

PRICE, F.B.: Choral Works

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[2]–[7] Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight

Text: Vachel Lindsay (1879–1931)

It is portentous, and a thing of state
That here at midnight, in our little town
A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,
Near the old court-house pacing up and down.

Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards
He lingers where his children used to play,
Or through the market, on the well-worn stones
He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away.

A bronzed, lank man! His suit of ancient black,
A famous high top-hat and plain worn shawl
Make him the quaint great figure that men love,
The prairie-lawyer, master of us all.

He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.
He is among us: – as in times before!
And we who toss and lie awake for long
Breathe deep, and start, to see him pass the door.

His head is bowed. He thinks on men and kings.
Yea, when the sick world cries, how can he sleep?
Too many peasants fight, they know not why,
Too many homesteads in black terror weep.

The sins of all the war-lords burn his heart.
He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main.
He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now
The bitterness, the folly and the pain.

He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn
Shall come; – the shining hope of Europe free;
The league of sober folk, the Workers' Earth,
Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea.

It breaks his heart that kings must murder still,
That all his hours of travail here for men
Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white peace
That he may sleep upon his hill again?

[8] Song of Hope

Text: Florence Beatrice Price (1887–1953)

I dare look up. The heaven's blue is mine!
Held in contempt and hated, still, Lord, I am Thine.
Tho' torn asunder, poisoned arrows reach my soul.
Because Thou livest do I know that Thou shalt make me whole.

I dare look up through flames that, mounting high,
Consume my flesh. In faith I see Thee. Thou art nigh.
I would not that my anguish to Thy throne ascend,
For pain and sin and sorrow doth Thy mercy, Lord, transcend.

I dare look up! Thy promise made to me –
A humble creature, groping, will yet make me free.
Thy mighty plan, beyond my simple ken, assures
Thy love, surpassing human hope, protects me; still endures!

[9] Weathers

Text: Thomas Hardy (1840–1928)

This is the weather the cuckoo likes,
And so do I;
When showers betumble the chestnut spikes,
And nestlings fly;
And the little brown nightingale bills his best,
And they sit outside at 'The Traveller's Rest,'
And maids come forth sprig-muslin drest,
And citizens dream of the south and west,
And so do I.

This is the weather the shepherd shuns,
And so do I;
When beeches drip in browns and duns,
And thresh and ply;
And hill-hid tides throb, throe on throe,
And meadow rivulets overflow,
And drops on gate bars hang in a row,
And rooks in families homeward go,
And so do I.

[10] Poem of Praise

Text: Elizabeth Coatsworth (1893–1986)

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[11] Praise the Lord

Text: The Bible (Psalm 117, King James Version)

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[12] Wander-Thirst

Text: Gerald Gould (1885–1936)

Beyond the East the sunrise, beyond the West the sea,
And East and West the wander-thirst that will not let me be;
It works in me like madness, dear, to bid me say good-bye;
For the seas call, and the stars call, and oh! the call of the sky!

I know not where the white road runs, nor what the blue hills are;
But a man can have the sun for a friend, and for his guide a star;
And there's no end of voyaging when once the voice is heard,
For the rivers call, and the roads call, and oh! the call of the bird!

Yonder the long horizon lies, and there by night and day
The old ships draw to home again, the young ships sail away;
And come I may, but go I must, and, if men ask you why,
You may put the blame on the stars and the sun and the white road
and the sky.

[13] Summer Clouds

Text: Mary Rolofson Gamble (1848–1937)

The summer clouds go sailing by,
Like silver ships across the sky,
Or, stretching out like furrowed plain,
Or white-capped billows on the main!
What matters how their course we view,
If now and then the blue peeps through?

Sometimes they rise like mountains bold,
Peak after peak all tinged with gold;
Sometimes they frown, sometimes are gray,

Sometimes bring darkness while it's day;
What matters when we know it's true,
The azure'll soon come peeping through?

For well we know the sky is there,
Above the clouds all bright and fair;
The silver ship and furrowed plain,
And mountain peak and billowy main –
Will pass – but skies are firm and true,
The azure'll soon come peeping through!

So, clouds must come into each life,
Some silver-tinged, some gray with strife,
But God's rich mercy like the sky,
Broods over all as years go by,
And, many be the clouds or few,
God's love is always peeping through!

[14] Song for Snow (pub. 1957?)

Text: Elizabeth Coatsworth (1893–1986)

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[15] The Witch of the Meadow

Text: Mary Rolofson Gamble

There's a witch in the meadow, I've hunted all over
But never have found her, shy four-leaved clover!
She can tell – how entrancing – if lovers are true!
Though distance may part them, she has them in view!

All the other gay fairies came trooping around me;
Wild columbines, dancing because they had found me;
Sweet buttercups gave me a drink from their chalice,
But, witch of the meadow, where, where is your palace?

My heart holds a secret I'd whisper to you;
O, fairy witch, tell me, please tell me it's true;
I'll whisper it softly, now fairy, believe me,
It's so heavenly sweet, if untrue it will grieve me.

He says I'm the first one he ever called "dear,"
Or kissed in the moonlight; he's lying, I fear!
He's a wonderful person, this lover so bold,
But if he's loved others, can I his love hold?

O witch, come and tell me; Love oft is a rover,
Is mine staunch and true, fairy four-leaved clover?
Ah, here she is standing, just where I would tread,
And smiles a sweet answer. Thanks, witch, we will wed!

[16] The Moon Bridge

Text: Mary Rolofson Gamble

The moon like a big, round ball of flame
Rose out of the silver bay,
And built a bridge of golden beams,
Where the fairies came to play.
I saw them dancing in jeweled robes,
On the wavelet's rhythmic flow,
And I longed to stand on the magic bridge,
In the moonlight's mystic glow.

But, over the sky a veil of mist
Thin, soft as a web of lace,
Was drawn, then parted, then came again,
With easy, coquettish grace;
And the moon put on a sober mask,
And frowned on the rippling wave,
And the beautiful bridge went under the sea,
Not a beam could the fairies save!

I wondered if this would end their play,
And if, as the bridge went down,
They would lose their jewels so frail and fair,
And the queen her diamond crown!
But they glided away in merry mood,
To their home in the rose-tree's bowers,
And finished their dance on the dewy grass,
In the "wee sma" morning hours.

[17] Night (1945)

Text: Bessie Mayle (1898–1959)

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[18] Resignation

Text: Florence Beatrice Price

My life is a pathway of sorrow;
I've struggled and toiled in the sun
with hope that the dawn of tomorrow
would break on a work that is done.
My Master has pointed the way,
he taught me in prayer to say:
"Lord, give us this day and our daily bread."
I hunger, yet I shall be fed.
My feet, they are wounded and dragging;
My body is tortured with pain;
My heart, it is shattered and flagging,
What matter, if, Heaven I gain.
Of happiness once I have tasted;
'Twas only an instant it paused
tho' brief was the hour that I wasted
For ever the woe that it caused
I'm tired and want to go home.
My mother and sister are there;
They're waiting for me to come
Where mansions are bright and fair.