not all day long:
The moons magnificent arrive
With full words to the song,

Then comes that ghost, the echo,
As one who fears to reign;
Too close unto an old valley
The Autumn is the pain.

Title] A postscript under the signature reads: ‘Do you think the title too clumsy? Perhaps ‘The nine moons’, or merely ‘Nine moons’ would be better’. *B*

1 come quick] are hot *A*

2] The laugh is long and clean *A*

3] The new – the old amazement comes *A*

4 questioning] questionings *A*

6] That burns up all day long *A*

7] The moon of excellence arrive[s] *A*

8] At half-way in the song *A*

10] In drowsiness and rain *A*

JSN - JD 26 April 1936:

I daresay you have seen the idea of the moons piece before. Some years back I remember reading what a musical man wrote about song making. He divided each song into three parts. The question, the answer, and the echo. I don’t think he is always right, but of course it is the chorus, the echo, that always lives. We understand this when we bring to mind songs like ‘Annie Laurie’, ‘Home sweet home’, and ‘Killarney’. I finish this rhyme with Autumn, the time of remembrance. Winter is the old valley which is merely hinted at.

JSN - JD 10 May 1936:

I got your letter with typed copy of ‘The moons’. I note what you say and agree that we would be better to try and keep the line ‘Nine moons in a Song’ for the last line. I will see what I can do with it next month.

NOT ALTOGETHER UNEXPECTED

‘1929’, 44b (A0634) [A], fair draft. ML MS 3354/3-2, 7/13 [EN], transcription.

There was an old man of Kentucky,
And he was remarkably plucky;
It was one of his larks
To swim among sharks
But one day he ceased – being lucky.

5 ceased –] ceased – *MS*

OF BERRIES SO EXTREME

NLA MS 1145/74(b), typescript [JD], 4 stanzas, headed 'Your first rough draft of'. NLA MS 1145/48, typescript [JD], 4 stanzas, with notes, and annotation '(Unfinished)'. Written while Neilson was in Brisbane in 1941.

The second of the two typescripts is the preferred text.

Of strawberries in the Spring,
Of berries so extreme,
Softly they say to all
As if they did recall
Some roguery in a dream —

These berries white and red
Still with a joy endure,
As holy bells that sound
Along the enchanted ground
Against all things unpure.

There is that berry dark
Who sits up in a tree;
Too distant for a friend,
It tells of the dark end,
Chills of eternity.

In haytime happiness
There lives no scent of sin;
Berries of violet bear
All loves upon a prayer
The sheltering leaves within.

[*Unfinished*]

- 6-10] *MS* 1145/48 has a note: 'Verse 2, strawberries'
6 These] There *MS* 1145/74(b)
7 Still] As still *MS* 1145/74(b)
10 unpure] impure *MS* 1145/74(b)
11-15] *MS* 1145/48 has a note: 'Verse 3, the mulberry'
12 in] on *MS* 1145/74(b)
20 sheltering] violet *MS* 1145/74(b)

ONE JOURNEY MORE

‘1934’, 42a (A0731) [L], unfinished.

It’s an old man you are – but lots of the best in your chin;
True it is trying to break out there under your skin
But let us be off with you now and your old violin.

Take us out there I tell you – I don’t mind the feel of the dew;
The leaves they can hold up the birds that will go with us too
And tell me of all the old flowers that you trod on your way coming through.

[*Unfinished*]

1 lots] lot[s] *MS*

4 I don’t mind] I [never] «don’t» mind *MS*

ONLY OF SAILORS

‘1934’, 8a (A0697) [A], unfinished.

Always they come, barbaric, bold,
Dancing and waving, shod with gold,
By a most gracious tempest hurled
Into the bosom of the World.

The young maids wandering to the day
Gladly salute them by the way:
Always to sailors will they cling;
Only of sailors so I sing.

Boisterous, barbaric, on the flood,
Have they not given feast of blood?
'Tis on the canvas to be spilled;
Song it is ever filled and filled.

[Unfinished]

PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE OF FOOD VALUES

NLA MS 605/24 [A], fair draft. LaT MS 9419/3677, typescript. NLA MS 1145/76, typescript [FN], entitled 'The doctor's dilemma'.

The fair draft is the preferred text.

A well-known doctor of Tamworth
Was asked what he thought turnip jam worth:
As he felt rather tired
He politely inquired
What would you consider a damn worth?

POLICE PICNIC

‘1934’, 5a-5b (A0694-5) [A], fair draft.

Hard men they were – they had been hated sore
For thirteen moons, and now one day did take.
Softening to smiles they now did think no more
Of the dull sinners who come out to break
Laws that did the sternest statesmen strive to make.
Let every law, they said, dry up, decay!
All this was on the hard men’s holiday.

In the high noon they played about the trees,
Made gentle happiness for children there;
Watched for the flight of butterflies and bees,
Scented the honey that the tall trees bear,
Reached into happiness to take a share.
There is no sin, they said, it falls away!
All this was on the hard men’s holiday.

5 Laws] [The] Laws *MS*

7 men’s] mans *MS*

REMARKABLE CLARITY OF EXPRESSION

NLA MS 605/24, [A], fair draft.

A lecturer whom we love dearly
Was stung by some bees most severely:
Did he swear or get narked?
Not at all – he remarked
They express themselves rather too clearly!

SAINT DOROTHY

NLA MS 1145/48, typescript [JD], unfinished, 5 stanzas, with a note; NLA MS 1145/48, typescript [JD], 6 stanzas. The poem was written in 1941 when Neilson was in Brisbane.

He apparently commenced the poem while staying with James Devaney and did not finish it; then, when visiting Frank Francis, he dictated it as a new poem with an additional stanza.

Through faint remembrance of the summer days,
Of Summer, scarlet in a glorious prime,
Here wistfully, while Winter still delays,
I must conduct for Dorothy a rhyme.

Her rudeness is atrocious – she is slim;
Summer is with her, all the scent and bloom:
And as for Death, she has no fear of him,
That conscientious Foreman-in-the-gloom.

Red is her rudeness with stings in all the quips;
Life is confounded in its madcap-time
By the insurgent lightning of the lips
Of Dorothy, for whom I heat the rhyme.

Sometimes I would talk of the Beyond,
But awful energies with her are vain.
Said she, all men of such romance are fond,
Out of the mist come back and live again.

How dark it is upon Life's riverside,
Yet Dorothy could call the flowers to bloom:
And all day long in mirth she would deride
That conscientious Foreman-in-the-gloom.

So resolute she is, and yet so slim,
So filled with all the rage of summertime:
And this dull Foreman, she must laugh at him,
This Dorothy for whom I heat the rhyme.

21-24] = NLA MS 1148 typescript, unfinished

NLA MS 1145/48: the note with the unfinished draft reads:

The rest of the verses (six) were all left incomplete before he tired of this poem and turned to others. He said: 'It's really about a nurse. I like the name Dorothy. I called her Saint Dorothy because she has saintly qualities – courage in gloom and not afraid of Death, the old Foreman a sort of will-worker for God, a servile flunkey for Him doing His dirty work, trapping people into the dark river where all is gloomy and sad, and where there is no bridge. The old fellow all the time is trying to get them in and drown them. But she laughs at him, she works against him all the time. She has contempt for him.'

SAY SUMMER SHALL NOT DIE

‘1934’, 2b (A0692) [A], fair draft, 3 stanzas. ‘1936’, 8b (A0777) [L], 2 stanzas.

The earlier 3-stanza version, ‘1934’, 2b (A), is the preferred text. The rhyme scheme clearly indicates that lines 3 & 4 are in the wrong order, perhaps the result of copying.

‘1934’, 2b = A; ‘1936’, 8b = B

Say as the seasons pass,
 Say to the living tree,
 All movements on the grass,
 All things that toil for fee,
 Unto the last goodbye
 Say loud to all who pass
 That Summer shall not die.

Say as the hands recede,
 Say as the feet default,
 Let no too cautious creed
 Counsel your soul to halt;
 All dried-up Laws defy:
 Say while the eyes recede
 That Summer shall not die.

Though Reason in the cold
 Sits as an Emperor,
 Say loudly, it is gold,
 My thoughts are gossamer:
 With loveless lips and dry,
 Say to that Emperor
 That Summer shall not die.

Title] Say, Summer shall not die *A*

3] = *A* line 4; = *B* line 3

3] All [flowers that] «movements» on the grass *B* line 3

4] = *A* line 3; = *B* line 4

4 fee] fee[d] *A*

12 All] [Though bot] All *A*

19 With loveless] With [thirsty] loveless *A*

21 not die] not [se] die *A*

15-21] omitted *B*

SAY THIS FOR LOVE

NLA MS 1145/48, typescript [JD], with notes. Written in 1941 when Neilson was in Brisbane.

Say this for love, when the great summer time
Is gone and only winter wisdoms blow,
Fiercely he burned like some imperious rhyme
Burned and he burned but would not let me go.

Say this – his ominous riddlings were so deep
I could not see, I knew not where he trod;
He did from out a thousand centuries creep
As some insurgent enemy of God.

Say this for love, you did smite to kill,
And you did lie – it was my soul to soil.
Dressed as a hatred you did flog me still
Chained to the last insanities in toil.

Say this for love, for all the ills in him
I give forgiveness for the lies he told.
Say this for love, when both the eyes are dim
And darkness leaves you whimpering in the cold.

3] Devaney's note reads: Verse 1 line 3. JSN: 'Imperious is not the word, but I'll put it in'.

9 you did smite] you who did smite *MS*

The last stanza was rewritten. The discarded stanza reads:

Say this for love oh fire of love delay
Love me and tell me all the lies you told
When a reproach to love you feel your way
Dark to the springboard whimpering at the cold

A further note reads:

JSN: 'The man is trying to tell Love the disastrous thing it has been to him. Now he is old and going to the springboard, he sees he must not be too bitter about what it has done to him – tied him down, made him suffer. He says that Love was worth it all.'

SCATTERED

‘1939’, 7b-9a (A0804-6) [A], fair draft, with 2 lines at 7b [JSN], then poem recommenced at 8a [A].

Darkness now settles – such a night –
 Sinners see clearly – how they sinned:
 You that were with us in the light
 You have been given to that wind.

How wickedly you were consumed;
 But as a flower leaves scent behind
 Beauty of moments that you bloomed
 Burn in the caverns of the mind.

Out of this earth I cannot reach;
 Out of the sunlight and the dew
 I shall be listening for the speech
 Of gaieties that run with you.

Dust on the roadside still may hold
 Joy without body, love, or home:
 You may be wavering with the gold
 Of spring-time to the honey-comb.

3 that were] that was *MS*

16 Of spring-time] [some] «Of» spring-time *MS*

Discarded lines at 7b [JSN]:

Darkness now settles – such a night
 Sinners fall backward – how they sinned

SOME THIEVERY OF OLD

NLA MS 1145/48, typescript [JD], unfinished, with notes. Written in 1941 when Neilson was in Brisbane.

How long ago since first a thief was I –
That time I was too close unto the earth
And yet God was upon me from the sky.

Pain was about the world: I saw the pain.
I looked all day for light – the touch of gold
Brought to me generous thirst and generous pain.

I would not speak to God for well I knew
He did much count on well-loved little things,
The Challenger who walked about the blue.

Let me go back to where I first began:
Sweet was the world, made sweet with promises.
I could not walk where all around me ran.

A few moons gone I had assailed the nest
Of every brooding bird who caught the Spring,
I was not guiltless either east or west.

Then to the great Controller of the sky
I said, the birds in love I hinder not,
I have no wish that any more shall die.

Dull was my axe and hard my heart next day;
Feverish my hands – then could I pity not.
Murder was in me and I lived to slay.

Then did I haste, I scented honeycomb;
Nor did I stop till in the gold I saw
The windblown carriers clambering to their home.

It was the time when bees in folly swarm
And I myself have great remembrance
[*Unfinished*]

Continued overleaf...

Some Thievery of Old (cont.)

There was an old-time peace upon the hay;
Then drank we well of saffron home-made ale,
And happiness sat never far away.

In the long grass I saw a golden mare
And by her side the tall comedian;
The foal with eyes all innocent was there.

Six weeks ahead there loomed the holy time,
Then every housewife made the generous sweets
Welcome as little warblings in a rhyme.

In the full strength of summer sauntering by
Sweet was the smoke about the whitening world;
Still in my heart the uncaught thief was I.

Then did I thief – there was a wealth of bloom;
Bees I defied – my heart would pity not.
I slew the young, I saw them in their doom.

But still the Challenger who roved the blue
Would speak – how slow He spoke about the law,
And He would say, my rage may fall on you.

But being now full sixteen years and strong
I would dispute with Him – I feared Him not.
I said, You have been Challenger too long.

Now being old and thick with fears the sky
Where the Controller lives came close to me,
And winter tells how long a thief was I.

But unto God I say, Your work is slow:
Long was the sunlight slumbering, dull were you
When in the dark you taught the wind to blow.

For thirteen years in prison dim was I.
Sunlight I saw not – it was blasphemy
To look for loving-kindness in the sky.

31-33] annotated 'This verse discarded' [JD]

Continued overleaf...

Some Thievery of Old (cont.)

My life did seem as some unsightly psalm.
Daily I ate profound absurdities;
All that was evil came into the calm.

There was but only mockery of the Spring,
And the accountant feared incessantly
That a stray warbler might be heard to sing.

Once in a while I sought a holy day
Out to the edge to have encouragement,
But the dull moan of Business led the way.

Once in the Spring I had sweet scent of air
And a quaint pony mother met my eye,
And a comedian, my beloved, was there.

Blue, he was blue, as well becomes a foal.
Proudly he stood with all benevolence;
Great were his eyes with cleansing of the soul.

Autumn is now not any friend of mine;
Long have I scented some deceitfulness
And so I question all things called divine.

This salve diplomacy around me strewn
Deceives me not – 'tis not benevolence
That makes the sun mild-mannered as the moon.

This long politeness merely coats a crime:
Much I would rather sheer intolerance –
Some honesty there lives in winter time.

Sometimes unto the Challenger I say,
Spare me no longer for my thieveries;
Slay me, if Thou have competence to slay.

70 blue] The reference is to a blue roan, a horse that has white hairs mixed with black.

Continued overleaf...

Some Thievery of Old (cont.)

Seeing Your world I treat You as a foe.
Dull – You are dull – I know not Challenger
How in the dark the wind began to blow.

[Unfinished]

The typescript has notes headed ‘Notes on the above’:
Verse 12, the holy time. JSN: ‘That was Christmas, of course.’

Verses 22, 23, to the edge: the edge of the town. JSN: ‘Sometimes in the Spring I’d get away on a Sunday just to see a mare and foal, I never get tired of foals . . . A foal is not suspicious. People are suspicious.’

After verse 24. JSN: ‘Now a sudden break – I want to get in a bit about the autumn. It’s good to be a bit abrupt in these things. You have to manoeuvre like that when you make up verse. It’s full of jobbery and all sorts of dodges.’

SONG FOR A HONEYMOON

There are three discrete versions of this poem. The first, written c. 1927, is a short piece of three stanzas, similar in tone and rhythm to ‘Stony Town’ which occurs in the same notebook: the second and third, which developed from this, are longer poems that were commenced in late 1929 or early 1930 and completed in 1931.

SONG FOR A HONEYMOON [2]

‘1929’, 2b-4b (A0592-4) & 6b-7a (A0596) [A], draft, 12 stanzas numbered 1-12, with stanzas 3, 4 & 9 cancelled. ML MS 4937/5, 477-487 [A], fair copy, 11 stanzas, with letter 16 August 1931, the MS numbered I [AGS]. ‘1929’, 30b-33a (A0619-0621) [A], 9 stanzas (5 stanzas, 4 of them revised). ML MS 4937/5, 499-507 [A], 5 stanzas, with letter 6 September 1931. ML MS 4937/5, 515-521 [A], 2 stanzas under heading ‘Odd Verses’, with letter 13 September 1931. ML MS 4937/7-4, typescript [AGS], with comments. This is a later version of a poem written c.1927, ‘Song for a honeymoon’ [1].

JSN - AGS 2 August 1931 (concerning a proposed edition and poems he wants omitted: offers as a substitute ‘a pretty long piece’ which he wrote ‘4 or 5 years ago’); 10 August 1931 (will finish the verse and send); 16 August 1931 (encloses poem: says ‘Of course it’s all wrong, it’s not a honeymoon song at all’, and adds, ‘I have been thinking of another couple of verses for it’). AGS - JSN 18 August 1931 (says ‘Honeymoon song is good – we can touch it up a bit’, and offers suggestions). JSN - AGS 23 August 1931 (has written ‘four fresh verses and altered one of the old ones’, and says he will hold them for a fortnight because he ‘may be able to improve them’); 6 September 1931 (enclosing five new stanzas, says ‘You can fit them in where you think best’, and adds ‘I could not altogether follow the ideas you suggested’); 13 September 1931 (says ‘I got your letter the other day’, and encloses two stanzas: ‘one an alteration of the one you complained about’, and the other, ‘a fresh stanza for my ancestors’).

Stephens misread the poem, and N pointed this out to him in his letter dated 23 August 1931: however, he agreed that Stephens’s interpretation was a better idea and the additional stanzas sent on 6 September 1931 and 13 September 1931 reflect the attempt to develop this interpretation. (He told Stephens that his idea was ‘that the goodly man was a person apart from the hero (the bridegroom)’, and continued, ‘From your letter I should say that you have put the two into one’.) Stephens typed the poem, combining the stanzas from MS 4937/5, 477-487 (the fair copy) and MS 4937/5, 499-507 and MS 4937/5, 515-521 (the additional stanzas), and returned it to N, with further suggestions for improvement (MS 4937/7-4), but N was apparently not happy with this, for he sent another version of the poem on 3 November 1931, in which he dropped several stanzas from the first fair copy, added two new stanzas, and created what is another, discrete, version – ‘Song for a honeymoon’ [3], q.v.

Correspondence is given after the notes.

On this basis, the fair copy, MS 4937/5, 477-487 (B), is taken as the preferred text. Discarded stanzas are shown at the end of the notes.

‘1929’, 2b-4b & 6b-7a = A; MS 4937/5, 477-487 = B; ‘1929’, 30b-33a = C; MS 4937/5, 499-507 = D; MS 4937/5, 515-521 = E; MS 4937/7-4 = F

Continued overleaf...

Song for a Honeymoon [2] (cont.)

Here am I in a downcast mood, for the glistening pair I know
 Have both defied me to fashion a song to carry them out in the glow,
 Have both defied me to rattle the words, and how shall I find a tune?
 I long for a man with a goodly air for a song for a honeymoon.

Now here is a matter of life and death, of strength that cannot yield,
 Of the steadfast eye of the steadfast thought with every pain concealed.
 Now here is a matter of reddest war, and fierce lights in the sky,
 That will not falter or turn aside though all that it loves should die.

Now here is a purpose grim and great for a stronger speech than mine –
 The bravery never came out of the mist and never was born of wine.
 My eyes are slow and my speech is slow and my thoughts fade out too soon,
 I long for a man with a goodly air for a song for a honeymoon.

1-4] ≠ *A*; ≠ *F*

1 downcast mood] downcast «thoughtful» mood [AGS] *F*

3 to rattle] to find *A*

3] Have both defied me to rattle the words and how shall I find a tune «to meet with [a] bridal tune» [AGS] *F*

4 air for] air with *A*

4] I long for a man with a goodly air «And show them a man with a goo[dly]» for a song for a honeymoon [AGS] *F*

5-8] = *A*; = *F*. *F* has the stanza cancelled, with the comment ‘? out. Too mixed’ [AGS]

6 with every pain] [that] «with» every pain *A*

9-12] ≠ *A* cancelled stanza 3; ≠ *F*

10] [For] «The» bravery never came out of the mist [or] «and» never was born of wine *B* •

For bravery never came out of the mist or never was born of wine *A* •

The bravery never «For [courage] «valour» that never» came out of the mist and never was born of wine [AGS] *F*

11] But the red blood moves and my speech is slow and my thoughts fade out too soon *A*

Continued overleaf...

Song for a Honeymoon [2] (cont.)

Good patriots all I love, and so as a patriot I shall thieve
Of the crow's call, and the swan's call, and the faintest call at eve;
Of happier days and the Summer light I will take me a red man's share
And I'll talk so long and often of God like an old thief at his prayer.

Oh, the birds are brave – 'twas they who took the cowardice out of man,
The timorous shepherd listened long ere ever a song began –
The birds are brave at the white of day when their hearts come out so soon:
I long for a man with a goodly air for a song for a honeymoon.

The rattle of Life can best be found in a brimmed-up fighting man
Who laughs at the wind and the sun and the rain as only a fighter can;
Who fears no devil except the fear that cowardly men conceal,
Who quarrels with nature and knows the pride that only a man can feel.

The measure of Life can best be found in a woman wise and fair,
With peace and plenty about her mouth and the goodwill in her hair;
Whose eyes have courage to fight with death, who will not likely yield,
Who knows the sorrows of all the race that never could yet be healed.

13-16] *A* ∅; = *F*. *F* has the comment 'This is squaring up. Hit out!' [AGS] at the top of the page

14 call at eve] call [of Eve] «at» eve *B*

15-16] *F* has the comment 'Not good' in the margin [AGS]

17-20] ≠ *A*; = *F*. *F* has the comment 'off beat' in the margin [AGS]

19] The birds are brave at the white of dawn they never can speak too soon *A*

20 goodly air for] goodly heart with *A*

21-24] = *A*; = *F*

21 The rattle of Life] The «weight» «pressure» «burden» of Life [AGS] *F*

22 laughs at] laughs «in» «with» at [AGS] *F*

23-24] *F* has these lines underlined, and the comment 'Weak' in the margin [AGS]

25-28] ≠ *A*; ≠ *F*. *F* has the comment 'Good' in the margin [AGS]

25 The measure] The battle *A* • The [battle] «measure» *B*

27 likely] [likely] «lightly» [AGS] *F*

28] Who knows the sorrows of all the race and sees them still unhealed *A*

Continued overleaf...

Song for a Honeymoon [2] (cont.)

This man must have no fear of men, nor any fear of the Law.
I need the Devil about his mouth and the ironstone in his jaw,
And under his shirt the rattle of Life must be so proud and strong,
And he shall plunder the whole green Earth to help me in a song.

But Reason, my enemy, still is near, he comes close to my side,
He makes a coward of every man and a dull thing of a bride.
If he had a body and we could meet and I had the strength to draw
A good blue sword, his heart I'd cut, and laugh at the hounds of Law.

We'll borrow the bells that good men ring and the young child's faintest cry,
And flowers we'll gather of ripest red and carry them shoulder high,
We pray to the Sun to strike so hard that we may not live too long,
That the cold may never come up – all this we need in the bridal song.

The man I need is a steadfast man, with a steadfast arm and eye.
I'll burn the Pity all out of him for I dare not let him sigh,
And he shall carry his rage to me if my thoughts fade out too soon.
I long for a man with a godly air for a song for a honeymoon.

29-32] = A 37-40; = F. F has the comment 'Good' in the margin [AGS], renumbered 4 [AGS]

29-32] F has a comment above these lines 'This woman must . . .' and 'Want new stanza', with 'Or work in some cast out lines' added below [AGS]

33-36] ≠ A 29-32; = F. F has the stanza cancelled, with the comment 'Too much me. Sing your song', below [AGS]

36] The mightiest sword his heart I'd cut | [An] and laugh at the [hand] «hounds» of Law A

37-40] ≠ A 41-44; ≠ F

37 We'll borrow] [We'11] «I'll» borrow [AGS] F

38 we'll gather of ripest red] we'll gather of red and green A • [we'll] «I'll» gather of ripest red [AGS] F

39] We pray to the sun to strike and strike that we may not live too long A •

[We'11] «I'll» pray to the Sun to strike so hard that [we] «I» may not live too long [AGS] F

40 That the] But «That» the A

40 we need] [we] «I» need [AGS] F

41-44] ≠ A 45-48; = F 41-44 (stanza 11, renumbered 7 [AGS])

42 I'll burn] I«'11» [will] burn B • I will burn A

44 for a] [with] [with] for a A

Discarded stanzas

A cancelled stanza 4:

Let all the trees of the forest come that I may not be afraid
May blue winds hasten and lightnings flash «and» the great seas give me aid
For out the ripening water [came] too this restless pair have come
But the «fight» of a thousand million years it shall not leave us dumb

Continued overleaf...

Song for a Honeymoon [2] (cont.)

A cancelled stanza 9:

He has been far out he has baffled me to Heaven he loves to go
 He puts the sawdust about the streets he turns the lights so low
 And here am I with a rhyme to weave my thoughts fade out too soon
 I call for aid for a man with an air for a song for a honeymoon

C stanza numbered 1; *D* stanza numbered 1 (cancelled [AGS]); *E* ‘Odd verses’ (1st of 2); *F* stanza 12 (lines 45-48):

The man I see is a barbarous man but newly from the dark *C, D, E, F* (line 1)
 He tames the leopard he blinds the bull he has on his face the mark *C, D* (line 2)
 Of every savage that raids the world he has on his face the mark *E, F* (line 2)
 Of every savage he shouts aloud a Lord and his slaves obey *C, D* (line 3)
 He tames the leopard he blinds the bull a Lord [and] «that» his slaves obey *E*
 He tames the leopard he blinds the bull a Lord that his slaves obey *F* (line 3)
 Through [roaring] «burning» forests or roaring seas he carries [the] «a» bride away *C*
 Through burning forests or roaring seas he carries a bride away *D*
 Through burning forests and roaring seas he carries a bride away *E, F*

F has part of line 2 underlined, with the comment ‘Awkward’ following ‘mark’ in the margin [AGS]

C two stanzas numbered 2; *D* stanza numbered 2; *F* stanza 14 (lines 53-56), renumbered 6 [AGS]:

[Now here is a purpose grim and] *C* a false start to 1st of 2 stanzas •
 A clamorous man for the goodly [he needs] «meats» and a clamorous man for wine *C* (1st of 2)
 A clamorous man for all the meats and a clamorous man for wine *C* (2nd of 2), *D, F*
 He goes with a purpose grim and great with a stronger speech than mine *C* (1st of 2)
 He rides in haste to settle a feud with a surer hand than mine *C* (2nd of 2)
 In haste he rides to settle a feud with a surer hand than mine *D*
 In haste he rides to settle a feud [with a surer hand than mine] [AGS] *F*
 His saw [sword] he rattles lest any poor thought of mine should fade too soon *C* (1st of 2)
 And he shall chide me if any proud thought of mine shall fail too soon *C* (2nd of 2)
 And he shall chide me if ever a thought of mine should fade too soon *D, F*
 I follow the man for a goodly air for a song for a honeymoon *C* (1st of 2)
 I will follow the man for a goodly air for a song for a honeymoon *C* (2nd of 2), *D, F*

F has lines 3 & 4 cancelled [AGS]

C stanza numbered 3; *C* stanza headed ‘3rd’; *D* stanza numbered 3; *F* stanza 15 (lines 57-60):

I dream – a woman with orange bloom and the young world in her eyes *C* stanza numbered 3
 The bloom and the blessing the woman goes with the new world in her eyes *C* ‘3rd’
 Bloom and the blessing the woman goes with the now world in her eyes *D*
 Bloom and [the] «a» blessing the woman goes with the new world in her eyes [AGS] *F*
 Of colour she thieves and thieves until her merriment makes her wise *C* (both stanzas), *D, F*
 She knows no famine her heart is wealth and her patience proud and long *C* (both stanzas), *D, F*
 The milk of her body it moves and gives and haloes [hallows] the cradle song *C* stanza numbered 3
 The milk of her body it gives and moves and haloes [hallows] the cradle song *C* ‘3rd’, *D*
 The milk of her body [it] «she» gives [and] «it» moves and [haloes] «hallows» the cradle song [AGS] *F*

F has ‘and thieves’ encircled (line 58)

F has ‘moves’ encircled, and a question mark, and a question mark at the head of the line [AGS] (line 60)

Continued overleaf...

Song for a Honeymoon [2] (cont.)

C stanza numbered 4; *C* stanza headed '4th'; *D* stanza numbered 4; *F* stanza 16 (lines 61-64), renumbered 7 [AGS]:

Love is the blossom and low there comes «with» [the] lifting scent of wine *C* stanza 4
 The [golden light] «lights of gold» and the orange leaf and the calling of the kine *C* '4th'
 [I dream of sorrows and merriment] «Of bells I dream and the merriment» and [a]
 «the» horseshoe for a sign [JSN] *D*
 Of bells I dream and the merriment and the horseshoe for a sign *F*
 [With] The goodly meats and the yellow mead and the lowing of the kine *C* stanza 4
 The goodly meats and the honeycomb and the lifting scent of wine *C* '4th'
 [The] «Of» goodly meats and the honeycomb and the lifting scent of wine [JSN] *D, F*
 The white maids dressing the old wives' joy and the great sun on the corn *C* stanza 4
 The white maids dressing the good men's mirth and the great sun on the corn *C* '4th'
 Of white maids dressing and good men's mirth and the great sun on the corn *D*
 Of white maids dressing «robing» and good men's mirth and the great sun on the corn *F*
 And songs for telling of joys that must come in when a man is born *C* stanza 4
 And songs for telling of joys that roll the day that a man is born *C* '4th'
 Of songs for telling the joys that roll the day that a man is born *D, F*

C cancelled stanza, unnumbered; *C* stanza numbered 5; *D* stanza numbered 5; *F* stanza 17 (lines 65-68), renumbered 10 [AGS]:

The man he fashions his first rude home as safe as an eagle's nest *C* cancelled stanza
 The man he fashions his first new home as strong as a[n] eagle's nest *C* stanza numbered 5
 The man he has fashioned his first rude home as strong as an eagles nest *D, F*
 The woman I see in her early joy with the young life on her breast *C* cancelled stanza 5, *C* stanza numbered 5,
D, F
 The [hand] heart that ever can cheer and guide the small feet on the floor *C* cancelled stanza
 The man and the woman who cheer and guide the small feet on the floor *C* stanza numbered 5
 The man and the woman who guide and cheer the small feet on the floor *D, F*
 It runs forever through all the world to the outcast at the door *C* cancelled stanza
 They find the pity that warms and runs to the stranger at the door *C* stanza numbered 5
 They find the pity that fills and heals the outcast at the door *C* 'last line 5th verse'
 Have found the pity that bids them run to the outcast at the door *D, F*

E second of 2 stanzas headed 'Odd verses'; *F* stanza 13 (lines 49-52), renumbered 8 [AGS]:

The folk I see are a forest folk and their gods go everywhere *E, F*
 They speak their rage on the mountain top they crouch [on] «in» the golden air *E*
 They speak their rage on the mountain top they crouch in the golden air *F*
 They have their home in the serpents eye in the witches wavering tune *E, F*
 The sorrows of old come down and walk in [a] «the» song for a honeymoon *E*
 «And» The sorrows of old come down and walk in the song for a honeymoon [AGS] *F*

F has 'have' encircled (line 51)

ML MS 4937/7-4 (*F*) has a verse and comment at the head and end [AGS]:

Up lads! and sing hearty with triumphant voice!
 Come cheer up the party! Exult and rejoice!
 Let song like a river no downcast bloke mar!
 Jock Neilson for ever and ever! Hurrah!

Continued overleaf...

Song for a Honeymoon [2] (cont.)

There is enough substance in this to drop the defeated attitude. I dislike poets who whine “I can’t”. poets CAN. Better recast it.

Let the man with a goodly air come in first stanza.

Then go out and find him and his mate.

First a stanza for man, then a stanza for mate, then man, then mate, then man, then mate. «And so on»

Then a final stanza with the closing line (after a recital —

«Here this»

Such is the man who

Such is the bride who

[illegible hand] and the goodly foods

— Have I found them a man with a goodly air for a song for a honeymoon?

I do not understand “air”. Do you mean for music? Or a man who looks proud and valiant and noble? We can take it either way — a blot on meaning. Still, that may pass as an air for music. But a song is an air for music.

Too many tags and left-overs and half-uttered thoughts.

No, I do not want too much. This is a good thing, and I want the best it can do.

Take it my way, and make last line of first sentence

Can I find them a man with a goodly air for a song for a honeymoon?

OVER [page]

You can work in ‘I long for’ lower down in the scheme. But I would put a question first, and after the accomplishment, a quotation last with modest assurance of the answer.

Or take it your own way. Chew over lines and words and make better as it stands.

Then I will have a go at it. No hurry – let the [oven] out and turn the bread baked well.

I have not put the stanzas in order. Do that later. In the mixture there are good lines.

I want a good poem.

JSN – AGS 16 August 1931, ML MS 4937/5, 477-487:

Dear Mr Stephens

I enclose the rhyme I mentioned. Of course, it’s all wrong, it’s not a honeymoon song at all. But it does not seem so feeble as some of the rest of which the public approve. I think the worst feature about it is that it parodies to a certain extent the ‘Petticoat green’.

I have been thinking of another couple of verses for it, but I have not finished them yet. If you think it worth while going on with it I can send them to you.

Continued overleaf...

Song for a Honeymoon [2] (cont.)

AGS – JSN 18 August 1931, ML MS 3354/1:

Dear Neilson

Honeymoon song is good – we can touch it up a bit. What you want, you old dog, is three bottles of sound old wine under your belt – no thin raw new stuff – after a good dinner of beef and green; and then you would roar up to the height of your splendid subject.

The body of what you send is all right; might cut a bit; can do with a bit more. Suggestions on what I have –

After stanza 8 – This man must have – you have an easy continuation to This woman must have – with another good stanza – only wants thinking about and pounding out.

Similarly, after stanza eleven, The man I need, give us another stanza for The woman I need.

Would like a stanza for the proper joys of matrimony – a lustful joyful full-mouthed stanza: do not be too niggling over the physical side – let Gallagher go as far as sturdy breasts and loving bosoms anyway. Do not let your bull turn into a cow in the city.

Would like a stanza for the children, the fruit – see the church service to warrant you. It is a fair thing on this theme to follow the people – the old hearty loving people, the only abiding people – and talk of ‘the procreation of children’ as an honourable and glorious hope of every valiant pair.

We don’t want a honeymoon song manufactured with golden syrup out of a commercial tin; call up your red-blooded fighting ancestors male and female from the ancient cells in your brain and let them put the panting bride to bed and carry the bridegroom full of meat and manhood to her longing arms. Don’t apologise for the bard and don’t be ashamed of Life.

See the pale reflection of Catullus in book posted here-with – pages 45 to 55, meditate, and get some ideas. For instance, you can bring the spectators in – the parents, the friends of groom and bride; the old gaffers and gammers, the youths and virgins, the old Earth rejoicing at this manifestation of life supreme.

You have the idea and many of the bones of a glorious chant: stiffen your back, erect your head, leap and exult once more. You are no age at present – 59 or whatever it is is no age for a son of Nils the Viking – let alone a child of King whoever he was or she was. ‘Forward, let us do or die’.

Keep book a month – do Annie good to read it.

JSN – AGS 23 August 1931, ML MS 4937/5, 489-495:

Dear Mr Stephens

I am glad that you liked the ‘Honeymoon’ piece. I have written 4 fresh verses and altered one of the old ones. I will keep them another fortnight because I may be able to improve them before sending them. Thanks for the copy of the old Roman poet. I note what you say in regard to sending it back. I will return it within a month. Annie is always so desperately busy on Sunday and that is the only day I see her. She may be able to read some of the verse to me next Sunday.

My idea was that the goodly man was a person apart from the hero (the bridegroom). From your letter I should say that you have put the two into one. I really think that this is the best idea. I have followed it out in the new verses slightly to keep the notion going. I can have a go at this next Sunday. Without being ridiculous I am hinting that the man is glutinous and a wine biber and has other failings. I want him to be as unlike a YMCA official as possible. The hardest job seems to be to write anything about the children.

Continued overleaf...

Song for a Honeymoon [2] (cont.)

I note what you say about my want of frankness. That is something in my nature. It is hard to get it out. I am sorry that I cannot call wine into my aid. If I drank a couple of glasses of wine in the evening I would be awake all night. My stomach is really only fit for a Sunday school teacher. It behaved very badly all last year. I have been dieting since then, I have got on very well. I have gained about 16lb. For breakfast I have mostly bread and milk. It is rather poor tucker for the descendant of a Viking. But I am feeling very well. I will be able to do some writing this Spring.

JSN – AGS 6 September 1931, ML MS 4937/5, 499-507:

Dear Mr Stephens

I am enclosing 5 new stanzas. You can fit them in where you think best. I have a feeling that some of the other verses should be altered but perhaps it is better to wait till you return the lot typed. Of course you may be able to cut one or two verses out with advantage to the piece. I would like to see it all before you send it anywhere. That is if you think of sending it to 'Aussie' or elsewhere. I could not altogether follow the ideas you suggested. I could not manage the wedding festival or the bridal chamber pictures.

Annie has been so frightfully busy today that we could not tackle the old Roman poet. Next Sunday we may be able to open the book and I will send it back the day after. It is really no use sending me a book at all. Some of my friends send me books at times. I acknowledge their kindness, but I sometimes have to commit perjury when sending my thanks.

I have started a couple of fresh pieces which I hope to be able to finish before Xmas.

JSN – AGS 13 September 1931, ML MS 4937/5, 515-521:

Dear Mr Stephens

I got your letter the other day. I am sending you two verses. One an alteration of the one you complained about. I am making the line finish with mark this time. The other is a fresh stanza for my ancestors. I understand that those old fellows prowled about in the forest a good deal and of course were very superstitious. I am returning 'Catullus' tomorrow (by registered post). I am sorry to say that Annie was only able to read one or two poems. She is really too busy on Sunday to do these letters for me. . . .

SONG FOR A HONEYMOON [3]

ML MS 4937/5, 543-555 [A], fair copy, 13 stanzas, sent with letter 3 November 1931, numbered II [AGS]. [NLA MS 1145/64 is a copy of ML MS 4937/5, 3 November 1931, 543-555.] NLA MS 1145/74(a), typescript [AGS], 11 stanzas, with a comment [AGS]. ML MS 4937/7-4, typescript [AGS], 11 stanzas, with a comment, numbered II. [NLA MS 1145/64 is a copy of ML MS 4937/7-4.] ML MS 4937/5, 575-587 [A], fair copy, 11 stanzas, sent with letter 30 November 1931, annotated 'Recd. 8 December, 1931', numbered III [AGS]. ML MS 4937/7-4, typescript, numbered III, annotated '15/12/31' [AGS]. NLA MS 605/34 [L], a revised line for *CP*. NLA MS 605/27 [RHC], a revised line, for *CP*. ML MS A2305/9, typescript [?], for *CP*, with revised line added to text [RHC]. [NLA MS 1154/64 is a typed transcription of the *Art in Australia* text, with notes [Harry Chaplin].

Art in Australia 15 February 1932, p. 35; *CP* 165 (with a different order of stanzas)..

This is a later version of a piece written c. 1927, and a later version of the poem first sent to Stephens, 'Song for a honeymoon' [2], q.v.

3 November 1931 (sending 'Song for a honeymoon', '13 stanzas in all'). AGS - JSN 6 November 1931 (poem received: 'will work over and report'). JSN - AGS 29 November 1931 (thinks he will be able to alter verse 'tomorrow'); 30 November 1931 (encloses poem and discusses revisions in detail); 6 March 1932 (prompting Stephens to pursue publication of the poem).

JSN - RHC 7 November 1933, NLA MS 605 ('I have 'Honeymoon song' in copy of *Art in Australia*'); 19 November 1933, NLA MS 605/34 (says 'there were also some printers errors in 'The honeymoon song'', and encloses a new line; 24 June 1934, LaT MS 8910 Box 1206/4(b) (refers to autographed copies of *CP*). FN - JSN 23 July 1934, ML MS 3354/1, 63-68 (concerning errors to be corrected); JSN - JD 5 August 1934, NLA Ms 1145/61 (refers to review of *CP*); 27 January 1935, NLA MS 1145/64 (discusses poem in response to Devaney's question, 'How many lines did A.G. Stephens supply for your verse?'). JSN - J.K. Moir 20 August 1939, NLA MS 1145/69 (has given Frank a letter from AGS 'advising me about the writing of the 'Honeymoon Song'').

Correspondence is given after discarded stanzas.

N sent the poem to Stephens on 16 August 1931 (MS 4937/5, 477-487, 'Song for a honeymoon' [2]). Stephens did not care for poems concerned with the poet's need for inspiration, as this was, and so chose to ignore N's comment that this was 'not a honeymoon song at all'. Instead, he interpreted the bride and groom of the piece as the central figures and urged N to add additional stanzas to develop this interpretation.

N agreed that this was the best idea and the central figures were developed. Additional stanzas were written ('1929', 30b-33a) and sent to Stephens (MS 4937/5, 499-507 & MS 4937/5), who typed the poem and returned it to N (MS 4937/7-4). However, Stephens was still very critical of the piece: he requested further stanzas to develop the theme and cancelled 4 of the original stanzas, and N abandoned this version, and then rewrote the poem.

Continued overleaf...

Song for a Honeymoon [3] (cont.)

The new version (MS 4937/5, 543-555), sent to Stephens on 3 November 1931, drops 7 stanzas from the version sent on 16 August 1931, retains 4 of the 6 additional stanzas sent on 6 September 1931 and 13 September 1931, and adds 2 new stanzas. Stephens replied that he had received the poem and that he would ‘work over and report’ (6 November 1931), and added suggestions to the MS. He then typed the poem (NLA MS 1145/74 (a)), dropped the 2 new stanzas, and rearranged the order of the stanzas in a text that incorporates the suggestions which he had added to the fair copy sent on 3 November 1931. He then retyped the poem and returned it to N, with a typed comment (MS 4937/7-4 [II]).

N responded to these suggestions at length on 30 November 1931, when he sent a further copy of the poem (MS 5937/5, 575-587), and justified his decisions. He accepted some of the revisions that Stephens made, and his judgement about the stanzas, and he made further alterations and Stephens then typed a copy of this version (ML MS 4937/7-4 [III]).

On this basis, the fair copy, MS 4937/5, 30 November 1931, 575-587 (D), is taken as the preferred text.

MS 4937/5, 543-555 = A; NLA MS 1145/74(a) = B; ML MS 4937/7-4 [II] = C; ML MS 4937/7-4, 575-587 = D; MS 4937/7-4 [III] = E; NLA MS 605/34 = F; NLA MS 605/27 = G; ML MS 2305/9 = H

The bells have bidden me speak my heart, and the glistening pair I know
 Have both defied me to fashion a song to quicken them into the glow;
 Have both defied me to beckon the words and the folly to feed the tune;
 I drop to the shadows and follow a Man for a song for a honeymoon.

1-4] ≠ A, B, C 1-4; = E, A1A, H, CP 1-4

1] The bells have bidden [me speak my heart] «my heart uprise» and the glistening pair I know [AGS] A •

The bells have bidden my heart uprise and the glistening pair I know B, C

2] [Have both defied] «Together have dared» me to fashion a song to [carry] «hurry» them in to the glow [AGS] A •

Together have dared me to fashion a song to [hurry] «quicken» them into the glow B •

Together have dared me to fashion a song to quicken them into the glow C

3] [Have both defied] «Together have dared» me to beckon «ravish» the words and the folly to feed the tune [AGS] A •

Together have dared me to [ravish] the words and the frenzy to feed the tune B •

Together have dared me to beckon the words and the folly to feed the tune C

4 I drop] I'll drop [AGS] A

4 a man] [the] «a» man D

4 honeymoon] [honeymoon] Honey Moon [AGS] A

Continued overleaf...

Song for a Honeymoon [3] (cont.)

The folk I see are a forest folk their gods go everywhere;
 They speak their rage on the mountain top, they crouch in the golden air;
 Their magic lurks in the serpent's eye, in the witches' wavering tune;
 The devils of old come down and walk in the song for a honeymoon.

The man I see is a barbarous man, but newly from the dark;
 His spearmen follow him – blood there is wherever he leaves his mark.
 He tames the leopard, he leads the bull – a lord that his slaves obey;
 Through burning forests or roaring seas he carries a bride away.

This man will have no fear of men – he carries, he makes the law;
 I want the devil about his mouth and the ironstone in his jaw;

5-8] ≠ *A* 41-44; ≠ *B* 5-8; = *C*, *E*, *AIA*, *CP* 5-8

5 folk their gods] folk and their gods *A*

6 crouch in] crouch [on] *A*

7] They loiter low «Their [magic] «lurks» in the serpent's eye in the witches' wavering tune [AGS] *A* •

Their memory lurks in the serpent's eye in the [witches'] «fairies» wavering tune [AGS] *B*

8 The devils] The sorrows *A* • The wizards *B*

8 the song] [a] «the» song *A*

9-12] ≠ *A* 5-8; ≠ *B* 9-12; ≠ *C* 9-12; = *E*, *AIA*, *H*, *CP* 9-12

10] He «spears – flow – eagle plume in blood →» [scorns the lion and blood there??is] wherever he leaves his mark [AGS] *A* •

His spearmen follow his eagle plume in blood he leaves his mark *B* •

His spearmen follow his tossing plume in blood he leaves his mark *C*

12 or roaring] [an] or roaring *D*

13-16] ≠ *A* 29-32; ≠ *B* 13-16; ≠ *C* 13-16; = *E* 13-16; = *AIA* 13-16; ≠ *F*, *G* (revised line); ≠ *H* 13-16; ≠ *CP* 13-16

13] This man must have no fear of men nor any fear of the Law *A* •

This man must have no fear of men nor any dread of the law *B* •

This man must have no fear of men he makes his own dread law *C*

Continued overleaf...

Song for a Honeymoon [3] (cont.)

And under his shirt the rattle of Life shall beat so fierce and strong
That he shall plunder the whole green Earth to help me in a song.

The man I see is a resolute man, to a steadfast purpose bound;
In pain and hunger he plants the seed, he furrows the virgin ground.
He will not flinch in the morning frost or fail in the heat of noon,
I'll follow this man, I need this man, in a song for a honeymoon.

The man, he has builded his first rude home, as strong as an eagle's nest;
The woman I see in her early joy with the young life on her breast.
The man and the woman who cheer and guide the small feet on the floor
Have found the pity that bids them run to the outcast at the door.

Bells and the blessing – the woman goes with the new world in her eyes.
The manna of love has found the Earth, 'tis pouring out of the skies.
She knows no famine, her heart is wealth, and her patience proud and strong;
The faith in her body it reigns, it fills, and hallows the cradle song.

15 shall beat so fierce] shall be so proud *B* • shall beat so [proud and str] fierce [AGS] *C*

15] And under his shirt [his mutinous heart] «the rattle of life» shall be so proud and strong [AGS] *A*

16] That his shoulders wide will carry [him] «me» through all gateways to a song *A* •

His shoulders wide will [carry] «hurry» me through all gateways to a Song [AGS] *B* •

Wherever he rides I too shall ride for the heart-beat of a song *F* 'fresh line for Honeymoon song | New version', *G* 'Corrections to be made to MSS of Collected Poems' •

[That he shall plunder the whole green Earth to help me in a song]

«Wherever he rides I too shall ride for the heart-beat of a song» [RHC] *H* •

Wherever he rides I too shall ride for the heart-beat of a song *CP*

17-20] ≠ *A* 21-24; ≠ *B* 17-20; = *C, E, AIA, H, CP* 17-20

18 and hunger] and famine *A, B*

19 in the morning frost or fail] [at] «in» the morning [cold] «frost» nor fail [AGS] *A*

20 in a song] for a song *A, B*

21-24] = *A* 33-36; = *B, C, E, AIA* 21-24; = *H* 37-40; = *CP* 37-40

21] The [man] Man he has builded his first rude home [and] as strong as a[n] eagles nest *A*

23 and the woman] and «the» woman *A*

25-28] ≠ *A* 17-20; ≠ *B* 25-28; ≠ *C* 25-28; ≠ *E* 25-28; = *AIA* 25-28; = *H* 33-36; = *CP* 33-36

25 Bells and the blessing] Bells and [the] «a» blessing [AGS] *A* • Bells and a blessing *B* • [Balm] «Bells» and a blessing [JSN] *C* • Bells and [the] «a» blessing [AGS] *E*

27 proud and strong] proud and long *A, B, C*

28] The milk of her body she gives it moves and hallows the cradle song *A, B, C*

28] 'it moves' encircled and marked 'AWKWARD' [AGS] *C*

Continued overleaf...

Song for a Honeymoon [3] (cont.)

The marrow of Life can best be found in a brimmed-up fighting man
 Who rules a rabble, who robs a thief, nor cares how a fight began.
 The sword he rattles – he comes, he owns – a lord that his slaves obey;
 Through swirling rivers and trackless hills he carries a bride away.

The measure of Life can best be found in a woman wise and fair,
 With peace and plenty about her mouth and the goodwill in her hair;
 Whose eyes have courage to strive with death and a thousand fears of old;
 Whose pity is clad in a radiance that a million tears have told.

- 29-32] ≠ A 37-40; ≠ B 29-32; ≠ C 29-32; ≠ E 29-32; = AIA 29-32; = H 21-24; = CP 21-24
 29 The marrow] The pressure A • The vigour B, C
 30 rabble] [rabul] «rabble» [AGS] D
 30] Who leads a rabble who robs a thief or falls as a fighter can A, B •
 Who rules a rabble who robs a thief or falls as a fighter can C
 30] 'or falls . . .' underlined and marked 'WEAK END' [AGS] C
 31] More willing is he to hate than love more eager to grip than spend A •
 More willing is he to hate than love more eager to gripe than spend C •
 The sword he rattles he comes he [dons] «owns» a lord that his slaves obey [AGS] E
 32] And his back is ready to meet the stroke that a merciless Fate may send A, B, C
 33-36] ≠ A 9-12; ≠ B 33-36; = E 33-36; = AIA 33-36; = H 25-28; = CP 25-28
 35] Whose eyes have courage to fight with death who will not [likely] «lightly» yield [AGS] A •
 Whose eyes have courage to fight with death who will not lightly yield B •
 Whose eyes have courage to strive with death who will not lightly yield C
 35] 'who will not . . .' underlined with comment WEAK END' [AGS] C
 36 radiance that] radiance [as] «that» D
 36] Whose hands have pity whose thought is clean as the dewdance on the field A, B
 Whose hands have [pity] healing whose thought is clean as the dew-dance on the field [AGS] C

Continued overleaf...

Song for a Honeymoon [3] (cont.)

Of bells I dream and the merriment, and the horseshoe for a sign;
 Of the goodly meats and the honeycomb, and the lifting scent of wine;
 Of white maids robing and good men's mirth, and the great sun on the corn;
 Of songs for telling the joys that roll on the day that a man is born.

I'll borrow the prayers that good men say, and the new-born's faintest cry,
 And the tremor that comes to women and men with the sorrow to say goodbye;
 And thus will I say to the glistening pair – I have sought for a barbarous tune,
 I've been on a raid with a right red man for a song for a honeymoon.

37-40] ≠ *A* 25-28; ≠ *B* 37-40; ≠ *C* 37-40; ≠ *E* 37-40; ≠ *AIA* 37-40; = *H* 29-32; = *CP* 29-32

37] [Of bells I dream and of <ancient> mirth] «I dream of mirth at an ancient feast» with the horse-shoe for a sign [AGS] *B* •

I dream of mirth at an ancient feast with the horse-shoe for a sign *C*

38] Of goodly meats and a honeycomb and the lilting scent of wine *C*

39 maids robing] maids calling *A*

39 Sun] [song] «sun» *D*

39] Of white maids calling and strong men's [<songs>] «glee» and the great sun on the corn [AGS] *B* •

Of white maids singing and strong men's glee and the great sun on the corn *C*

40 roll on the day] roll in the day *E* • roll on in the day *AIA*

40] Of chants for telling the joys that roll on the day when a man is born *C*

41-44] ≠ *A* 49-52; ≠ *B*, *C*, *E*, *AIA*, *H*, *CP* 41-44

41] I'll borrow the bells that good men ring and the young child's faintest cry *A*, *B* •

I'll borrow the prayers that good men say and the young babe's faintest cry *C*

42] And the quiver that comes to women and men at the sorrow to say goodbye *A* •

And the quiver that comes to women and men [at] with the sorrow to say goodbye [AGS] *B* •

The tremor that comes to women and men with the sorrow to say goodbye *E* •

The tremor that comes to women and men with the sorrow to say goodbye *AIA*, *H*, *CP*

43] And thus will I speak to the glistening pair I have «have» been for a barbarous tune *A* •

And thus will I speak to the glistening pair I have «sought» [...] for a barbarous tune [AGS] *B*

44] I have been on a raid with a ripe red man for a song for a honeymoon *A*, *B*, *C*

Continued overleaf...

Song for a Honeymoon [3] (cont.)

Discarded stanzas

A stanza 4:

The [man] Man I see is a ruthless man as he hurries away to war
 The salt of his vanity holds him hard to the thing he is fighting for
 He gaily jokes with his enemy Death he wheels to a riotous tune
 I'll follow the man I need the air for a song for a honeymoon

A stanza 12:

The [man] Man I see him the [red] «rude» [man] Man still in a pitiless hunger bred
 He slays whatever his eyes can find where the riddle of Life is red
 He snares the mother he scatters the nest he carries the wild bird home
 Above the shadows he tracks the bee in the flight to the honeycomb

C has comments [AGS] following stanza 11:

About as good as I can do – still subject to betterment. Execution not up to conception; but I would not worry it farther save where marked. There are good lines and stanzas – and? A bridegroom? Should suggest Ned Kelly?
 The order of stanzas is about the best; it was all rather mixed; with too many repetitions of words such as “bells” proud” “famine”. But you may think of better words than mine.

JSN - AGS 3 November 1931, ML NS 4937/5, 543-55:

Dear Mr Stephens

I am sending ‘Song for a honeymoon’ 13 stanzas in all. There are two new stanzas [and] with the exception of one all the others have been altered a good deal. I had some difficulty in placing the verses, so as to avoid the rhyme ending with honeymoon occurring in stanzas following each other. I have got the man in 6 stanzas and the woman only in two. I find it much easier to write about the man than about the woman and the wedding. But after all the man is the person I am after to get the song from.

I think it really requires two more verses for the woman – one for her vanity and one for her self-sacrifice. But I don't feel equal to the job, and besides, the piece is getting too long. You may be able to place some of the verses better than I have. You will notice that I have started with the man as a barbarian, then a soldier off to battle – then a corn grower. The next two verses seem to be glorifying him as a fighting man. Then in the last verse we see him again as a hunter, very primitive indeed. This all appears a bit mixed, but I found it difficult to do otherwise. In one verse there is a reference to the savage as a stoic. There is ‘merciless Fate’ in it. I was not too sure about this verse but it may pass muster.

I am returning the marked copy.

JSN - AGS 30 November 1931, ML MS 4937/5, 575-587:

Dear Mr Stephens

Re corrections. I think it is simplest to deal with each stanza.

I think you have got No 1 and 2 pretty decent.

You have improved 2 a great deal.

In No 3 I have altered the 2nd line. I think ‘spearmen follow his tossing plumes’ is not quite primitive enough.

Continued overleaf...

Song for a Honeymoon [3] (cont.)

In stanza 4 I don't like the word dread near the close of the first line. The law he carries is of course his sword or spear.

I think stanza 6 is about the same as I wrote it.

Stanza 7. I have altered the last line of the stanza. You marked this.

Stanza 8. You have also marked this and I have altered the stanza considerably. I have put in 'marrow' instead of 'vigour' of life. Vigour sounds well enough, but it does not seem correct to me. I think 'challenge' would be better.

Stanza 9 also marked by you. I have altered the line that you thought was weak.

Stanza 10. This seems to be the only stanza over which we might have an argument. I can see that you are striving for clearness. That is of course important, but I think this stanza as I originally sent it was not really vague. I don't like the words ancient feast in the first line. They seem to spoil the music. I think the feast could be understood. I meant Annie to write 'lifting' scent of wine, but she may have written 'lilting' as you have it. I thought of this word too, but I like 'lifting' best. I think the scent of wine does give one a sense of being lifted up in the air.

You will notice that I have altered the word 'strong' to 'good' and 'chant' to 'song' also 'robing' instead of 'singing'. I think that 'singing' and 'strong' jar a little where they are. You have in times past pointed out the importance of having the vowel sounds right. I can't always give very good reasons for my preference but I have repeated all these lines over dozens of times. I am more likely to be right in the sound than in the sense. Of course I am handicapped in one way, that I have never read the lines myself.

Stanza 11. Two very slight alterations. I thought 'new-born' sounded better than 'babe'. In the last line Annie may have written 'ripe' but I think 'right' is better.

To an outsider it might seem that we are fussing over very little but I remember how we altered and re-altered the 'Irish Welcome' and I think it was worth while. It seems to suit very much the people who don't pretend to be Highbrows.

Dec[ember] 1st

I don't know that I have much to add. The stanza 10 is about the same as when I last sent it. If you do not like it that way and you are not thinking of sending the piece anywhere for Xmas, you might send it back and I will try to rewrite it. As it is I think it is better than some of the other verses.

The one about the savage hunter was perhaps too bloodthirsty, but the one about the fighting man hurrying off to war I liked. The salt of his vanity holds hard to the thing he is fighting for I was rather proud of. It is perhaps a weakness in me to want to make fun of warriors. It is some kink or want of training. Anyhow I suppose the piece is long enough.

P.S. You said something about going on with the book. I take it that you mean a collection of the two published books. Do you think there is any chance of a subscription edition in Sydney.

JSN - JD 27 January 1935, NLA MS 1145/64:

[In response to a question from Devaney: 'How many lines did A.G. Stephens supply for your verse?'].

We wrote to each other a good deal over 'Song for a honeymoon'. I owe A. G. a great lot in this piece. At first it was very slow and I had to cut out a good many verses on his advice. I don't suppose there are more than two or three lines of his in it, but the value of his advice made the piece.

Editor's note: There are no full lines of Stephens's in the final fair copy, but there are several words and phrases.

SONGS CAN BE THOUGHT OF

‘1929’, 29b (A0618) [A], fair draft.

Songs can be thought of, and yet it is theirs to evade;
They are but shadows of shadows, they are as people afraid.
They go down daily and nightly to places where fairies belong:
A man may have bright eyes, but no one could follow a song.

They on the ground will be creeping, slowly where swine see the wind,
They will be taking the hearts of the children that having not sinned
Do perceive quickly all life at the glow:
Songs are but shadows, and shadows that die as they go.

5 swine see the wind] See also ‘Swine see the wind’ and ‘The story of the mulberry’ [2].

STEPHEN FOSTER (Composer of ‘My Old Kentucky Home’)

‘1929’, 5a-6a (A0594-5) [A] drafts, with 2 stanzas numbered 1 & 2 at 5a, 3 stanzas numbered 1 & 2 at 5b (with stanza 2 cancelled and rewritten), and an unnumbered stanza [1] at 6a.
CP 149.

JSN - AGS 22 December 1929 (has been ‘trying to write some lines about Stephen Foster’, and comments on Foster). JSN - RHC 7 December 1933, NLA MS 605 (encloses ‘a little piece on Stephen Foster’, and comments on Foster).

In the absence of a fair draft or fair copy *CP* is taken as the preferred text: the gloss is reproduced from *CP*, and the punctuation is reproduced.

‘1929’, 5a = A; ‘1929’, 5b = B; ‘1929’, 6a = C

Who was the man? he was not great or wise,
He lived in sore distress,
Always he went with pity in the eyes
For burnt-out Happiness.

He who was poor had melodies of gold,
He had the rude man’s Art,
No one can now deny him – he could hold
The quick roads to the heart.

Title] Stephen Foster (1826-64), an American songwriter and composer.

1 great] rich *A*, *B* • strong *C*

2] He lived with old Distress *A* •

He [walked with old] «went out in» distress *B* •

As one who comes to bless *C*

3] Always he went with sorrow to the eyes *A* •

Always he [turned] «came» with pity in the eyes *B*

4 For] To *B*, *C*

4] Of [Happiness] home-born Happiness *A*

5] He was so poor he found rich melodies *A* •

’Twas to the poor he gave deep melodies *B* (cancelled stanza) •

Love was upon him in grave melodies *B*

6] He knew no painted Art *A*, *B* (cancelled stanza) •

That will not now depart *B*

7] He was courageous surely he could seize *A* •

[Could] Who could deny him he would quickly seize *B* (cancelled stanza) •

Who could deny him. He did quickly seize *B*

8 quick roads] quick road *A* • high road *B* (cancelled stanza) • clean road *B*

SUNDAY EVENING

‘1929’, 7b-8a (A0597) [A], draft, 6 stanzas, with stanza 4 cancelled, entitled ‘On Sunday evening’.
 ‘1935’, 18b-19a (A0760) [A], draft, 6 stanzas, with stanza 4 cancelled and rewritten, entitled ‘On Sunday evening’.
 ‘1936’, 11a (A0779) [L], draft, 4 stanzas, numbered 1-3 & 5, with numbering for stanza 4 and space left, entitled ‘On Sunday evening’; 13a-13b (A0781-2) [L], fair draft, 4 stanzas, entitled ‘On Sunday evening’; 16a (A0785) [A], fair draft, 4 stanzas, entitled ‘Sunday evening’. NLA MS 1145/35(C), typescript [JD], annotated [JD] & [L], entitled ‘On Sunday evening’. NLA MS 1145/67, corrections to typescript for *BI* (with letter JSN - JD 3 May 1936).
Sydney Morning Herald 19 March 1938; *BI* 32.

JD - JSN 17 April 1936, McKimm MS (‘I think ‘Sunday Evening’ a better title for this than ‘On Sunday Evening’). JSN - JD 3 May 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (corrections to typescript for *BI*); 10 April 1937, NLA MS 1145/68 (in a list of 7 unpublished pieces to be considered for entry in a competition); 18 April 1938, NLA MS 1145/68 (received cheque for poem from *Sydney Morning Herald*).
 Correspondence is given after discarded stanzas.

The first draft of the poem was probably written in early 1930, and then abandoned, and N returned to it sometime in 1935 when he wanted poems for *BI*. The typescript, NLA MS 1145/35(C) (F), is taken as a base text. N’s corrections are incorporated and a typographical error is corrected.

‘1929’, 7b –8a = A; ‘1935’, 18b-19a = B; ‘1936’, 11a = C; ‘1936’, 13a-13b = D; ‘1936’, 16a = E; MS 1145/35(C) = F; NLA MS 1145/67 = G

Homeward, still homeward
 The calm folk ride,
 And the unsoiled children
 In dreams abide.

Homeward, still homeward,
 Fond arms display

Title] *F* has the question, ‘Would the word ‘On’ be better omitted in the title?’ [JD], and N’s response, ‘Yes, I think you are right. Let it go as ‘Sunday evening’.’

1-4] A new stanza in *F*

5-8] ≠ *A* stanza 6; ≠ *B* stanza 5; ≠ *C* stanza 5; ≠ *D* stanza 1; = *E* stanza 1

5] Eastward and westward *A, B, C*

6 Fond] Loud *F*

6] Fond eyes display *A* •

The folk display *D*

Continued overleaf...

Sunday Evening (cont.)

Flowers and calm children – 'tis
A holy day.

The love will uphold them;
Softly they bear
Green leaves and children with
The falling hair.

As stars on the darkness
Console the eye,
So do the deep children
Speak down the sky.

As flowers at the nightfall
Give silence fair,
So give the white children
With falling hair.

- 7] Flowers and calm children *A, B, C* •
The flowers and calm children *D*
8] 'Tis a holy day *A, B, D* •
'Tis the Holy day *C*
9-12] ≠ *D* stanza 2; = *E* stanza 2
9] Homeward still homeward *D*
10] Proudly they bear *D*
11] Green leaves and [the] calm children *D*
12 hair] air *F* (corrected *G*, JSN - JD 3 May 1936)
12] With the falling hair *D*
13-16] ≠ *E* stanza 3
15 deep] sweet *E*
16 Bring] Speak *F* (corrected *G*, JSN - JD 3 May 1936)
17-20] ≠ *E* stanza 4
17 at] on *SMH*
19 white] deep *E*
20 hair] air *F* (corrected *G*, JSN - JD 3 May 1936)
20] [The] «With» falling hair *E*

Continued overleaf...

Sunday Evening (cont.)

Discarded stanzas

A, B, & C stanza 1:

A day of sweet living *A, B, C*
 Hearts can abide *A, B, C*
 Oh the black noise of selling *A*
 The great God of selling *B*
 The grey God of selling *C*
 Is now denied *A, B, C*

A, B & C stanza 2 & D stanza 3:

Long laws and old laws *A, B, C*
 Old laws and hard laws *D*
 Hearts disobey *A, B, C*
 The flowers are not silent *A*
 Love is in silence in *B*
 Love is in silence on *C*
 The white ones dream on in *D*
 Tis a holy day *A*
 The holy day *B, D*
 This Holy day *C*

A, B, C stanza 3:

Way eastward and westward *A, B, C*
 Eastward and westward *B, C*
 Do the people fare *A, B, C*
 And return – [with h] «oh» the heavy children *A*
 And return with [the] calm children *B*
 Return with calm children *C*
 The falling hair *A*
 And the falling hair *B, C*

A cancelled stanza 4:

[Their arms do encircle
 Great leaves that play
 A deep song for children
 Tis a holy day]

A stanza 5:

Hands do not tremble
 At one thought of sorrow
 The children go down into
 The roads of tomorrow

B cancelled stanza 4 & B stanza 4:

[The eyelids would carry us
 The long miles away
 We weaken in silence of
 The holy day]

Continued overleaf...

Sunday Evening (cont.)

Their eyelids would lift us
Where feet cannot climb
We weaken in silence of
This holy time

D stanza 4:

The white ones they have not
The need of prayer
The night is made holy with
The falling hair

JSN - JD 3 May 1936:

[A postscript]

One thing I forgot 4th line of 4th stanza in 'Sunday evening'. You have 'Speak down the sky'. I dictated 'Bring down the sky' to Lisette. If you think 'Speak' is better than 'bring' I suggest that you put 'calm' instead of 'deep' in the 3rd line. The two words have the same sound and jar a little.

In list of corrections:

Fourth line in 3rd stanza and 4th line in last stanza [you] have 'air' instead of 'hair'. Lisette says she wrote 'air', so that accounts for it.

TAKE DOWN THE FIDDLE KARL

‘1940’, 4b-5b (A0820) [L], fair draft.

Men openly call you the enemy, call you the swine;
Not all they say to you ever can make you a foeman of mine.
The rain has come over the mountain, the gullies have faded away –
 Take down the fiddle Karl,
 The little old impudent fiddle,
 The work is all done for the day.

The ganger sits down in the bar-room with money to spend,
And many will laugh at his loudness and many will hail him as friend;
How strong the mist settles, it sinks in the souls of us all –
 Take down the fiddle Karl,
 The little old impudent fiddle,
 That hangs on the peg on the wall.

We are tired of the jack-hammer’s clatter, the rattle of stone;
The many who boast of their travels, the many who moan.
We are tired of the spoil and the spoilers, the lifting of clay –
 Take down the fiddle Karl,
 The little old impudent fiddle,
 The work is all over today.

Your fiddle will show me your fathers, the hunt of the boar:
How dark were the forests, but fairies were seen at the door,
And in the old chapels your fathers, bare-headed they came in to pray –
 Take down the fiddle Karl,
 The little old impudent fiddle,
 The work is all over today.

The fiddle is old, but the things it is saying will ever be young;
It goes out and tries to be saying what cannot be sung.
The speech that you have Karl, it means nothing at all –
 Take down the fiddle Karl,
 The little old impudent fiddle,
 That hangs on the peg on the wall.

The fiddle can give to us more than the drinking of wine;
It brings up a world of good fellows to your eyes and mine.
The ganger, poor man, is misguided, his world is so grey –
 Take down the fiddle Karl,
 The little old impudent fiddle,
 The work is all done for the day.

TELL SUMMER THAT I DIED

‘1940’, 10a (A0825) [L], fair draft.

When he was old and thin
And knew not night or day
He would sit up to say
Something of fire within;
How woefully his chin
Moved slowly as he tried
Some lusty word to say –
Tell Summer that I died.

When gladness sweeps the land
And to the white sky
Cool butterflies go by
And sheep in shadow stand;
When love, the old command,
Turns every hate aside
In the unstinted days –
Tell Summer that I died.

THE APPROACH TO DEATH

NLA MS 605/25 [A], fair draft.

A circus once went to Geelong;
The tiger though virile and strong
Grew alarmingly tired,
And the lion inquired
Is it Death – or is anything wrong?

THE BARD AND THE LIZARD

‘1927’A, 1a–3b & 7b (A0532-5 & A0539) [A], draft, 6 stanzas numbered 1-6 with stanzas 3 & 5 cancelled and one unnumbered stanza at 7b under short title ‘Lizard’. ‘1929’, 13b-14b (A0602-3) [A], fair draft, 5 stanzas. ML MS 4937/5, 22 December 1929, 363-371 [A], fair copy, 5 stanzas. *Aussie* 14 March 1931, p. 18; *CP* 163.

JSN - AGS 22 December 1929 (encloses poem which he says ‘is really a Spring piece’ and asks Stephens if he thinks the poem is a ‘bit hazy’, saying ‘Of course it all seems very plain to me, but so did Petticoat Green and others’). AGS - JSN 11 December 1930 (‘Lizard is all right’). JSN - AGS 7 April 1931 (‘got the ‘Lizard’ and the Parody [by AGS] some time back’). AGS - JSN 25 May 1931 (‘‘Aussie’ has taken a revised ‘Wisdom of Autumn’ [Stephens’s parody]). JSN - AGS 2 August 1931 (negotiations concerning contents of proposed collection); 22 September 1932 (negotiations continued).

‘1927’A, 1a-3b & 7b = A; ‘1929’, 13b–14b = B; MS 4937/5, 363-371 = C
The fair copy (C) is the preferred text.

The lizard leans in to October,
He walks on the yellow and green;
The world is awake and unsober,
It knows where the lovers have been.
The wind, like a faint violoncello,
Comes up and commands him to sing:
He says to me, Courage, good fellow!
We live by the folly of Spring!

A fish that the sea cannot swallow,
A bird that can never yet rise,

1-8] ≠ A stanza 1; = B stanza 1
1 leans] [comes] «leans» A
1 to October] [the] «to» October B
2 walks] climbs A
3] He fears that the world is too sober A
4] He knows where the sorrows have been A
5 a faint violoncello] a violoncello *Aussie*, *CP*
5] The flute and the dim violoncello A
6] Deluge and incite him to sing A
9-16] ≠ A stanza 4; ≠ B stanza 2
9 A fish] A [f bird] «fish» B
10 that can] that could A

Continued overleaf...

The Bard and the Lizard (cont.)

A dreamer no dreamer can follow,
 The snake is at home in his eyes.
 He tells me the paramount Treason;
 His words have the resolute ring;
 Away with the homage to Reason!
 We live by the folly of Spring!

The leaves are about him – the berry
 Is close in the red and the green.
 His eyes are too old to be merry,
 He knows where the lovers have been.
 And yet he could never be bitter;
 He tells me no sorrowful thing:
 The Autumn is less than a twitter!
 We live by the folly of Spring!

As green as the light on a salad,
 He leans in the shade of a tree;
 He has the good breath of a Ballad,
 The strength that is down in the sea.

- 13 Treason] [treason] Treason *C*
 13 He tells me] He [whispers] «tells me» *B* • He whispers *A*
 14] It has the most resolute ring *B* •
 He cuts to the heart of [[the King] «a» thing *A*
 17-24] ≠ *B* stanza 3; ≠ *A* stanza 5 (lines 21-24 cancelled)
 17] The trees are upon him the berry *A*
 18 close in] close and *A*
 19] A[s] Stoic and yet is he merry *A*
 21] Tis only the fool that is bitter *B* •
 [I know you magnificent fellow] *A*
 22] [You eat of the infinite thing] *A*
 23] [The green that impeaches the yellow] *A*
 25-32] ≠ *B* stanza 4; ≠ *A* stanza 6
 25] As green as a Summertime salad *A*
 26 a tree] the tree *A*
 28 down in] out of *A*

Continued overleaf...

The Bard and the Lizard (cont.)

How silent – he creeps in the yellow,
 How silent – and yet can he sing:
 He gives the good morning, good fellow!
 We live by the folly of Spring!

I scent the alarm of the faded
 Who love not the light and the play;
 I hear the assault of the jaded,
 I hear the intolerant bray.
 My friend has the face of the wizard;
 He tells me no desolate thing:
 I learn from the heart of the lizard,
 We live by the folly of Spring!

- 29] How silent – he creeps in the yellow *C* •
 The wind like a faint violoncello *B* •
 He has the delight of the yellow *A* •
 30] How silent – and yet can he sing *C* •
 Comes up and commands him to sing *B* •
 This bird that can never take wing *A*
 31 gives the good morning] gives me good morning *Aussie, CP*
 31] He says to me courage good fellow *A*
 33-40] ≠ *B* stanza 5; ≠ *A* unnumbered stanza
 35 the assault] the insult *B, A*
 37 the wizard] a wizard *B, A, Aussie, CP*
 38] He eats the unknowable thing *A*
 39] I listen and learn of the lizard *A*

Discarded stanzas

A stanza 2 & cancelled stanza 3:

I looked to my good fellow climber
 His eyes are in search of a Song
 And I the most desolate rhymer
 Have striven and striven so long
 And being so dull I am fitter
 For death than for any warm thing
 [The] «But» Autumn is less than a twitter
 We live by the folly of Spring

[For all who have fallen defeated
 And still in the perilous climb
 Keep on where so many retreated
 The Lizard he yawns in his time
 The flute and the dim violcello [sic]
 Delude and incite him to sing
 He says to me courage good fellow
 We live by the folly of Spring]

THE BIRD OF COURAGE

‘1927’ A, 23a –24a (A0554-5) [A], fair draft.

Lightly they ran, with joy they sang aloud,
Fought with the forest, called the seas their home;
Sang to the lightning on the thunder-cloud
And with the honey loitering in the comb.

At the first glory of the day they cried
We shall be braver, we shall now be stirred;
Nothing on earth to us shall be denied,
We who have heard the whistling by the bird.

They did not see him when the colours came
Nor when the flowers ran up amid the grass;
He was not in the sundown or the flame
Nor any miracle that came to pass.

Salt of his song upheld them, and the salt
Bade them go quickly to the east or west;
Love as a singer did their lives exalt,
Whistling was ever underneath the nest.

Cities they builded, temples tall and fair;
The bird invisible – they heard him call;
In many a nest they heard the Child of Prayer
Drowsy with blessing at the evening fall.

9 did not see] did «not» see *MS*

THE BUTTERFLIES INVITE ME

‘1934’, 11b (A0701) [A], draft.

The butterflies invite me – ’tis a day
When dull men dream – it is the scent of hay
That comes up east or west,
That knows not time or rest:
No kinsmen flying low
Talk to me — where is woe?
Why, why will you delay?
What laws would you obey?
Come up from toil, from utmost weariness,
The butterflies invite you all the way.

2 When dull men dream] [No] «When» dull [men] «man» [take] dream *MS*

5 low] low [laug] *MS*

THE CRANE IS MY NEIGHBOUR

‘1934’, 42b & 43a (A0732) [L], fair draft, 6 stanzas, entitled ‘The listener on the edge’. ‘1936’, 9a-9b (A0777-8) [L], fair draft, 6 stanzas, with stanza 4 cancelled, entitled ‘The listener on the edge’; 15a (A0784) [A], 2 stanzas, unnumbered, entitled ‘The crane on the edge’; ‘1936’, 17b (A0787) [A], 1 stanza and a line, untitled. NLA MS 1145/67, typescript [JD], annotated. NLA MS 1145/67 [L], fair copy, 7 stanzas. NLA MS 1145/67 [L], a revised stanza.
BI 14.

JD - JSN 17 April 1936, McKimm MS (is sending N typed copies of the ‘three new pieces’, with some suggestions: says ‘I like ‘The crane is my neighbour’ best of these three’ [‘He saw the jig’, ‘Sunday evening’, and ‘The time of tumult’ are also discussed]). JSN - JD 26 April 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (comments on Devaney’s suggestions: has ‘made alterations as you suggest’ and encloses poem); 30 April 1936, NLA MS 1145/65 (JD should now have N’s suggestions for alterations); 3 May 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (corrections to typescript for *BI* with revised version of additional stanza sent 26 April 1936); 4 July 1937, NLA MS 1145/68 (suggests sending poem to *Sydney Morning Herald*); 5 September 1937, NLA MS 1145/68 (makes the suggestion again); 13 June 1938, NLA MS 1145/2 (poem one of two entered in a competition and now returned); 7 August 1940, NLA MS 1145/68(2) (one of 14 pieces Dr Mackaness wants to include in an anthology).

The draft at ‘1934’, 42b & 43a occurs at the back of a notebook dated c. 1934-1935 with other material N was working on for *BI* and this suggests that the MSS are all part of the same impulse of composition. The poem was sent to Devaney for *BI* prior to 17 April 1936 when Devaney wrote to N discussing the poem, and Devaney obviously enclosed a typed copy of the first fair copy received with this letter, or sent one very soon afterwards. Devaney questioned the word ‘waves’ in lines 4 & 12 and ‘dew’ in line 10, and N replied (26 April 1936) that he thought Devaney was ‘right about the ‘waves’ in the ‘Crane’’, adding that ‘When we were children we always called them waves although at times they were merely ripples’. He continued, ‘I have added another stanza as I wanted to preserve the idea of the crane being the guest of the sunlight, and it seemed the best way to do it’. He then revised the additional stanza (3 May 1936), saying ‘You have alterations in hand, also another stanza which I think might be improved still further’.

‘1934’, 42b & 43a = A; ‘1936’, 9a-9b = B; ‘1936’, 15a = C; MS 1145/67 (typescript) = D; ‘1936’, 17b = E; MS 1145/67 [L] = F; MS 1145/67 (3 May 1936) = G

The version first sent to Devaney is simpler and less obviously poetic and the typescript (D) is taken as the preferred text on this basis.

Continued overleaf...

The Crane is my Neighbour (cont.)

The bird is my neighbour, a whimsical fellow and dim:
There is in the lake a nobility falling on him.

The bird is a noble, he turns to the sky for a theme,
And the waves are as thoughts coming out to the edge of a dream.

He bleats no instruction, he is not an arrogant drummer:
His gown is simplicity – blue as the smoke of the Summer.

The bird is both ancient and excellent, sober and wise,
But he never could spend all the love that is sent for his eyes.

How patient he is as he puts out his wings for the blue:
He is an old guest of the sunlight – a child of the dew.

Title] The blue crane is a heron (JSN - JD 26 April 1936). Cf. St Luke 10: 29: But he willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? *AV*

1-2] = *F*, *BI* 1-2

3-4] ≠ *F*, *BI* 3-4

4] *D* has the comment 'Line 4, repeated in last line: why particularly the word 'waves' in this magnificent line? If you mean 'ripples' leave out the word 'as' – would that do?' [*JD*].

4 waves are as thoughts] ripples are thoughts *F*, *BI*

5-6] ≠ *A* 5-6; ≠ *B* 5-6; = *F*, *BI* 7-8

5 bleats no instruction] bleats no commandments *A* • bleats not he listens *B*

6 the smoke] the [smok] mist *A* • the mist *B*

7-8] ≠ *A* 3-4; ≠ *B* 3-4; = *F*, *BI* 5-6

7] The bird is a noble an excellent fellow and wise *A*, *B*

8] And though he is dreaming there is a good love in his eyes *A* •

He never could spend all the love that he has in his eyes *B*

9-10] ≠ *A* 9-10; ≠ *B* 9-10; ≠ *E*; ≠ *F*, *BI* 9-10

9] How patient is he as he starts on his way to the blue *A* •

How cautious he is as he folds up his wings for the blue *B* •

How patient he is [when] «as» he puts out his wings to the blue *E*

10] He tells not his route nor the millions of miles he can do *A* •

He tells not «at» all of the wearisome miles that he flew *B* •

10] His eyes are as old as the twilight as calm as the dew *E* •

He goes as the guest of the sunlight far into the blue *E* following revised lines (9-10) •

10] *D* has the comment 'Verse 5. All perfect except perhaps the 'dew'. This bird of the lake does not particularly belong to the dew, and that word suggests being brought in just for rhyme' [*JD*].

10] His eyes are as old as the twilight and calm as the dew *F*, *BI*

Continued overleaf...

The Crane is my Neighbour (cont.)

The bird is a noble, he turns to the sky for a theme,
And the waves are as thoughts coming out to the edge of a dream.

11-12] ≠ *A* 11-12; ≠ *B* 11-12; ≠ *F*, *BI* 13-14

11] He listens this noble this water bird supple and thin *A* •

The bird is a noble with tolerance subtle and thin *B*

12] And the waves are as dreams going out and calls coming in *A*, *B* •

And the ripples are thoughts coming out to the edge of a dream *F*, *BI*

Discarded stanzas

A & *B* stanza 1:

The bird is a noble with tolerance supple and thin *A*

The bird is a noble with tolerance subtle and thin *B*

And the waves are as dreams going out and calls coming in *A*, *B*

A & *B* stanza 4 (cancelled in *B*):

How patient he listens he hears as he turns to the grass

The whirring of all the small people who hasten to pass

C unnumbered stanzas:

The Summers long Summers have made him | Unknowingly wise

The Ages have put the good fellowship | There in his eyes

The bird is a Noble he calls | me to walk in the dim

I am young as the grass when | I go to my journey with him

F stanza 6, revised at *G*, & *BI* stanza 6:

The bird is my neighbour he leaves not a claim for a sigh *F*, *G*, *BI*

He moves as the guest of the sunlight out into the sky *F*

He moves as the guest of the sunlight he roams in the sky *G*, *BI*

THE CRITIC AFTER DEATH OR ALLEGED INEFFICIENT HEATING

ML MS 3038/3, 9 [FN], transcription, entitled 'A hostile critic'. NLA MS 605/27 [JSN], fair copy. NLA MS 1145/76, typescript [FN], entitled 'A poor show'. LaT MS 9419/3677, typescript, with title 'The critic after death'.

NLA MS 605/27 is the preferred text.

There was an old Critic named Byer
Renowned for his gloom and his ire;
When to Hell he went down
He arrived with a frown
And began to belittle the Fire.

1 an] [and] «an» *MS*

THE DEFENCE OF SUMMER

‘1929’, 17a (A0605) [A], unfinished.

Love well the utmost blackness – but say not
To me who flourishes, a Summer thing,
That Summer is too hot.

If thou art daring – well I love the cold.
All about us say, curse the mild Summer –
That Summer is too cold.

Down, down to Death – we are remembered not.
Dost thou so love the cold that thou must say
[That Summer is too hot]

[*Unfinished*]

4 art . . . cold] are . . . bowl *MS*, a likely mishearing

THE DISPUTE WITH THE DRUMMER

‘1940’, 14b-16b (A0830-2) [L], fair draft, 14 stanzas, numbered 1-13, stanza 9 cancelled and rewritten immediately following. ML MS A3038/3, 11b & 12a [FN], transcription, with an annotation [JD], ‘[= the heart – J.D.]’.

The fair draft is the preferred text.

In the still hours before the white of day
I am too faint, I am no match for him –
'Tis when the drummer makes his oldest play.

Loud he complains – the feet, he says, they fail.
They are disloyal, faltering as they go,
And the poor tongue has not the pride to rail.

In a mild rage I say, the feet to me
Have long been trusted servants and I know
Nothing that points to their disloyalty.

The tongue is still my slave – it tells of love,
Still it can find sin in my enemies,
Still will it take my prayers to God above.

But, said the drummer, with an ancient sneer,
Look to the hands, they tremble in the noon.
Who would not know them, each a mutineer?

Oh, but the eyes, first cowards of them all,
Blinking at shadows in the sunlight dim,
Fearing lest some great evil may befall.

Then in a rage, I say, the hands have been
Used to much wrestling in the world and I
Seldom such tireless warriors have seen.

7 the feet] [the] The feet *MS*

18 lest] less *MS*

21 such tireless] such [noble] tireless *MS*

Continued overleaf...

The Dispute with the Drummer (cont.)

The eyes though being tired can still defy
 Darkness and death – they have not ceased to love
 Sunlight and all the dancers of the sky.

But, said the drummer, it is only I
 Tell you to live – without me you would soon
 Be with the ashes of the years gone by.

* * *

Then to this most rebellious Slave I say
 You are the rebel, 'tis your uneven beat
 Ever that makes me dismal night and day.

Then said the drummer, this is coward's talk:
 Aid to your eyelids I have given and
 Have I not stirred your hapless feet to walk?

Even your trembling hands I do uphold:
 Still it is I who bids the eyes to see,
 Still it is I who tells the tongue to scold.

Am I defeated? do I scent decay?
 Long I dispute – old is the argument –
 Loud is the drummer – much to my dismay.

25-26] [Then said the drummer low the ears default || Music they know not they go
 hastening] *MS*

26 Tell you] [That] Tell[s] you *MS*

31 this] This *MS*

32 eyelids I have given] eyelids [still] I «have» given *MS*

THE DRINKER

‘1929’, 6a (A0595) [A], fair draft.

Now Martin was the worthiest of men
And he did drink but little ale or wine;
A wife he had and children, nine or ten;
No discontent had ever made him whine.

One summer day he sat with an old friend,
Of all the friends the one he held most dear;
Great hospitality he did extend,
So Martin came to drink the honey – beer.

4 had ever made] has ever [crossed] «made» *MS*

THE DUST OF A MAN

‘1929’, 33b–34a (A0622) [A], fair draft.

The man is forsaken, but brothers, for aught that we know
 He may already be out in the grasses below;
 But why should we talk of his going, we know not yet where he began:
 His eyes and his feet have deserted him, throw out the dust of a man.

The mouth that did venture for kisses, or heated with ire
 Gave out ready poison, is taken away by the fire,
 And what is there left but the little white atoms – and the world can be thinned
 Of many fine fellows and follies, so put out his dust to the wind.

He may be wintering down in the green of the trees;
 He may be somewhere out lifting up honey in hope to the bees;
 He may be close to the sundown, and still knowing pain;
 His eyes have deserted him, throw out the dust to the rain.

The feet that were eager and knew not the time for a rest,
 Now finding a joy in the North, or a hope in the West;
 The eyes that went over the rainbow and measured its brim,
 These too have deserted, so let him go into the dim.

1 forsaken but] forsaken [they tell us] but *MS*

3 talk] taught *MS*, a mishearing

4 a man] [the] «a» man *MS*

7 be thinned] be thin *MS*, a mishearing

9 be wintering] [go] «be» wintering *MS*

12 throw out the dust to the rain] through out the dust to the [man] rain *MS*, an obvious mishearing, corrected

14 North . . . West] [north] North . . . [west] West *MS*

16 These too] These two *MS*

THE GOOD MEN AND THE WINE

There are two discrete versions of this poem, 'The good men and the wine' and 'The good men made the wine', both written while Neilson was in Brisbane in 1941.

THE GOOD MEN AND THE WINE

NLA MS 1145/48, typescript [JD], written when staying with Frank Francis in 1941.

How patiently, in diligence they bent;
In the green leaves they spoke to God in prayer.
With silent dream and quiet merriment
They made the good wine there.

Of colourings, I know not how they came,
Far was the Word Who made the sun to shine.
In the deep dark they kept alive the flame,
The good men made the wine.

Of tolerance they took a goodly share,
And Innocence they found through years a-long.
The wine they made, in faithfulness and prayer,
The good wine gave the song.

Through purpled shades they pondered on the mind,
Seeking for company each holy thing
That they might give to men brave hearts to find
The merriment to sing.

Summer brought the fragrance of the rose,
Close to the earth sweet promises they found
Breathing of Paradise and purest snows,
Warming the sacred ground.

Never as idlers were their full days spent;
Down the dark ages did they strive and toil
Seeking from humble art a quiet content
On the anointed soil.

Continued overleaf...

The Good Men and the Wine (cont.)

Of God Who taught enraptured buds to burst,
The moon to grieve, the scarlet sun to shine,
In high hunger and a heavenly thirst
The good men made the wine.

Instance they sought of high and noble trees
Out of all summers to the far supreme;
Dimly they saw through all eternities,
These good men of a dream.

Of children and the innocence of eyes
Throughout dark Time they sought of the unseen.
All things they saw were in a sweet disguise,
These good men in the green.

They sought for peace, the calm benignity,
The force that moves the mighty soul to shine.
For God Who made the world's high dignity
The good men made the wine.

THE GOOD MEN MADE THE WINE

NLA MS 1145/48, typescript [JD], unfinished, with notes by Devaney: written when staying with James Devaney in 1941. Another version was written during his visit to Queensland, 'The good men made the wine', q.v.

Hatreds like serpents wrapped the world in sin,
Yet the few faithful lived in quiet prayer;
And to His servants God Himself came in,
They made the good wine there.

Colours they took, the all-impatient red,
And in the green rows, while the sun would shine,
By the most holy thoughts still comforted
The good men made the wine.

They sought sweet scent that all men might desire,
And in sweet musings, many a promise found.
Softly, they said, there comes some holy fire
On the most holy ground.

Quietly they fought, they had the world to win.
God came down through the greeneries of prayer;
Freed from the vile impediments of sin
They made the good wine there.

[Unfinished]

Devaney's note reads:

Four other verses were done in part only. JSN said: 'The idea is that God came down while the good monks of old days worked among the vines, and helped them, and put in the sunlight and the scent and all that, to make wine a good gift to man . . . God gave the colour and fire for their wine, and the scent. The scent of the wine is important . . . I've worked a lot among grapes myself. The greenery of the vines is very restful.'

Verse 2, rows: of the vines in the vineyard.

THE GOOD SEASON

‘1927’A, 33a-34a (A0565) [A], fair draft, 3 stanzas numbered 1-3, with the rest of the page blank. ‘1929’, 1a-2a (A0590-1) [A], fair draft, 5 stanzas, stanza 3 renumbered 4 and followed by stanza numbered 3; 8b (A0598) [A], 1 stanza under heading ‘Last verse ‘Good season’; 15a (A0603) [A], 1 stanza under heading ‘Good season odd verse’. ML MS 4937/5, 16 February 1938, 385, typescript [AGS], 6 stanzas, with comments [AGS]. NLA MS 1145/73, typescript [AGS], annotated. *Sydney Morning Herald* 10 May 1939; *CP* 156.

AGS - JSN 15 February 1930 (‘Good Season to hand. Couldn’t pass that new last line . . . change doesn’t show your usual fine taste. Will see what I can do’). JSN - AGS 16 February 1930 (enclosing the ‘Revised edition of ‘Good Season’’ and annotated, ‘typed copy and envelope returned’ [JSN]). AGS - JSN 5 May 1930 (‘Nothing heard from Herald which has had Season with stamp for return, for one month’). JSN - AGS 26 July 1931; 2 August 1931; 22 September 1932; 9 October 1932; 6 November 1932 (the poem offered as a replacement in negotiations about titles to be dropped from a proposed collection). JSN - RHC [c. March 1934], NLA MS 605/71-75 (corrections to proofs *CP*). JSN - JD 27 January 1935, NLA MS 1145/64 (discusses Stephens’s contribution to the poem: ‘there are one or two lines which are his put in which I could easily have beaten’). Correspondence is given after the notes.

The first draft was written sometime in 1928 (‘1927’A, 33a-34a) and then extended in late 1929 (‘1929’, 1a-2a). Stephens must have requested some alteration and N responded by sending an additional stanza on 22 December 1929 (‘1929’, 15a, a revision of ‘1929’, 8b), saying ‘It seems rather hard to say the necessary thing in one stanza’. (Stephens’s letter and comment of 15 February 1930 make most sense if they precede the typescript MS 4937/5, in which case the letter is misdated and 15 January seems a more likely date. Otherwise, this letter and comment must refer to a later revision, preceding N’s ‘Revised edition’.) The typescript MS 4937/5, 16 February 1930, 385, which is heavily marked, is derived from ‘1929’, 1a-2a & 15a and is misplaced at this date and location. Stephens omitted line 4 of the stanza at 15a and has ‘will’ instead of ‘they’ in line 2 of this stanza. He then made suggestions for rewording, questioned the number of references to birds, and suggested an alternative line for line 11. He suggested three alternative lines for the last stanza (that is, line 4 of the stanza at 15a, the additional stanza) which he said was ‘too feeble’, adding that ‘this old mother must show a spark of real feeling’. His criticism led to a ‘Revised edition’ from N dated 16 February 1930 which incorporated some of the suggested alterations, and returned a typescript (NLA MS 1145/73). N questioned line 4 of the typescript saying ‘I think I had ‘Butterflies over the hay’, which occurs in ‘1927’A, 33a-34a, and explained his reason for not using ‘the last line typed on the envelope’.

The published text reflects Stephens’s preference for a more overtly poetic finish: on this basis the fair draft at ‘1929’, 1a-2a (B) is taken as a base text and the additional stanza at ‘1929’, 15a is incorporated. 1927’A, 33a–34a = A; ‘1929’, 1a-2a = B; ‘1929’, 8b = C; ‘1929’, 15a = D; ML MS 4937/5, 385 = E; NLA MS 1145/73 = F

Continued overleaf...

The Good Season (cont.)

The old mother talks and her eyes will be dimming and dimming:
It is the good season that comes up and, oh, she will say,
All Summer the ducks do I see – they are swimming and swimming,
The barley it talks to the butterflies wheeling away.

Oh, that was the season for all the long grass and the clover,
The oats were up over the fences and seven foot high:
Our own little creek it was flooded a dozen times over
And water-birds came without warning to blacken the sky.

But what did we think of? it was not the holding of money
For he would be riding to see me the whole summer through:
The trees would be thick with the birds and all shaking with honey
And I would be making my palaces up in the blue.

1-4] ≠ *A* stanza 1; = *E*; ≠ *F*; = *SMH*

1 talks and her] talks «and» her *B*

1] She will be thinking and thinking her eyes will be dimming *A*

2] [It] «T»is the good season that come[s] up and aw – she will say *A*

3] Its [throu] all through the summer I see the ducks swimming and swimming *A*

4] The barley [and] «in» stokes and the butterflies over the hay *A*

4 butterflies wheeling away] [wheeling away] «over the hay» [AGS] *E* • over the hay *F*

5-8] ≠ *A* stanza 2; = *E*; ≠ *F*; ≠ *SMH*

5 Oh that was] It was *A*

6 were up over] were all «up over» *A* • they were over *F*, *SMH*, *CP*

7 Our own little creek] [And] the little red creek *A*

8] And water-birds coming quick over would blacken the sky *A*

9-12] ≠ *A* stanza 3; = *E*; ≠ *F*; ≠ *SMH*

9 the holding] the [holding] «? storing» [AGS] *E* • the storing *F*, *SMH*, *CP*

10] For he would be riding to see me and me looking too *A*

10 the whole] the [whole] «? longl» [AGS] *E*

11 shaking] [shaken] shaking *B*

11] The forest was thick with the birds and washed with the honey *A*

11] *E* has line cancelled [AGS] •

«How sweet was the scent of the world it is wet with the bees and the honey» [AGS] •

How sweet was the scent of the world [with the bees and the] «it was shaking with» honey [AGS] *F* •

How sweet was the scent of the world it was shaking with honey *SMH*, *CP*

12 making] [making] «building» [AGS] *E* • building *F*, *SMH*, *CP*

12] And me going out with the butterflies into the blue *A*

Continued overleaf...

The Good Season (cont.)

The sun, it was like a moon, it was never so mellow:
Your heart would be thinking of plenty and always at ease:
How drowsy the cattle were – oh, and the butter was yellow,
All summer the little round parrots fell out of the trees.

The shearing was late, for you never could get the fine weather;
'Twas close on to Autumn the last of the wool was away.
The wheat was too rank and the year was too rich altogether;
We started at Easter the second time cutting the hay.

* * *

The old mother looks, and the blood will be thinning and thinning;
Her eyes will go up to the Heavens and over the ground.
She says, I can see him still laughing and losing and winning;
What else could I ever be thinking of all the year round?

13-16] *A* ∅; = *E, F, SMH, CP*

13 so mellow] so [yellow] «mellow» *B*

16 parrots] underlined [AGS] (as is 'birds' line 8) with the comment 'birds CHANGE' *E*

17-20] *A* ∅; = *D, E, F, SMH, CP*

21-24] *A & B* ∅; ≠ *C; ≠ E, F, SMH, CP*

21] mother looks and the blood] mother talks and the blood *C* • mother looks «dreams»

and the «[her]» blood [AGS] *E* • mother dreams and the blood *F, SMH, CP*

21] JSN - AGS 16 February 1930: 'In the 1st line of the 6th stanza I think 'the' sounds better than 'her''

22] will go up] will go out *C* • they go up *E, F, SMH, CP*

23] She says I can see him there laughing at losing or winning *C*

24] I«'»[a]m thinking of all we were thinking of all the year round *C*

24] *E* has line omitted with suggested lines [AGS] and comment 'last line too feeble | this old mother must show a spark of real feeling'.

And oh he looks long at me riding off all the week [round] long •

'Tis queer he is riding to see me now all the year round •

'Tis queer now him calling and beckoning all the year round

24] And oh he looks long at me riding off all the [week] «night» round [AGS] *F* •

And oh he looks long at me riding off all the night round *SMH* •

And oh he looks long at me riding off all the year round *CP*

JSN – AGS 16 February 1930, ML MS 4937/5, 395-398:

Typed copy and envelope returned

I am enclosing the revised edition of 'Good Season'. The last line typed on the envelope seems the best for a finish, but I can't very well use away for rhyme ending in the 6th stanza while I am using away and hay in the 5th stanza. I have kept the line about the parrots falling out of the trees but have wiped out most of the other references to birds . . . In the last line of the 1st stanza I think I had 'Butterflies over the hay'. Perhaps wheeling is more correct but I like the other idea. However as you like. In the 1st line of the 6th stanza I think the sounds better than her but as you like again.

THE HOBBLING FIDDLER

‘1934’, 23b-25a (A0713-4) [A], fair draft.

Blessings have come from travellers in old days;
Blessings from all the winds and all the ways.

'Tis in the heat the moistening of the sun
Droops to acknowledge that the race is run.

Now the poor traveller comes up to the door;
Children have never seen his like before.

Softly the housewife bids him enter in;
Laden he is with dust, and red and thin.

If he be weak, she says, 'tis Heaven's plan,
So shall I treat him as a Holy man.

Beef did she bring, and food of every kind;
Cakes that are much the pride of womankind.

Raisins she gave, and prunes, the gold and blue,
And of sweet nuts that in the garden grew.

Slowly he ate and made no word to say;
Dust was upon him, dust of all the day.

* * *

Housewife and husband stood as to a psalm
When the poor fiddler moved about the calm.

Speechless the children were, they sought to find
Wisdom that never came to human-kind.

Housewife and husband said, 'tis Heaven's plan;
Shall we not treat him as a Holy man?

1 & 10] Cf. 2 Kings 4: 8 – 9: And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread . . . And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. *AV*

Continued overleaf...

The Hobbling Fiddler (cont.)

Jigs did he play that courage did bestow
To the warm dancers down the long ago.

Grief did he play, but with no painted art;
Grief – 'twas the blood about his mother's heart.

Jigs did he play that in the barley ran;
Slow did they say, he is a Holy man.

Long did he play of raids he never saw,
Long did he pour defeat on all the law.

Dust was about him, heat and blood and joy;
Softly they said, he is but still a boy.

Then did he teach them how the evil pray
Till he was weary and had ceased to play.

Housewife and husband said, 'tis Heaven's plan,
So we shall treat him as a Holy man.

24 down the] down [a] the *MS*

26 'twas the blood] twas [lo] the blood *MS*

30 defeat on] defeat [an] on *MS*

33 pray] [preye] pray *MS*

THE INVASIONS

NLA MS 1145/68, typescript [JD]. The poem was written when Neilson was in Brisbane in 1941.

The flowers did invade us swiftly when we were young,
When all for love and new love fierce we clung:
We strove for the scarlet, we sought for the sky,
The flowers did uphold us in the griefs gone by.

The flowers did invade us in long days of toil
When the fires were about us on the thirsty soil:
When eastward or westward there came no calm
The flowers did invade us as a great psalm.

The flowers do invade us when all the gold
Does hasten to leave us while the winds are cold:
To the deaf they bring hearing and to the blind
The scarlet of promise, the calm and kind.

THE JOURNEY TO THE TUNNEL

ML MS 3354/3, 7/13a, typescript [JD?], on a sheet with 'To a young girl in the Spring', under heading 'By John Shaw Neilson .. 1941'.

Madly we crowd, all decency we flout;
Fiercely we fight as in a boxing bout.
(Oh for your metre Omar, lease or lend)
Entrance is certain, but do we get out?

Here on the rails we all our necks extend;
In the mad rush all creeds and colours blend.
One thing is certain – 'tis our entrance – but
Is there, I wonder, any other end?

3 Omar] 'The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám', a series of quatrains translated by Edward Fitzgerald and first published anonymously in 1859.

THE JUGGLERS IN THE DOGWOOD

‘1940’, 3a (A0818) [L], fair draft.

There was a tree long since I knew,
A dogwood crowned with honey-flower,
And there were jugglers, only two.

Child that I was I held my breath;
Oh, but these hideous eyes, I said,
Life is more terrible than death.

Daily they moved with scarce a sound,
But by the middle moon there came
The young birds, beautiful and round.

There did they love – I could not see
Meaning in this great riddle there,
The jugglers in the dogwood tree.

4] [’Twas in October I was filled] *MS* a false start to stanza 2

8 But . . . there] [And] «But» . . . [their] there *MS*

9 and round] and [brown] «round» *MS*

WS p. 117 has a note: ‘The birds Neilson writes of are Pink Cockatoos (*Kakatoe leadbeateri*), better known as Major Mitchells or Wee Jugglers.’

THE LITTLE GIRL AT THE POND

‘1934’, 1a (A0689) [L], unfinished, 1 stanza, (stanza 1) cancelled and rewritten without variant, and a line, under the number 2, entitled ‘My little girl at the pond’; 8b (A0698) [A], unfinished, 2 × 4-line stanzas, with numbering for 3 and space left.

She is the most elusive and beyond
 All the insane assassins of sweet things;
 'Tis on the Summertime she plays and sings
 Beside the pond.

Law has not yet enfeebled her two eyes:
 She will go softly, quickly will respond
 To every hope, quick scattering all the lies
 Along the pond.

[*Unfinished*]

1 elusive] delusive *MS*

2 assassins] assurers *MS*

8] To every hope that falls out of the skies *MS* preceding line 8, which presumably cancels this line.

‘1934’, 1a reads:

She is as old as God is she is beyond
 Tremble «and» talk and the dull fevers
 She is my little girl at the pond

Out of the west the Seven Sailors have risen in fire

THE LITTLE MILITANT

‘1936’, 9b-10a (A0778) [L], fair draft.

Of waterbirds that in my youth I did admire
Can I forget that crafty little islander
Whose home I did full many a time desire?

So keen was he – he did all day discover
The enemy in every passer-by:
I love that little militant, the plover.

At night he did the world about awaken,
Shrill was his cry – go to the top-most Heaven,
His doubt in mankind still remained unshaken.

Always he was both general and lover:
Loud were his falsehoods to the enemy:
I love that little militant, the plover.

THE LITTLE SOPRANO

‘1940’, 8b (A0824) [L], fair draft.

The big drum is silent, the little drum rattles no more;
The little soprano is gone, the earth cannot hold him;
The basses are silent, the heavy men wait on the floor.

Now does he eat to his fill in the feast of fine weather
Over the top of the butterflies lost in the glow
In a sweet country the lights have assembled together.

4 eat to his fill] eat to his full *MS*

THE LONG LAD ON THE VIOLIN

‘1940’, 19b (A0835) [L], fair draft.

’Twas in a desolate hut he played,
Grimy his clothes and salt his skin;
Toiling at some uncertain trade,
As an intruder he came in.
There was no man of us he knew
But all our hidden things came through
That long lad on the violin.

The dull men gambled in the smoke,
There was no holiness of prayer,
On the four walls the unclean joke
Left a remembrance in the air.
How could this floundering youth fetch in
Joys and forgiveness of sin
Upon that wornout fiddle there?

THE LONG WEEKEND

There are two discrete versions of this poem. The dating is uncertain, but the sequence is reasonably clear. The first version was written c. 1934 ('1939', 12b-13a) and this version was abandoned in favour of another which was written c. 1935 ('1934', 21b & 35b), and then revised to send to Devaney for *BI* in 1936 ('1936', 7b-8a & 12a-12b).

THE LONG WEEKEND [1]

'1939', 12b-13a (A0810) [A], fair draft.

Rest, she had little rest – she had her woes;
The foreman that she feared, the clothes to mend.
How fortunate she is, this girl who goes
Upon the long weekend.

She is not here – the long white body lies
In the long gown – it is the time to pray
Though she may never hear it in the skies,
Who knows how far away.

She had the thirst for colour and the need
Of a grand lover – someone more than friend –
'Twas for a Prince and 'tis with a Prince indeed
She takes the long weekend.

How fortunate she was that He should come.
'Twas in the night – he did one moment stay;
He the Unseen that made all neighbours dumb
Took that we loved away.

In the far country bridges are of gold;
She shall have now no need to save or spend.
She fears no jealousy, or heat, or cold
Upon the long weekend.

The Unseen Prince has lifted her away.
The foreman that she feared, the clothes to mend,
Shall no more bring the tears by night or day;
She takes the long weekend.

1 she had] she [has] had *MS*

4 the long] [a] «the» long *MS*

9 the need] the [sigh] need *MS*

11 'tis with a Prince] tis «with» a Prince *MS*

12 the long weekend] the «long» weekend *MS*

19 no jealousy] no [any] jealousy *MS*

THE LONG WEEKEND [2]

‘1934’, 21b (A0711) [L], 3 stanzas numbered 1-3, stanza 3 cancelled; 35b (A0725) [A], 2 stanzas under title, with heading ‘Odd verses’, numbered 5 & 4. ‘1936’, 7b-8a (A0776) [L], draft, 5 stanzas numbered 1-4, stanza 4 cancelled and rewritten. Loose leaves in the front of ‘1929’, (A0780-1) [L], fair draft, 4 stanzas. ‘1936’, 12a-12b (A0780-1) [L], fair draft, 4 stanzas. NLA MS 1145/67 [L], corrections to proofs *BI*.
BI 22.

JD - JSN 8 March 1936, McKimm MS (has received poem and encloses a typed copy ‘with a comment or two’: ‘This is a good piece, and the 3rd verse is particularly good’). JSN - JD 3 May 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (correction to typed copy for *BI*); 5 September 1937, NLA MS 1145/68 (in response to a question from JD, suggests this may be suitable to send to some of the ‘women’s papers’).

The fair draft on the loose leaves in the ‘1929’ notebook is derived from ‘1934’, 21b & 35b and ‘1936’, 7b-8a and may have been intended for use as fair copy, and this version was revised again, and not for the better, for *BI*.

On this basis, the fair draft (C), loose in ‘1929’, is taken as the preferred text.
‘1934’, 21b & 35b = A; ‘1936’, 7b-8a = B; loose leaves in ‘1929’ = C; ‘1936’, 12a –12b = D; NLA MS 1145/67 = E

All poverty she knew is at an end:
The foreman that she feared in all her woes
Can leave no cloud – how fortunate she goes
Upon the long weekend.

Can we forgive? She did not always mend
Her faulty finery, her silken hose.

1-4] ≠ A; = B; ≠ D; ≠ BI

1] Beauty she fought for she had need to spend D, BI

2 in all] [and] «in» all A

3 Can leave no cloud] Can make no cloud[s] A • Can [make] leave no cloud B

3] Leaves not a cloud how fortunate she goes D, BI

5-8] ≠ A; ≠ B; ≠ D; ≠ BI

5 Can we forgive? She] Can we forgive [her] she A • Can we forgive her she C

5] Can we forgive her that she did not mend D, BI

6] Her silken finery her thin pretentious hose A, B •

«Her faulty finery her silken hose» B at bottom of page

Continued overleaf...

The Long Weekend [2] (cont.)

Dreams were the sole commandments – now she goes
Upon the long weekend.

Week after week the days were all the same:
Sunday was like the lightning in the sky
Threatening of storm – on Monday came the sigh,
The unholy whistle came.

* * *

Sweet in the white – they say she may ascend
To an unstinted country where the days
Come with no malice – there she plays and plays
Upon the long weekend.

7] She [was awa] «did with» rainbows wander now she goes *A* •
Thirst and a dream she had now she goes *D* •

Thirst and a dream she had and now she goes *BI*

9-12] ≠ *A* stanza numbered 4; ≠ *B*; ≠ *D*; ≠ *BI*

9] Week after week they ran and all the same *A* •

Week [after] «[upon]» week [they ran and] «the days were» all the same *B* •

Toil without pity greeds without a shame *D, BI*

10] These did she suffer Sunday but a sigh *D* •

These did she suffer Sunday still a sigh *BI*

11] Threatning of storm [and trouble then] «on» Monday with a cry *A* •

Threatening of storm on Monday [with a cry] «came the sigh» *B* •

And with the Monday on the sky *D, BI*

13-16] *A* ∅; = *B*; ≠ *D*; ≠ *BI*

13 she may ascend] she will ascend *D, BI*

13] *E* has the comment 'Page 9. The Long Week-end. The first line 4th Stanza. I dictated 'she will' but Lisette may have put 'will she'.

15] Come without malice there she stays and stays *D, BI*

Discarded stanzas

A cancelled stanza 3:

[The time for rest was all too swift, the afternoon
Whistled about her, the flowers and trees
Whispered like friends and sometimes enemies
Faint underneath the moon.]

A 'Odd verses, 5'; *B* cancelled stanza 4 preceding rewritten stanza 4:

Little she earned and they say she may ascend *A, B*
Into some radiant city ah who knows *A, B*
With the dark hair in white how sweet she goes *A, B*
[How] Upon the long week end *A*
Upon the long seek-end *B*

THE OLD MAN IN THE AUTUMN

‘1940’, 1a-1b (A0816) [A], fair draft. ML MS A3038/3, 13a (B0075) [FN], transcription, with a note, ‘Note by Frank. Might pass but it’s a strange bit of gloom. Late verse of J.S.N. 1941’.

The fair draft is the preferred text.

The Calm is unceasing,
The Soul would delay;
He the unseen in Autumn
Steps not far away.

How gentle the children;
Softly they pass
In a faint merriment
On the scented grass.

As Loves half defeated
The flowers seek the dim;
Oh, the Unseen – I like not
The long talk with him.

He shall not dare to come
Down to my rhyme;
He is of God and surely
The kinsman of time.

He offered wisdom;
Already I am too wise
With all my years counted up
At the back of my eyes.

Too cold is the beauty,
The Love burns dim.
That old man I like not,
Nor the long talk with him.

Title] The Old Man [and] «in» the Autumn *MS*

3 He the] He «the» *MS*

6 Softly] Sof[t]ly *MS*

16 The Kinsman] [A] «The» Kinsman *MS*

24] Nor the long «talk» with him *MS*

THE PLAYMATE OUT OF EGYPT

‘1930’, 4b (A0649) [EN], fair draft.

In the strange land great tumult woke
Tremblings that are not told in story;
The playmate out of Egypt spoke
Her playworld in the Morning Glory.

1 strange] [far] «strange» *MS*

3-4] The quatrain probably alludes to the plant *Ipomea cairica* [meaning, of Cairo], commonly known as Morning Glory.

THE POOR CAN FEED THE BIRDS

‘1929’, 28b (A0617) [A], 2 × 4-line stanzas numbered 1 & 2, entitled ‘The poor beside the pond’. ‘1940’, 10b-11a (A0826) [A], fair draft, 4 × 6-line stanzas, entitled ‘The poor feed the birds’; 12a-14a (A0827-9) [L], draft, 13 stanzas, with cancelled stanzas, rewritten stanzas, and renumbering, entitled ‘The poor feed the birds’; 17b-19a (A0833-4) [L], fair draft, 11 stanzas, entitled ‘The poor feed the birds’. ‘1934’, 15a-17a (A0704-6) [A], revisions, under headings ‘Alterations for Feed birds’ and ‘Alterations to Poor can feed the birds’; 29b-30b (A0719-0720) [L], fair draft, 10 stanzas, entitled ‘The poor can feed the birds’, with heading ‘3rd version’. ‘1935’, 4a-4b (A0745-6) [A], 3 stanzas and some lines, with cancelled lines, under heading ‘Odd verses for birds’; 10b-11a (A0753) [A & L], revisions, 6 stanzas, stanza 2 cancelled and rewritten, under short title ‘The birds’. NLA MS 1145/35(C), [L], fair copy, 11 stanzas, entitled ‘The poor feed the birds’, annotated ‘Recd 16.1.35 | Note by J. Devaney’ [Harry Chaplin]. *Sydney Mail* 25 December 1935, p. 19; *BI* 28.

JSN – JD 13 January 1935, NLA MS 1145/66 (encloses poem, discusses background, and asks JD to mark it where he thinks ‘it could be altered to advantage’); 31 March 1935, NLA MS 1145/46 (‘will fix ‘feeding the birds’ piece at Easter’); 3 September 1935, NLA MS 1145/67 (‘have got the alterations made and I will send it to you on next Sunday’); 27 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/65 (in list of pieces JD now has for *BI*, with a postscript, ‘If you see ‘The birds’ in the S.M. Herald you can let me know the dates so as I can send for a paper’); 30 April 1936, NLA MS 1145/65 (says ‘I had forgotten about the ‘Sydney Mail’ publishing ‘The birds’); 3 May 1936, NLA MS 1145/65 (corrections to copy for *BI*: ‘‘The poor can feed the birds’. Correct.’); JSN – JD 27 September 1938 [incorrectly dated?], not located [quoted in ‘Neilson’s problem’s and a query’, Walter Stone, pp.62-63, *Biblionews & Australian notes & queries*, 3rd series 1/4, 1976]; 7 August 1940, NLA MS 1145/68 (Dr Mackaness would like to use this in an anthology). Correspondence is given after discarded stanzas and the order of stanzas.

The poem occurs first in the notebook dated ‘Footscray 3/12/29’ [A], as 2 x 4-line stanzas, and was probably written in early to mid-1930 (‘1929’, 28b). This was abandoned, and then taken up again in 1934. A piece of 4 x 6-line stanzas was then written (‘1940’, 10b-11a), and then rewritten, as an 8 × 3-line stanza poem (‘1940’, 12a-14a). This was revised to make 11 x 3-line stanzas (‘1940’, 17b-19a), and then sent to Devaney in January 1935 (NLA MS 1145/35(C). N asked Devaney to mark where he thought the text could be improved, and further revisions followed (‘1934’, 15a-17a). A list of comments at ‘1934’, 15a, concerning revisions to be made, is unusually systematic, as if the comments have been taken from another source, and this suggests that these suggestions are Devaney’s.

The fair draft at ‘1934’, 29b-30b, headed ‘3rd version’, reflects these suggestions and a copy of this was sent to Devaney. (This is the text he printed in *BI*.) Further revisions occur at ‘1935’, 4a-4b and ‘1935’, 10b-11a, and these are incorporated in the *Sydney Mail* text.

The version at ‘1934’, 29b-30b corrects two inferior stanzas: however, the subsequent revisions, introduced in the first published text, are also inferior, which is no doubt why Devaney preferred to print the text taken from the ‘1934’, 29b-30b ‘3rd version’ in *BI*.

The fair draft at ‘1934’, 29b-30b (G) is therefore taken as the preferred text.

‘1929’, 28b = A; ‘1940’, 10b-11a = B; ‘1940’, 12-14a = C; ‘1940’, 17b-19a = D; MS 1145/35 (C) = E;

‘1934’, 15a-17a = F; ‘1934’, 29b-30b = G; ‘1935’, 4a-4b = H; ‘1935’, 10b-11a = I

‘1929’, 28b (A) & ‘1940’, 10a-11a (B) are shown separately in the notes. The order of stanzas and revised lines at C, F, H & I are given following A and B.

Continued overleaf...

The Poor Can Feed the Birds (cont.)

Ragged, unheeded, stooping, meanly shod,
The poor pass to the pond. Not far away
The spires go up to God.

Shyly they come from the unpainted lane:
Coats have they made of old unhappiness
That keeps in every pain.

1-3] ≠ *C*; ≠ *D*; ≠ *E*; = *BI*

1] Ragged unheeded stooping meanly shod *F* (17a) '1st line'

1] *F* (15a) has 'First verse | unheeded instead of unhallowed'

1] = *F* (17a) '1st line'

1 unheeded] unthinking *C* • unhallowed *D*, *E*

4-6] ≠ *C* cancelled stanza [4] 5; ≠ *C* rewritten stanza 5; ≠ *D*; ≠ *E*; ≠ *H* cancelled stanza 'No 2'; ≠ *H* stanza 'No 2' (2nd of 2); ≠ *I* stanza numbered 1 (1st of 2); ≠ *I* stanza numbered 1 (2nd of 2); ≠ *SM*; = *BI*

4] Shyly they come from the sinpainted lane *H* cancelled stanza 'No 2'

5] [And] The unwholesome door – from all that bitterness *C* cancelled stanza [4] 5 •

The unwholesome door – the need of happiness *C* stanza 5 •

The unwholesome door – the need for happiness *D*, *E* •

Coats do they wear of Old Unhappiness *H* cancelled stanza 'No 2' •

And for their coats they have unhappiness *H* stanza 'No 2' •

Coats have they made of old unhappiness *H* following stanza 'No 2' •

Sorrow in sky lights and the unwholesome door *I* stanza numbered 1 (1st of 2) •

[Windows of sorrow] «Sorrow of windows» and the unwholesome door *I* stanza numbered 1 (2nd of 2) •

Sorrow of windows and the unwholesome door *SM*

6] That is the dust of pain *C* cancelled stanza [4] 5 •

The long nights and the pain *C* stanza 5 •

That tunes up every pain *D*, *E*

6] *F* (15a) has '2nd verse | tunes up to be altered'

6] The long fierce cold of pain *F* (16a) 'last line | No 2' •

The footways into pain *F* (17a) '2 3rd line' •

That hide well every pain *H* cancelled stanza 'No 2' •

That keeps out every pain *H* following 'No 2' •

That shuts in every pain *I* stanzas numbered 1, *SM*

6] JSN – JD 27 September 1938 has ' In The poor can feed the birds in 3rd line of 2nd stanza I think it should read 'That keep in every pain' instead of keeps. However, I am not quite certain, coats keep and happiness keeps. It hardly matters?'

Continued overleaf...

The Poor Can Feed the Birds (cont.)

The rich have fear. Perchance their God is dim:
'Tis with the hope of stored-up happiness
They build their spires to Him.

The rich go out in clattering pomp and dare
In the most holy places to insult
The deep Benevolence there.

But 'tis the poor who make the loving words:
Slowly they stoop – it is a sacrament:
The poor can feed the birds.

7-9] ≠ *D*; ≠ *E*; ≠ *F* '3rd verse'; = *SM*; = *BI*

7 perchance] and though *D, E*

7] *F* (15a) has '3rd verse | Perchance instead of though'

8 'Tis with the hope] So with a hope *F* '3rd verse'

9] They build the spires for Him *D, F* '3rd verse' •

They build the spires to Him *E*

10-12] ≠ *C* stanza 2; ≠ *D*; ≠ *E*; ≠ *F* '4th verse' (1st of 2); ≠ *F* '4th verse' (2nd of 2); = *SM*; = *BI*

10] The rich go forth in finery near and far *C* •

The rich go out in whistling pomp and stare *D, E*

10] *F* (15a) has 'Verse 4 | Stare to be improved'

10] The rich go out with insolence they dare *F* '4th verse' (1st of 2) •

The rich go out in whistling pomp and dare *F* '4th verse' (2nd of 2)

11 to insult] they insult *C, D, E*

11] Stand in most holy places. They insult *F* '4th verse' (1st of 2)

12] White moon and Evening Star *C*

13-15] ≠ *C* stanza 3; = *D, E, SM, BI*

13 who make] who [find] «make» *C*

14] Here do they find all Heaven [upon] «along» the pond *C*

13-15] Cf. Luke 24: 30 & 35 . . . as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them . . . And they told . . . how he was known of them in breaking of bread. *AV*

Continued overleaf...

The Poor Can Feed the Birds (cont.)

Old, it is old, this scattering of the bread:
 Deep as forgiveness, or the tears that go
 Out somewhere to the Dead.

The feast of love, the love that is the cure
 For all indignities, it reigns, it calls,
 It chains us to the pure.

Seldom they speak of God – He is too dim:
 So without thought of after happiness
 They feed the birds for Him.

16-18] ≠ *C* cancelled stanza 4; ≠ *C* stanza 4; ≠ *D*; ≠ *E*; ≠ *F* (15b) '6th'; ≠ *F* (16a) '6th verse'; ≠ *F* (17a) '3 Full verse'; = *H* 'No 6'; ≠ *I* stanza numbered 6; ≠ *SM*; = *BI*
 16] This pity thing this scattering of the bread *C* cancelled stanza 4, *C* stanza 4, *D*, *E*
 16] *F* (15a) has 'Verse 6. This pity thing to be improved'
 16] This burning thing this scattering of the bread *F* (15a) '6th' •
 This pity thing this scattering of the bread *F* (16a) '6th verse' •
 This then is Pity. Love behind the bread *F* (17a) '3 Full verse'
 17] Is but the scent of half the tears that go *C* cancelled stanza 4 •
 Is but the thought behind the tears that go *C* stanza 4 •
 Is but the heat behind the tears that go *D*, *E* •
 [Is] Wild as [the] first Love [is] it clings it goes *F* (15b) '6th' •
 Burns in upon us and even goes *F* (16a) '6th verse' •
 Old as the first Forgiveness or the tears *F* (17a) '3 Full verse'
 Dim as forgiveness deep as tears that go *I*, *SM*
 18] Out whispering to the dead *F* (16a) '6th verse' •
 That come down to the Dead *F* (17a) '3 Full verse'
 19-21] ≠ *C* cancelled stanza 8; ≠ *C* stanza 7; = *D* stanza 10; = *E* stanza 10; = *SM*; = *BI*
 19-21] *F* (15a) has the comment 'Verse 10 to be 7th'
 19] To love to filch of love it is the cure *C* cancelled stanza 8 •
 To love to feast of love is still [can the] «the» cure *C* stanza 7
 20] For all our cold infirmities it calls *C* cancelled stanza 8 •
 [All things] «For all» but death and love 'tis only love *C* stanza 7
 21] That chains us to the pure *C* stanza 7
 22-24] ≠ *C* cancelled stanza 6; ≠ *C* stanza 6; = *D* stanza 7; = *E* stanza 7; = *SM*, *BI*
 22 speak of] talk of *C* cancelled stanza 6, *C* stanza 6
 23] He is too far away in the sweet air *C* cancelled stanza 6 •
 So without hope of stored-up happiness *C* stanza 6

Continued overleaf...

The Poor Can Feed the Birds (cont.)

The rich men walk not here on the green sod,
But they have builded towers, the timorous,
That still go up to God.

Still will the poor go out with loving words:
In the long need, the need for happiness,
The poor can feed the birds.

25-27] *C* ∅; ≠ *D* stanza 8; ≠ *E* stanza 8; = *SM*, *BI*

26] But they have built them spires the timorous *D* •

But they have builded them the timorous *E*

28-30] *D* ∅; *C* ∅; ≠ *E* stanza 11; ≠ *H* stanza 'No 10'; ≠ *I* stanza 10; ≠ *SM*; = *BI*

28] But 'tis the poor who take the loving words *E* •

Still do the poor give out the loving words *H* •

Always it is the poor with loving words *I*, *SM*

Discarded stanzas

C cancelled stanza [6] 7 & *C* stanza 8:

Crave not the meaning of the loving words *C* [6] 7, 8

The rich men have the spires they build to God *C* [6] 7

The rich can have the spires they put to God *C* 8

The poor can feed the birds *C* [6] 7, 8

D stanza 9 & *E* stanza 9:

Always it is the poor with loving words

Bread do they scatter love and bread and love

The poor can feed the birds

D stanza 11:

As for the rich, they have the flocks and herds,

Have they not choirs that tell of happiness

The poor can feed the birds

I cancelled stanza numbered 2 & *I* stanza numbered 2:

Much do they fear such men as pity woe

Hunger they have disguised as merriment

To shield them as they go

A reads:

What is the hear[t] that is [in] them stirs

Tis all that sets the world aglow

While poverty about them grows

Daily they feed the voyagers

The rich that have not felt the scars

Scented and haughty groomed and curled

They have the hilltops of the world

And the loud glorly [glory] of the cars

Continued overleaf...

The Poor Can Feed the Birds (cont.)

B reads:

Shyly they come with awkward hands and feet
 From the unwholesome door, the unpainted lane
 These who have known bitterness seek for a sweet
 Hunger they know and every [shape] shade of pain
 Slowly they stoop with mellowing of words
 The Poor can feed the birds.

The rich go forth with many a hideous car
 To the most holy places, night and noon
 Screeching aloud they scorn the Evening Star
 Smutch the untold benevolence of the Moon
 But 'tis the Poor who take the mellow words
 [Hungry] «Humbly» they feed the birds

Little they have to love, their children run
 Bootless and hungry, but their eyes respond
 To this that will not leave their Souls undone
 This that has put all Heaven [upon] «[around]» «along» the pond
 Shyly they come with mellowing of word
 The Poor can feed the birds

These that know not of Heaven make no prayer
 These who have burning wishes casts the bread [sic]
 He who has clad the mountains in sweet air
 Pity is round about him overhead
 Shyly they talk their eyes are all too dim
 They feed the birds for him

Order of stanzas and revised lines *C*, *F*, *H* & *I*

C (12a-13a) stanzas 1-3; cancelled stanzas 3, 4, [4] 5, 6, [6] 7, 8

C (13b-14a) stanzas 4-8

F (15a) lines under heading 'Alterations for Feed Birds':

'First verse', '2nd verse', '3rd verse', 'Verse 4', 'Verse 6', 'Verse 10 [to be 7th]

F (15b-16a) stanzas '4th verse', '6th'; under heading 'revised edition' '4th verse', '6th verse', 'last line No 2', '3rd verse'

F (17a) under heading 'Alterations to Poor can feed the birds': '1st line', '2 3rd line', '3 Full verse'

H (4a-4b) 'Odd verses for birds': 'No 2' cancelled stanza, 'No 6', 'No 10', 'No 2' & revised lines 2 & 3 of stanza 'No 2'

I (10b): stanzas 1, 2, 6 & 10; (11a) stanzas 1 & cancelled stanza 2

Continued overleaf...

The Poor Can Feed the Birds (cont.)

JSN - JD 13 January 1935:

I am sending you some verse, 'The poor feed the birds'. I think Frank said in a letter he liked best stanzas 4, 5 and 6 and 9 and 10. Near where I work in the gardens there are two ponds. These ponds contain some black and white swans, some duck and water-fowls. I have noticed for several years past that it is always the poor people who feed the birds. No well dressed people come – I suppose they are away motoring or entertaining their friends. I think most of the bird feeders are 'sussos'. Fitzroy and Carlton are close by and have many mean streets. This bread-breaking seems almost a religious act. It is as near a religious act as most of these people will ever get.

From one side of the western pond one can see the spire of the Wesley Church but none of the other church spires are visible. When the Anglican Church was collecting for St. Paul's spires a few years back it was remarkable how people of other religions and no religions put in. I often used to wonder whether these business rogues thought they were doing a little good for themselves in the next world but perhaps I am uncharitable.

I would like you to mark 'The birds' where you think it could be altered to advantage. Send it back to me and if we can get it into any shape we might have a try with some of the papers.

THE PRINCE HAS BEEN INTO THE LANE

NLA MS 2765 [FN].

The Bread & Cheese book; a selection of verses, ed. R. I. O’Leary, The Bread & Cheese Club, Melbourne, 1939.

JSN – E. (Ted) Turner) 3 September 1938 [FN], NLA MS 2765 (enclosing poem and says ‘The Prince is of course Death. I wrote this thing some time last year. I have tried to alter it a bit lately but I have not had the leisure to do it justice’). JSN - JD 11 April 1939, NLA MS 1145/39 (‘I sent this to them last September. I meant to send it first to you for your opinion, but they were in a great hurry to get it’).

The fair copy is text the preferred text.

How soft are the neighbours, they no more complain
At the noise of the children – the Prince has been into the lane.

How faint was the little one, how tired out and thin:
And the Prince was so proud and so distant – ’twas good of the Prince to come in.

He who can stay the hot foot and the heat in the brain,
He did delay for a moment – the Prince has been into the lane.

No monarch has ever been powerful to stay His decree:
They tell that He lives on black rivers across a wide sea.

Pity He has not, and yet He has put out a pain:
He stayed not a moment – the Prince has been into the lane.

’Twas kind of the Prince of the Shadows; He had far to come:
The awe of this honour – it leaves us half-hidden and dumb.

The little one knew but the footway, the dust, and the rain;
The hard word, the kind word – the Prince has been into the lane.

He has not the leisure for pity by night or by day:
Oh, thank the good Prince – as He hastened He made the delay.

Can He be older than Love? we see not an end to His reign:
Is He kinsman of God? or a vassal? – the Prince has been into the lane.

THE REASONINGS

ML MS 3354/2, Item 7, 5b-6a [A], fair draft.

In the calm time I shall delay:
When sunset cools the flocks and herds
And the low bushes take the birds,
Surely God will not turn away?

God, I will say, it is unwise:
She lives too long with the unclean,
This clattering of the gray machine,
This white work withering out the eyes.

Though I be stranger in the dim
And He has many throats to hear,
Emperors and Prelates loud and clear,
Yet will I venture unto Him.

Calm at the sundown shall I stay:
God, shall I cry, is there a land
Somewhere could Happiness be planned,
Springtime and Springtime all the day?

And if He hears me not I'll stay
In the white mid-land of the moon:
God, shall I say, she fades too soon:
I'll search Him for a holiday.

1 time I shall] time [we] I shall *MS*

14 a land] a la[mb]«nd» *MS*

15 planned] [found] «planned» *MS*

THE ROAD TO THE HOSPITAL

‘1939’, 5b & 6b-7a (A0802 & A0803) [A], fair draft, 5 stanzas, with a note. ‘1940’, 7a-7b (A0822-3) [L], fair draft, 4 stanzas, with a gloss. LaT MS 8910, Box 1206/4(b) [L], fair copy, 4 stanzas, with a gloss. NLA MS 605/76, typescript (carbon copy), annotated ‘Sent to Australasian 8/7/34’ [RHC]. *Sydney Morning Herald* 15 September 1934; *BI* 12.

JSN - RHC 17 June 1934, LaT MS 8910, Box 1206/41(b) (enclosing poem; and discusses its history); 5 August 1934, NLA MS 605/77 (asks ‘have you heard anything of the hospital piece since you sent it away?’, and suggests RHC try the *Sydney Morning Herald* if the *Australasian* not interested). Correspondence is given after a discarded stanza.

This is a later version of ‘East of the hospital’, which was sent to Stephens in December 1930, and rewritten as ‘The road to the hospital’ between mid-1933 and June 1934 when it was sent to Croll. The fair copy (C) is the preferred text.

‘1939’, 5b & 6b-7a = A; ‘1940’, 7a-7b = B; LaT MS 8910 Box 1206/4(b) = C; NLA MS 605/76 = D

(*Over this road, running west through the Gardens to the Children’s Hospital, Melbourne, mothers carry their children day by day*)

This is the road the fainting go, on Summers keen and bold,
 And this the way of the wounded, in bitterness and cold.
 Oh some are proud in the loving arms, and some too faint to sigh:
 I am with God in a reverence when Mother Love goes by.

They tell me that the city dust has filled the trees with grime
 And the flowers are pale – I will not have such heresy in my rhyme,
 For the rainy eyes of the children have left them sweet and fair;
 There is no stain on the clean gardens when Mother Love is there.

1-4] ≠ A; = B, D, SMH, BI

Gloss] = BI • (The Road running west through the Gardens to the Children’s Hospital Carlton. Over this road many mothers carry their children day by day.) C

3 too faint] too white A

5-8] ≠ A; = B, D, SMH, BI

7 have left] have washed A

8 clean gardens when] clean gardens while A • [sweet] «clean» gardens when B

Continued overleaf...

The Road to the Hospital (cont.)

They tell me that this wide city is black with every sin,
 And that Heaven's gates are shut so fast we never may crowd in;
 But the woes of little eyelids will teach us how to pray,
 And our eyes will all go mothering with Mother Love today.

* * *

Vainly I seek the scented word, the witness of the Spring,
 Glad with the honey at the heart for long remembering;
 But dumb I am to the clean earth, and dumb to the great sky;
 I am with God in a reverence when Mother Love goes by.

9-12] = *A, B, D, SMH, BI*

10 Heaven's gates] Heaven's gate[s] *A*

13-16] ≠ *A* 17-20; = *B, C, SMH, BI* 13-16

13 word] word[s] *C*

14 at the heart] of the heart *A*

16 with God in a reverence] [in] with God with a [reverence] Reverence *A*

Discarded stanza

A stanza 4 (lines 13-16):

If this should fail one moment fail how quickly would we pass
 As quickly as the rainbow rides in farewell to the grass
 This is the sweetening that can make full Summer all the year
 And the only thought is holy thought when Mother love is near

JSN - RHC 17 June 1934:

Last January I spoke of sending you a piece which was too late for the book. I am enclosing it. A few days ago I spoke to Mr Greening [Lothians] about it but I have never shown it to anyone since I finished it. He thought it might not be a bad plan to send it to the 'Australasian' if you thought it good enough. You will forgive me for trying to explain why it was written.

Six years ago when I started with the Board, I could not help noticing that mothers carried their children day by day past the door to the Children's Hospital. Often these children were seven or eight years old and too heavy for little women to carry, but mothers are brave creatures. I understand that some years previous there was a conveyance to fetch the children over. But it ceased through want of funds.

About three years ago I tried to make a rhyme about it. I was really indignant but I could not get any indignation in the verse. There were eight or nine stanzas altogether. I sent them to A.G. but he thought rather poorly of them. He advised me to cut the piece down to four or five stanzas. About 12 months ago I cut out the weaker stanzas and tried to improve the remaining ones. Last summer I altered it again several times. It is rather a difficult thing to write anything about mother love that has not been written before. You understand how unworthy the rhyme is when you comprehend the glory of the subject.

I had to put in a prose heading to make the piece explain itself. A.G. hated any kind of explanatory note very fiercely. I always avoided them.

THE SHOES OF MARIETTA

‘1935’, 12b –13a (A0754) [A], fair draft.

Hygienically they are most unsound,
But 'tis on them an angel spins around;
Take the long look with me and be profound.

Who would be bold to question, who would choose
Reason or Economics – and so lose
What then is Marietta in her shoes?

Swift on her tongue is every sly retort!
Whims she has many – Charities and Sport!
All that the most fantastic shoes support!

They could beguile both Emperor and Clown;
As for the heels – the talk of all the town –
They are like minarets dancing up-side-down!

Always entrancing, always without fear,
Swiftly she walks with gifts and Christmas cheer;
It is the season Angels do appear.

Ones? are they ones? Perhaps – I cannot tell;
Five feet above them always hangs a spell;
Oh, but her eyes in tenderness excel!

Title] The shoes of Maretta *MS*
4 question who] question [Who] who *MS*
8 Charities] [charity] Charities *MS*
12 minarets] minerades *MS*
17 feet above them] feet «[above] them» *MS*
18 in tenderness excel] in[tertiness]«tenderness» excel *MS*

THE STOLEN LAMENT

‘1927’A, 13b-18a (A0545-9) [JSN], draft, 12 stanzas, two stanzas cancelled, with some unnumbered stanzas and with extensive renumbering. ML MS 4937/5, 30 September 1928, 285-293, fair copy [A], 6 stanzas, with comments [AGS].

CP 150.

ML MS 3354/3-5 is a newspaper cutting headed ‘Various Verse: a little anthology of John Shaw Neilson’, which prints ‘The stolen lament’, ‘Heart of Spring’, ‘Song be delicate’, and ‘The Irish welcome’. The cutting has an advertisement with a Melbourne address at the bottom and no other details. The text is identical in every respect to the *CP* text.

JSN - AGS 30 September 1928 (discusses inspiration for the poem – an article about Irish music). JSN - RHC 20 November 1933, NLA MS 605 (encloses poem and comments: adds, ‘I think that [it] is about seven hundred years ago that the Irish were having a very rough time at the hands of the British’).

Stephens was very critical of the poem, which he said was ‘Right in essence – wrong in treatment’, and said ‘I can do nothing with this – still-born’). N abandoned the piece, and then rewrote it for *CP*, drawing on the first drafts. The *CP* text is superior to the fair copy and is taken as the preferred text. Stephens’s comments are given in full after the discarded stanzas and the order of stanzas.

‘1927’A, 13b-18a = A; MS 4937/5, 285-293 = B
The order of stanzas (A) is given after discarded stanzas.

It has the seal of sorrow – it was born
In lamentation where sweet women died
And the red smoke came out upon the corn.

1-3] ≠ *A* stanza 1; ≠ *B* stanza 1

1] Can it be less than holy it was born *B*

2] On the red season where sweet women died *B*

3] And the black smoke came over all the corn •

And the hot smoke ran over all the corn *B*

Continued overleaf...

The Stolen Lament (cont.)

Leave it in pity – it is sealed of woe –
Lest you should hear the hisses of the Dead
Of Ireland seven hundred years ago.

Beauty of light is on it, scent of dew,
That once in Heaven was the bud that came
On trees of happiness that never grew.

Beauty it has that never came by words,
The lordly evidence of Summertime,
And the deep adoration of the birds.

It has been lifted on rebellion's red –
But listening in the calm we know that night
Is but a generous playtime for the Dead.

* * *

Its wealth of tears is not for you to know,
Lest you should hear the hisses of the Dead
Of Ireland seven hundred years ago.

- 4-6] ≠ *A* stanza 2, renumbered 3; ≠ *A* stanza renumbered [5] [6] [4] 3; ≠ *B* stanza 2
4] It[s] [wealth of tears is not] «is too deep to <clean> for you» for you to know *A* [2] 3 •
Leave it in pity it is sealed with woe *A* [5] [6] [4] 3 •
Leave it in pity falling even so *B*
5 hear] have *A* [2] 3
5] Can you not hear the hisses of the Dead *B*
6 Of Ireland] [From] «Of» Ireland *A* [2] 3
7-9] ≠ *A* stanza numbered [1] [2] 4; *B* ∅
8] [And] «That» once [it] in Heaven was | And buds that came *A*
10-12] ≠ *A* an unnumbered stanza; ≠ *B* stanza 3 (lines 7-9)
10 came by] came [on] «by» *A*
11 lordly] dancing *B*
12 deep] white *A* • first *B*
13-15] ≠ *A* an unnumbered stanza; ≠ *B* stanza 4 (lines 10-12)
14] Yet [it has] «there is» calm that tells us «[that]» [beyond] «here that» the Night *A* •
Never shall it to Insolence succumb *B*
15] It is the halt for crying to the Dead *B*
16-18] ≠ *A* [5] [6] [4] 3
16] Leave it in pity it is sealed with woe *A*

Continued overleaf...

The Stolen Lament (cont.)

Discarded stanzas

A cancelled stanza numbered 3 & *A* stanza numbered 3 [4]:

It has been soiled | by robbers but | the wail | of a lost mother
[Hovers upon] «still» it | hungers till the blood

It has been soiled by | robbers idle | words
Traders make use | of have been | «called» to it
[And] [But] it was | with [blessing] | «This that had | all the» | of the birds

A cancelled stanza numbered 6:

Beauty of Light | is on it hours of dew
Let not the | petty words | deceive your heart
This that was | stolen cuts | the robber too

A stanza numbered 1 5 [sic]:

Sharp red | the sorrow is | Thine [and the] «with his » | lies
Of blackness «In his old» | [fail] wavers | Here is Pain
Desperate | with happiness | upon the eyes

A two stanzas under heading ‘Odd verse[s]’:

Leave it in Pity | this ye may not sing
Sorrow on sorrow | naked as a | prayer
On the green | world it saw | the cruel thing

Time will not | soothe «it» with | his many Lies
Pain [is upon] «shall not leave» it | that shrill Emperor
Conquers all | happiness upon | the eyes

B stanzas 5 & 6:

In the compassion that dispises Art [sic]
Tis for the bleeding women and the men
Whitening with all the arrows at the heart

Leave it in pity falling failing so
Can you not hear the hisses of the Dead
Of Ireland seven hundred years ago

Order of stanzas *A*:

1, [2] 3, cancelled stanza 3, [4] 3, [5] [6] [4] 3, cancelled stanza 6, [1] [2] 4, 1 5 [sic], unnumbered stanza ‘Beauty it has that never came [on] «by» words’, unnumbered stanza ‘It has been lifted on rebellions red’ under heading ‘odd verse’, unnumbered stanza (first of two) ‘Leave it in Pity this ye may not sing’, unnumbered stanza (second of two) ‘Time will not soothe «it» with his man Lies’.

Stephens’s comments at the bottom of the fair copy read:

Right in essence – wrong in treatment. You might re-write when you have more force energy in your brain. I can do nothing with this – still-born. Some good lines. Leans on title. It – it – it. Blow Ireland 700 years ago unless you can turn it to use for Australia today. ?Give it to Advocate with an explanatory note [as N suggested] – I would not. 6 = half a dozen. The Irish probably played English tunes from Q Elizabeth onward – or earlier as well. Question wants more musical learning than I have handy.

THE STORY OF A MULBERRY [1]

‘1929’, 9b-11b (A0598-0691) [A], fair draft.

The stranger came to the quiet town,
How goodly was the air;
The birds lived out their happiness
For many trees were there.

They said, he has no thing to sell
And little does he buy,
And soon they fell to gossiping –
The stranger comes to die.

His face was of the heavier sort
That well becomes a man;
Oft at his side a woman walked
And the young children ran.

The gossips said, how strange a man,
He loves not flower or tree,
And more than once we saw him shake
When he passed the mulberry.

And so would spread the gossiping:
He does not come to buy,
But a bandage is about his mouth –
He only longs to die.

They said, he is not old or weak,
Though the grey is in his hair;
He does not love our old gardens
For mulberries are there.

* * *

Into the little mulberry town
One day Mill Fallon came:
Grey was her head, and all her dress –
She was a bitter dame.

24 mulberries] [mulberrys] mulberries *MS*

Continued overleaf...

The Story of a Mulberry [1] (cont.)

She was so great a mystery
 To all who lived near by;
 They said she has but come to hate –
 She has not come to die.

Unto that lofty tree she spoke –
 It shut out air and sky –
 She said, my God is good – I knew
 That I should see him die.

'Twas long ago in the little town;
 'Twas twenty years or more;
 I will tell no one but a mulberry
 Because my heart is sore.

All foolishness that men will talk,
 All these he promised me;
 It was an oath to God he took
 Beneath the mulberry.

I waited long – 'tis an old tale –
 How soon his heart was cold.
 His eyes went quick to a rich woman
 While I had grown old.

'Twas last week that I heard – and now
 His mouth is wrapped – I know
 My God is good and I have come
 To see a mulberry grow.

'Twas yesterday I passed them by –
 They took no thought of me –
 The rich wife and the two children
 All decked out prettily.

His mouth was wrapped and well I know
 What God had put below:
 I may be mad – but I have come
 To see the mulberry grow.

31 said] say *MS*

61 I know] I [knew] know *MS*

64 grow] go *MS*, a probable mishearing

THE STORY OF A MULBERRY [2]

‘1934’, 9a-11a (A0698-0700) [A], fair draft

Her eyes gave witness that her life was hard:
Shrill was the voice – she said, an axe for me!
Do you not see it growing in the yard?

The young maid saw the eyes, and with a stare
Said, 'tis the yard that they have put us in.
It is your mind, no tree is growing there.

The other said, 'tis you are mad, not I.
See how the tree begins to grow and grow;
It will be scrambling out unto the sky.

The young maid said, I am not mad – I know
I have been put in prison. God did speak:
All that I did God told me – it is so.

Two years ago I heard the thunder roll.
After the thunder God spoke, soft and low:
Kill him, He said, and you will save his soul.

What could I do when God spoke so to me?
Long I delayed, then in a prayer I went
Softly – and found a razor – silently.

Then at the midnight to his room I crept.
I did not tremble – God was with me there:
Under his chin – I slew him as he slept.

Then said the elder maid, for such as you
God may have pity – him I have not seen:
I have seen God an awful murder do.

10 young maid said] young [one] «maid» said

14 spoke soft and] spoke «soft» and *MS*

21 as he slept] as [I] «he» slept *MS*

22 Then said] [«Sue»] Then said *MS*

Continued overleaf...

The Story of a Mulberry [2] (cont.)

Listen, she said, your eyes they cannot see!
Is there no axe? Why do you stare and stare?
We will be overshadowed by that tree!

It is no tree of Love – it is of blue!
It has defeated Love! it is of God!
I have seen God a desperate murder do!

Oh Love! oh Love! find me a place for Love!
It that can hold the eagle in the air
It can command the tiger and the dove.

It is so wrapped in scarlet, fed with gold,
Born in amazement — 'tis no happiness
But a young fever quick'ning – then the cold.

He who was snared, he was my love – 'twas she
With the big eyes, the thin, thin lips – she took
All that was man and God and man for me!

Then did I pray – what else could woman do,
By night, by day? – but I saw naught of God,
Never one moment in the black or blue.

* * *

The years came by – long years, and all were gray.
Twice seven years I worked down in the gloom,
And every day was an unholy day.

All trees were dead, there was no sweetness there.
Cattle, and cattle – little else I saw;
Of bitterness I had the good round share.

29 It has] It [is] «has» *MS*

31 place for Love] place [to l]ove «for L» *MS*

36 fever quick'ning] fever [sickening] quickning *MS*

37 He who] He [tha] who *MS*

40 Then] [W]hen «T»hen *MS*

41 naught] [not] «naught» *MS*

Continued overleaf...

The Story of a Mulberry [2] (cont.)

My bread was such that I myself did bake;
 My meat the flesh of swine – until I said
 Father, no more! no more for Jesus' sake!

My father he was angered, as a man
 Full of long prayers – he shook me hard and said
 Girl you can starve, or eat as best you can!

Father, I said, the swine they all have sinned!
 God has so told me – 'tis for that they –
 They, and no other – ever see the wind.

Have I not known how on windy days
 Looking along the ground they windward go,
 And in their eyes there is the sullen blaze?

Last month I ate the sow's flesh – there has hung
 Since then about me evil things and thoughts:
 She, the white sow, the sow that ate her young.

50] Cf. Leviticus 11: 7-8: And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you. Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you.
AV

54 or eat] a eat *MS*, an obvious error

58 known how on] known «how» on *MS*

59-60] Looking along the ground// they windward go || [They cannot tell] [but] «And» in their eyes there is the sullen blaze *MS*

61 There has] there [it] «has» *MS*

THE STRAWBERRY SELLER

‘1934’, 22a-22b (A0711-2) [L], draft, with stanza 5 unfinished and cancelled and stanzas 6 & 7 renumbered 5 & 6. This is a second version of ‘The strawberry woman’, q.v.

Softly she says, the highway is my mart:
Love do I sell, I sell the lover’s heart.

Cars by the thousands pass the mountain way:
Then slowly she says, it is the holy day.

It is a day to love and not to sigh:
Here there is love, ’tis in the heart you buy.

Grey is her head, ’tis white for one so young:
She has the eyes that no one yet has sung.

Strawberries I sell, cool strawberries, she cries!
Sweet hearts I give you for the lips and eyes!

Sweethearts, she says, the highway is my mart:
Love do I give, the strawberry is a heart.

6] Here «there» is love [it is] «tis» in the heart you buy *MS*

10] Sweethearts I give you for «the» lips and eyes *MS*

Discarded stanza

Cancelled stanza 5:

Eyes that despair not when the good and fair
Pass to the shadow [*unfinished*]

THE STRAWBERRY WOMAN

‘1934’, 7a-7b (A0696-7) [A], fair draft. This poem was later rewritten as ‘The strawberry seller’, q.v.

She has the woman’s art,
 ’Tis on the mountain way:
 She says, I sell a heart
 And ’tis a holy day.

All Love, she says, is shy:
 Here at my mountain mart
 Come buy and buy and buy!
 You buy the lover’s heart!

Oh sweethearts all, she cries,
 No foolish questioning make:
 It should be paradise
 This lover’s heart to take.

To every youth and maid
 She says, will ye depart?
 Be now no more afraid,
 Each body is a heart.

* *

Will they in days to come,
 Uncomforted and cold,
 Weary and lame and dumb
 Remember what she told?

* *

Thin, she is thin – she cries,
 Here on the mountain way,
 Love! it is love! who buys?
 And ’tis a holy day.

4] And [it] is a holy day *MS*

24] And [it is] «tis)) a holy day[s] *MS*

THE THEME ETERNAL

‘1935’, 20b-21a (A0762) [A], draft, 3 stanzas, entitled ‘To a fellow rhymmer’; 22b-23a (A0764) [L], fair draft, 3 stanzas, entitled ‘The eternal subject’; 23b-24a (A0765) [A], fair draft, 4 stanzas, entitled ‘The eternal subject’. ‘1934’, 37a-37b (A0726-7) [L], fair draft, 4 stanzas, with a revised final line, entitled ‘The eternal theme’, title cancelled, and retitled ‘To a fellow rhymmer’. NLA MS 1145/67 [L], a revised line. NLA MS 1145/33, typescript [JD], annotated. NLA MS 1145/33 [L], ‘New third stanza’ [revised stanza 2], and a revised line under short title, ‘Theme eternal’.

BI 11.

JSN - JD 3 September 1935, NLA MS 1145/67, (a revised final line, enclosed with alterations to other poems). JSN - JD 20 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/33 (is ‘returning all the typed stuff except ‘The theme eternal’’). JSN - JD 27 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/63 (enclosing ‘a fresh final line’, and ‘a new third stanza’ [attached to JSN - JD 20 January 1936]). JSN - JD 26 April 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (enclosing the typed copy [attached to JSN - JD 20 January 1936]). JSN - JD 30 April 1936, NLA MS 1145/65 (asking JD to return the typed copy, which JD told him to keep). JSN - JD 3 May 1936, NLA Ms 1145/67 (corrections to typescript for *BI*: ‘Theme eternal. Correct. You have it in hand.’). JSN - JD 5 September 1937, NLA MS 1145/68 (in response to a question from JD, suggests this may be suitable to send to the ‘Women’s papers’). JSN - JD 14 November 1937, NLA MS 1145/68 (this is one of three poems JD has picked to enter in a competition: N says it is the ‘most even’, but ‘rather trifling’).

N kept the typed copy of the poem because ‘The young lady who paints so much wishes to have a look at it’ (JSN - JD 20 January 1936), and then revised the 2nd stanza because it was ambiguous: ‘the chap who first noticed the young lady painting told her that the inference in my verse was that she painted her eyelids. As she has very nice eyelids which don’t need paint at all she was somewhat indignant’ (JSN - JD 27 January 1936). However, Devaney chose not to use this revised stanza in *BI*.

The MSS are all part of the one impulse of composition, and the typescript, NLA MS 1145/33 (F), is therefore taken as the preferred text.

‘1935’, 20b-21a = A; ‘1935’, 22b-23a = B; ‘1935’, 23b-24a = C; ‘1934’, 37a-37b = D; MS 1145/67 = E; MS 1145/33 = F; MS 1145/33 (‘correction’) = G

Continued overleaf...

The Theme Eternal (cont.)

(Replying to a fellow rhymer who complains that a beautiful young girl is using cosmetics)

Great is the theme, good brother, you have chosen;
 Sweet is the maid as the impetuous Spring.
 Beauty she craves – without it all is frozen;
 Love could not breathe in each beloved thing.

Truly she paints, and with serene precision;
 Velvet her eyelids, as the moon, would seem;
 Always an angel, always in our vision
 Drifting divinely onward in a dream.

Gloss] *A* ∅ • In reply to a fellow rhymer who complains that a beautiful young girl is using cosmetics *B* •

Replying to a fellow rhymer who complains that a beautiful young girl is using cosmetics *C, D* •

Added at bottom of page [JD] *F*

1-4] ≠ *A, B, C* 1-4; = *D, BI* 1-4

1] Brother no fitter [thing] «theme» you could have chosen *A* •

Great is the theme no greater could be chosen *B* •

Great is the theme oh brother you have chosen *C*

2] Sweet is that maiden as a glimpse of Spring *A*

3] A life without beauty would be something frozen *A*

4 breathe in] live in *A* • breathe on *C*

5-8] ≠ *A, B, C*; = *D*; ≠ *G*; = *BI* 5-8

5] Beauty she seeks with a serene persistence *A* •

Deftly she paints with her serene precision *B* •

Surely she paints and with serene precision *C* •

Had she no paint no art with cool precision *G* •

6] Softly her velvet eyelids seek the moon *A* •

Velvet her eyelids are as the faint moon *B* •

[Velvet her eyelids seem as the faint] | Velvet her eyelids as the moon would seem *C*

Still would she come with gladness to [the] «our» vision *G*

7] [As] And her dark eyes proclaim the soul's existence *A* •

Is she not fair nay more she is a vision *B* •

Still would she come with gladness to [the] «our» vision *G*

8] Gazing each morning at the far off moon *A* •

Haunting us ever as a fragrant tune *B* •

Lightly she walks as someone in a dream *C* •

Always an angel hastening in a dream *G*

Continued overleaf...

The Theme Eternal (cont.)

Song she has found, the song of the green season,
 And the last tremors of the violin;
 Who can resist her? she outgenerals reason;
 Great is the calm irreverence of her chin.

Eve is upon her each day of the seven,
 Eve with the urge that none may understand.
 Beauty she craves, all beauty under heaven,
 Old as the thirst of summer on the land.

9-12] A Ø; B Ø; ≠ C; = D 9-12; = BI 9-12

9] Music she has caught up in the green Season C

10] She has all tremors of a violin C

12] Where is the contest that she would not win C

13-16] ≠ A 9-12; ≠ B 9-12; ≠ C 13-16; ≠ D 13-16; = BI 13-16

13] [She she will] A a false start •

Still would she paint though she were seven times seven A •

Still would she smile though she were seven times seven B •

Mystic she is in each day of the seven C

14] She who like Summer sweetens all the land A •

Still would she cast a gladness o'er the land B •

[Fair as a rosebud swee] | She is a rosebud whispering o'er the land C

15] Let us applaud all beauty under Heaven A, B, C

16] Let us – ah yes – Your wife I understand A •

Oh – but your wife – ah yes I understand B, C •

She has the only magic in the land D •

She is the source of mischief in the land D, a revised line following line 16 •

Old as the thirst of Summer on the land E, G

THE TIME FOR THANKFULNESS

ML MS A3038/1, 29a (B0136) [JSN], fair draft.

Let us be thanking God:
I know not where
He made music and sorrow
And little girls so fair.
They touch not the earth:
In the sweet years round seven
They beseech all day,
They gaze into Heaven.

9 They] The[y] *MS*

THE TIME OF TUMULT

There are three discrete versions of this poem. Two drafts were written c. 1908, and the second of these was then revised and published in the *Clarion* 15 Decemeber 1908. The *Clarion* text was then rewritten and sent to James Devaney for *BI*.

THE TIME OF TUMULT [3]

‘1934’, 45b (A0735) [L], fair draft. ‘1936’, 1b (A0770) [L], 2 lines, revision, following a transcription of the *Clarion* text [FN]. ‘1936’, 5b (A0774) [L], 1 line, revision, under title, with heading ‘4th line’. NLA MS 1145/67 [L], fair copy (with letter JSN - JD 27 January 1936).

JSN - JD 27 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (enclosing a revised version of the *Clarion* text (‘The time of tumult’ [2]): ‘The little thing ‘The time of tumult’ has only seven lines. I cut out some of the poorer ones in the original version’). JD - JSN 16 February 1936, McKimm MS (‘I must say that I like the first version of ‘The time of tumult’ [‘the original version’, that is, the transcription of the *Clarion* text N sent] better than the second’, and says ‘I send herewith a typed copy of both, with some remarks’); 8 March 1936, McKimm MS (‘I have also [noted] your new line for ‘Time of tumult’); 17 April 1936, McKimm MS (this is such a perfect little lyric that you must be patient about rounding it off’). JSN – JD 26 April 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (thinks poem is now ‘improved a great lot from the version in the *Clarion*’ and comments on JD’s suggestions and his own response); JSN – JD 3 May 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (corrections to proofs *BI*).

Correspondence is given after the *BI* text.

Two drafts of the version in the ‘1915’E notebook (c.1908) were revised to give the second version of the poem published in the *Clarion* in 1908. This was then rewritten in 7 lines (with a draft at ‘1934’, 45b) and sent to Devaney as the ‘Revised version’ for *BI* and a transcription of the *Clarion* text was sent afterwards as the ‘Original version’. Devaney rejected the 7-line revision, the ‘Revised version’, in favour of a less radical revision of the *Clarion* text for *BI* which is shown in the notes.

The fair copy, NLA MS 1145/67, is the preferred text.

‘1934’, 45b = A; MS 1145/67 = B

Joy in the wilderness, joy in the mart;
 A mystery beats on us at every door;
 The tender thoughts assail the tender heart;
 In undimmed days the little rivers roar;
 The gaudy flowers amaze us more and more.
 High in the blue the thoughts go up and stay
 With all the new-born butterflies at play.

2] A mystery beating in at every door *A*

4] MS ‘1936’, 5b has a discarded line which may have been intended for this version: ‘In rippling days the little rivers roar’.

6-7] = MS ‘1936’, 1b, two lines following the transcription

6-7] Oh Time of Tumult when all choirs sing || Tempest of all the colours Whispering Spring *A*

Continued overleaf...

The Time of Tumult [3] (cont.)

The *BI* text reads:

Joy in the wilderness, joy in the mart:
 A mystery beats in at every door;
 The tender thoughts assail the tender heart;
 In the undimmed the little rivers roar;
 The gaudy flowers amaze us more and more.
 It is the time when cherries lose their green,
 When new-weaned lambs have heavy sorrowing,
 And young maids know the most that love can mean.
 O time of tumult, when all choirs sing,
 Tempest of all the colours, jubilant Spring!

JD - JSN 17 April 1936:

Your poem 'The Time of Tumult' is such a perfect little lyric that you must really be patient about rounding it off. I don't think you realise yourself what a splendid lyric this one is. It seems to me now in final form except that one word 'ruddy'. The phrase 'ruddy Spring' is perfectly good, but it is not the best for your whole line:

Tempest of all the colours, ruddy Spring

A three-syllabled word there instead of a two-syllabled one would be exact. Besides, that word 'ruddy' suggests more an overseas Spring than ours. Your ear is right as usual about the clash of R's in hovering Spring

Other words you suggest are: Sovereign, and Circling. The original word 'whispering' brings in I-N-G twice, 'whispering Spring'. Therefore I don't think the word we are after should end in I-N-G. I daren't suggest anything. And yet, what about:

Tempest of all the colours, carnival Spring

or 'jubilee' or 'revelry'

But you will find the one perfect word; perhaps something with 'of' after it.

JSN – JD 26 April 1936:

. . . Re alterations to 'Time of tumult'.

Line 7.

The one you had was I think 'When young maids know the most that love can mean', may be just as good as the one I put in, or perhaps 'When young maids tell the most that love can mean'.

The line I give has an 'all' in it and there are 'alls' in succeeding lines. You will notice that I put the word 'jubilant' in the last line. It was suggested to me by your word 'jubilee'. I like 'jubilee' very much, but I like jubilant a little better, it sounds rather more joyous. Your suggestion of 'carnival' was also good, but I could not fit it in somehow.

Both the 'jubilee' and 'jubilant' jump just a little. They are far ahead of whispering.

I enclose another line which is perhaps worth considering.

'Tempest of Invitation, Sovereign Spring.'

It sounds alright to me but I think that you will like the line I have given better.

If you like 'jubilee' better than 'jubilant' put it in by all means. . . .

JSN – JD 3 May 1936:

. . . In the Collected Works, both Mrs Robertson and Bob Croll read the proofs. However strangers cannot detect the faults so well as the man who writes the piece. You can use your own discretion about any minor alterations and about using the alterations you have in hand.

I think that 'jubilant' or 'jubilee' is much better than ruddy in 'Time of tumult' . . .

THE TYPIST ACCEPTS AN INVITATION TO THE RACES

‘1934’, 18a-19a (A0707-8) [A], 5 stanzas, with numbering for 6, unfinished, entitled ‘The acceptance’;
20a-21a (A0709-0710) [L], fair draft, 7 stanzas.

JSN - JD 19 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (says ‘I don’t think any of our papers would print the ‘Typiste’ piece’, because ‘It ridicules commerce’). The poem is a variation on the theme of that in ‘To a blonde typist’, which was sent to Devaney, and this reference probably relates to that poem, given the extensive references to it in the correspondence.

The fair draft (B) is the preferred text.

‘1934’, 18a-19a = A; ‘1934’, 20a-21a = B

Came the glad news amid the haste and clatter,
Flat was the world – no round thing could be flatter;
Deep – I was deep in all dull things that matter.

Business persistent, like to a vile Tumour,
Grew as a Bill to some poor Gas Consumer
Swiftly affecting all Good Taste and Humour.

* * *

Yea I would go, though ’twere to slide down craters,
Or to debate with furious Women Haters,
Or, for a change, to swim with alligators.

Let me take Hope – Hope that no Fate can tether;
Though we should Lose, we shall be glad together
And may the good Saints guarantee the Weather!

1-3] ≠ A 1-3

2] Flat was the world (could Ptolemy think it flatter) A. [Ptolemy, Claudius Ptolemaeus (121-151) was a Greek geographer and mathematician.]

4-6] ≠ A 13-15

4 Business persistent] Business [incurable] «peristent» B

4] Business oh Bosh that most outrageous Tumour A

5 Grew as] Grows like A

6 Swiftly affecting] Quickly effacing A

7-9] ≠ A 4-6

7] I would accept though twere to slide down craters A

10-12] ≠ A 7-9

11] Though we may lose we shall have joy together A

Continued overleaf...

The Typist Accepts an Invitation to the Races (cont.)

Ye who would call it Sin to pick a Winner,
 May your Intolerance make you thin, and thinner,
 Till in the end you can't digest a dinner.

Show me the horse – one of God's true successes;
 Oh, for the Glamour no cool speech expresses!
 Give to my eyes the Feast of all the Dresses!

* * *

Lo, a dim typist in a world benighted,
 Cloudy with commas, is today excited:
 Here's to good horsemen – always yours – delighted.

13 Sin] [sin] Sin *B*

13] Oh ye intolerant who would call me sinner *A* 10

14] At a days sport may ye grow thin and thinner *A* 11

15] Till in the end you can't digest a dinner *A* 12

16-21] *A* ∅

21] Here's to good horsemen – always yours – delighted *B*

THE VICTIM ASTOUNDS ME

NLA MS 1145/48, typescript [JD], with a note. Written in 1941 when Neilson was in Brisbane.

(To a Refugee, a Hebrew)

Ill-footed Hebrew lad,
 You do my heart astound.
 Only my heart can say
 Oh, Hebrew, Hebrew, play
 The deeps of the deep ground.

Believe me, Hebrew lad,
 I am with cold acute.
 Over all heat and cold
 Give me, oh, give the gold
 And the blue ways of the flute.

Oh ill unshaven lad
 You do me still astound,
 You who can yet create
 Over all guilts of hate
 This blue on the deep ground.

Ill-coated Hebrew lad,
 Still, still, my heart will say
 I long for the sweet ground;
 Still do you so astound;
 Of violets you play.

Oh Hebrew, Hebrew, lad
 You can my soul renew.
 Give me the rich and rare,
 The gold of the gold air
 And violets in blue.

Ill-shaven Hebrew lad
 Old centuries acute
 Live on your shoulders there,
 But still on the sweet air
 You cool me with the flute.

Hebrew, oh Hebrew lad,
 You fear far less than I.
 Give me of rich and rare,
 Old summertimes and fair,
 And cool ways to the sky.

Devaney's note reads:

JSN: 'The victim is a young Jewish refugee playing a flute in the street. The deep sounds of the flute seem to go along the ground.

Any bellowing, &c., is of the ground. Violets are of the ground too.'

THE VINE THAT IS A FRIEND

‘1940’, 20b-23b (A0836-9) [L], fair draft, 21 stanzas, stanza 15 cancelled, entitled ‘The wine that is a friend’.

‘1934’, 3a-4b (A0692-4) [A], 15 stanzas, stanza 5 cancelled, with renumbering [JSN]; 5b (A0695) [A], 3 stanzas, numbered 6-8, with renumbering, under heading ‘Odd verses of Wine that is a friend’; 6a (A0695) [A], 3 stanzas, numbered 5-7, stanza 5 cancelled, under title ‘The wine that is a friend’, with heading ‘Odd verses’; 6b (A0696) [A], 1 stanza, numbered 10, renumbered 9, under short title ‘Wine’; 12a (A0701) [A], 3 stanzas, numbered 11-13, under heading ‘Odd verses Wine’; 13a (A0702) [L], 4 stanzas, numbered 14-17, stanza 14 cancelled, under heading ‘Odd verses Wine’; 13b (A0703) [A], 1 stanza, unnumbered, under heading ‘Odd verses for the Vine’; 31a (A0720) [A], 3 stanzas, numbered 1-3, under heading ‘Alterations for the vines’; 34a (A0723) [A], 2 stanzas numbered 2 & 22, and directions for revisions of stanzas numbered 5, 7, 29, 9 & 14; 33b (A0723) [A], (continued over from 34a), 2 stanzas numbered 2 & 7, stanza 7 cancelled; 34b-35a (A0724) [A], 7 stanzas numbered 9, 14, 22, 28, 29, 7 & 8; 40a-40b (A0729-0730) [L], revisions for stanzas listed by number, and 3 stanzas, with 2 stanzas numbered 21 (the first cancelled) and a stanza numbered 22, under headings ‘Final revision – the vine’, and ‘The vine’; 41b & 42a (A0731) [L], 2 stanzas numbered 21 & 22, each under heading ‘the vine’
ML MS 3354/2-7, 8b [L], preceded by the number 22.

‘1935’, 1a-3b (A0742-5) [L], 21 stanzas, numbered 11-29, with numbering for stanza 20 cancelled, stanza 20 rewritten and cancelled, and with annotation, ‘verse to be put in here’ [A], and an unnumbered stanza at the end (under heading ‘odd verse’), under heading ‘The Vine – odd verses’.

NLA MS 1145/67, alterations, sent with letter JSN - JD 19 January 1936, attached to letter JSN - JD 3 September 1935. NLA MS 1145/67, alterations, with letter JSN - JD 3 May 1936.

BI 16.

JSN - JD 3 September 1935, NLA MS 1145/67 (encloses poem, with comments); 19 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (thanks JD for the trouble that he has taken with this poem (and with other pieces), and says ‘I think that ‘The vine that is a friend’ is the best name for it’); 27 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/65 (in list of pieces sent for *BI*). JD - JSN 16 February 1936, McKimm MS (says he has ‘put back the full title, ‘The vine that is a friend’’, and discusses the use of the word ‘sere’ in line 5); JSN - JD 30 April 1936, NLA MS 1145/65 (‘manuscript [for *BI*] arrived today’: ‘pieces like ‘The vine’ and ‘The sundowner’ may need little corrections’); 3 May 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (corrections to typescript for *BI*: a revised stanza, suggests that a footnote be added and says ‘I forget the other alteration. I will think of it before I write next’). FN – JSN 16 July 1936, ML MS 3354/1 (following Lothian’s rejection of *BI*, thinks ‘The Vine’ piece is ‘too long but some fine lines’). JSN- JD 10 May 1937, NLA MS 1145/33 (‘The Vine that is a Friend’ and ‘The Birds’ you have gone to great pains with’ [not sighted: Hewson, *John Shaw Neilson*, p. 314]. JSN – JD 5 September 1937, NLA MS 1145/68 (says it ‘might be worth trying the S.M. Herald with the ‘Wine that is a friend’); 7 October 1937, NLA MS 1145/68 (agrees with JD that the poem is too long to enter in a competition: suggests that JD ‘might be able to place it with the S.M. Herald or some other papers’); 10 October 1937, NLA MS 1145/68 (in list of poems to be considered for a competition, with the comment, ‘Too long’). JSN - JD 27 September 1938, in ‘Neilson’s problems and a query’, Walter Stone, *Bibliionews and Australian Notes & Queries*, 3rd series 1/4, 1976, pp. 62-63 (‘The Vine that is a Friend. 23 stanza 1st line. It should read “The vine had evil fame” instead of has’).

Correspondence is given after discarded stanzas and the order of stanzas.

Continued overleaf...

The Vine that is a Friend (cont.)

In the absence of a complete fair draft or fair copy, *BI* is taken as the preferred text.
 ‘1940’, 20b-23b = A; ‘1934’ (all MSS) = B; ‘1935’, 1a-3b = C; MS 3354/2-7, 8b = D

The order of stanzas is given after Discarded stanzas.

Arthur is old, and being overwise,
 He will not cease to taunt me night and day:
 He does my water-drinking much despise.

He is monotonous and will complain:
 Meanness, he says, will sere the soul of man;
 He can drink cheaply of the stored-up rain.

Why will you save? You should be glad to spend;
 Why not have joy and all good fellowship?
 'Tis with the Vine, the Vine that is a friend.

Did Jesus sin? come tell me if you can;
 Did He not once upon a wedding-day
 Drink as a loving neighbour and a man?

1-3] = *A* stanza 1; = *B* stanza 1 (3a)

4-6] ≠ *A* stanza 2; ≠ *B* stanza 2 (3a); ≠ *B* stanza 2 (34a); ≠ *B* stanza 2 (33b)

5] = *B* ‘2nd stanza, 2nd line’ (40a); = *NLA MS* 1145/67, 3 September 1935

5] Of my long meanness he will mock me with *A* •

Of my long meanness and he mocks me with *B* (3a) •

Meanness it is that soils the soul of man *B* (34a) •

Meanness he says will soil the Soul of Man *B* (33b)

6 He can] You can *B* (3a)

6] You have been drinking of the stored-up rain *A* •

Drives «him» forever to the stored-up rain *B* (34a)

7-9] ≠ *A* stanza 3; ≠ *B* stanza 3 (3a)

7 you save] ye save *A*, *B*

10-12] = *A* stanza 4; ≠ *B* stanza 4 (3a)

10-12] Cf. John 2: 1-10 . . . there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee . . . and both Jesus was called, and his disciples,
 to the marriage . . . *AV*

12] Drink as a neighbour and a loving man *B*

Continued overleaf...

The Vine that is a Friend (cont.)

In the long hours you sleep it will descend
With its long roots into the yellow lime:
Great is the Vine, the Vine that is a friend.

Then do I say, I have seen much of shame
In the dull lives of drinkers – nor would I
Call to my God to have Him bear the blame.

Arthur in stout resistance will complain:
You would dishonour God with old mistrust,
You would drink cheaply of the stored-up rain.

Rain – 'tis a wholesome drink for ewes and lambs;
On the long days it is the home of weeds
In the dull creeks and all the yellow dams.

Dreary is he whose drink is the dull rain;
It is so filled with every evil thing
Even at times the cattle will complain.

- 13-15] ≠ *A* stanza 6; ≠ *B* stanza [6] 5 (3a)
13 it will descend] it doth descend *A*, *B* (3a) • it will descend *B*, a part-line at 34a under number 5
16-18] = *A* stanza 7; = *B* stanza 7 (3b)
19-21] ≠ *A* stanza 8; = *B* stanza 8 (3b); = *B* stanzas 7 (35a); ≠ *B* cancelled stanza 7 (33b)
19] Arthur is in a rage and does complain *A*, *B* (3b) •
Arthur is close upon me to complain *B* (33b) •
Arthur is in a <rage> *B*, a part-line at 34a, with number 7
22-24] ≠ *B* stanza 9 (3b); = *B* stanza 8 (35a)
23] On withering Summer days it has the weeds *B* (3b)
24] [In] «Of» all the wandering creeks and yellow dams *B* (3b)
25-27] ≠ *B* stanza 10 (3b); ≠ *B* stanza 9 (34b)
25] = *B* 'Verse 9, first line' (40a)
25] It is no drink for man this silly rain *B* (3b) •
Dreary is he whose only drink is rain *B* (34b) •
This silly rain *B* a part-line at 34a, with number 9
26 so filled] so soaked *B* (3b)
27 cattle will] cattle do *B* (3b)

Continued overleaf...

The Vine that is a Friend (cont.)

Though you reject it, still the sun will shine;
 Though you should sit in darkness, still for you
 There is the constant glory of the Vine.

It has more song than all the bells that chime,
 And it can heal – it takes up happiness
 To the white maiden in a perilous time.

By gluttony man has been long defiled,
 But 'tis the Vine that runs with sustenance
 To the thin mother and the thirsting child.

It is a summer never known to end;
 It has defied old winters of all time;
 Great is the Vine, the Vine that is a friend.

Rain – 'tis a sorrow dropping from the sky;
 It is the home of all uncertainties,
 Filled with the bodies of the birds that die.

28-30] ≠ *A* stanza 17; = *B* stanza 10 [11] (4a)

29] Though you will drink with cattle still for you *A*

30] Still is the constant glory of the Vine *A*

31-33] ≠ *A* stanza 13; ≠ *B* stanza numbered 1 (4b); ≠ *C* stanza 11

31] Wine says old Arthur is in every chime *A* •

More song it has than all the bells that chime *B, C*

32] It is the song that [heals and] goes with happiness *A* •

It heals it thrills it takes up happiness *B, C* 34-36] ≠ *B* stanza numbered 2 (4b); ≠ *C* stanza 12

34] Man has by gluttony been long defiled *B, C* 37-39] ≠ *B* stanza numbered 3 (4b); = *C* stanza 1338] It is a Spring filled out with miracles *B* 40-42] = *A* stanza 11; ≠ *B* stanza 4 (4b); ≠ *B* stanza 14 (34b); ≠ *B* stanza numbered 3 (31a); ≠ *C* stanza 1440 Rain – 'tis a] [The] Rain is a *A* • Rain is the *B* (31a) • Rain is a *B* (4b), *C*

41] = *B* 'Verse 4. Second line' (40a)

41] And when men store it it is an evil thing *A* •

And when men store it tis [a[n] evil thing] «unspeakable» *B* (4b) •

Tis but the captive enemy we drink *B* (31a)

41] *B* (34a) has '14 unspeakable'

41] It is the wash of all uncertainties *B* (34b) •

And when men store it, 'tis unspeakable *C*

Continued overleaf...

The Vine that is a Friend (cont.)

Arthur is like some Prophet who of old
Under the rainbow, out upon the mist,
Spoke to his God, and all His might extolled.

Who touches wine, said he, though he be mean,
He shall not need to search for merriment;
He shall see further than the Seers have seen.

* * *

He shall see flowers where only weeds have grown;
Sunrise shall not forsake him, and at eve
He shall be dreaming, listening all alone.

Rain is a fitting thing for lambs to choose
On the white sheep-runs when December tells
Only the old imprisonment of the ewes.

Rain – 'tis a welcome vintage for the lambs,
Though it be thickened with unwholesome spawn,
Evil and green and yellow in the dams.

- 43-45] ≠ *B* stanza numbered 5 (4b); ≠ *C* stanza 15
43] Arthur is one of these who did of old *B, C*
45] Spoke to [his] «their» God and all his gifts extol *B* •
Speak to a God and all his strength extol *C*
46-48] ≠ *B* stanza numbered 6 (6a); ≠ *C* stanza 16
46] Who touches wine though he be poor and mean *B, C*
47] Faith he will have and strange benevolence *B*
48 He shall] He will *B, C*
49-51] ≠ *B* stanza numbered 7 (6a); ≠ *C* stanza 17
49] = *B* (40a) 'Verse 17. First line'
49 He shall] He will *B, C*
50] He will see butterflies about the skies *B*
51] He will know all that loving hearts have known *B*
52-54] ≠ *A* stanza 9; ≠ *B* stanza numbered 11 (12a); ≠ *C* stanza 13
52] Rain tis a fitting drink for lambs to choose *A, C* •
[Wine] «Rain» 'tis a fitting drink for lambs to choose *B*
55-57] ≠ *A* stanza 10; ≠ *B* stanza numbered 12 (12a); = *C* stanza 19
57] Evil and green yellow in the dams *A* •
Evil and yellow in the dams *B*

Continued overleaf...

The Vine that is a Friend (cont.)

Rain – 'tis a drink when birds fall down and die,
When the loud wind tells not of merriment
But of tremendous happenings in the sky.

Rain – 'tis a drink when birds fall down afraid,
Fluttering to mercy when the panting sheep
Move with the morning to the moving shade.

* * *

58-60] ≠ *B* stanza numbered 15 (13a); ≠ *C* cancelled stanza 20 (followed by note [A], '(Verse to be put in here)')

58 Rain – 'tis] Rain it is *B*

59 loud wind] hard wind *B, C*

60 happenings] bickerings *B, C*

61-63] ≠ *A* part-stanza numbered 11 and cancelled; ≠ *B* stanza numbered 13 (12a); ≠ *B* unnumbered stanza (13b); ≠ *B* 'Verse 21' (40a), cancelled stanza; ≠ *B* stanza 21 (40b); ≠ *B* stanza 21 (41b); ≠ *C* stanza 20, numbering cancelled

61] Tis a good drink when birds fall down afraid *A, B* (12a), *C*

62] When parrots die and sheep at sunrise go *A, B* (12a), *C* •

Trembling to see the sunrise where the <night> *B* (13b) •

Fluttering to [mercy] <[pity]> <<mercy>> when the panting sheep *B* (40a) •

Fluttering to mercy when the panting sheep *B* (40b) •

Fluttering to mercy when the mournful sheep *NLA MS* 19 January 1936

63] [In companions to find the nearest shade] | Moving each morning to the thickening shade *B* (12a) •

Has in his roadside once delayed *B* (13b) •

Move with the morning to the dancing shade *B* (40a) •

Run with the morning for the scattering shade *B* (40b) •

Move with the morning to the scattering shade *B* (41b) •

Moving each morning to the thickening shade *C* •

Move at the sunrise with the moving shade *NLA MS* 19 January 1936

Continued overleaf...

The Vine that is a Friend (cont.)

Arthur when young did ride in a red land:
Bones did he see and old malevolence;
Death was the neighbour ever close at hand.

Arthur will say, the Vine has evil fame,
But for its health God sent His messengers:
In from the desert the wild asses came.

Keen in their hunger they did pluck and rend,
Then did the roots go deep for nourishment.
Great is the Vine, the Vine that is a friend.

Arthur is old, his thoughts are in the dim:
I should be doubly gentle – well I know
That his intolerance is the truth to him.

64-66] ≠ *B* stanza numbered 2 (31a); ≠ *B* stanza 22 (34a); ≠ *B* stanza 22 (34b); ≠ *B* ‘Verse 22’ (40b); ≠ *B* stanza 22 (42a); ≠ *C* ‘Odd verse’; ≠ *D* a part-stanza (lines 1 & 2); ≠ *NLA MS* 1145/67 (19 January 1936); = *NLA MS* 1145/67 (3 May 1936). *NLA MS* 1145/67 (3 May 1936) has the comment: ‘I suggest this instead of what you have. I corrected it a good few times and my memory is poor, but keep the one you have if you like it best.’
64 a red land] the red land *B* (31a), *D*, *NLA MS* 19 January 1936 • the grim land *C*

64] Arthur when young did see in the red land *B* (40b) •

Arthur [did see] «when» young did see in the red land *B* (42a)

65] Cattle and bones and famine there he saw *B* (31a) •

Bones did he see and fear and loneliness *B* (34a) •

Bones did he see and no benevolence *B* (34b) •

Bones [that made] «and the» history [for] «of» the wilderness *B* (40b) •

Bones that made history for the wilderness *B* (42a) •

Murmuring of sheep and cattle much he heard *C* •

Bones did he see and old malevolence *D*, *NLA MSS* 19 January 1936 & 3 May 1936

66] *D* ∅

67-69] ≠ *B* stanza numbered 16 (13a); ≠ *C* stanza 21

67] Once was the vine a thing of evil fame *B*, *C*

67] JSN – JD 27 September 1938 has ‘23 stanza 1st line. It should read ‘The vine had evil fame’ instead of has.’

69] * A reference to the old tradition, probably true, that pruning was first suggested by the beneficial results noticed in plants cropped by wild animals. *BI*

70-72] = *B* stanza numbered 17 (13a); = *C* stanza 22

73-75] ≠ *A* stanza 12; ≠ *B* stanza 6 [8] (5b); ≠ *C* stanzas 23

73] Arthur is old his thoughts wake up the dim *A*, *B*, *C*

Continued overleaf...

The Vine that is a Friend (cont.)

Wine, he says, is for boldness in the boy;
'Tis in the toes of girls for happiness;
It is the taste of cleanness in the joy.

Arthur is old – I have not time to hear
All his long boast, and wine I only take
Faintly, how faintly, once or twice a year.

Then does he say, you have not heart to spend.
It is your servant, it can love and cling;
Great is the Vine, the Vine that is a friend.

Arthur will have his grievance – he will say
Can you not drink, oh, drink as Jesus did,
Drink as a friend upon a wedding-day?

76-78] ≠ *B* stanza renumbered [2] [3] [8] 10 (5b); ≠ *C* stanza 25

76] It is of Spring that lifts the girl and boy *B*, *C*

77] 'Tis in the feet and toes for happiness *B*, *C*

78] [Alway] It is the song that never lacks a joy *B* •

It is the song that never lacks a joy *C*

79-81] ≠ *A* stanza 18; ≠ *B* 11 [12] (4a); ≠ *C* stanza 26

79] Arthur is old [I would not care to] «what can I do but» hear *A* •

Arthur is old I would not care to hear *B* (4a) •

Arthur is old I [would] «do» not care to hear *C*

80] Wine do I like but little wine I take *A* •

Such wine from others wine I say I take *B* •

[Such talk from others wine I say] | This long long boast for wine I only take *C*

81] Faintly and only once or twice a year *A*, *B* • Faintly and seldom once or twice a year *C* 82-84] ≠ *A* stanza 19; ≠ *B*

stanza renumbered [12] [13] (4a); = *B* stanza 28 (34b); ≠ *C*

stanza 27

83 it can love] it does love *A*, *B* (4a), *C*

85-87] ≠ *A* stanza 20; ≠ *B* stanza 14 (4a); ≠ *B* stanza 29 (35a); ≠ *C* stanza 28

85] Arthur is now more tolerant he will say *A*, *B* (4a), *C* •

Arthur is now more tolerant *B* part-line at 34a, numbered 29 •

Arthur is [rich] «swift» to reason he will say *B* (35a) •

Arthur will have his grievance *B* 'Verse 29. 1st line' (40b)

Continued overleaf...

The Vine that is a Friend (cont.)

Slowly I soften – I no more pretend
To argument. I sit, and Arthur says,
Great is the Vine, the Vine that is a friend.

88-90] = *A* stanza 21; = *B* stanza 15 (4a); = *C* stanza 29
88 no more] [know] «no» more *B*

Discarded stanzas

A stanza 5 & *B* cancelled stanza 5 (3a):

'Twas the unwholesome water that he turned *A, B*
To the good wine and for his memory *A, B*
And for a blessing so the wine has burned *A*
That blessing in the Vines [does] «has» ever burned *B*

A stanza 14:

It is the Summer never known to end
It is the Spring that knows no weariness
Great is the Vine, the Vine that is a friend.

A cancelled stanza 15, *B* cancelled stanza 5 (6a), *B* cancelled stanza 14 (13a):

[Arthur] Oh love, oh wine you win with the one tune *A*
Oh love oh wine, you wing with the one tune *B* (6a)
Wine is in love it lives in the same tune *B* (13a)
I am too old [now] and wavering now to sing *A*
And I am old and wavering much would sing *B* (6a)
It has the heat of happenings in the sun *B* (13a)
Strength of the Sun and happenings in the Moon *A, B* (6a)
[It is] And the sweet temperance round about the moon *B* (13a)

A stanza 16:

Who touches wine our God will not disown
He has made thistledown «and» butterflies
Has He not poured out courage to His own

B stanza numbered [2] 7 [9] (5b) & *C* stanza 24:

Sunbeams he says are in it it has played
Over the very ground where Jesus walked
Who drinks he prays though he had never prayed

B stanza numbered [10] 9 (6b):

It is the wholesome [drink] for crying ewes
Who is [in] December days rain on and on
Ever complaining of the lambs they lose

B stanza numbered 1 (31a):

Old without virtue hopeless what is rain
Did I not learn to drink it in the dust
When the wild-eyed cattle would complain

Continued overleaf...

The Vine that is a Friend (cont.)

Order of stanzas *A*:

1-10; 2 lines stanza 11, cancelled; 11-14; stanza 15 cancelled; 16-21

Order of stanzas *B*:

at '1934', 3a: 1-4; stanza 5 cancelled; 5 [6]

at '1934' 3b: 7-10

at '1934', 4a: 10 [11]; 11 [12]; [12] [13]; 14-15

at '1934', 4b: under heading 'Odd verses', 1-5

at '1934', 5b: under heading 'Odd verses of Wine that is a friend', 6 [8], [2] 7 [9], [2] [3] [8] 10

at '1934' 6a: under heading 'The wine that is a friend | Odd verses', stanza numbered 5 cancelled; 6 & 7

at '1934', 6b: under heading 'Wine', [10] 9

at '1934', 12a: under heading 'Odd verses Wine', 11-13

at '1934', 13a: under heading 'Odd verses Wine', 14 (stanza cancelled), 15-17

at '1934', 13b: under heading 'Odd verses for the Vine', unnumbered stanza

at '1934', 31a: under heading 'Alterations for the Vines', 1-3

at '1934', 34a: under heading 'The Wine', stanzas numbered 2 and 22; part-lines and word/words beside the numbers 5, 7, 29, 9 & 14

at '1934', 33b: 2, 7 (stanza cancelled)

at '1934', 34b: 9, 14, 22, 28

at '1934', 35a: 29, 7 & 8 (under heading 'Wine')

at '1934', 40a: under heading 'Final Revision – The Vine', lines and 'Verse 21' (cancelled stanza)

at '1934', 40b: 'Verse 22', first line verse 28, 'Verse 21' under heading 'The vine'

at '1934', 41b: under heading 'The Vine', stanza 21

at]1934', 42a: under heading 'The Vine', stanza 22

Order of stanzas *C*: stanzas numbered 18-29; stanza 20 rewritten and cancelled (following stanza 20), with annotation [A]('Verse to be put in here)' between cancelled stanza and stanza 21; unnumbered stanza at end under heading 'Odd verse'

JSN – JD 3 September 1935:

I am sending in another envelope 'The Vine that is a friend'. I have had it on hand ever since last November and I feel a bit sick of it at times ... I don't know whether the public will at once grasp the story. Arthur is a man who in his young days worked as a station hand and saw the sufferings of sheep and cattle in droughts. At middle age he has taken up wine growing and is an enthusiast about the grape. Like many other drinking men he is very intolerant. He thinks that every man who does not get drunk now and again is extremely mean.

This piece is really written from a teetotalter's point of view. But in the end Arthur wins the argument, by his long-windedness. I daresay you have met this type of old chap before now.

Two postscripts read:

I believe that it is correct about pruning being first done by the wild asses from the desert. A sultana grower at Merbein told me this.

I know that some of the verses in 'The vine' are faulty, but I had this version written off and it was a bother to alter it.

JSN – JD 19 February 1936:

Second stanza, 2nd line.

Meanness, he says, will sere the soul of man.

I thought that [sere] «sear» was the way to spell the word that meant burnt.

Sere means aged or dried up. You know more about these things than I do, but I thought it well to draw your attention to it.

Continued overleaf...

The Vine that is a Friend (cont.)

JD – JSN 16 February 1936:

About the two words serē and sear in the line: ‘Meanness, he says, will serē the soul of man’, of course you may use either and it is for you to say. I like serē better than sear in this connection . . . Either word would be correct in your line.

THE WALKER ON THE SAND

‘1940’, 3b (A0819) [A], fair draft.

The spires so delicate are but the fears
Of the poor fishes, back a million years:
These terraces that bring the eye delight
Are but the wishes of the birds of night:
They all have feared the riddler, he who planned
The reptiles and the fishes, hungry from the sea:
Slowly I walk, I walk uneasily,
 Along the sand.

THE WALKING OF THE MOON-WOMAN

‘1940’, 6a-6b (A0821-2) [L], fair draft.

’Twas moonlight in the ripe barley
And she was half-concealed;
Perchance she was a Moon-Woman
Below the barley field.

For Moon-Women, they never dance,
They neither laugh nor sing;
They are made up of old wishes
That fear not anything.

Perchance she was a Moon-Woman
Who stole from east to west;
Her feet were in the white barley
And a child was on her breast.

Perchance she was a Moon-Woman
Whose wishes all were sighs,
For the child was all too beautiful
And the blue was in his eyes.

Perchance she was a Moon-Woman
Who in her day did burn
And now in moonlight courage stood
But would not yet return.

* * *

’Twas long ago – my eyes are dim,
I fear too much the cold:
Perchance she was a Moon-Woman
Down in the barley-gold.

7 are made] are [but] made *MS*

14 Whose] Who[se] *MS*

THE WAYS OF THE WILDFLOWER

‘1940’, 3b-4a (A0819) [A], fair draft. This is a later version of ‘Love is a berry’.

It is but a wildflower, untamed by man;
It is one of all outcasts of the berry clan.

It will not be staying where the good flowers abide;
It will be burning and crying on the bare hillside.

In the hopeless desert it will strive to grow;
It will not be the servant in a quiet row.

In the sweet garden it will make a moan;
It will be crying and crying to go out alone.

It will go to the dark lane, it will live in woe;
It will be in places where the weeds are ashamed to grow.

It will turn bitter all the heart of man;
It is the wild thing that grows with the berry clan.

4 and crying on] and crying and crying on *MS*

7 sweet garden] sweet[est] garden *MS*

12 clan] <plan> *MS*

THE WHISTLING JACK

Australasian 28 December 1929; *CP* 151.

JSN - AGS 2 August 1931 (discussing a proposed edition and pieces to discard, says 'I do not think it would be wise to put 'The Whistling Jack' in'). JSN - AGS 22 September 1932 (continuing the discussion, says 'I am not too sure that I did offer the Whistling Jack [last year]', as a replacement). JSN - RHC 7 November 1933, NLA MS 605 (if Croll wants this for *CP* 'it can be got in the *Australasian*'). JSN - RHC 19 November 1933, NLA MS 605 (encloses poem, and comments). JSN - Kate Baker 12 December 1933, LaT MS 9419/2954 (thanks her for copying the poem for him). JSN - RHC n.d. [c. March 1934], NLA MS 605/71-75 (corrections to proofs *CP*). JSN - JD 13 January 1935, NLA MS 1145/66 (says that 'pieces like 'The Whistling Jack', 'The soldier is home' and 'The ballad of remembrance' . . . rub some people the wrong way'). FN - JSN 16 July 1936, ML MS 3354/1, 1-2.

Correspondence is given after the notes.

The preferred text is the *Australasian*.

Not far above me in the boughs he sat – a solemn thing:
On the grey limb, in grey he sat – he did not move to sing:
He was so dumb, he seemed to see no glamour in the Spring.

Near by me did the chickens run beneath their mother's eye:
'Twas but a little noise I heard, and I look up to the sky:
The Whistling Jack and a white chicken! I had not seen it die.

He ate so greedily, and then – as if he did no wrong –
He poured into the morning air the beauty of his song,
And I spoke to him right angrily – I kept not silence long.

This is, I said, no little thing – how can you live, and dare
To sing this song that is a song and sometimes is a prayer?
And the blood is still upon your beak and tells of murder there.

Title] See JSN – RHC 7 December 1933, at end of notes.

6 I had not seen] I did not see *CP*

9] And I stared at him I scowled at him I kept not silence long *CP*

9] NLA MS 605/71-75 [c. March 1934] has: 'Last line, 3rd stanza. Right angrily is very bad. I don't think it appeared that way before. I suggest And I stared a[t] him I scowled at him I kept not silence long.'

Continued overleaf...

The Whistling Jack (cont.)

When the mother at the even-fall will with mother's wing
 Give love unto her brood, and they in eager love will cling,
 What of the blood upon your beak? Is it a little thing?

The Whistling Jack hopped lower down, and he looked me in the eye.
 He said, I kill to eat, but you pray long into the sky
 For the help of God in all you do to make your fellows die.

I know not God – how could I? But I am not always dumb.
 With many flags you march, you make strange noises on a drum
 And you praise God for murders old and murders yet to come.

Your hymn you found with mating birds, and you have stolen prayer:
 All earth you claim and all the sea, and even the sweet air:
 You without pity cry to God for all His love and care.

Your Heaven is but a theft – you saw the white walls in the sky
 And the mystery of the wing you took, to make your angels fly.
 For all your bravery as a thief, you have not loved to die.

You own the earth and all therein, and all you hear and see,
 You cut the flower into the heart, your axe is at the tree,
 You burn the body beautiful that was a friend to me.

If this you say to me is true, that slaughter is a sin,
 What of the hat upon your head? the shoes you saunter in?
 The fur you found by cruelty – by cruelty the skin.

You have not ceased one day to rob since ever you were born:
 There was a theft to give you milk – and all that you have worn
 Is only yours by plunder foul that fills me with a scorn.

If you can preach of murder, I can preach of murder too:
 You have defiled the sweet green earth, and prayed into the blue
 For strength unto your God, that you may other murders do.

13 with mother's wing] with the mother wing *CP*

13] NLA MS 605/71-75 has: '5th stanza, 1st line. The line should run like this: When the mother at the even fall will with the mother wing'

26 wing] wings *CP*

Continued overleaf...

The Whistling Jack (cont.)

I am a little thief – but you with evil caution strive
For the white wool and the glistening silk and the honey of the hive:
But for a million cruelties you would not be alive.

Of valour do you boast, and yet your whole life is a whine.
Where is your pity for the sheep? your mercy for the kine?
You who would dare to preach to me at this little meal of mine!

This bird had almost stilled my heart and both my eyes were dim:
There was no mercy in his speech as I saw him on the limb.
I said, Perchance he is of God. Who knows the heart of Him?

Oh, the bird he was on fire – he spoke so long and bitterly:
I heard him till at last he flew – I did not wish to see
The heavens blue, for he had put such weakness into me.

JSN - RHC 7 December 1933:

I don't know that you will like the rhyme much. A.G. rather disliked it. He despised vegetarians and pacifists on principle.

He knew very little about birds. Even less than I do. You know the bird well of course. The Dervin Jackass. We often used to call him the 'Whistling Jack' in the Mallee. He is very quick at descending on chickens and mice. Anyhow, it is not the sort of a piece that a respectable Civil Servant should write.

THE WINTER SUNDOWN

‘1929’, 46b-47a (A0636) [A], fair draft, 5 stanzas, entitled ‘It is a fine country’; 46b & 47a (A0636) [FN], revisions, under title ‘A fine country out there’. ‘1939’, 6a (A0802) [A], fair draft, 5 stanzas, entitled ‘’Tis a fine country’; 9b-10a (A0807) [L], fair draft, 5 stanzas, with renumbering.
CP 162.

JSN – RHC 10 January 1934, NLA MS 1145/57-60 (says ‘I am trying to finish a short rhyme [of] about 20 lines. It is something I started a few years ago’). Lothians – JSN 19 January 1934, [no location] (in re. quotations of verses for *CP*). FN – JD 18 January 1935, NLA MS 1145/75, *HI*, not located.

HI has an entry: ‘Title ‘Winter Sundown’ in list of 11 poems headed ‘Poems in Collected Poems to which the Author has complete rights and ownership’ [AGS], [Constance Robertson – JSN 6 October 1933 [NLA MS 1145/30, Helen Hewson, *John Shaw Neilson*, p. 246], not located.

The dating is uncertain, but the reference to the title by Constance Robertson, together with the location of the drafts in the notebooks, suggests a date of 1931 for the composition of this poem. The stanzas in Frank’s hand in the ‘1929’ notebook are probably the attempt at revision which N refers to in his letter to Croll (10 January 1934).

The *CP* text is derived from the fair draft at ‘1939’, 9b-10b (D) and this fair draft is therefore taken as the preferred text. The versions at ‘1929’ 46b-47a (A) and ‘1939’, 6a (C) are shown separately in the notes with the revisions at ‘1929’, 46b & 47a.

‘1929’, 46b-47a [A] = A; ‘1929’, 46b-47a [FN] = B; ‘1939’, 6a = C; ‘1939’, 9b-10a = D

They falter, they stay not
To your eyes and mine,
The boatmen in violet
On bays of wine.

Calm without sorrow, and
The peace without prayer,
All fear is folly in
That country out there.

Many we mourn are out
Seaward, away:
Tears did they leave us
As players who play.

3 in violet] «in» violet *D*
5 sorrow, and] sorrow, *CP*

Continued overleaf...

The Winter Sundown (cont.)

The highlands, the hilltops,
They make the heart bare,
Burned out with wishing for
That country out there.

* * *

They stay not, they stay not,
But your eyes and mine
Have boatmen in violet
On bays of wine.

13-16] = *D* stanza 3, renumbered 4
14 They make] they [leave] «make» [JSN] *D*
17-20] = *D* stanza 4, renumbered 5

Discarded stanzas

A ('1929', 46b-47a):

On the face of the Sundown
It is Hope without prayer
It is the calm without sorrow
It is a fine country out there

The hills are all folly
Your wealth and mine
There are blue boatmen going
On days [bays] of wine

No man will be telling
All God's ways and prayer
It is a place for old wishes
It is a fine country out there

It is a mist of the Follies
No one come[s] through
All the day telling
What God means to do

The boatman dies softly
Wise men despair
At the bloom and the long wish
It is a fine country out there

B revisions [FN], at 47a:

Calm without Sorrow
The Peace without prayer
Tis a place [for] «of» long wishes
That country out there

Continued overleaf...

The Winter Sundown (cont.)

Calm without sorrow
 The peace without prayer
 Tis a «fine» place [for long] «of» wishes
 That country out there

A [fine] place of long wishes
 That country out there

B revisions [FN], at 46b:

The fair Land so boundless
 It has no Dome or Floor
 Where all our fond wishes
 Go through the Black Door

C ('1939', 6a):

At the winter sundown
 Like the rainbow sign
 Came boatmen in violet
 On bays of wine

No one did boast of
 [His signs an] «sins» in prayer
 [The] «Twas» calm without sorrow
 The country out there

Headlands went mistward
 Where no one might see
 As children in red caps
 [Dive] «Die» playfully

No man made much of
 His dull ways and prayer
 In the calm without sorrow
 That country out there

The Alleys came upwards
 And Hills divine
 With the boatmen in violet
 On bays of wine

THESE MEN WHO PLAY

‘1939’, 11b-12a (A0809) [A], fair draft.

Where have they been? Perhaps 'twas in the trees,
Going with God with honey for the bees.

Why make they merriment of all our sins,
These men who play the unfed violins?

When they would fall, 'tis then they start to climb
At the first halting of the Summertime.

With wood so weak and hapless, hair and string,
Gravely they give commandments to the Spring.

They walk with weariness – the ale and wine
Falter, and will not make their eyes to shine.

These who are never holy tell the pure
Always, and always, pity is the cure.

Because of them, our journey is delayed:
Listening with them, our hearts have been afraid.

Why make they merriment of all our sins,
These men who play the unfed violins?

Hunger there is upon them as they cry:
Dead men are with them of the years gone by.

4 play] play[ed] *MS*

16] [Famine is with them still they] | These men who play the unfed violins *MS*

¶ **‘Those who have loved him, those who have hated’**

‘1936’, 21a (A0790) [FN], fair draft.

Those who have loved him, those who have hated,
 Come together in gentle guise;
 For his first defeat, how long they have waited,
 'Mid every tempest about the skies.
 He still grows fainter, he calls and sighs,
 Alone, deserted by all but fears;
 The blood refuses, and lo, the drummer
 Is out with the mist with the mutineers.

The days are heavy, the feet have halted,
 The knees will tremble, the voice is thin;
 And now in a trice have the hands defaulted,
 The eyes tell only the woe within.
 Calamity sits on the mouth and chin,
 The poor eyes tell us that Love is gone;
 A valiant fellow is still the drummer
 And undefeated he still fights on.

5 grows] grew *MS*

6 Alone] [She st] Alone *MS*

13] [The brain grows weary] *MS*, a false start

THOUGHTS ABOUT ROSEMARY

‘1940’, 2a-2b (A0817-8) [L], fair draft.

It is not here upon my tongue to say
But in my heart, for Rosemary, and she
Is in the sunlight, always at a Play.

In cowardice, my heart will say in fear,
There is a storm about the world sweet one,
Moons may be hastening, it may soon be near.

You may be taken in the overflow
With the exalted for a season and
With the exalted to the gateway go.

Mountains may meet you, you may find the mire,
Whispering to God, how desperate at the dawn,
Cool me, oh cool me, cool me in a fire.

This is the heart – but oh, the lying tongue!
It will be softening all in parables,
Sweetmeats, that all men take unto the young.

Out of my heart I have no word to say
To Rosemary, who walks in happiness,
Always in sunlight, always in a Play.

2 heart for] heart [from] «for» *MS*

18 Play] play *MS*

TO A BLONDE TYPIST

‘1934’, 26a-28a (A0715-8) [A], draft, 12 stanzas numbered 1-12, and 4 stanzas numbered 1-4, under heading ‘Odd verses Typist’. ‘1934, 38a (A0727) [L], revisions, under heading ‘Alterations for Blond typist’. ‘1935’, 5a-8a (A0746-9) [L & A], fair draft, 16 stanzas numbered 1-16, and 2 stanzas numbered 1 & 2, under heading ‘Alterations’. ‘1936’, 17a (A0786) [A], a line, under heading ‘Odd lines’. ML MS 3354/2, Item 7, 8b [L], 1 stanza. NLA MS 1145/67 [L], revision. NLA MS 1145/67, typescript [JD], with revised line [A], entitled ‘Blond typist’. ML MS 3038/2, 15a & 16a (B0022-3), typescript [JD], entitled ‘Blond typist’.

JSN - JD 10 December 1934, NLA MS 1145/68, *HI*, not located (with comment ‘JD has this poem’). JSN - JD 3 September 1935, NLA MS 1145/67 (alteration to final line, with thanks to JD for suggestion). JSN - JD 19 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (N not keen on JD sending this to papers and does not think they would print it). JSN - JD 27 January 1936, NLA MS 1145/65 (N does not want this in *BI* because the CRB staff may not like it: he does not want to risk incurring displeasure when he wants to have his employment extended beyond the age of 65 [‘in about 13 months’]). JD -JSN 8 March 1936, McKimm MS (‘I think now that the Typiste piece should certainly go into the book, and hope you agree to that’). JSN - JD 3 May 1936, NLA MS 1145/67 (says ‘I put the words in pencil on top of ‘Blonde typist’ to explain my attitude toward Big Business’; and in list of corrections to typescript *BI*, ‘I have marked 1st line of 11th stanza: you have my correction for this’). JSN – Lothian 17 May 1936, LaT (Lothian Papers) (‘did not intend to include this piece’ which is ‘more suitable for a Labour newspaper’). JSN - JD 28 June 1936, NLA MS 1145/34(b) (attributes rejection of *BI* by Lothians partly to inclusion of this poem, and asks JD to leave this out if sending the MS to Angus & Robertson). JSN - JD 12 July 1936, NLA MS 1145/65 (JD to hold this piece till next year, when N will know if he is getting an extension of his appointment with the CRB). FN - JSN 16 July 1936, ML MS 3354/1 (thinks this may have put Lothian’s off publishing a selection of verse); JSN - JD 29 September 1936, NLA MS 1145/34(b) (instructs JD not to include this in *BI*). JSN - JD 8 November 1936, NLA MS 1145/35(c) (asks JD to send him a copy of the poem). JSN - JD 4 January 1938, NLA MS 1145/68 (the poem N wanted to omit from *BI* was ‘To a blonde typist’).

The revisions at ‘1934’, 38a (C) relate to the fair draft at ‘1935’, 5a-8a (B), and are reflected in the typescript at NLA MS 1145/67, 3 September 1935 (G). The revision at ‘1936’, 17a (F) was added to NLA MS 1145/67, 3 September 1935 by Annie, and is incorporated in the second typescript, ML MS 3038/2, 15a & 16a (H). The MSS are all part of the one impulse of composition, and the first typescript, NLA MS 1145/67, 3 September 1935 (G) is therefore taken as the preferred text, and the revised line added to it is incorporated.

‘1934’, 26a-28a = A; ‘1935’, 5a-8a = B; ‘1934’, 38a = C; MS 3354/2-7, 8b = D; NLA MS1145/67, 3 September 1935 (‘Alterations’) = E; ‘1936’, 17a = F; NLA MS 1145/67, 3 September 1935 (typescript) = G; ML MS 3038/2, 15a & 16a = H

Continued overleaf...

To a Blond Typist (cont.)

(To a young girl in the employ of Big Business)

Gently with dolls not long since you were playing,
But you must come the old hard laws obeying,
Come where the old Ass Business leads the braying.

Business is like Apollyon, somewhat sooty:
Child you are heavenly and it is my duty
Here to give Salutation to a Beauty.

Britain, your speech is all too mild in cursing:
Who is this thief we keep on Reimbursing?
Who is this Tyrant we persist in nursing?

Business – I see a Serpent cool, suspicious,
Slithering in slime and always most malicious,
Foe to the Arts and Patron to the Vicious.

Now for a change, compare him to a Tumour,
Full of all meanness, blackness, evil rumour,
Quickly effacing all Good Faith and Humour.

1-3] ≠ *A* 'Odd verses', stanza numbered 2; ≠ *B* stanza 1; = *H* 1-3

2] Trembling you came the hard cold laws obeying *A*]

But you came here the old hard laws obeying *B*

3] Came where this Old Ass Business leads the brain *A*

3Come] Came *B*

4-6] *A* ∅; ≠ *B* stanza 2; = *H* 4-6

4 Apollyon]. Apollyon was the angel of the bottomless pit. Cf. Revelation 9:2-11. *AV*

6 to give] to make *B*

7-9] ≠ *A* 'Odd verses', stanza numbered 1; = *B* stanza 3; = *H* 7-9

7] English is quite inadequate for cursing *A* •

[Written] «Britain» your speech is all too mild in cursing *B*

10-12] *A* ∅; *B* ∅; ≠ *C* stanza numbered 4; = *H* 10-12

10] Business I see a serpent most malicious *C*

11] Slithering still slimy slyly all suspicious *C*

13-15] ≠ *A* stanza 6; ≠ *B* stanza 5; = *H* 13-15

13 compare him] compare it *A*, *B*

15 effacing] destroying *A*

Continued overleaf...

To a Blond Typist (cont.)

Business, they tell us, is a stern Probation,
 Good for the soul – nay Child, it is starvation,
 Always resulting in complete Damnation.

Nature is kind, but Business will outwit her:
 Sweetheart, I am, though sometimes somewhat bitter,
 Merely a tomtit with an extra twitter.

You, you have eyes to make the whole world sunny,
 Deep in your soul there is mistrust of money:
 Sweet one, forgive me if I call you Honey.

Often your eyes will through the windows wander,
 You should be out upon the hillside yonder.
 Here in the haste we dare not let you ponder.

16-18] ≠ *A* stanza 8; ≠ *B* stanza 6; ≠ *B* 'Alterations', stanza numbered 1; = *H* 16-18

16] What is this business this absurd probation *A*, *B* (16-18)

17] 'Tis for the soul sheer absolute starvation *A*, *B* (stanza 6)

17 nay Child] oh child *B* 'Alterations'

18] = *C* 'Verse 6. Line 3'

18 Always] Swiftly *A*, *B* (stanza 6)

18] Which in the end ensures complete damnation *B* 'Alterations'

19-21] ≠ *A* stanza 7; ≠ *B* stanza 7; = *H* 19-21

20] = *C* 'Verse 7. Line 2'

20] Sweetheart I am not really mad or bitter *A*

21 Merely a] Nay but a *A*

22-24] ≠ *A* stanza 9; ≠ *B* stanza 8; = *H* 22-24

22] [In your blue eyes there is distrust of money] | [You you were meant to make the whole world sunny] •

[See] You you were meant to make the whole world sunny *A*

23] Deep in your eyes there is distrust of money *A* •

Deep in your soul there is distrust of money *B*

25-27] ≠ *A* stanza 10; ≠ *B* stanza 9; = *H* 25-27

26] You should be dreaming on the hillside yonder *A* •

You should be rambling on the hillside yonder *B*

Continued overleaf...

To a Blond Typist (cont.)

You should be out where all Good has beginnings,
 Out where the rainbow sometimes has an innings,
 Always in sunlight counting up your winnings.

Here in the old Calamities of Clatter,
 Here we assist in making flatness flatter,
 Here we insist that only dull things matter.

In a sane world who, who would rise at seven?
 It should be ten, ten-thirty or eleven:
 Life could be sung – a Parody of Heaven.

Work should begin with wine and generous joking,
 And in the place of penalties for Smoking
 Let us have fines for Platitudes and Croaking!

28-30] = *A* stanza 1; = *B* stanza 10; = *H* 28-30
 31-33] ≠ *A* stanza 2; ≠ *B* stanza 11; ≠ *G* 31-33; = *H* 31=33
 31] = *F* under heading 'Odd lines'; = *G* 'new 1st line for 11th stanza'
 31] Here in the old [calamities] Calamities of Clatter *F* •
 [Here in the noise the senseless haste and clatter] *G* (cancelled [*A*]) •
 Here in the haste the senseless fuss and clatter *A* •
 Here in the noise the senseless [fuss] «haste» and clatter *B*
 32 we assist] we persist *B*
 33 dull things] profits *A*
 33] Here we [persist] «insist» that only profits matter *B*
 34-36] ≠ *A* stanza 3; = *B* stanza 12; = *H* 34-36
 36] Then might the world full soon resemble Heaven *A*
 37-39] ≠ *A* stanza 4; ≠ *B* stanza 13; ≠ *B* 'Alterations', stanza numbered 2; = *H* 37-39
 37-39] *C* has: 'Verse 13 To be altered, [also Verse 4]'
 37] We could have joy and wine and generous joking *A* •
 Work could begin with wine and generous joking *B* •
 Life let us have with wine and generous joking *B* 'Alterations'
 38] As for discipline we could leave him croaking *A* •
 I see Discipline Heaven's aid invoking *B* •
 — Here old Discipline now past all provoking *B* 'Alterations'
 39] [«Smothering» at last] «Soon to collapse» with our continuous smoking *A* •
 Smothering recanting while we keep on smoking *B* •
 Falls in a fit and dies while we are smoking *B* 'Alterations'

Continued overleaf...

To a Blond Typist (cont.)

Honey, forgive me, have I been offending:
 All my old Acts I should be now amending,
 Chiefly with Hymns to ease my latter ending.

Business a Dragon is, still bent on harming
 Virtue and Youth – he has become alarming:
 Ah, you are saved, and by your own Prince Charming.

40-42] ≠ *A* stanza 12; = *B* stanza 15; = *H* 40-42

40-42] *C* has: 'Verse 15 also to be altered'

40] Slowly I cease my rhyme was I offending *A*

42 latter] later *A*

43-45] *A* ∅; *B* ∅; = *D*; = *H* 43-45

45] = *E* 'Final line', with comment, 'Thanks very much for the suggestion about Prince Charming' [L]

Discarded stanzas

A stanza 5, lines 13-15; *A* 'Odd verses', stanza numbered 3; *B* stanza 4, lines 10-12:

Nature is kind but business must exploit her *A* stanza 5

Business it is arch Hypocrite Exploiter *A* 'Odd verses', *B*

Business I see as an outrageous goitre *A* stanza 5

Clearly I see it like a hideous goitre *A* 'Odd verses'

I can behold it as a hideous goitre *B*

Quickly consuming all sweet thoughts that loiter *A* stanza 5

Quickly consuming all sweet things that loiter *A* 'Odd verses'

Chuckling with Death who gives it time to loiter *B*

A stanza 11, lines 31-33; *A* 'Odd verses', stanza numbered 4; *B* stanza 16, lines 46-48:

Honey forgive me for this tedious ranting *A* stanza 11

Fairest forgive me all this tiresome ranting *A* 'Odd verses'

So may you pardon all this thoughtless ranting *B*

Still it is yours to wait demurely panting *A* stanza 11

You can escape one way demurely panting *A* 'Odd verses'

You may escape one way demurely pouting *B*

For the Great Prince you know the one enchanting *A* stanza 11

Tis with the Prince who rules the All Enchanting *A* 'Odd verses'

Tis with the Prince who comes – the all enchanting *B*

B stanza 14, lines 40-42:

[You] Child you are loved of Nature dear old Madam

She who was once so kind to Eve and Adam

Ah the poor Gardener – how your Grandma had him

TO A DEPARTED BUSHRANGER

‘1929’, 17b-19a (A0606-7) [A], draft, with stanza 5 misnumbered 3 and renumbered.

Though thou art wrapped up in the pleasant earth
I would not dream that thou art at an end:
Of true romance we have a genuine dearth
And we have need of thee, O trusty friend.

What is our history? It has still the smell
Of the grim flagellator in his day:
Of some old truths I would not dare to tell:
Our world crawled on with its bullock dray.

Then came the fever and the rush for gold;
Strange were the men come out of every land:
Here did thy early energies unfold,
Here were thy fierce experiments all planned.

And thou did'st steal – but theft was in the air:
Horses were scarce and horses thou did'st find.
Squatters of old took all things everywhere;
I would not give comparisons unkind.

Leave us not now thy good blue shirt – we need
Thy cabbage tree, right glorious to behold:
Haply the younger folk may find a feed
Of true romance from out the days of old.

1 wrapped up in] wrapped «up» in *MS*

2art] ar[e]«t» *MS*

4 need of thee] need[ed] «of» thee *MS*

5 it has still] it [is] «has» still *MS*

6 flagellator] fladigulator *MS*

8][The] «Our» old world [went] crawled on with «the» «its» bullock dray *MS*

10 men come] men [came] «come» *MS*

11 did thy] did [I] «thy» *MS*

17 blue shirt] [red] «blue» shirt *MS*

18 cabbage-tree] Cabbage-tree hats were woven from the cabbage palm, *Livistona australis*.

19 Haply] Happily *MS*

Continued overleaf...

To a Departed Bushranger (cont.)

You were the upstart of an evil hour:
Blindly you fought with Nature close at hand,
Even at times gave poison in the flour
To the unwary children of the land.

Proudly you builded homes of spacious size,
And that your vanities might be fulfilled
Rabbits you brought and foxes with keen eyes,
Our enemies – they never can be killed.

Long did you hold the country, but at last
Wisdom prevailed – the small men had their share:
The heyday of your tyranny is past
And the good wheat comes smiling everywhere.

21 of an evil hour] of [the] «an evil» hour *MS*

24 unwary] unw[e]ary *MS*

27 Rabbits] [The] rabbits *MS*

28 be killed] be [gilled] killed *MS*

30 men] man *MS*

32 comes] came *MS*

TO A LITTLE GIRL AT CHRISTMAS

NLA MS 1145/48, typescript [JD], with notes. Written in 1941 when Neilson was in Brisbane.

Bells, the encircling bells, bestow
Out of all Heaven loves that climb.
Softly, O playmate, 'tis the glow,
Tolerance the radiant is the chime.

Bells of all Heaven, bells and bells,
Burn with great reddening down the land.
Softly, O playmate, Jesus tells
Tolerance, the new law on the sand.

Bells of encirclement bestow
Thoughts of all Heaven on your chime.
Joy is your playmate, all we know
Of these unknowables of time.

12] [Tolerance the love[d] thing on the sand] *MS*
Tolerance the new law on the sand *MS* (note).

Note by Devaney:

JSN: 'The Christmas bells seem to be asking us to be tolerant, Christmas being the time of goodwill and forgiveness. Christ was very tolerant. What Christ wrote on the ground when he saved the poor woman who was going to be stoned was some word of tolerance.' [Cf. John 8: 3-7. *AV*]

The last line of verse 2 was rewritten half a dozen times. His final version was:
Tolerance the new law on the sand.

TO A MAGPIE IN GAOL

There are two discrete versions of this poem. The poem was written c. 1930 and then it was rewritten, probably in mid-1935.

TO A MAGPIE IN GAOL [1]

‘1929’, 15b-16a (A0604) [A], fair draft, 8 x 4-line stanzas, written c. 1930.

What crime did you once dare to do?
Oh, the Authorities are hard,
They will not even give to you
The hopeless freedom of the yard.

In all the country, up and down,
Robbers are buoyant everywhere;
They are not punished with a frown,
Sweetness they have, and light and air.

You did not even dare to sing
Any Disloyalty to Man;
Why was so innocent a thing
Imprisoned e'er the song began?

* * *

Behind those awful wires you sit
Broken and helpless, day by day;
Your song has in the scent of it
Joys of a wilderness away.

Were it not well to put some hate
Into your song? It were no crime
To put loud curses on the fate
That gaoled you in the honey-time.

Oft in the night, most like a dove,
You mourn to her, you die too soon.
She the imaginary mate
Watches the falling of the moon.

19 To put] [To curse] To put *MS*

To a Magpie in Gaol [1] (cont.)

'Tis not for me you sing: ah, no –
Blue is your voice and violet
As an old flute of long ago
Where lovers in the old days met.

In all the country, through and through,
Robbers are buoyant everywhere.
This is the punishment for you,
They have the sweetness and the air.

32 sweetness] sweet[est]«ness» *MS*

TO A MAGPIE IN GAOL [2]

‘1935’, 13b-14a (A0755-6) [A], fair draft, 6 stanzas, numbered 1-6. ‘1935’, 15a-16b (A0756-8) [A], draft, 7 stanzas numbered 1-7, stanzas 1, 3, 6 & 7 cancelled and 3 stanzas under heading ‘Odd verse’ numbered 1, 3 & 6 (rewritten stanzas), entitled ‘To a magpie in prison’. ‘1934’, 41a-41b (A0730-1) [L], fair draft, 6 stanzas numbered 1-6.

This is a later version of a poem written c. 1930, and rewritten, probably in mid-1935. The notebooks dated ‘1934’ and ‘1935’ were in use at the same time, and the fair draft at ‘1934’, 41a-41b is derived from the draft at ‘1935’, 15a-16b.

The fair draft ‘1934’, 41a-41b (C) is taken as the preferred text.
 ‘1935’, 13b-14a = A; ‘1935’, 15a-16a = B; ‘1934’, 41a-41b = C

Oh, but the high Authorities are hard!
 You are denied all thought of liberty,
 Even the ghastly freedom of the yard.

Being so close to death, you die so soon:
 But you have loved the imaginary mate
 Nestling to keep the silence for the moon.

Great men of old have thus uplifted bars,
 Sung to sweet women, seen the unriden seas,
 Told the unwavering story to the stars.

- 1-3] ≠ A stanza 1; ≠ B stanza 1 (cancelled); = B ‘Odd verse | 1’
 1] Ah [the Au] but the «old» Authorities are hard A
 2 thought] thoughts B ‘Odd verse | 1’
 2] You will not have one moments tolerance B cancelled stanza •
 You will [invade] «invade» the [early] «scented» loveliness A (annotated, ‘evade’) [JD]
 3] Nor the unwholesome freedom of the yard B cancelled stanza •
 So you have lost the freedom of the yard A
 4-6] ≠ A stanza 6; = B stanza 2
 5 But] Yet A
 6] Nestling and listening near the failing moon A
 7-9] A ∅; = B stanza 5
 8] Sang to sweet women saw the unriden seas C, B
 9 story] [stories] «story» B

Continued overleaf...

To a Magpie in Gaol [2] (cont.)

Prisons have sheltered greatness in old time,
 Songsters and warriors bound by infamies
 Did from the darkness to the daylight climb.

You have the chant that only tears can hold,
 You have the wealth beyond all Summertime,
 You have the faith that still outlives the cold.

How can you die? Although you die so soon
 Have you not loved the imaginary mate,
 She in the boughs with patience and the moon?

10-12] ≠ *A* stanza 4; *B* ∅

10] Prisons have sheltered great men in [all] «old» times *A*

11 warriors bound] warriors [in] bound *C*

11] Songsters and warriors in old dreameries *A*

13-15] ≠ *A* stanza 5; *B* ∅

13] So is your song both eloquent and bold *A*

14] It is the chant under the Summertime *A*

15] It is the faith that will not feel the cold *A*

16-18] ≠ *A* stanza 6; ≠ *B* cancelled stanza 6; ≠ *B* 'Odd verse | 6'

16] How [sha11] «can» you die although the night is soon *B* 'Odd verse | 6' •

You have not died although you die so soon *B* cancelled stanza •

Being so close to death you die so soon *A*

17] Yet you have loved the imaginary mate *A*

18] She of the boughs [of the] «with» silence and the moon *B* 'Odd verse | 6' •

Quietning the boughs in silence for the moon *B* cancelled stanza •

Nestling and listening near the failing moon *A*

Discarded stanzas

A stanza 2, lines 4-6 & *B* cancelled stanzas 3:

Thieves are triumphant outside everywhere *A, B*

Though they speak much of God continuously *A, B*

[Yet] «Still» do their sins pollute the morning air *A*

Still do their sins give blackness to the air *B*

B 'Odd verse | 3':

It is too fine for sorrow this cool song

Sorrow and joy it has for sustenance

It is of love [*unfinished*]

B stanza 4, lines 10-12:

Never did boaster tell you noise for tune

Wisdom has walked in darkness to your soul

You have beheld the awakening of the moon

B cancelled stanza 7, lines 19-21:

It is too fine for sorrow this cool song

She the unseen the gold desirable

Waits with the moonbeams underneath the song

TO A YOUNG GIRL IN THE SPRING [1]

ML MS 3354/3, Item 3, 7/13, typescript [JD?], on a sheet with ‘The journey to the tunnel’, under heading ‘By John Shaw Neilson. 1941’. A variant of the first stanza appears as a quatrain at LaT MS 9419/3678, with the same title, q.v.

I am too faint indeed to find a song,
I have not strength for tedious tale or ballad;
Let me, I pray thee, ere I say so long
Out of the leaves around us build a salad.

Let me of all these beauties manifold,
Far above clods, beyond the ills of scheming,
Sit you up swiftly to the feast of gold,
So for all seasons you may have the dreaming.

Of orange, green, a good rude company
Come to us here, and more we still can borrow;
There is a love that dies not in a tree,
Let me, I pray thee, burn out all the sorrow.

Greens of the berries dance into the eyes,
The butterfly has wings in the sweet weather,
The green hop gives us time to be unwise,
Let us put all the greens, and greens, together.

3 say] stay *MS*

TO A YOUNG GIRL IN THE SPRING [2]

LaT MS 9419/3678, typescript, cancelled, a variant of stanza 1 of a longer poem with the same title, q.v.

Sweet one, I am too ancient for a song;
I have not strength or time for tedious ballad;
Let me, I pray thee, ere I say so long,
Out of the leaves around us build a salad.

TO ALL THE GOOD BIRDS

‘1929’, 27b (A0616) [A], fair draft.

Birds of all seasons, all times and all places I saw,
Birds who were timorous, birds that defied all the law;
By gray places and cool mornings all your fine feathers I knew,
But this that I loved most was all the fine lying in you.

Man is so tied to dull truth, so wrapt in a fear,
He is so plagued with all evil that never comes near;
You have at all times great enemies ever close by
And yet all your merriment is at the top of the sky.

TO AN EARLY-FLOWERING ALMOND

‘1929’, 21b (A0610) [EN], 1 stanza and a part-stanza [previous leaf cut out]; 22a (A0610) [A], 2 stanzas, numbered 1 & 3; 26b-27a (A0615) [A], 2 stanzas, the first numbered 1, the second unnumbered, under short title ‘The almond’. NLA MS 605/33 [L], revisions, for *CP*.
CP 119.

AGS – JSN 28 November 1930, NLA MS 1145/74B (suggesting he writes two replacement lines); AGS – JSN 11 December 1930, NLA MS 1145/74B (doesn’t want new stanzas; wants clarity). JSN - RHC 19 November 1933, NLA MS 605 (enclosing revisions to texts for *CP* and will send ‘two others [for] the ‘Flowering almond’); n.d. [Late 1933-early 1934], NLA MS 605 (encloses alterations and says, ‘I think A.G. must have disliked the first line in ‘The flowering almond’. The ‘so as’ might have seemed clumsy to him. How does it strike you? I put in a fresh second stanza, which I think is an improvement. I have also made a slight alteration in first line of last stanza.’); n.d. [c. March 1934], NLA MS 605/71-75 (corrections to proofs *CP*: ‘‘To a[n] early flowering almond’. Better cut out this 3rd stanza. I think I had fresh lines for it, but I can’t find them now. It will do without it’).
Correspondence is given after discarded lines and stanzas.

In the absence of a complete fair draft or fair copy, the *CP* text is taken as the preferred text
‘1929’, 21b = A; ‘1929’, 22a = B; ‘1929’, 26b-27a = C; NLA MS 605/33 = D

Gowned as a bride thou art
Caught with the glow,
Giving with ruddy heart
Blood to the snow.

Thou hast come in to make
Dreams to the boy,
Lightly the girl will take
Omens of joy.

Thou hast the taste of all
Sweethearts in Spring,
Thou hast come out to call
Colours to sing.

Low rides the sun above,
Meek as the moon:
Thou art as moist in love
As a love tune.

1-4] ≠ *C* stanza numbered 1

1] [Almond a bride thou art] | Gowned as a bride thou art *D* ‘Suggestion for 1st stanza’

5-8] ≠ *B* stanza numbered 3; = *C* unnumbered stanza; = *D* ‘New 2nd stanza’

5] Thou hast the eyes to make *B*

7 Lightly] [Likely] «Lightly» *B*

Continued overleaf...

To an Early-Flowering Almond (cont.)

Still as a bride thou art
 In a bride's gown:
 See, an uplifted heart
 Beats in a clown.

17] = *D* 'suggestion for 1st line in last stanza'

Discarded lines and stanzas

A part-stanza:

Her hair was like the mist that comes
 As raiment for a rhyme

A unnumbered stanza & *B* 'No 1':

No more the Winter thought *A, B*
 Now can I see *A*
 Now shall I see *B*
 Love and extravagance *A*
 Love in its wonderments *B*
 Borne to a tree *A*
 Born to a tree *B*

AGS – JSN 28 November 1930:

. . . If you don't feel up to writing new stuff, you might do two new lines for
 Her hair was like the leaves that drape
 The wilderness of rhyme
 Which is a bad image that has bogged several admirers who can't see the likeness.

Also want a stanza for Flowering Almond putting the tree into the poem, 'stead of leaving it in title to get lost. Works of art are always perfect in the unity of their expression and do not lean on titles or labels. What would you say to a statue or picture you could not understand without a title? . . .

AGS – JSN 11 December 1930:

We object to false images – or images that are partial and not essential – or images so subtle that ordinary minds cannot appreciate the imagery.

A woman's hair and paper leaves of books are characteristically unlike each other. Hair does not drape a head as leaves of books drape books or as leaves drape rhymes. The comparison is comical – like the comparison of a head to a cabbage. There are more pints of difference than points of likeness.

Hair can be compared to a cloud or a mist unspecified – or to a physical mist containing the essential qualities of a woman's hair. Not to the cloud of mist on a rhyme. I can see the point – much too far away to be useful. Bosom like a white morning – good. Hair like the leaves of a book; or the mist that clothes a rhyme – bad. . .

I don't want new stanzas for ALMOND. I want the word almond IN the poem – so that we may know it is not an early peach-blossom or a miraculous pumpkin-blossom without to the title. I want a horse that does not need THIS IS A HORSE written beneath before ordinary people can recognise it. Most of us are not gardeners or orchardists. There are other trees with white and early blossoms in spring. Let us know whether we are eating beef, mutton, or pork by the taste, not by the bill-of-fare. . . .

TO DULCIE IN A WHITE DRESS

‘1929’, 48a-48b (A0638-9) [A], draft, 3 stanzas, entitled ‘To Dulcie in a white dress’. ‘1935’, 19b-20a & 21a (A0761 & A0762) [A& L], fair draft, 4 stanzas, with stanzas 1-3 [A] under short title ‘Dulcie’ and stanza 4 [L] under title ‘Dulcie in a white dress’.

‘1929’, 48a-48b = A; ‘1935’, 19b-20a & 21a = B
The fair draft (B) is the preferred text.

The sunlight always seems to beat
More passionate, when you are there
And there is swiftness in your feet
And the great midnight on your hair.
Almost a woman – half awake –
Child, it is fitting you should take
The colour that the Angels wear.

The one thing that we dare not buy
Is innocence – your eyes can hold
That wonderment which is so high
To the Divinities of old,
Of things we shall not dare to lose.
Child, it is fitting you should choose
The colour that the Angels hold.

Lilacs and lilies fear the heat,
Flowers of all colours have despair,
But there is music at your feet
And with the midnight on your hair.

2] [De]lightfully] while you are there *A*
3] There is a gladness in your feet *A*
4] colour] colours *B*
4] And with the midnight on your hair *A*
7 The colour] [Colo] The colours *A*
8 we dare not] we cannot *A*
9] Is innocence [and in your eyes] «your eyes can hold» *A*
10 wonderment] gentleness *A*
11] To Holiness. We heard of old *A* •
To the [angelic eye] «Divinities» of old *B*
15-21] = *A*

Continued overleaf...

To Dulcie in a White Dress (cont.)

Almost a woman – half awake –
Child, it is fitting you should take
The colour that the Angels wear.

Wisdom is somewhere in the sky,
Folly is bloom exceeding fair
(All that we know – a smile – a sigh)
And there is midnight on your hair.
Child of romances – half asleep –
Is it not fitting you should keep
The colour that the Angels wear?

TO NORAH McKINNEY

NLA MS 1145/48 [typescript?], *HI*, not at this location.

Meanjin Papers: Contemporary Queensland prose and verse No.5, August 1941, p. 9.

Written in 1941, when Neilson was in Brisbane.

Your father is quick with the gun, and he long has been hating
The poor little sparrows who keep on their loving and mating.

Your father, the keen man he is, and I see his face harden,
It costs him a lot for the poison he puts in the garden.

Your father has spite on the chin and the core of his marrow,
He says that the phosphorous burns and is best for a sparrow.

The end of September it was, and a patch of bad weather,
And you and the spawn of the enemy sobbing together.

Oh you with the love in your eyes and the smutch on your pinny,
It's a very good girl that you are then, my Norah McKinney.

Your father, the strong man he is, with the gloom in his marrow,
But the love that was deep in your heart it was poured on a sparrow.

All Sunday your father has hate that he hoards for tomorrow,
But you gave the mercy of God to a thief in his sorrow.

The mercy was up in your eyes and it fell on your pinny,
It's a very good girl that you are then, my Norah McKinney.

The young thing had only one right – 'twas the right to be frozen,
But how for the mercy of God could he ever be chosen?

Your father, the big man he is, and his forehead is narrow,
But you had the pity of God and the tear for a sparrow.

20] Cf. Luke 12: 6: Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? *AV*

Continued overleaf...

To Norah McKinney (cont.)

I talk in the tongue of the asses, a fine thing for braying,
A fine thing for buying and selling, a fine thing for paying.

But I being wrong in the reason and dull over money,
It's love that I want to be telling, all in the green honey.

I saw you with spawn of the enemy, you two together,
The end of September it was and a patch of bad weather.

Your father has gloom in his eyes and a gloom in his marrow,
But the pity of God that was in you, it fell on a sparrow.

It's love that I want to be telling of, you in the pinny,
It's a very good girl that you are then, my Norah McKinney.

21] Cf. 2 Peter 2: 15-16: Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrightousness; But was rebuked for his iniquity; the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. *AV*

TO THE ELUSIVE SONG

‘1929’, 30a-30b (A0618-9) [A], fair draft.

Still art thou as a scent concealed
As when at first to the unloosed man,
Awed with the tremors of the field,
The rustling of this soul began.

Unto the Omens shall we climb,
Scent of the blossom, glimpse of wing:
Thou dost so faintly in all time
Melt us forever on the Spring.

More than all pity to the eye,
More than all fever in the brow,
Still on the roadway to the sky
Some servant of a God art thou.

Who is the strong and who the weak?
They know not where thy lips delay:
Only in folly will they seek
The song that seems not far away.

2 unloosed] unlused *MS*

5 Omens] Possibly a mishearing on Annie’s part: ‘Amens’ is a more likely reading in this context.

TO THE MEN OF THE ROADS

ML MS 3354/3, Item 3, 6/11, typescript [?].

Printed as a Christmas card, 'from C.R.B. STAFF & EMPLOYEES', 1940, NLA MS 1145/40.

FN - JSN 16 November 1941, ML MS 3354/1 (not time today 'to find the CRB card').

The printed card is the preferred text and the punctuation is reproduced.

Men of ripe colour reared in Liberty
Soldiers and kinsmen – road-men that we knew,
Over all ills of land or sky or sea
Snow-fall or red wind, goes our love to you.

Salt of your courage shines in everything,
Here in the flags – in all the bells that chime;
In the endowed bewilderment of Spring
While the slow moons walk to the Summertime.

TO THE PEACOCK'S LADY

'1939', 1a-5a (A0797-0801) [A], draft, with alterations [A & L], and renumbering of stanzas [JSN].

JSN - JD 13 January 1935, NLA MS 1145/66 (N 'has the 'Peacock' piece still'); 1 February 1938, NLA MS 1145/68 (in response to a question from JD says 'I think it would need too much revising for me'); 10 December 1941, NLA MS 1145/68 (says 'you have MS of 'To the peacock's lady'. You suggested alterations for this but I could never manage it'); 20 December 1941, NLA MS 1145/68 (says 'You have several pieces of my light verse: 'Maud Fane', 'To the peacock's lady' unfinished' [and others]).

N attempted to revise the poem by renumbering the stanzas, and dropped 4 stanzas in the process. However, he did not proceed with this. The original arrangement is therefore given as the preferred text.

Some grievance you have, I cannot doubt it,
 What is it you persistently admit?
 The thing called life? We may not think without it,
 And yet for all it leaves us little wit.
 Could I advise you make the most of it?
 What can a little hen like you be gaining
 By all these tiresome centuries of complaining?

Your Lord is beautiful – 'twas he was chosen
 By Emperors in magnificence of old;
 He was the sun, and you a being frozen
 With daily cares, a creature of the Cold.
 Princes came far his beauty to behold
 And you stood by alert and all suspicious,
 Till your one note was always the malicious.

He took for eyes the leaves of all things growing,
 There was no light he did not call his own.
 He had the sun, the rising and the going,

8-14] Stanza renumbered [2] 1

8] Your lord is beautiful[i]t was he [who] was chosen *MS*

10 sun] [son] sun *MS*

14 one note] one [on] note *MS*

15-21] Stanza renumbered [3] 2

18 within] [upon] «within» *MS*

Continued overleaf...

To the Peacock's Lady (cont.)

And every joy that dreamed within a stone.
 Could you keep silent? live without a moan?
 Sister, I hear you down centuries calling,
 Faintly as one who falls and fears the falling.

Wisely your Lord has not forgotten sorrow,
 In every dark'ning shade he pins it down;
 His flowery eyes see bravely each tomorrow
 Beyond the wilderness, beyond the town.
 Calm is his joy, he dare not be a clown:
 Sister, you are a most unfit attendant
 For this a proud Emperor in a world resplendent.

There is some indignation in your roaming,
 Something that never could be satisfied;
 Something from out the darkness or the gloaming,
 Something that every sister was denied;
 Something that leaves you sick of all pretending
 Nursing some grievance towards a bitter ending.

Your Lord is rich, he loves the sunniest weather;
 I doubt not that he gives to God a praise
 For all good things – he jumbles them together,
 Moonlight and orange leaves and golden rays.
 I often wonder much as one who strays
 Which way is God, what road should we be choosing?
 The guides are everywhere and all confusing.

20 I hear] I [see] hear *MS*

21 fears the falling] fears | the / not falling *MS*

22-28] stanza renumbered [5] [4] 3

25-26] stanza broken and misnumbered 5 between lines 25-26, the numbering cancelled

28] For [this the] «a» proud Emperor in [the] «a» world resplendent *MS*

29-34] stanza renumbered [5] 4

30 satisfied] [saturday] «satisfied» *MS*

35-41] stanza renumbered [6] 5

36 gives to God] gives [his mate a] «to God» *MS*

37 all good] all [that] good *MS*

Continued overleaf...

To the Peacock's Lady (cont.)

Oft have I heard that in the rainy season
 Fears have been thick upon you as a mist;
 Sister, you are too old to have a reason,
 Fear is the old man and he will persist.
 Slowly you move, your long neck takes a twist,
 Your eyes behold against the black cloud brightening
 All the uncounted dances of the lightning.

Your Lord is vanity, that Precious feeling
 That keeps us satisfied in all we do;
 If we be wounded it will give us healing,
 It fills us with the fruit that never grew
 (Our wretched lies of sermon sounded true).
 So thus your Lord is well equipped for seeing
 The universe – himself the Centre Being.

Your Lord has darkness in his eyes, the colour
 Of sorrow is not ever far away;
 He has a summer sunlight, but the duller
 Tones of the Autumn on his spirits pray.
 Almost at times he seems to stoop to say
 The last goodbye, the cooled-out heart defending
 Vainly against the blue-black of the ending.

Your Lord has fear, and we have all been fearing,
 Since first we made the cry, not of good will,
 But gasping at the miracles appearing
 Wept bitterly, and it is with us still –
 It is the food that ever feeds the will.
 Fear, it is fear, that calls us in like cattle,
 Bids us salute and fight in every battle.

42-48] stanza renumbered [7] 6

49-55] stanza numbered [8] [7]

49] Your lord is vanity [its serves] that [Princess] «Precious» feeling *MS*

55 Centre] [centre] Centre *MS*

56-62] stanza renumbered [9] [8] 7

56 in his eyes] [many] «in his» eyes *MS*

63-69] stanza renumbered [10] 8

Continued overleaf...

To the Peacock's Lady (cont.)

Sister, I fain would start apologising
 For the long speech, the aimless waste of time,
 But to our dreams – let us be both devising
 Something by which we may the staircase climb,
 You with your moan and I beneath a rhyme.
 I shall be Prophet in this courtyard shady
 And you, though desperate, outwardly a Lady.

Sister, I dare not ask you cease your sighing,
 It is a part of you, however long;
 Still you are rebel all the gods defying
 Offering no tiresome honey in your song.
 What is it that you see? what thing is wrong?
 Can you with your dull eyes that gleam suspicious
 See in the distance Lucifer malicious?

Sister, you have irreverence – 'tis Salvation,
 For the dull world it is the sorest need;
 That wayward fire, men call it indignation,
 Spurs the lone hero to the perilous deed,
 It finds the flaw in many a tiresome creed.
 Though you and I go westward unlamented
 Let us at least be stoutly discontented.

Sister, of Lords I fear I am disdainful,
 At all Authority I wish to poke;
 Experience has taught us it is painful;

70-76] stanza numbered [11] [9]

77-83] stanza renumbered [12] 9

79 gods] [Gods] gods *MS*

80 Offering] [Lacking] «Offering» *MS*

83 Lucifer malicious] Lucifer [delicious] malicious *MS*. Cf. Isaiah 14: 12: How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! *AV*

84-90] stanza renumbered [13] 10

89] [For] «Though» you and I [stak] «go» westward unlamented *MS*

90 us at least] us «at» least *MS*

91-97] stanza renumbered [14] 11

91] Sister of Lords [«I [fear]» «I am»] you are disdainful *MS*

92 Authority] [authority] Authority *MS*

Continued overleaf...

To the Peacock's Lady (cont.)

Rulers are seldom strong courageous folk
 Mostly their Calm is but a circus joke.
 When comes defeat there is no time for funning,
 Shrewdly they run, and keenly keep on running.

Do I grow tiresome? Ah, most patient sister,
 Plainly you are no ordinary bird;
 Are you in fact a necessary blister
 Lest vanity should make itself absurd?
 You have at least one ancient rhymer stirred:
 I shall be Prophet in this courtyard shady,
 You, the most desperate thing, but still a Lady.

Sister, you are persistent – this defying
 Of vanity and greed may make us pure:
 Great is your Lord with his own virtue sighing,
 How like an Emperor, serene, cocksure;
 The world is well, it needs not any cure.
 Your neck is craned, your rage you are consuming,
 The hillside world of oranges is blooming.

98-104] stanza numbered [15] [12]

98 Do I grow] Do I [go] «grow» *MS*

100 a necessary] unnecessary *MS*, a mishearing

103 Prophet] [prophet] Prophet *MS*

104 but still] but [a] still *MS*

105-111] stanza misnumbered 17 [=16], renumbered 12

107 Lord with] lord [an] with *MS*

111] The oranges and all the world «hillside the world of oranges» is blooming *MS*

TO THE THREE RECORDING ANGELS ON SATURDAY MORNING

‘1929’, 36a-39b (A0625-9) [A], draft, 18 stanzas, with cancelled stanzas, rewritten stanzas, and renumbered stanzas, entitled ‘Prayer suitable for Saturday morning’, with stanzas under short titles ‘Prayers suitable for Saturday’, and ‘Prayers’; ‘1929’, 40a-41a (A0629-0630) [A], fair draft, 8 stanzas, entitled ‘To the angel of the records on Saturday morning’; ‘1929’, 41b-42b (A0631-2) [A], fair draft, 8 stanzas, under heading ‘Last edition’, entitled ‘To the three recording angels on Saturday morning’. LaT MS 9419/3674, typescript, [on paper from the Country Roads Board, *HI*], signed ‘Shaw Neilson’, Casino 22/11/41’.

The LaT MS may have been typed by someone at the Country Roads Board. It was one of several pieces of light verse that N took with him to Brisbane (or had sent to him there), and it was given to Victor Kennedy as an autographed memento.

The preferred text is the second of the two fair drafts, ‘1929’, 41b-42b (C).
 ‘1929’, 36a-39b = A; ‘1929’, 40a-41a = B; ‘1929’, 41b-42b = C; LaT MS 9419/3674 = D
 The order of stanzas A is given in the notes.

Angels, your eyelids lift us unto Heaven;
 May I, still trembling, fall to Earth and speak?
 Oh, for that file, three four six stroke eleven:
 Mud in a culvert – urgent – Boggy Creek.

1-4] ≠ A cancelled stanza 3 (36b); ≠ A ‘Odd verses’ cancelled stanza numbered 7 (at 37b);
 ≠ A ‘Odd verses’, stanza numbered 1 (at 38b); ≠ B stanza 1; = D stanza 1
 1] Soft are thy eyelids as the dews of Heaven A (36b) •
 Angel thy eyelids call up thoughts of Heaven A (37b) •
 Angel thy eyelids give sweet thoughts of Heaven A (38b) •
 Angel whose eyes transport us to Heaven B
 2] And thy great eyes – each separate eye, a star A (36b) •
 And thy great eyes – each «separate» eye a [separate] star A (37b) •
 May thy unworthy servant dare to speak A (38b)
 3] Grant me that file, three four six-stroke eleven A (36b) •
 [Give me that file three four six] | That Contract file three four six stroke eleven A (37b)
 4] Dealing with sales of some superlous tar [sic] A (36b) •
 Contractors missing who knows where they are A (37b) •
 Mud in a culvert «Urgent» out at Boggy Creek [JSN] A (38b)
 4 – urgent –] – urgent – C

Continued overleaf...

To the Three Recording Angels on Saturday Morning (cont.)

Always your footsteps make an enchanted strip
Of Paradise. Angels, could I obtain
Tourists indignant – goats at rubbish tip,
Also reporting yabbies in a drain?

Beauty triumphant thaws the Official frost,
On the gray file this baffling truth appears:
Council unconscious that the wheel was lost
From an old barrow somewhere down the years.

Gladness is with you and each golden laugh
Turns the ungracious desert into bloom;

- 5-8] ≠ *A* unnumbered stanza (at 39b), under heading ‘Prayers’; ≠ *B* stanza 2; = *D* stanza 2
5] Ever beneath thy footsteps lies a strip *A* •
Always thy footsteps make a magic strip *B* •
Always your[s] footsteps make «an» the enchanted strip *C*
6] Of Paradise unsoiled by dust or pain *A* •
Of Paradise. Angel could I obtain *B* •
Of Paradise. Angels could I obtain *C*
7] File uphill drainage road to rubbish tip *A*
7 indignant –] indignant – *C*
8] Water refuses – no one can explain *A* •
Also submitting in a drain *B*
8 reporting,] reporting, *C*
9-12] ≠ *A* stanza 3 (at 38b & 39a); ≠ *B* stanza 3; ≠ *D* stanza 3
9] But for thy smile this board would be a frost *A* (38b-39a; *A* (39a); *B*
10] [Charm this ungracious desert into bloom] | Cheer [us] and enchant us in our doubts
and fears *A* (38b-39a)
10] Oh for that file it fails it disappears *A* (39a) •
Angel another fed with hopes and fears *B*
11 the wheel] a wheel *D*
11] Now for that file re the excessive cost *A* (38b-39a) •
Foreman advising how the wheel was lost *A* (39a)
13-16] ≠ *A* cancelled stanza 2 (at 36a); ≠ *A* stanza numbered 4 (at 39a); ≠ *B* stanza 4; = *D* stanza 4
12 From] Of *A* (38b-39a) • [Of] From *B*
13] Sweet one for thee at any pain I’d laugh *A* (36a) •
Give to us Goddess of thy golden laugh *A* (39a) •
Music is with thee and thy golden laugh *B*
14] Sleep in the strong room – fight with Death and Gloom *A* (36a) •
Turn this ungracious dessert into bloom [sic] *A* (39a)

Continued overleaf...

To the Three Recording Angels on Saturday Morning (cont.)

File resubmitting Angels on the Staff
Whispering too early in the dining room.

Yours is the beauty ancient dreamers saw,
Angels, a deviation – shrill – severe;
Ruin of hen-house – lady threatens law –
Quick – she is temperamental – she is here.

Angels, an old ‘regretting’, deep, intense:
Once in the dim a Councillor deplored
That his own bull had smashed the Board’s own fence
Causing gross inconvenience to the Board.

- 15] Is there a file re Ladies on the Staff *A* (36a), *A* (39a) •
This – re submitting Angels on the Staff *B*
16] Found at twelve fifty in the dining room *A* (36a), *A* (39a)
17-20] ≠ *A* ‘Odd verses’ (at 37b), stanza numbered 6; ≠ *B* stanza 5; = *D* stanza 5
17] Face sweet as thine no lover ever saw *A*
17] Yours] Thine *B*
18] Grant me that file that letter sharp severe *A* •
Angel this [Devation] ‹Deviation› shrill severe *B*
18 a deviation] ‹a› devetation *C*, with annotation, ‘deviation’ [JD]
18 – shrill –] – shrill – *C*
19 – lady –] lad[ies] ‹y› *C*
20 – she is –] – she ‹is› – *C*
20] Quick with the file the indignant Dame is here *A*
21-24] ≠ *A* stanza 6, renumbered 4; ≠ *B* stanza 6; ≠ *D* stanza 6
21 ‘regretting’] “regretting” *C*
21] Angel I ask of thy benevolence *A* •
Angel an old time tragical intense *B*
22] One file in which a Counciller deplored *A* •
Dim in his tears a councillor deplored *B*
23 the Board’s own fence] a Board own fence *B* • [the] ‹a› Board ‹s› own fence *C* [JD] • a Board’s own fence *D*

Continued overleaf...

To the Three Recording Angels on Saturday Morning (cont.)

Angels, Pelaco road Sign – urgently!
 Shameful, outrageous – Ladies League is hurt!
 Board has declined Responsibility,
 Always and henceforth, any Man or Shirt.

Angels, an anxious morning nears an end,
 Work, the old monster, tottering disappears.
 Where is the Book? who cries? it is our friend
 Evans of the Impetuous Engineers.

25-28] ≠ *A* cancelled stanza 4, renumbered 3 (at 36b); ≠ *A* ‘Odd verses’ (at 38b), stanza numbered 2; ≠ *B* stanza 7; = *D* stanza 7

25–28] The reference is to road signs or hoardings advertising business shirts for men, made by Pelaco, a Melbourne firm, established as Pelaco Limited in 1917.

25] Grant me a file [re road signs fierce and tense] «mine tink it» let it be *A* (36b) •

Angel that file Pelacca let me see *A* (38b) •

Angel – Pelecco Road Sign – urgently *B*

25 Pelaco Road Sign –] Pelac[c]o Road Sign – *C*

26] At [at] «this» rude sign some ladies league is hurt *A* (36b) •

Road outrageous ladies league is hurt *A* (38b) •

Shameful outrageous. Ladies League is hurt *C*

27] The Board declines responsibility *A* (36b)

28] Backward or hence forth any man or shirt *A* (36b) •

Backward and henceforth any man or shirt *A* (38b)

29-32] ≠ *A* ‘last verse’; ≠ *B* stanza 8; = *D* stanza 8

29] Angel the unkind morning nears an end *A* •

Angel the anxious morning nears an end *B*

30 Work –] Work – *C*

31] Who is the Youth cries Book it is our friend *A*

Continued overleaf...

To the Three Recording Angels on Saturday Morning (cont.)

Discarded stanzas

A cancelled stanza 1 (at 36a):

Queen of the records with the angelic airs
 Slay not thy servant if he dares to speak
 Grant him that file submitting sundry prayers
 For a box culvert out [of] «at» Boggy Creek

A cancelled stanza 5 (at 36b):

Sweet is thy voice a Spring-like harmony
 Soaring away beyond all Deeds and Acts
 There is a dozen files I crave of thee
 Dealing with Sales that pay or don't pay Tax

A cancelled stanza 7, renumbered 5 (at 37a):

Goddess thy lips are full of Heavenly airs
 Songs that are fitted for the Angels' ears
 Now for that file concerning dull repairs
 To an old barrow somewhere down the years

A 'First verse', cancelled stanza (at 38a):

Beauty of form thou hast and bloom of lip
 Brow fair as thine no poet ever sang
 Is there a file re road to rubbish tip
 Meeting of Protest held in Woomelang

A stanza numbered 1, under short title 'Prayers' (at 39b):

Angel with eyes benevolent serene
 No[ne] can paint thee who could paint the Spring
 In the full days when miracle[s] are seen
 And the enchanted birds come out to sing

WHEN DOES A BURGLAR HAPPEN TO SHAVE?

There are two discrete versions of this poem: the first written c. 1913 and the second, derived from this, c. 1934, when Neilson was trying to interest Devaney in publishing some of his light verse.

WHEN DOES A BURGLAR HAPPEN TO SHAVE [2]

ML MS 3354/2, Item 7 [A], fair draft [c. 1934]. This is a later version of a poem written c. 1913, q.v.

He has taking ways when he comes to Court,
 He takes the Bible, he takes the oath;
 On each occasion he seems to sport
 A dull, ridiculous, half-inch growth.
 A stern strong man with a resolute mind,
 Who would defy him he should be brave;
 But no sane answer to this I find –
 When does a burglar happen to shave?

A sensitive fellow, he keeps aloof;
 He seeks no counsel, he needs no aid.
 Does he seek a cellar or sit on a roof
 While he silently uses his safety blade?
 Scientists tell us of flukes and flaws
 Since ever we came from the dismal cave;
 But I want the date of a certain cause –
 When does a burglar happen to shave?

Our lives are threatened by screaming cars,
 They drive the innocent out of mirth,
 They steal the silence of moon and stars,
 They hoot for evil to fill the earth.
 Earthquakes happen in old Japan,
 Emperors cackle and communists rave:
 But I ask you steadily, man to man –
 When does a burglar happen to shave?

8 a burglar] [the] «a» burglar *MS*

13 flukes] flutes *MS*

Continued overleaf...

When Does a Burglar Happen to Shave [2] (cont.)

Newsboys struggle and screech to sell
 Airman's babble and showman's sham;
 The Melbourne citizen fears no hell,
 He has always suffered the cable tram!
 The stirred-up asses come out to view
 The tired-out asses of Donkey-Dave:
 But answer, answer me, tell me true –
 When does a burglar happen to shave?

Strange are the tales that they worry us with:
 Jonah's journey and Satan's fall –
 Horatio's bridge, it is mostly myth –
 Did Shakespeare ever write plays at all?
 Life is cruel and death is sharp,
 If ever I reach the golden pave
 I will word some angel gripping a harp –
 When does a burglar happen to shave?

30 Donkey-Dave] The allusion is obscure.

32 a burglar] [the] «a» burglar *MS*

33 worry] worries *MS*

35 Horatio's] Properly, Horatius' or Horatius's: the mispronunciation and misspelling are retained to preserve the rhythm

39 I will word] I «will» word *MS*

YOU CANNOT GO DOWN TO THE SPRING

‘1929’, 47b (A0638) [A], fair draft.

The MS shows uncertainty about line length and line endings are shown in the notes.

The song will deceive you, the scent will incite you to sing,
You clutch, but you cannot discover – you cannot go down to the Spring.

The day will be painted with Summer, the heat and the gold
Will give you no key to the blossom – the music is old.

It is at the edge of a promise, a far-away thing;
The green is the nest of all riddles – you cannot go down to the Spring.

The truth is too close to the sorrow, the song you would sing,
It cannot go into the fever – you cannot go down to the Spring.

1 incite] insight *MS*
It cannot] [You] It *MS*

Line endings

Stanza 1 (lines 1-2 of reading text): 1 sing || 2 discover || 3 Spring ||

Stanza 2 (lines 3-4 of reading text): 1 Summer || 2 gold || 3 old ||

Stanza 3 (lines 5-6 of reading text): 1 thing || 2 riddles || 3 Spring ||

Stanza 4 (lines 7-8 of reading text): 1 sing || 2 fever || 3 Spring ||

YOU WITH A FROWN

‘1929’, 34b-35a (A0624) [A], fair draft.

Far back it was since I saw you – you were concealed:
Blue-black you were then and old, like a sorrow unhealed,
In the whispering patch of the barley at the back of the field.

Barley can whisper – but not with the same sorrow now:
We would be thanking God then for the rain for the plough,
We would be thanking God then for the grass for a cow.

Mercy was nowhere beside you – but there have come down
Fears that hung all about you and shook in your gown.
There did I see you, to hate you, first – you with the frown.

God is so good – but is it for us that strawberries grow?
The little birds surely have hunger, and what do we owe
To you? Are you God of the silence, where all people go?

You may be older than God – though he never comes down
They say that he ties up the sweethearts to fill up a town.
Get away you on the sky-line there – you with a frown.

6 a cow] [the] «a» cow *MS*

12 To you? Are you] To you. Are you *MS*

15 sky-line there, you] sky-line, «there» you *MS*

John Shaw Neilson: The Collected Verse

VERSES THAT CANNOT BE ASSIGNED A DATE

Edited by Margaret Roberts

Australian Scholarly Editions Centre,
UNSW@ADFA
Canberra
2003

¶ **'Be diligent young men and go'**

McKimm MS, 'Remembering Shaw Neilson', Introduction by Jack [& Alan] McKimm.

One of an unknown number of limericks written about local personalities, at the request of his brother-in-law, 'for the guests to sing at the celebration smoke night' when the Chillingollah football team won the premiership. Paterson [or Peterson?] and Watson & Co. Pty Ltd was a local store.

Be diligent young men and go
To bed early and you may grow
To be an Inspector or perhaps a Director
Of Paterson, Watson and Co.

GOING ALONE

ML MS A3038/2, 9b-10a (B0015) [A], fair draft, two part-leaves, with a note [FN] on one: ‘This poem written by Shaw Neilson about the same time; somewhat the same subject as [...]: a striking <fragment> I think. Apparently ‘Going alone’ refers to a girl going on the journey of Death?’

Will there be time for a rest in the blackness to sit on a stone?
How will you go dear, and who will you go with? I fear for you going alone.

You I see always in summery raiment, but now will you stray
In a long mist – and here you had lovers and songs all the way.

Will there be no one to lift up your little feet over each desolate stone?
How will you go dear, and who will you go with? I fear for you going alone.

1 Will] With *MS*

5] [T Will there be no one to hold you] *MS* a false start

6 How will you] How w[ould]«ill» you *MS*

THE FEVER OF THE HAY

ML MS 3354/3, Item 1, 1/1a & 1/1b [JSN], draft.

'Twas on a night the moon was on the green
 These walkers now had ventured overbold:
 The dust upon the dying wheat did rise
 Into their ears, upon their pretty eyes,
 And straightway all their blood was hot and cold.

A thousand flowers did tingle with the gold
 Of that great rust the mad bees carry high:
 The honey-coloured gooseberries stared afraid
 As if with eyes and a sweet mourning made
 To all the flowers that ever sought the sky.

A thousand hopes upon the flowery dust
 Burned on them and they heard the dying grain:
 The moon did fill them, but beside them crept
 Strange friends upon the grass who sighed and kept
 Some old unwanted fellowship with pain.

2 walkers] [lovers] «walkers» *MS*

5 was hot and cold] was «hot» and cold *MS*

7 carry high] carry [home] [...] high *MS*. The *MS* is difficult to read here: however, the rhythm suggests that the intention was to cancel the indecipherable word.

14 friends] friend[s] *MS*

14 sighed and kept] sighed and [wept] kept *MS*

TO A LITTLE GIRL LOOKING SOUTH

ML MS 3354/3, Item 1, 5/9a & 6/11a [JSN], fair draft, 7 × 2-line stanzas.

You look to the South, and eastward, and the blue boats to your eye
Sail to the fairies' Heaven where no one says goodbye.

The light is over your shoulder and the music of your hair
Would make me more than merry if my heart could only dare.

But the noise is all so jealous and my heart falls faint again,
And I may not look to Heaven for the call of the cackling men.

They smell of the Earth beside me, they laugh and whine and wail,
They worship froth and the sinews, and the mudpath and the ale.

I cannot hear you singing, and the blue boats come and go:
If you dreamed in a thousand summers, your dream I could not know.

I could not be your playmate – the blue boats change today –
And your hair is always music and the dull heart makes me stay.

I lived in a heavy summer – I would go with the boats again –
But your eyes were taken from me by the call of the cackling men.

Title] [The cackling of men] «To a little girl looking south» *MS*
1 eastward] [eastern] eastward *MS*
2 Sail to the] Sail «to» the *MS*
6 call of the cackling men] call [of] the Cackling men *MS*
8 froth] «froth» *MS*
10 dreamed in] dreamed «in» *MS*

TO A SEA CURLEW

Jindyworobak Anthology 1942, p. 65.

Unwanted, uninvited, supercilious –
Such impudence I have not heard before.
Your constant invitation to be bilious
 Insults me to the core.

Luckily your cowardice is not contagious,
I have heard such from immigrants before.
Our own birds most cheerfully courageous
 Your blitherings ignore.

Here you take all we have – the most nutritious,
And as you gormandise it seems unfair –
Sir, you insult me – you would make me vicious
 With your prolonged despair.

All that we eat we gain by toil laborious,
All that we have you take – you eat the best.
You are I think remarkably inglorious,
 Distressingly distressed.

Travellers I love, but O, the supercilious!
Here in good jobs you overpaid we find.
Always you bring that something worse than bilious –
 'Tis the imported mind.

TO THE BEAUTIFUL CHILD

ML MS 3354/3, Item 1, 7/13a & 7/13b [JSN], draft.

Near me she sits in the evening – how can I tell
All other things – in all beauty she doth excel.

Sorrow hath soiled her not – dull, dumb am I,
My heart would follow and she wanders out on the sky.

Southward and eastward long boats of blue
Tremble in lavenders, fall away out of the view.

My heart is beating up ballads, songs for the sky,
But my lips dare not speak for the beautiful child living nearby.

I have heard God as a Harper in the quiet air
Playing – or was it the fall of her hair?

I would be sober, I would go into the cold,
But the child has compelled me – I hunger, I wake in the gold.

The Gold is not Summer, nor yet the last beat of the Spring:
The child is beside me – her beauty – I tremble – I sing.

1 how] How *MS*

6 out of the view] out of [our] «the» view *MS*

8] But my lips dare not speak for the [beauty] beautiful [it is] // [child] living nearby *MS*

9 heard God] [seen] «heard» God *MS*

10] Playing [to smite me. It was seemed in] «Or was it» the fall of her hair *MS*

12 compelled me] compelled [me] *MS*

13 nor yet] no[r] yet *MS*

14 beside me her beauty] beside «me» Her beauty *MS*

¶ **‘Your pious sleek self-constituted saint’**

ML MS A23O5/9, p.228 (now reclassified to ML MSS 4937), [A], fair draft.

Your pious, sleek self-constituted saint
 Within the sacred sanctuary stands,
 And looking sick, as if about to faint,
 Turns up his eyes and then turns up his hands;
 And then proceeds familiarly to paint
 A being whom he little understands,
 And labours hard in the attempt to prove
 A God of hate and terror, not of love.

* * *

Out with such doctrines! I would rather die
 A hopeless, unbelieving infidel
 Than charge the Ruler of the earth and sky
 With crimes that would degrade the ‘king of hell’.
 What punishment is there for those who try
 To libel their creator as they tell
 Such hideous tales with melancholy dole
 And dare to juggle with the human soul?

9 Out with] Out on *MS*

John Shaw Neilson: The Collected Verse

VERSES OF DOUBTFUL ATTRIBUTION

Edited by Margaret Roberts

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IF ONE OF THESE WERE MINE

The Bookfellow 7 March 1907, under the name Horace Halloran.

JSN - JD 10 August 1935, NLA MS 1145/68 ('That verse you quote 'If one of these were mine' does not belong to me').

Although N said the piece was not his, his subsequent remarks seem to imply that perhaps it was. Some lines are very like his work and the piece is similar in tone to some of his other light verse. It is possible that Neilson and his father collaborated on this.

Correspondence is given after the text.

The book-shop windows call me near
 To linger and to think,
 Amid the pleasant atmosphere
 Of books and printers' ink.
 The lordly quartos seem to look
 With open scorn at me:
 The covers of the 'latest book'
 Set errant fancy free,
 And then the strange heart-hunger grips,
 I cannot here define:
 The unvoiced thought is at my lips –
 If one of these were mine.

If one of these were mine to sway
 The people's fickle mood,
 If I were but for one short day
 Reviewed of all reviewed,
 The lukewarm friend would pat my back
 With thought of future gains –
 At last old chap you're on the track,
 I knew you had the brains.
 The haughty snob my hand would shake
 And ask me out to dine –
 The lion's paw they both would take
 If one of these were mine.

Continued overleaf...

If One of These Were Mine (cont.)

Twin stars of grey that light my life
 Would gaze at my vignette:
 The 'Dedication. To my Wife',
 Her happy tears would wet.
 How gaily she would walk beside
 Her Author down the street,
 And point me out with proper pride
 To friends we chanced to meet:
 And when editions gaily ran
 To 'thousands ninety-nine' –
 What future greatness she'd plan
 If one of these were mine.

And thus my day-dreams often trend
 Where shining volumes lie:
 The fussy snob and lukewarm friend
 Unnoticed pass me by:
 And though the classics seem to flout
 And look their scorn at me,
 The covers on the 'latest out'
 Set errant fancy free.
 'Tis then the strange heart-hunger grips,
 I cannot here define –
 'Tis then the thought leaps to my lips –
 If one of these were mine.

JSN - JD 10 August 1935:

That verse you quote 'If one of these were mine', does not belong to me. Did you see it in manuscript or was it printed in an old Bookfellow. It might easily have appeared in the 'Bookfellow' without me seeing it. Sometimes I didn't bother looking through the papers when my eyes were sore. The verse seems to be more like my father's than my own. In 1918-1919 I did not see him one time for about 18 months. I think he would have been sure to tell me if he ever got any verse in 'The Bookfellow'. I shall ask my stepmother if she recollects it.

STILL LIFE ON THE FARM

‘The fable and fantasy dialogues’, by Frank Neilson, p. 94, attributed to ‘Alexander Kirkwood’, Mckimm MS. The MS punctuation is retained.

A number of John Shaw Neilson’s pieces of light verse are attributed to ‘Alexander Kirkwood’ in Frank’s MS and this is more like John Shaw Neilson’s verse than Frank Neilson’s.

The fowls – still – roosting in the Pine
The sleepy farmhand rising early
Away all day – back – tea at nine
The fowls still roosting in the Pine
He thought them fixed there like a sign
Black Orpingtons and Leghorns pearly

* * *

The fowls still roosting in the Pine
The sleepy farmhand rising early.

THE LARRIKIN'S LAMENT

'The fable and fantasy dialogues', by Frank Neilson, p. 43, attributed to 'Alexander Kirkwood', '[written] in dialect form', McKimm MS.

This may have been written by John Shaw Neilson or possibly by John Shaw Neilson and Frank Neilson jointly.

I dreamt I wuz kissin' Chrissy,
 Chrissy with eyes of blue,
 An' the dream wuz like a picture
 An' the picture grew an' grew;
 An' Chrissy an' I wuz young,
 An' love an' hope wuz new.

I often uster meet her of an evenin' on the sly,
 An' one Sundee night I kissed her, just to see if she was shy,
 With her white chin in me left hand, but the laugh was in her eye,
 Though she said she'd nearly kill me, she didn't even try.

Chrissy wuz a choir girl an' a pretty voice had she,
 But the parson in the chapel had an orful set on me;
 He uster lecture Chrissy for to choose her company
 An' every blessed thing he told her Chrissy uster tell to me.

On the old Bay road
 In the yellor moonlit evenins
 'Twas a pleasan' place to linger,
 With the rain spilt on the plum trees,
 With the Springtime fast a-dyin'
 Just before the hay wuz mowed.

Old folks is allus fidgets an' they're allus seein' harm,
 Smellin' danger where there's none, they're apt to take alarm.
 One night as we wuz walkin' very lovin' arm in arm
 Chrissy's father overtook us at the foot of Brennan's farm.

He growled a bit at Chrissy, then he turned on me an' swore
 He'd half a mind to give me what I'd never had before.
 An' I spoke bold and cheeky, but me heart wuz sorto' sore –
 Would I ever walk with Chrissy, pretty Chrissy any more?

Continued overleaf...

The Larrikin's Lament (cont.)

On the old Bay road
In the yeller moonlit evenins
'Twas a pleasan' place to linger,
With the rain spilt on the plum trees,
An' the Springtime fast a-dyin'
Just before the hay wuz mowed.

* * *

I dreamt I wuz kissin' Chrissy
With her china-doll eyes blue,
An' the dream wuz like a picture
An' the picture grew an' grew.
An' Chrissy an' I wuz young
An' Love and Hope wuz new.

THE MAN ON THE BARGE

ML MS 4937/10, Item 1, typescript [AGS], with comment ‘This was sent to Bulletin but came back’.
This does not sound like John Shaw Neilson’s work.

His forehead was wrinkled and rugged,
His beard was a sober iron-grey;
His nose it was roman, a rough one,
His eyes had a strange kind of way.
He never got drunk on the river,
A mountain of wool was his charge;
A captain was he in his own way,
That old pal of mine on the barge.

So slowly he smoked when at rest,
So wisely he looked at the sky.
He growled when the weather was wet
And he cursed when the weather was dry.
Rheumatics had riled him, all through him
They seemed to be running at large;
But to me, well he couldn’t be kinder,
That old pal of mine on the barge.

He made up the age of the world,
He argued and reasoned it out,
And once on a very dry summer
He showed me the causes of drought.
’Twas the killing of blacks in old times,
And then came the ringing of trees,
And hunting the emus and kangaroos back –
No sins were as solemn as these
In the eyes of that hero of mine.
His heart was exceedingly large,
And kind as the heart of a woman is kind
Was his, my old pal on the barge.

He told me of wrecks, river wrecks,
And seventy year of the flood –
The love of the river was in him
And so it ran into my blood.
His speech was of barges and wool,
Of men who got drunk and were drowned,
How many the river sucked under
And some of them never were found.
His voice would grow solemn and husky
And me he would solemnly charge:
Delightful old fresh-water sailor,
Dear old pal of mine on the barge.

Continued overleaf...

The Man on the Barge (cont.)

He murmured about the wide sea
And the ways of the mighty big ships,
Larboard and starboard and fore'ad and shore'ad,
And many oaths came to his lips.
Look nipper, you're bound to be going,
You soon will be running at large –
You'll want all the pluck of a devil,
Said he, my old pal on the barge.

How often I think of him here,
Out here in the heart of the land,
Where life is so grey altogether,
All granite, grey granite and sand.
When I read that the river is up
Or I hear that the river is down,
I think of the girls and the boys,
I dream of the dear little town,
And the boat going out in the night –
The Captain and all in his charge,
The mountain of wool and behind them
That old pal of mine on the barge.

Say, young fellow, where were you born?
How often that comes to my ears.
And shadows come up like a flash
And laughter so very like tears.
And I say in my steadiest voice,
Eyes up and chin up full of pride,
On a little town down on the river,
And that's where the river is wide.

TOP O'THE TIDE

The Clarion 15 June 1908, p. 24, signed 'Horace C. Halloran. Sydney.'

The name is one that N used, although he was not in Sydney in the early 1900s and the verse does not sound like his work.

Rugged old face with its elf-locks of grey,
Tanned with the sun and the breath of the spray;
Honest old eyes that look kindly at me,
Blue with the fathomless blue of the sea.
Down where the headlands the breakers divide
Lives the old fisherman 'Top o'the tide'.

Sinewy arms with their gnarled knotted hands
Moving so deftly between the brown strands,
Hands that are 'stained' so the narrow folk say,
'Top o'the tide' has been wild in his day.
Courage and penitence, who shall deride?
Give me the hand of old 'Top o'the tide'.

Often I lie at his feet on the grass,
Watching his face with its shadows that pass,
Weaving life-dramas in which he took part,
Musing on secrets deep down in his heart.
What youthful folly, what passion or pride
Claimed as an exile old 'Top o'the tide'?

We have been friends for a season or more,
Rovers together, by sea and by shore,
Sharing some hardships, a danger or two,
Moments in which the veneer is rubbed through.
Comrade and gentleman, brother and guide,
Always I've found in old 'Top o'the tide'.

Many an hour I list to his tales,
Stories of shipwrecks in terrible gales,
Eerie night voices and cries of unrest,
Fair drowned women with babes at their breast;
White upturned faces with eyes staring wide
Tenderly closed by old 'Top o'the tide'.

Continued overleaf...

Top O' the Tide (cont.)

Gospels that Solitude speaks to the hills,
Secrets that Ocean may tell if she wills,
Sermons the surf thunders over the bars,
Knowledge that comes in long nights 'neath the stars –
These have built up a philosophy wide
Learned not in cities by 'Top o'the tide'.

In his old boat with her ragged tan sails
Still he is weathering Life and its gales,
Still in unorthodox faith does he live,
Till the great Pilot his signal shall give –
To some fair haven then safe may he glide
Crossing the bar at the top o'the tide.

John Shaw Neilson: The Collected Verse

FRAGMENTS

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¶ ‘1912’, 2b (A0249) [JSN].

A girdle of pure gems was looped around

ML MS 3354/2, Item 6, 10a [JSN], dated ‘May 7/09’.

A SONG FOR NOVEMBER

Give me I pray that yellow rose
The reddening splendours of the sun
And the glamour of girls’ clothes

¶ ML MS A308/1, 16b (B0115) [JSN], incomplete.

A WIDOWER

Mischievers laces ribbon girl[s] aglow
Are as a [murderous] rabble trooping [its] through a door
Quietly she whispers it was long ago
Was it not wonderful the thing[s] she wore

Along the street | Each sallow chattering child [along the street]
The vile man’s daughter and the slatter[n’s] son
Is a a glad angel (Even now he smiled)

¶ ‘1907’, 12a (A0101) [JSN].

A YOUNG LADY ‹WHALE› WRITES TO A YOUNG LADY FRIEND

How are you dear the news I have
Is barely worth the telling

¶ ‘1930’, 16a (A0660) [JSN].

HONEY IN TREES

I want not the old ungoverned clamour of Seas
«But» Bird[s] moving quietly skies covered in Folly
Lakes forgiving to children || Honey in trees

¶ ‘1915’C, 7b (A0319) [JSN]

I AM IN DEBT

That smile would make a winter day
Wear all the joy of Spring

¶ ‘1934’, 13b (A0703) [L].

IN PRAISE OF THE JIG

You are no dance of a coward
You live in the blood of the free

¶ NLA MS 1145/60 [JSN], incomplete, 1 stanza numbered 3.

LEAVING THE NEST

The old bird says I | have been down on the | bitter road she goes
Every trap that is set | for her my bleeding | being know[s]
[She] She will ‹slave› and | suckle love and hate | [for and hate] hate for a meal
(Cut out my heart Oh God | it is little more I can feel [])
What is this I hear | of Gods will – Gods will | and the sigh it is best
It is the old bird | cries for the young bird | leaving the nest

¶ ML MS A3038/2, 28 (B0038) [JSN], a part-leaf.

Lightly he talks of [leg] Pork and Lard
His ‹dignity› it doth not ‹please›
Of the Corned round and boiling rice

And on a Sunday ‹in› his best
And by no Cry of Blood distressed
‹Strong› of face with

3 Corned round] ‘Round’ is a cut of beef, in this case, corned (or salted).

¶ ‘1927’A, 22 (A0554) [A], unfinished, 1 stanza with numbering for a second.

LITTLE GIRL IN THE RAIN

Little of sorrow was there in the world when she died
 He[ll] being so cruel and filled with his own little pride
 But the birds being near into [unto] God will sing without pain
 He once was kind to a little girl down in the rain

¶ ML MS A3038/1, 26b (B0133) [JSN].

..... love for anything

¶ ‘1930’, 26b (A0671) [JSN].

LOVE NOT THE LAND

The night as a nurse would be tender with «as» the mercy of wine
 Would [...] fill and the moon light «shine» would quieten [all discord] «with beauty»
 All/ [and peace] «sorrow» would be thine

¶ ‘1908’, 18a (A0171) [JSN].

McADAM’S HUT

McAdam has built him a hut its manner is crude

¶ ‘1915’E, 12a (A0298) [JSN], incomplete, a part-line and a stanza numbered 2 under title at head of page.

MINE EYES HAVE SEEN

..... and maketh bold

The lad the lass in blue flowers by the way
 Dream that no lovers kiss as oft as they
 The sick man when the last white hour is done
 Stares to the blackness for the smile of Day

¶ ‘1906’, 36b (A0077) [JSN].

MUSHROOMS IN MAY

Bright in memory lies a little town
And round about it honeyed forests grew
And summer sun hung on it lovingly
And almost did we tire of Heaven’s blue

¶ ML MS ‘1906’, 32b (A0071-2) [?]. Title [JSN].

MY LOVE HATH ALL

All the waves of the sea [m]
‹[G]lad‹ [came] beating through the night
‹and‹ told her love to me

¶ ‘1930’, 27b (A0672) [JSN], unfinished.

MYSELF AND THE TREES

Here I am no one near by me
To injure or please
Now shall I ask
Some old riddle of
Myself and the trees

¶ ‘1927’B, 4b (A0486) [JSN]

[The m] Nimbly the ‹sunbeam›
The birds all dream of ‹Heaven›

¶ ‘1915’C, 2a (A0313) [JSN].

OUT OF THE HEART

Out of the heart will come Pity for quiet ‹things›
Tenderness for [.....] little ones

¶ ‘1930’, 28a (A0672) [JSN].

PLAY NOT THE LOVER

Here I protest I who know nothing of anything
To you all men dance ‹hard› and sing
But play not the lover or a mandaril dumb

¶ ‘1915’B, 10a (A3036) [JSN], unfinished.

PLAY TO THE HOLLOW MAN PLAY

Hunger is out on your fingers in every bone
Every thirst has your old brown body known

¶ ‘1930’, 13a (A0657) [FN].

PRAYER TO THE LEAVES

Have you not taken all the music out of the blue
Do you not every day all the follies renew
As the noon goes down ‹to› the even so do I to you

¶ ‘1929’, 48b (A0639)

RETIRED

Unto the mother thus he spoke
One evening in the darkning time

¶ ‘1929’, 16b (A0605) [A], unfinished.

THE CHILD OF THE FOREST

In all that he ventures each phase of his dull vanity
 He longs for the calm and leaf and the voice of the bird
 He is the Child of the Forest in love with the tree

With stone he has made him a city and still at his heart
 He has the old ache for a mercy the tongue cannot tell

¶ ‘1925’, 18a-18b (A0407-8) [JSN], unfinished.

THE CRONY

Old Kenny McNab was near the end and proud and bare and bony
 But the only ghost that was given to him was that of an early crony

[He robbed by cruel words]
 Many he robbed the weak the strong of the white and yellow money
 But the ghost that came he had been robbed of a woman filled with honey

¶ ‘1927’C, 34b (A0469) [A], unfinished.

THE JOY IN THE NEIGHBOUR

By the things that I hear [the things] that I guess at the things that I see
 I know that she fights the good fight with the old Enemy
 But she the undaunted she toils. [at] At the start of the day
 She will lift up her face to be kissed [at] «and» her body will say
 Rude is my love

¶ ‘1908’, 13a (A0166) [JSN], unfinished.

THE LAMENT FOR LOTTIE

Weary with riding was I I had come over the river
 Over the bridge I rode all the time dreaming and burning
 For my delightful love what should I hasten to give her
 She had been quiet for weeks still | I grew happier braver
 What is she wearing today rose pink or glorious yellow

¶ ‘1907’, 7b (A0097) [JSN].

THE LITTLE BLUE BULL

Proud were his eyes and dimly beautiful
The Spring had [come] with many blossoms
The grass was sweet by every «little» river
But that morning [a] the cruel spear had struck
Alas for the little blue bull

¶ ‘1927’B, 3b (A0485) [JSN].

THE LITTLE RED MOTHER

All mothers are red
It is the colour of all sharp endeavour

¶ ‘1907’, 14b (A0104) [JSN], incomplete.

THE MAN AND THE MOMENT

Young Jacob the trader was keen and discreet
But Esau went hunting and came home dead beat
Young Jacob showed genius ‘we musn’t say Greed’

1-3] Cf. Genesis 27: 1-35 and Genesis 30: 43. *AV*

¶ ‘1907’, 9a (A0098) [JSN].

THE MOTHER OF A SON

Fears of a furious kind did leap
Upon me in the sunniest hours
I did have dreaming in my sleep
Sweet with a summer full of flowers

¶ ‘1934’, 2a (A0691) [L].

THE OLD MAN IN THE SKY

It is well with the crow and the hawk, they cannot complain,
But do they give thanks, the old man is well used to praying
It is ill with the lamb with the eye out who bleats in the [out] blood in the rain

They blame him for all things, for keeping the white world so dry,

¶ ‘1930’, 19a (A0663) [JSN].

THE RETREAT OF THE HEART

When music falters we sit far apart
It is oh believe me my neighbour
The retreat of the heart

¶ ‘1927’C, 34a (A0468) [A], unfinished.

THE SONG THAT IS YELLOW

Song[s] have a colour here is an old song
Joy is a Dancer but sorrow a Walker so long
The Moon is upon it but more than the Moonlight is there
It is the Yellow the innermost Yellow that leaves the world bare

¶ ‘1930’, 18b (A0663) [JSN], unfinished.

THE SPOTS ON THE LOVER

Here for you[r] safety
See me uncover
For you ⟨unwilling⟩
This thing a lover

He takes on [a] little maid
Call[s] her his honey
For a brief season
Sees the world sunny

¶ ML MS 3354/2, Item 1, 1a [JSN], the last four lines of an unlocated poem (the lines are ruled off).

The tears came in my eyes
 I wept in bitterness of heart
 I woke in trembling pain
 I prayed that I might dream
 That bitter dream again

¶ ML MS 3354/2, Item 2, 10a [JSN].

THE TOILER

[He toiled in the city in a workshop dark and dim]
 [There was none to call him brother]
 In the workshop dark and dim
 [There was] | Few there were to comfort him
 When he wearied he would sigh
 Men there were close standing by
 But they thought of other things
 Sometimes in their whisperings
 They would mutter poor old Jim
 Wonder what is up with him

¶ '1907', 9b (A0099) [JSN].

THE TWO KINGS

They called her red rose in the morn
 And Lily in the eveningtime [h]our

¶ '1936', 17b (A0787) [L], unfinished.

THE UNSOILED SHOP

Tales do I hear that Deborah has sorrow
 The sunset comes as with an ache and then
 There is no joy to make in a tomorrow

Cruel her father is, and old and lying.
 Gentle the mother is, all day in bed
 Slow, he will say, how slow she is in dying

¶ ML MS 3354/3, Item 1, 9/17a [JSN], unfinished, a stanza and part-stanza numbered 1-2 and drawn off after line 6.

THE VOICE OF THE DARK

An old man is the [dark] Dark he lies
Deceitfully behind a[nd] tries
Telling the people of the sighs
Bring all your bitterness to me

He will not utter praise – nor [chil] chide
Such merriment as falls to sin

¶ ‘19008’, 1a (A0154) [JSN], unfinished.

THE WEAVER

By night he saw the stars of old
And in the day the suns wide walk
These were his life his love his gold
But oh the multitude would talk

¶ NLA MS 1145/60, 48 [FN], unfinished.

THE WISH OR THE SINGER

Only to feel the warm
Of the sun as a sweet friend
To gladly hate and spend
And to know when all is done
That Darkness may be fair
And the best heart m[a]y be bare
To speak with a dull joy
To the wind glowing

¶ NLA MS 1145/60, 48 [FN], unfinished.

THE WOMAN COURTING AIR

I know not who would call her sweet
Nor who would call her fair
Nor friend had she that the eye could see
This woman courting air

¶ '1927' C, 5b (A0437) [A].

TO A CHILD IN THE FOREST

Be not afraid little one no harm is nigh[t]
Friends are beside you they go from the green ground up to the sky

¶ '1927' B, 21b (A0503) [JSN].

TO A WILD [PIGIEN] PIGEON [sic]

I would <harm> my little <drinker> there is rest

¶ '1927' A, 29a (A0560) [A], unfinished.

TO AN AMATEUR ACROBAT

For all your dancing with
Toes in the air
Under all noise I find
Motherhood there

¶ '1910', 3a (A0225) [JSN], with the direction 'last'.

TO MY CREDITORS

Innumerable throng oh mighty host |
[.....] merciful

¶ ‘1929’, 29a (A0617) [A], unfinished.

TO THE MOTHER OF THE OUTLAWS

Long long ago it seems tis fifty years ago
 Since then all eyes have seen what many saw
 You were imprisoned we are proud to know
 Why you defied the law

¶ ‘1930’, 34 a (A0680) [JSN].

We shall not be joyous but shall

¶ ML MS 3354/2, Item 1, 4b [JSN].

‘When Charlie Morris from the Grange’

[I cannot boast that this my native land]

When [Jack] Charlie Morris from the Grange
 Came over on a Sunday
 [To see [his] «a» the sweetest maulen there]
 To [Kelly’s] Allens place to see his girl
 They made him stop till [Monday]
 And Mrs Allen smiled on him
 [And] In quite a charming manner
 And Charlie though[t] he’ad never seen
 A kinder woman than her

¶ ‘1936’, 3a (A0772) [L].

WHEN THE WINDS WERE YOUNG

[How far back, it was black and black and]
 «It was black and black it was so far back that» the wisest may not know
 The poor little winds were all afraid, they were cuddling up in a row.
 And the Daddy Wind, and the Mummy wind were telling him how to blow

¶ ‘1930’, 4b (A0649) [EN].

WHO SANG OF LOVE

Though he be deep down full five thousand years
Maids in remembrance shall in summertime
Cry with him gladly undefeated tears

¶ ‘1927’C, 37a (A0471) [A], unfinished.

YOU AND YOUR JOURNEYMAN

The play no[w] is over I stand at the edge of the town
The lights are as Mourners that tremble the Player is down
You on the Skyline you smile at the old Comedy
Is it your clumsy red Journeyman or is it you that I see

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