

Classic Poetry Series

Henry Kendall

- poems -

Publication Date:

2004

Publisher:

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

~Araluen~

River, myrtle rimmed, and set
Deep amongst unfooted dells—
Daughter of grey hills of wet,
Born by mossed and yellow wells;
Now that soft September lays
Tender hands on thee and thine,
Let me think of blue-eyed days,
Star-like flowers and leaves of shine!

Cities soil the life with rust;
Water banks are cool and sweet;
River, tired of noise and dust,
Here I come to rest my feet.

Now the month from shade to sun
Fleets and sings supremest songs,
Now the wilful wood-winds run
Through the tangled cedar throngs.

Here are cushioned tufts and turns
Where the sumptuous noontide lies:
Here are seen by flags and ferns
Summer's large, luxurious eyes.

On this spot wan Winter casts
Eyes of ruth, and spares its green
From his bitter sea-nursed blasts,
Spears of rain and hailstones keen.

Rather here abideth Spring,
Lady of a lovely land,
Dear to leaf and fluttering wing,
Deep in blooms—by breezes fanned.

Faithful friend beyond the main,
Friend that time nor change makes cold;
Now, like ghosts, return again
Pallid, perished days of old.

Ah, the days!—the old, old theme,
Never stale, but never new,
Floating like a pleasant dream,
Back to me and back to you.

Since we rested on these slopes
Seasons fierce have beaten down
Ardent loves and blossoming hopes—
Loves that lift and hopes that crown.

But, believe me, still mine eyes
Often fill with light that springs
From divinity, which lies

Ever at the heart of things.

Solace do I sometimes find
Where you used to hear with me
Songs of stream and forest wind,
Tones of wave and harp-like tree.

Araluen—home of dreams,
Fairer for its flowerful glade
Than the face of Persian streams
Or the slopes of Syrian shade;

Why should I still love it so,
Friend and brother far away?
Ask the winds that come and go,
What hath brought me here to-day.

Evermore of you I think,
When the leaves begin to fall,
Where our river breaks its brink,
And a rest is over all.

Evermore in quiet lands,
Friend of mine beyond the sea,
Memory comes with cunning hands,
Stays, and paints your face for me.

Henry Kendall

A Hyde Park Larrikin

You may have heard of Proclus, sir,
If you have been a reader;
And you may know a bit of her
Who helped the Lycian leader.
I have my doubts -- the head you "sport"
(Now mark me, don't get crusty)
Is hardly of the classic sort --
Your lore, I think, is fusty.

Most likely you have stuck to tracts
Flushed through with flaming curses --
I judge you, neighbour, by your acts --
So don't you damn my verses.

But to my theme. The Asian sage,
Whose name above I mention,
Lived in the pitchy Pagan age,
A life without pretension.

He may have worshipped gods like Zeus,
And termed old Dis a master;
But then he had a strong excuse --
He never heard a pastor.

However, it occurs to me
That, had he cut Demeter
And followed you, or followed me,
He wouldn't have been sweeter.

No doubt with "shepherds" of this time
He's not the "clean potato",
Because -- excuse me for my rhyme --
He pinned his faith to Plato.

But these are facts you can't deny,
My pastor, smudged and sooty,
His mind was like a summer sky --
He lived a life of beauty --

To lift his brothers' thoughts above
This earth he used to labour:
His heart was luminous with love --
He didn't wound his neighbour.

To him all men were just the same --
He never foamed at altars,
Although he lived ere Moody came --
Ere Sankey dealt in psalters.

The Lycian sage, my "reverend" sir,
Had not your chances ample;
But, after all, I must prefer

His perfect, pure example.

You, having read the Holy Writ --
The Book the angels foster --
Say have you helped us on a bit,
You overfed impostor?

What have you done to edify,
You clammy chapel tinker?
What act like his of days gone by --
The grand old Asian thinker?

Is there no deed of yours at all
With beauty shining through it?
Ah, no! your heart reveals its gall
On every side I view it.
A blatant bigot with a big
Fat heavy fetid carcass,
You well become your greasy "rig" --
You're not a second Arcas.
What sort of "gospel" do you preach?
What "Bible" is your Bible?
There's worse than wormwood in your speech,
You livid, living libel!

How many lives are growing gray
Through your depraved behaviour!
I tell you plainly -- every day
You crucify the Saviour!

Some evil spirit curses you --
Your actions never vary:
You cannot point your finger to
One fact to the contrary.

You seem to have a wicked joy
In your malicious labour,
Endeavouring daily to destroy
The neighbour's love for neighbour.

The brutal curses you eject
Make strong men dread to hear you.
The world outside your petty sect
Feels sick when it is near you.

No man who shuns that little hole
You call your tabernacle
Can have, you shriek, a ransomed soul --
He wears the devil's shackle.

And, hence the "Papist" by your clan
Is dogged with words inhuman,

Because he loves that friend of man
The highest type of woman --

Because he has that faith which sees
Before the high Creator
A Virgin pleading on her knees --
A shining Mediator!

God help the souls who grope in night --
Who in your ways have trusted!
I've said enough! the more I write,
The more I feel disgusted.

The warm, soft air is tainted through
With your pernicious leaven.
I would not live ~one hour~ with you
In your peculiar heaven!

Now mount your musty pulpit -- thump,
And muddle flat clodhoppers;
And let some long-eared booby "hump"
The plate about for coppers.

At priest and parson spit and bark,
And shake your "church" with curses,
You bitter blackguard of the dark --
With this I close my verses.

Henry Kendall

A Mountain Spring

Peace hath an altar there. The sounding feet
Of thunder and the wildering wings of rain
Against fire-rifted summits flash and beat,
And through grey upper gorges swoop and strain;
But round that hallowed mountain-spring remain,
Year after year, the days of tender heat,
And gracious nights whose lips with flowers are sweet,
And filtered lights, and lutes of soft refrain.
A still, bright pool. To men I may not tell
The secrets that its heart of water knows,
The story of a loved and lost repose;
Yet this I say to cliff and close-leaved dell:
A fitful spirit haunts yon limpid well,
Whose likeness is the faithless face of Rose.

Henry Kendall

A Spanish Love Song

From Andalusian gardens
I bring the rose and rue,
And leaves of subtle odour,
To weave a gift for you.
You'll know the reason wherefore
The sad is with the sweet;
My flowers may lie, as I would,
A carpet for your feet!
The heart—the heart is constant;
It holds its secret, Dear!
But often in the night time
I keep awake for fear.
I have no hope to whisper,
I have no prayer to send,
God save you from such passion!
God help you from such end!

You first, you last, you false love!
In dreams your lips I kiss,
And thus I greet your Shadow,
"Take this, and this, and this!"
When dews are on the casement,
And winds are in the pine,
I have you close beside me—
In sleep your mouth is mine.

I never see you elsewhere;
You never think of me;
But fired with fever for you
Content I am to be.
You will not turn, my Darling,
Nor answer when I call;
But yours are soul are body
And love of mine and all!

You splendid Spaniard! Listen—
My passion leaps to flame
For neck and cheek and dimple,
And cunning shades of shame!
I tell you, I would gladly
Give Hell myself to keep,
To cling to, half a moment,
The lips I taste in sleep.

Henry Kendall

Aboriginal Death Song

Feet of the flying, and fierce
Tops of the sharp-headed spear,
Hard by the thickets that pierce,
Lo! they are nimble and near.
Women are we, and the wives
Strong Arrawatta hath won;
Weary because of our lives,
Sick of the face of the sun.

Koola, our love and our light,
What have they done unto you?
Man of the star-reaching sight,
Dipped in the fire and the dew.

Black-headed snakes in the grass
Struck at the fleet-footed lord—
Still is his voice at the pass,
Soundless his step at the ford.

Far by the forested glen,
Starkly he lies in the rain;
Kings of the council of men
Shout for their leader in vain.

Yea, and the fish-river clear
Never shall blacken below
Spear and the shadow of spear,
Bow and the shadow of bow.

Hunter and climber of trees,
Now doth his tomahawk rust,
(Dread of the cunning wild bees),
Hidden in hillocks of dust.

We, who were followed and bound,
Dashed under foot by the foe,
Sit with our eyes to the ground,
Faint from the brand and the blow.

Dumb with the sorrow that kills,
Sorrow for brother and chief,
Terror of thundering hills,
Having no hope in our grief,

Seeing the fathers are far
Seeking the spoils of the dead
Left on the path of the war,
Matted and mangled and red.

Henry Kendall

Achan

HATH he not followed a star through the darkness,
Ye people who sit at the table of Jephthah?
Oh! turn with the face to a light in the mountains,
Behold it is further from Achan than ever!
"I know how it is with my brothers in Mizpeh,"
Said Achan, the swift-footed runner of Zorah,
"They look at the wood they have hewn for the altar;
And think of a shadow in sackcloth and ashes.

"I know how it is with the daughter of Jephthah,
(O Ada, my love, and the fairest of women!)
She wails in the time when her heart is so zealous
For God who hath stricken the children of Ammon.

"I said I would bring her the odours of Edom,
And armfuls of spices to set at the banquet!
Behold I have fronted the chieftain her father;
And strong men have wept for the leader of thousands!

"My love is a rose of the roses of Sharon,
All lonely and bright as the Moon in the myrtles!
Her lips, like to honeycombs, fill with the sweetness
That Achan the thirsty is hindered from drinking.

"Her women have wept for the love that is wasted
Like wine, which is spilt when the people are wanting,
And hot winds have dried all the cisterns of Elim!
For love that is wasted her women were wailing!

"The timbrels fall silent! And dost thou not hear it,
A voice, like the sound of a lute when we loiter,
And sit by the pools in the valleys of Arnon,
And suck the cool grapes that are growing in clusters?

"She glides, like a myrrh-scented wind, through the willows,
O Ada! behold it is Achan that speaketh:
I know thou art near me, but never can see thee,
Because of the horrible drouth in mine eyelids."

Henry Kendall

After Many Years

The song that once I dreamed about,
The tender, touching thing,
As radiant as the rose without,
The love of wind and wing:
The perfect verses, to the tune
Of woodland music set,
As beautiful as afternoon,
Remain unwritten yet.

It is too late to write them now --
The ancient fire is cold;
No ardent lights illumine the brow,
As in the days of old.
I cannot dream the dream again;
But, when the happy birds
Are singing in the sunny rain,
I think I hear its words.

I think I hear the echo still
Of long-forgotten tones,
When evening winds are on the hill
And sunset fires the cones;
But only in the hours supreme,
With songs of land and sea,
The lyrics of the leaf and stream,
This echo comes to me.

No longer doth the earth reveal
Her gracious green and gold;
I sit where youth was once, and feel
That I am growing old.
The lustre from the face of things
Is wearing all away;
Like one who halts with tired wings,
I rest and muse to-day.

There is a river in the range
I love to think about;
Perhaps the searching feet of change
Have never found it out.
Ah! oftentimes I used to look
Upon its banks, and long
To steal the beauty of that brook
And put it in a song.

I wonder if the slopes of moss,
In dreams so dear to me --
The falls of flower, and flower-like floss --
Are as they used to be!
I wonder if the waterfalls,
The singers far and fair,
That gleamed between the wet, green walls,

Are still the marvels there!

Ah! let me hope that in that place
Those old familiar things
To which I turn a wistful face
Have never taken wings.
Let me retain the fancy still
That, past the lordly range,
There always shines, in folds of hill,
One spot secure from change!

I trust that yet the tender screen
That shades a certain nook
Remains, with all its gold and green,
The glory of the brook.
It hides a secret to the birds
And waters only known:
The letters of two lovely words --
A poem on a stone.

Perhaps the lady of the past
Upon these lines may light,
The purest verses, and the last,
That I may ever write:
She need not fear a word of blame:
Her tale the flowers keep --
The wind that heard me breathe her name
Has been for years asleep.

But in the night, and when the rain
The troubled torrent fills,
I often think I see again
The river in the hills;
And when the day is very near,
And birds are on the wing,
My spirit fancies it can hear
The song I cannot sing.

Henry Kendall

After the Hunt

Underneath the windy mountain walls
Forth we rode, an eager band,
By the surges and the verges and the gorges,
Till the night was on the land—
On the hazy, mazy land!
Far away the bounding prey
Leapt across the ruts and logs,
But we galloped, galloped, galloped on,
Till we heard the yapping of the dogs—
The yapping and the yelping of the dogs.
Oh, it was a madly merry day
We shall not so soon forget,
And the edges and the ledges and the ridges
Haunt us with their echoes yet—
Echoes, echoes, echoes yet!
While the moon is on the hill
Gleaming through the streaming fogs,
Don't you hear the yapping of the dogs—
The yapping and the yelping of the dogs?

Henry Kendall

Aileen

A splendid sun betwixt the trees
Long spikes of flame did shoot,
When turning to the fragrant South,
With longing eyes and burning mouth,
I stretched a hand athwart the drouth,
And plucked at cooling fruit.

So thirst was quenched, and hastening on
With strength returned to me,
I set my face against the noon,
And reached a denser forest soon;
Which dipped into a still lagoon
Hard by the sooming sea.

All day the ocean beat on bar
And bank of gleaming sand;
Yet that lone pool was always mild,
It never moved when waves were wild,
But slumbered, like a quiet child,
Upon the lap of land.

And when I rested on the brink,
Amongst the fallen flowers,
I lay in calm; no leaves were stirred
By breath of wind, or wing of bird;
It was so still, you might have heard
The footfalls of the hours.

Faint slumbrous scents of roses filled
The air which covered me:
My words were low -- "she loved them so,
In Eden vales such odours blow:
How strange it is that roses grow
So near the shores of Sea!"

A sweeter fragrance never came
Across the Fields of Yore!
And when I said -- "we here would dwell," --
A low voice on the silence fell --
"Ah! if you loved the roses well,
You loved Aileen the more." "Ay, that I did, and now would turn,
And fall and worship her!
But Oh, you dwell so far -- so high!
One cannot reach, though he may try,
The Morning land, and Jasper sky --
The balmy hills of Myrrh.

"Why vex me with delicious hints
Of fairest face, and rarest blooms;
You Spirit of a darling Dream
Which links itself with every theme
And thought of mine by surf or stream,

In glens -- or caverned glooms?"

She said, "thy wishes led me down,
From amaranthine bowers:
And since my face was haunting thee
With roses (dear which used to be),
They all have hither followed me,
The scents and shapes of flowers."

"Then stay, mine own evangel, stay!
Or, going, take me too;
But let me sojourn by your side,
If here we dwell or there abide,
It matters not!" I madly cried --
"I only care for you."

Oh, glittering Form that would not stay! --
Oh, sudden, sighing breeze!
A fainting rainbow dropped below
Far gleaming peaks and walls of snow
And there, a weary way, I go,
Towards the Sunrise seas.

Henry Kendall

Amongst the Roses

I walked through a Forest, beneath the hot noon,
On Etheline calling and calling!
One said: "She will hear you and come to you soon,
When the coolness, my brother, is falling."
But I whispered: "O Darling, I falter with pain!"
And the thirsty leaves rustled, and hissed for the rain,
Where a wayfarer halted and slept on the plain;
 And dreamt of a garden of Roses!
 Of a cool sweet place,
 And a nestling face
 In a dance and a dazzle of Roses.
In the drought of a Desert, outweared, I wept,
O Etheline, darkened with dolours!
But, folded in sunset, how long have you slept
By the Roses all reeling with colours?
A tree from its tresses a blossom did shake,
It fell on her face, and I feared she would wake,
So I brushed it away for her sweet sake;
 In that garden of beautiful Roses!
 In the dreamy perfumes
 From ripe-red blooms
 In a dance and a dazzle of Roses.

Henry Kendall

Arakoon

Lo! in storms, the triple-headed
Hill, whose dreaded
Bases battle with the seas,
Looms across fierce widths of fleeting
Waters beating
Evermore on roaring leas!
Arakoon, the black, the lonely!
Housed with only
Cloud and rain-wind, mist and damp;
Round whose foam-drenched feet and nether
Depths, together
Sullen sprites of thunder tramp!

There the East hums loud and surly,
Late and early,
Through the chasms and the caves,
And across the naked verges
Leap the surges!
White and wailing waifs of waves.

Day by day the sea-fogs gathered—
Tempest-fathered—
Pitch their tents on yonder peak,
Yellow drifts and fragments lying
Where the flying
Torrents chafe the cloven creek!

And at nightfall, when the driven
Bolts of heaven
Smite the rock and break the bluff,
Thither troop the elves whose home is
Where the foam is,
And the echo and the clough.

Ever girt about with noises,
Stormy voices,
And the salt breath of the Strait,
Stands the steadfast Mountain Giant,
Grim, reliant,
Dark as Death, and firm as Fate.

So when trouble treads, like thunder,
Weak men under—
Treads and breaks the thews of these—
Set thyself to bear it bravely,
Greatly, gravely,
Like the hill in yonder seas;

Since the wrestling and endurance
Give assurance
To the faint at bay with pain,
That no soul to strong endeavour

Yoked for ever,
Works against the tide in vain.

Henry Kendall

Araluen

Take this rose, and very gently place it on the tender, deep
Mosses where our little darling, Araluen, lies asleep.
Put the blossom close to baby -- kneel with me, my love, and pray;
We must leave the bird we've buried -- say good-bye to her to-day;
In the shadow of our trouble we must go to other lands,
And the flowers we have fostered will be left to other hands.
Other eyes will watch them growing -- other feet will softly tread
Where two hearts are nearly breaking, where so many tears are shed.
Bitter is the world we live in: life and love are mixed with pain;
We will never see these daisies -- never water them again.

Here the blue-eyed Spring will linger, here the shining month will stay,
Like a friend, by Araluen, when we two are far away;
But, beyond the wild, wide waters, we will tread another shore --
We will never watch this blossom, never see it any more.

Girl, whose hand at God's high altar in the dear, dead year I pressed,
Lean your stricken head upon me -- this is still your lover's breast!
She who sleeps was first and sweetest -- none we have to take her place!
Empty is the little cradle -- absent is the little face.
Other children may be given; but this rose beyond recall,
But this garland of your girlhood, will be dearest of them all.
None will ever, Araluen, nestle where you used to be,
In my heart of hearts, you darling, when the world was new to me;
We were young when you were with us, life and love were happy things
To your father and your mother ere the angels gave you wings.

You that sit and sob beside me -- you, upon whose golden head
Many rains of many sorrows have from day to day been shed;
Who, because your love was noble, faced with me the lot austere
Ever pressing with its hardship on the man of letters here --
Let me feel that you are near me, lay your hand within mine own;
You are all I have to live for, now that we are left alone.
Three there were, but one has vanished. Sins of mine have made you weep;
But forgive your baby's father now that baby is asleep.
Let us go, for night is falling, leave the darling with her flowers;
Other hands will come and tend them -- other friends in other hours.

Henry Kendall

Astarte

ACROSS the dripping ridges,
O, look, luxurious night!
She comes, the bright-haired beauty,
My luminous delight!
My luminous delight!
So hush, ye shores, your roar,
That my soul may sleep, forgetting
Dead Love's wild Nevermore!
Astarte, Syrian sister,
Your face is wet with tears;
I think you know the secret
One heart hath held for years!
One heart hath held for years!
But hide your hapless love,
And my sweet—my Syrian sister,
Dead Love's wild Nevermore!

Ah, Helen Hope in heaven,
My queen of long ago,
I've swooned with adoration,
But could not tell you so,
Or dared not tell you so,
My radiant queen of yore!
And you've passed away and left me
Dead Love's wild Nevermore!

Astarte knoweth, darling,
Of eyes that once did weep,
What time entranced Passion
Hath kissed your lips in sleep;
Hath kissed your lips in sleep;
But now those tears are o'er,
Gone, my saint, with many a moan to
Dead Love's wild Nevermore!

If I am past all crying,
What thoughts are maddening me,
Of you, my darling, dying
Upon the lone, wide sea,
Upon the lone, wide sea,
Ah! hush, ye shores, your roar,
That my soul may sleep, forgetting
Dead Love's wild Nevermore!

Henry Kendall

Bell Birds

Hi There! I see you're enjoying the site, and just wanted to extend an invitation to register for our free site. The members of oldpoetry strive to make this a fun place to learn and share - hope you join us! - Kevin

Henry Kendall

Beyond Kerguelen

DOWN in the South, by the waste without sail on it—
Far from the zone of the blossom and tree—
Lieth, with winter and whirlwind and wail on it,
Ghost of a land by the ghost of a sea.
Weird is the mist from the summit to base of it;
Sun of its heaven is wizened and grey;
Phantom of light is the light on the face of it—
Never is night on it, never is day!
Here is the shore without flower or bird on it;
Here is no litany sweet of the springs—
Only the haughty, harsh thunder is heard on it,
Only the storm, with a roar in its wings!

Shadow of moon is the moon in the sky of it—
Wan as the face of a wizard, and far!
Never there shines from the firmament high of it
Grace of the planet or glory of star.
All the year round, in the place of white days on it—
All the year round where there never is night—
Lies a great sinister, bitter, blind haze on it:
Growth that is neither of darkness nor light!
Wild is the cry of the sea in the caves by it—
Sea that is smitten by spears of the snow;
Desolate songs are the songs of the waves by it—
Down in the South, where the ships never go.

Storm from the Pole is the singer that sings to it
Hymns of the land at the planet's grey verge.
Thunder discloses dark, wonderful things to it—
Thunder, and rain, and the dolorous surge.
Hills with no hope of a wing or a leaf on them,
Scarred with the chronicles written by flame,
Stare through the gloom of inscrutable grief on them,
Down on the horns of the gulfs without name.
Cliffs with the records of fierce flying fires on them—
Loom over perilous pits of eclipse;
Alps, with anathema stamped in the spires on them—
Out by the wave with a curse on its lips.

Never is sign of soft, beautiful green on it—
Never the colour, the glory of rose!
Neither the fountain nor river is seen on it,
Naked its crags are, and barren its snows!
Blue as the face of the drowned is the shore of it—
Shore, with the capes of indefinite cave.
Strange is the voice of its wind, and the roar of it
Startles the mountain and hushes the wave.
Out to the South and away to the north of it,
Spectral and sad are the spaces untold!
All the year round a great cry goeth forth of it—
Sob of this leper of lands in the cold.

No man hath stood, all its bleak, bitter years on it—
Fall of a foot on its wastes is unknown:
Only the sound of the hurricane's spears on it
Breaks with the shout from the uttermost zone.
Blind are its bays with the shadow of bale on them;
Storms of the nadir their rocks have uphurled;
Earthquake hath registered deeply its tale on them—
Tale of distress from the dawn of the world!
There are the gaps, with the surges that seethe in them—
Gaps in whose jaws is a menace that glares!
There the wan reefs, with the merciless teeth in them,
Gleam on a chaos that startles and scares!

Back in the dawn of this beautiful sphere, on it—
Land of the dolorous, desolate face—
Beamed the blue day; and the bountiful year on it
Fostered the leaf and the blossom of grace.
Grand were the lights of its midsummer noon on it—
Mornings of majesty shone on its seas:
Glitter of star and the glory of moon on it
Fell, in the march of the musical breeze.
Valleys and hills, with the whisper of wing in them,
Dells of the daffodil—spaces impearled,
Flowered and flashed with the splendour of Spring in them—
Back in the morn of this wonderful world.

Soft were the words that the thunder then said to it—
Said to this lustre of emerald plain;
Sun brought the yellow, the green, and the red to it—
Sweet were the songs of its silvery rain.
Voices of water and wind in the bays of it
Lingered, and lulled like the psalm of a dream.
Fair were the nights and effulgent the days of it—
Moon was in shadow and shade in the beam.
Summer's chief throne was the marvellous coast of it,
Home of the Spring was its luminous lea:
Garden of glitter! but only the ghost of it
Moans in the South by the ghost of a sea.

Henry Kendall

Billy Vickers

No song is this of leaf and bird,
And gracious waters flowing;
I'm sick at heart, for I have heard
Big Billy Vickers "blowing".
He'd never take a leading place
In chambers legislative:
This booby with the vacant face --
This hoddy-doddy native!

Indeed, I'm forced to say aside,
To you, O reader, solely,
He only wants the horns and hide
To be a bullock wholly.

But, like all noodles, he is vain;
And when his tongue is wagging,
I feel inclined to copy Cain,
And "drop" him for his bragging.

He, being Bush-bred, stands, of course,
Six feet his dirty socks in;
His lingo is confined to horse
And plough, and pig and oxen.

Two years ago he'd less to say
Within his little circuit;
But now he has, besides a dray,
A team of twelve to work it.

No wonder is it that he feels
Inclined to clack and rattle
About his bullocks and his wheels --
He owns a dozen cattle.

In short, to be exact and blunt,
In his own estimation
He's "out and out" the head and front
Top-sawyer of creation!

For, mark me, he can "sit a buck"
For hours and hours together;
And never horse has had the luck
To pitch him from the leather.

If ever he should have a "spill"
Upon the grass or gravel,
Be sure of this, the saddle will
With Billy Vickers travel.

At punching oxen you may guess
There's nothing out can "camp" him:
He has, in fact, the slouch and dress

Which bullock-driver stamp him.

I do not mean to give offence,
But I have vainly striven
To ferret out the difference
'Twixt driver and the driven.

Of course, the statements herein made
In every other stanza
Are Billy's own; and I'm afraid
They're stark extravaganza.
I feel constrained to treat as trash
His noisy fiddle-faddle
About his doings with the lash,
His feats upon the saddle.
But grant he "knows his way about",
Or grant that he is silly,
There cannot be the slightest doubt
Of Billy's faith in Billy.

Of all the doings of the day
His ignorance is utter;
But he can quote the price of hay,
The current rate of butter.

His notions of our leading men
Are mixed and misty very:
He knows a cochin-china hen --
He never speaks of Berry.

As you'll assume, he hasn't heard
Of Madame Patti's singing;
But I will stake my solemn word
He knows what maize is bringing.

Surrounded by majestic peaks,
By lordly mountain ranges,
Where highest voice of thunder speaks
His aspect never changes.

The grand Pacific there beyond
His dirty hut is glowing:
He only sees a big salt pond,
O'er which his grain is going.

The sea that covers half the sphere,
With all its stately speeches,
Is held by Bill to be a mere
Broad highway for his peaches.

Through Nature's splendid temples he
Plods, under mountains hoary;

But he has not the eyes to see
Their grandeur and their glory.

A bullock in a biped's boot,
I iterate, is Billy!
He crushes with a careless foot
The touching water-lily.

I've said enough -- I'll let him go!
If he could read these verses,
He'd pepper me for hours, I know,
With his peculiar curses.

But this is sure, he'll never change
His manners loud and flashy,
Nor learn with neatness to arrange
His clothing, cheap and trashy.

Like other louts, he'll jog along,
And swig at shanty liquors,
And chew and spit. Here ends the song
Of Mr. Billy Vickers.

Henry Kendall

Charles Harpur

Where Harpur lies, the rainy streams,
And wet hill-heads, and hollows weeping,
Are swift with wind, and white with gleams,
And hoarse with sounds of storms unsleeping.
Fit grave it is for one whose song
Was tuned by tones he caught from torrents,
And filled with mountain breaths, and strong,
Wild notes of falling forest currents.

So let him sleep, the rugged hymns
And broken lights of woods above him!
And let me sing how sorrow dims
The eyes of those that used to love him.

As April in the wilted wold
Turns faded eyes on splendours waning,
What time the latter leaves are old,
And ruin strikes the strays remaining;

So we that knew this singer dead,
Whose hands attuned the harp Australian,
May set the face and bow the head,
And mourn his fate and fortunes alien.

The burden of a perished faith
Went sighing through his speech of sweetness,
With human hints of time and death,
And subtle notes of incompleteness.

But when the fiery power of youth
Had passed away and left him nameless,
Serene as light, and strong as truth,
He lived his life, untired and tameless.

And, far and free, this man of men,
With wintry hair and wasted feature,
Had fellowship with gorge and glen,
And learned the loves and runes of Nature.

Strange words of wind, and rhymes of rain,
And whispers from the inland fountains
Are mingled, in his various strain,
With leafy breaths of piny mountains.

But as the undercurrents sigh
Beneath the surface of a river,
The music of humanity
Dwells in his forest-psalms for ever.

No soul was he to sit on heights
And live with rocks apart and scornful:
Delights of men were his delights,

And common troubles made him mournful.

The flying forms of unknown powers
With lofty wonder caught and filled him;
But there were days of gracious hours
When sights and sounds familiar thrilled him.

The pathos worn by wayside things,
The passion found in simple faces,
Struck deeper than the life of springs
Or strength of storms and sea-swept places.

But now he sleeps, the tired bard,
The deepest sleep; and, lo! I proffer
These tender leaves of my regard,
With hands that falter as they offer.

Henry Kendall

Daniel Henry Deniehy

TAKE the harp, but very softly for our brother touch the strings:
Wind and wood shall help to wail him, waves and mournful mountain-springs.
Take the harp, but very softly, for the friend who grew so old
Through the hours we would not hear of—nights we would not fain behold!
Other voices, sweeter voices, shall lament him year by year,
Though the morning finds us lonely, though we sit and marvel here:
Marvel much while Summer cometh, trammelled with November wheat,
Gold about her forehead gleaming, green and gold about her feet;
Yea, and while the land is dark with plover, gull, and gloomy glede,
Where the cold, swift songs of Winter fill the interlucent reed.
Yet, my harp—and oh, my fathers! never look for Sorrow's lay,
Making life a mighty darkness in the patient noon of day;
Since he resteth whom we loved so, out beyond these fleeting seas,
Blowing clouds and restless regions paved with old perplexities,
In a land where thunder breaks not, in a place unknown of snow,
Where the rain is mute for ever, where the wild winds never go:
Home of far-forgotten phantoms—genii of our peaceful prime,
Shining by perpetual waters past the ways of Change and Time:
Haven of the harried spirit, where it folds its wearied wings,
Turns its face and sleeps a sleep with deep forgetfulness of things.

His should be a grave by mountains, in a cool and thick-mossed lea,
With the lone creek falling past it—falling ever to the sea.
His should be a grave by waters, by a bright and broad lagoon,
Making steadfast splendours hallowed of the quiet, shining moon.
There the elves of many forests—wandering winds and flying lights—
Born of green, of happy mornings, dear to yellow summer nights,
Full of dole for him that loved them, then might halt and then might go,
Finding fathers of the people to their children speaking low—
Speaking low of one who, failing, suffered all the poet's pain,
Dying with the dead leaves round him—hopes which never grow again.

Henry Kendall

Daphne

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Henry Kendall

Etheline

The heart that once was rich with light,
And happy in your grace,
Now lieth cold beneath the scorn
That gathers on your face;
And every joy it knew before,
And every temped dream,
Is paler than the dying flash
On yonder mountain stream.
The soul, regretting foundered bliss
Amid the wreck of years,
Hath mourned it with intensity
Too deep for human tears!

The forest fadeth underneath
The blast that rushes by --
The dripping leaves are white with death,
But Love will never die!
We both have seen the starry moss
That clings where Ruin reigns,
And ~one~ must know ~his~ lonely breast
Affection still retains;
Through all the sweetest hopes of life,
That clustered round and round,
Are lying now, like withered things,
Forsaken -- on the ground.

'Tis hard to think of what we were,
And what we might have been,
Had not an evil spirit crept
Across the tranquil scene:
Had fervent feelings in your soul
Not failed nor ceased to shine
As pure as those existing on,
And burning still in mine.
Had every treasure at your feet
That I was wont to pour,
Been never thrown like worthless weeds
Upon a barren shore!

The bitter edge of grief has passed,
I would not now upbraid;
Or count to you the broken vows,
So often idly made!
I would not cross your path to chase
The falsehood from your brow --
I ~know~, with all that borrowed light,
You are not happy now:
Since those that once have trampled down
Affection's early claim,
Have lost a peace they need not hope
To find on earth again.

Henry Kendall

Footfalls

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Henry Kendall

Hy-Brasil

"Daughter," said the ancient father, pausing by the evening sea,
"Turn thy face towards the sunset -- turn thy face and kneel with me!
Prayer and praise and holy fasting, lips of love and life of light,
These and these have made thee perfect -- shining saint with seraph's sight!
Look towards that flaming crescent -- look beyond that glowing space --
Tell me, sister of the angels, what is beaming in thy face?"
And the daughter, who had fasted, who had spent her days in prayer,
Till the glory of the Saviour touched her head and rested there,
Turned her eyes towards the sea-line -- saw beyond the fiery crest,
Floating over waves of jasper, far Hy-Brasil in the West.

All the calmness and the colour -- all the splendour and repose,
Flowing where the sunset flowered, like a silver-hearted rose!
There indeed was singing Eden, where the great gold river runs
Past the porch and gates of crystal, ringed by strong and shining ones!
There indeed was God's own garden, sailing down the sapphire sea --
Lawny dells and slopes of summer, dazzling stream and radiant tree!
Out against the hushed horizon -- out beneath the reverent day,
Flamed the Wonder on the waters -- flamed, and flashed, and passed away.
And the maiden who had seen it felt a hand within her own,
And an angel that we know not led her to the lands unknown.

Never since hath eye beheld it -- never since hath mortal, dazed
By its strange, unearthly splendour, on the floating Eden gazed!
Only once since Eve went weeping through a throng of glittering wings,
Hath the holy seen Hy-Brasil where the great gold river sings!
Only once by quiet waters, under still, resplendent skies,
Did the sister of the seraphs kneel in sight of Paradise!
She, the pure, the perfect woman, sanctified by patient prayer,
Had the eyes of saints of Heaven, all their glory in her hair:
Therefore God the Father whispered to a radiant spirit near --
"Show Our daughter fair Hy-Brasil -- show her this, and lead her here."

But beyond the halls of sunset, but within the wondrous West,
On the rose-red seas of evening, sails the Garden of the Blest.
Still the gates of glassy beauty, still the walls of glowing light,
Shine on waves that no man knows of, out of sound and out of sight.
Yet the slopes and lawns of lustre, yet the dells of sparkling streams,
Dip to tranquil shores of jasper, where the watching angel beams.
But, behold! our eyes are human, and our way is paved with pain,
We can never find Hy-Brasil, never see its hills again!
Never look on bays of crystal, never bend the reverent knee
In the sight of Eden floating -- floating on the sapphire sea!

Henry Kendall

In Memorium : Adam Lindsay Gordon

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Henry Kendall

James Lionel Michael

BE HIS rest the rest he sought:
Calm and deep.
Let no wayward word or thought
Vex his sleep.
Peace—the peace that no man knows—
Now remains
Where the wasted woodwind blows,
Wakes and wanes.

Latter leaves, in Autumn's breath,
White and sere,
Sanctify the scholar's death,
Lying here.

Soft surprises of the sun—
Swift, serene—
O'er the mute grave-grasses run,
Cold and green.

Wet and cold the hillwinds moan;
Let them rave!
Love that takes a tender tone
Lights his grave.

He who knew the friendless face
Sorrows shew,
Often sought this quiet place
Years ago.

One, too apt to faint and fail,
Loved to stray
Here where water-shallows wail
Day by day.

Care that lays her heavy hand
On the best,
Bound him with an iron hand;
Let him rest.

Life, that flieth like a tune,
Left his eyes,
As an April afternoon
Leaves the skies.

Peace is best! If life was hard
Peace came next.
Thus the scholar, thus the bard,
Lies unvext.

Safely housed at last from rack—
Far from pain;
Who would wish to have him back?

Back again?

Let the forms he loved so well
Hover near;
Shine of hill and shade of dell,
Year by year.

All the wilful waifs that make
Beauty's face,
Let them sojourn for his sake
Round this place.

Flying splendours, singing streams,
Lutes and lights,
May they be as happy dreams:
Sounds and sights;

So that Time to Love may say,
"Wherefore weep?
Sweet is sleep at close of day!
Death is sleep."

Henry Kendall

Kiama

Towards the hills of Jamberoo
Some few fantastic shadows haste,
Uplit with fires
Like castle spires
Outshining through a mirage waste.
Behold, a mournful glory sits
On feathered ferns and woven brakes,
Where sobbing wild like restless child
The gusty breeze of evening wakes!
Methinks I hear on every breath
A lofty tone go passing by,
That whispers -- "Weave,
Though wood winds grieve,
The fadeless blooms of Poesy!"

A spirit hand has been abroad --
An evil hand to pluck the flowers --
A world of wealth,
And blooming health
Has gone from fragrant seaside bowers.
The twilight waxeth dim and dark,
The sad waves mutter sounds of woe,
But the evergreen retains its sheen,
And happy hearts exist below;
But pleasure sparkles on the sward,
And voices utter words of bliss,
And while my bride
Sits by my side,
Oh, where's the scene surpassing this?

Kiama slumbers, robed with mist,
All glittering in the dewy light
That, brooding o'er
The shingly shore,
Lies resting in the arms of Night;
And foam-flecked crags with surges chill,
And rocks embraced of cold-lipped spray,
Are moaning loud where billows crowd
In angry numbers up the bay.
The holy stars come looking down
On windy heights and swarthy strand,
And Life and Love --
The cliffs above --
Are sitting fondly hand in hand.

I hear a music inwardly,
That floods my soul with thoughts of joy;
Within my heart
Emotions start
That Time may still but ne'er destroy.
An ancient Spring revives itself,
And days which made the past divine;

And rich warm gleams from golden dreams,
All glorious in their summer shine;
And songs of half forgotten hours,
And many a sweet melodious strain,
Which still shall rise
Beneath the skies
When all things else have died again.

A white sail glimmers out at sea --
A vessel walking in her sleep;
Some Power goes past
That bends the mast,
While frightened waves to leeward leap.
The moonshine veils the naked sand
And ripples upward with the tide,
As underground there rolls a sound
From where the caverned waters glide.
A face that bears affection's glow,
The soul that speaks from gentle eyes,
And joy which slips
From loving lips
Have made this spot my Paradise!

Henry Kendall

Kooroora

The gums in the gully stand gloomy and stark,
A torrent beneath them is leaping,
And the wind goes about like a ghost in the dark
Where a chief of Wahibbi lies sleeping!
He dreams of a battle -- of foes of the past,
But he hears not the whooping abroad on the blast,
Nor the fall of the feet that are travelling fast.
Oh, why dost thou slumber, Kooroora?

They come o'er the hills in their terrible ire,
And speed by the woodlands and water;
They look down the hills at the flickering fire,
All eager and thirsty for slaughter.
Lo! the stormy moon glares like a torch from the vale,
And a voice in the belah grows wild in its wail,
As the cries of the Wanneroos swell with the gale --
Oh! rouse thee and meet them, Kooroora!

He starts from his sleep and he clutches his spear,
And the echoes roll backward in wonder,
For a shouting strikes into the hollow woods near,
Like the sound of a gathering thunder.
He clammers the ridge, with his face to the light,
The foes of Wahibbi come full in his sight --
The waters of Mooki will redden to-night.
Go! and glory awaits thee, Kooroora!

Lo! yeelamans splinter and boomerangs clash,
And a spear through the darkness is driven --
It whizzes along like a wandering flash
From the heart of a hurricane riven.
They turn to the mountains, that gloomy-browed band;
The rain droppeth down with a moan to the land,
And the face of a chieftain lies buried in sand --
Oh, the light that was quenched with Kooroora!

To-morrow the Wanneroo dogs will rejoice,
And feast in this desolate valley;
But where are his brothers -- the friends of his choice,
And why art thou absent, Ewalli?
Now silence draws back to the forest again,
And the wind, like a wayfarer, sleeps on the plain,
But the cheeks of a warrior bleach in the rain.
Oh! where are thy mourners, Kooroora?

Henry Kendall

Mooni

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Henry Kendall

News of War

Today, while yet the rumour filled the street,
I left your faces troubled with the thought
Of brothers to a bodeful fury wrought;
And, hurrying past a thousand twinkling feet,
With clouded heart a solitude I sought,
The haunt of many leaves--a cool retreat--
And mused of strife with untold interest fraught;
Of homes; of bloody battles to be fought;
Nor stirred till night rose stormy, and the deep
Moaned like some monster shaken in its sleep.
Then doleful sounds came up from lea and lynn
Where rain fell heavy on the gloomy deep,
As if the world, so old and sick of sin,
Had turned her face into the dark to weep.

Henry Kendall

Orara

THE STRONG sob of the chafing stream
That seaward fights its way
Down crags of glitter, dells of gleam,
Is in the hills to-day.

But far and faint, a grey-winged form
Hangs where the wild lights wane—
The phantom of a bygone storm,
A ghost of wind and rain.

The soft white feet of afternoon
Are on the shining meads,
The breeze is as a pleasant tune
Amongst the happy reeds.

The fierce, disastrous, flying fire,
That made the great caves ring,
And scarred the slope, and broke the spire,
Is a forgotten thing.

The air is full of mellow sounds,
The wet hill-heads are bright,
And down the fall of fragrant grounds
The deep ways flame with light.

A rose-red space of stream I see,
Past banks of tender fern;
A radiant brook, unknown to me
Beyond its upper turn:

The singing silver life I hear,
Whose home is in the green,
Far-folded woods of fountains clear,
Where I have never been.

Ah, brook above the upper bend,
I often long to stand
Where you in soft, cool shades descend
From the untrodden land!

Ah, folded woods, that hide the grace
Of moss and torrents strong,
I often wish to know the face
Of that which sings your song!

But I may linger, long, and look
Till night is over all:
My eyes will never see the brook,
Or sweet, strange waterfall.

The world is round me with its heat,
And toil, and cares that tire;

I cannot with my feeble feet
Climb after my desire.

But, on the lap of lands unseen,
Within a secret zone,
There shine diviner gold and green
Than man has ever known.

And where the silver waters sing
Down hushed and holy dells,
The flower of a celestial Spring,
A tenfold splendour, dwells.

Yea, in my dream of fall and brook
By far sweet forests furled,
I see that light for which I look
In vain through all the world—

The glory of a larger sky
On slopes of hills sublime,
That speak with God and morning, high
Above the ways of Time!

Ah! haply, in this sphere of change
Where shadows spoil the beam,
It would not do to climb that range
And test my radiant Dream.

The slightest glimpse of yonder place,
Untrodden and alone,
Might wholly kill that nameless grace
The charm of the unknown.

And therefore, though I look and long,
Perhaps the lot is bright
Which keeps the river of the song
A beauty out of sight

Henry Kendall

Outre Mer

I see, as one in dreaming,
A broad, bright, quiet sea;
Beyond it lies a haven --
The only home for me.
Some men grow strong with trouble,
But all my strength is past,
And tired and full of sorrow,
I long to sleep at last.
By force of chance and changes
Man's life is hard at best;
And, seeing rest is voiceless,
The dearest thing is rest.

Beyond the sea -- behold it,
The home I wish to seek,
The refuge of the weary,
The solace of the weak!
Sweet angel fingers beckon,
Sweet angel voices ask
My soul to cross the waters;
And yet I dread the task.
God help the man whose trials
Are tares that he must reap!
He cannot face the future --
His only hope is sleep.

Across the main a vision
Of sunset coasts, and skies,
And widths of waters gleaming,
Enchant my human eyes.
I, who have sinned and suffered,
Have sought -- with tears have sought --
To rule my life with goodness,
And shape it to my thought.
And yet there is no refuge
To shield me from distress,
Except the realm of slumber
And great forgetfulness.

Henry Kendall

Prefatory Sonnets I

I purposed once to take my pen and write,
Not songs, like some, tormented and awry
With passion, but a cunning harmony
Of words and music caught from glen and height,
And lucid colours born of woodland light
And shining places where the sea-streams lie.
But this was when the heat of youth glowed white,
And since I've put the faded purpose by,
I have no faultless fruits to offer you
Who read this book; but certain syllables
Herein are borrowed from unfooted dells
And secret hollows dear to noontide dew;
And these at least, though far between and few,
May catch the sense like subtle forest spells.

So take these kindly, even though there be
Some notes that unto other lyres belong,
Stray echoes from the elder sons of song;
And think how from its neighbouring native sea
The pensive shell doth borrow melody.
I would not do the lordly masters wrong
By filching fair words from the shining throng
Whose music haunts me as the wind a tree!
Lo, when a stranger in soft Syrian glooms
Shot through with sunset treads the cedar dells,
And hears the breezy ring of elfin bells
Far down by where the white-haired cataract booms,
He, faint with sweetness caught from forest smells,
Bears thence, unwitting, plunder of perfumes.

Henry Kendall

Rose Lorraine

Sweet water-moons, blown into lights
Of flying gold on pool and creek,
And many sounds and many sights
Of younger days are back this week.
I cannot say I sought to face
Or greatly cared to cross again
The subtle spirit of the place
Whose life is mixed with Rose Lorraine.

What though her voice rings clearly through
A nightly dream I gladly keep,
No wish have I to start anew
Heart fountains that have ceased to leap.
Here, face to face with different days,
And later things that plead for love,
It would be worse than wrong to raise
A phantom far too vain to move.

But, Rose Lorraine -- ah! Rose Lorraine,
I'll whisper now, where no one hears --
If you should chance to meet again
The man you kissed in soft, dead years,
Just say for once "He suffered much,"
And add to this "His fate was worst
Because of me, my voice, my touch" --
There is no passion like the first!

If I that breathe your slow sweet name,
As one breathes low notes on a flute,
Have vexed your peace with word of blame,
The phrase is dead -- the lips are mute.
Yet when I turn towards the wall,
In stormy nights, in times of rain,
I often wish you could recall
Your tender speeches, Rose Lorraine.

Because, you see, I thought them true,
And did not count you self-deceived,
And gave myself in all to you,
And looked on Love as Life achieved.
Then came the bitter, sudden change,
The fastened lips, the dumb despair:
The first few weeks were very strange,
And long, and sad, and hard to bear.

No woman lives with power to burst
My passion's bonds, and set me free;
For Rose is last where Rose was first,
And only Rose is fair to me.
The faintest memory of her face,
The wilful face that hurt me so,
Is followed by a fiery trace

That Rose Lorraine must never know.

I keep a faded ribbon string
You used to wear about your throat;
And of this pale, this perished thing,
I think I know the threads by rote.
God help such love! To touch your hand,
To loiter where your feet might fall,
You marvellous girl, my soul would stand
The worst of hell -- its fires and all!

Henry Kendall

September in Australia

Grey Winter hath gone, like a wearisome guest,
And, behold, for repayment,
September comes in with the wind of the West
And the Spring in her raiment!
The ways of the frost have been filled of the flowers,
While the forest discovers
Wild wings, with the halo of hyaline hours,
And the music of lovers.

September, the maid with the swift, silver feet!
She glides, and she graces
The valleys of coolness, the slopes of the heat,
With her blossomy traces;
Sweet month, with a mouth that is made of a rose,
She lightens and lingers
In spots where the harp of the evening glows,
Attuned by her fingers.

The stream from its home in the hollow hill slips
In a darling old fashion;
And the day goeth down with a song on its lips
Whose key-note is passion;
Far out in the fierce, bitter front of the sea
I stand, and remember
Dead things that were brothers and sisters of thee,
Resplendent September.

The West, when it blows at the fall of the noon
And beats on the beaches,
Is filled with a tender and tremulous tune
That touches and teaches;
The stories of Youth, of the burden of Time,
And the death of Devotion,
Come back with the wind, and are themes of the rhyme
In the waves of the ocean.

We, having a secret to others unknown,
In the cool mountain-mosses,
May whisper together, September, alone
Of our loves and our losses.
One word for her beauty, and one for the grace
She gave to the hours;
And then we may kiss her, and suffer her face
To sleep with the flowers.

Oh, season of changes -- of shadow and shine --
September the splendid!
My song hath no music to mingle with thine,
And its burden is ended;
But thou, being born of the winds and the sun,
By mountain, by river,
Mayst lighten and listen, and loiter and run,

With thy voices for ever.

Henry Kendall

Song of the Cattle Hunters

While the morning light beams on the fern-matted streams,
And the water-pools flash in its glow,
Down the ridges we fly, with a loud ringing cry --
Down the ridges and gullies we go!
And the cattle we hunt -- they are racing in front,
With a roar like the thunder of waves,
As the beat and the beat of our swift horses' feet
Start the echoes away from their caves!
As the beat and the beat
Of our swift horses' feet
Start the echoes away from their caves!

Like a wintry shore that the waters ride o'er,
All the lowlands are filling with sound;
For swiftly we gain where the herds on the plain,
Like a tempest, are tearing the ground!
And we'll follow them hard to the rails of the yard,
O'er the gulches and mountain-tops grey,
Where the beat and the beat of our swift horses' feet
Will die with the echoes away!
Where the beat and the beat
Of our swift horses' feet
Will die with the echoes away!

Henry Kendall

Song of the Shingle-Splitters

IN dark wild woods, where the lone owl broods
And the dingoes nightly yell—
Where the curlew's cry goes floating by,
We splitters of shingles dwell.
And all day through, from the time of the dew
To the hour when the mopoke calls,
Our mallets ring where the woodbirds sing
Sweet hymns by the waterfalls.
And all night long we are lulled by the song
Of gales in the grand old trees;
And in the breaks we can hear the lakes
And the moan of the distant seas.
For afar from heat and dust of street,
And hall and turret, and dome,
In forest deep, where the torrents leap,
Is the shingle-splitter's home.

The dweller in town may lie upon down,
And own his palace and park:
We envy him not his prosperous lot,
Though we slumber on sheets of bark.
Our food is rough, but we have enough;
Our drink is better than wine:
For cool creeks flow wherever we go,
Shut in from the hot sunshine.
Though rude our roof, it is weather-proof,
And at the end of the days
We sit and smoke over yarn and joke,
By the bush-fire's sturdy blaze.
For away from din, and sorrow and sin,
Where troubles but rarely come,
We jog along, like a merry song,
In the shingle-splitter's home.

What though our work be heavy, we shirk
From nothing beneath the sun;
And toil is sweet to those who can eat
And rest when the day is done.
In the Sabbath-time we hear no chime,
No sound of the Sunday bells;
But yet Heaven smiles on the forest aisles,
And God in the woodland dwells.
We listen to notes from the million throats
Of chorister birds on high,
Our psalm is the breeze in the lordly trees,
And our dome is the broad blue sky,
Oh! a brave frank life, unsmitten by strife,
We live wherever we roam,
And our hearts are free as the great strong sea,
In the shingle-splitter's home.

Henry Kendall

The Barcoo

From the runs of the Narran, wide-dotted with sheep,
And loud with the lowing of cattle,
We speed for a land where the strange forests sleep
And the hidden creeks bubble and brattle!
Now call on the horses, and leave the blind courses
And sources of rivers that all of us know;
For, crossing the ridges, and passing the ledges,
And running up gorges, we'll come to the verges
Of gullies where waters eternally flow.
Oh! the herds they will rush down the spurs of the hill
To feed on the grasses so cool and so sweet;
And I think that my life with delight will stand still
When we halt with the pleasant Barcoo at our feet.

Good-bye to the Barwon, and brigalow scrubs,
Adieu to the Culgoa ranges,
But look for the mulga and salt-bitten shrubs,
Though the face of the forest-land changes.
The leagues we may travel down beds of hot gravel,
And clay-cruste d reaches where moisture hath been,
While searching for waters, may vex us and thwart us,
Yet who would be quailing, or fainting, or failing?
Not you, who are men of the Narran, I ween!
When we leave the dry channels away to the south,
And reach the far plains we are journeying to,
We will cry, though our lips may be glued with the drouth,
Hip, hip, and hurrah for the pleasant Barcoo!

Henry Kendall

The Last of his Tribe

He crouches, and buries his face on his knees,
And hides in the dark of his hair;
For he cannot look up to the storm-smitten trees,
Or think of the loneliness there -
Of the loss and the loneliness there.

The wallaroos grope through the tufts of the grass,
And turn to their coverts for fear;
But he sits in the ashes and lets them pass
Where the boomerangs sleep with the spear -
With the nullah, the sling and the spear.

Uloola, behold him! The thunder that breaks
On the tops of the rocks with the rain,
And the wind which drives up with the salt of the lakes,
Have made him a hunter again -
A hunter and fisher again.

For his eyes have been full with a smouldering thought;
But he dreams of the hunts of yore,
And of foes that he sought, and of fights that he fought
With those who will battle no more -
Who will go to the battle no more.

It is well that the water which tumbles and fills
Goes moaning and moaning along;
For an echo rolls out from the sides of the hills,
And he starts at a wonderful song -
At the sound of a wonderful song.

And he sees through the rents of the scattering fogs
The corroboree warlike and grim,
And the lubra who sat by the fire on the logs,
To watch, like a mourner, for him -
Like a mother and mourner for him.

Will he go in his sleep from these desolate lands,
Like a chief, to the rest of his race,
With the honey-voiced woman who beckons and stands,
And gleams like a dream in his face -
Like a marvellous dream in his face?

Henry Kendall

The Muse of Australia

Where the pines with the eagles are nestled in rifts,
And the torrent leaps down to the surges,
I have followed her, clambering over the clifts,
By the chasms and moon-haunted verges.
I know she is fair as the angels are fair,
For have I not caught a faint glimpse of her there;
A glimpse of her face and her glittering hair,
And a hand with the Harp of Australia?

I never can reach you, to hear the sweet voice
So full with the music of fountains!
Oh! when will you meet with that soul of your choice,
Who will lead you down here from the mountains?
A lyre-bird lit on a shimmering space;
It dazzled mine eyes and I turned from the place,
And wept in the dark for a glorious face,
And a hand with the Harp of Australia!

Henry Kendall

Henry Kendall

The River and the Hill

And they shook their sweetness out in their sleep
On the brink of that beautiful stream,
But it wandered along with a wearisome song
Like a lover that walks in a dream:
So the roses blew
When the winds went through,
In the moonlight so white and still;
But the river it beat
All night at the feet
Of a cold and flinty hill -
Of a hard and senseless hill!

I said, "We have often showered our loves
Upon something as dry as the dust;
And the faith that is crost, and the hearts that are lost -
Oh! how can we wittingly trust?
Like the stream which flows,
And wails as it goes.
Through the moonlight so white and still,
To beat and to beat
All night at the feet
Of a cold and flinty hill -
Of a hard and senseless hill?"

"River, I stay where the sweet roses blow,
And drink of their pleasant perfumes!
Oh, why do you moan, in this wide world alone,
When so much affection here blooms?
The winds wax faint,
And the moon like a saint
Glides over the woodlands so white and still!
But you beat and you beat
All night at the feet
Of that cold and flinty hill -
Of that hard and senseless hill!"

Henry Kendall

To a Mountain

To thee, O father of the stately peaks,
Above me in the loftier light -- to thee,
Imperial brother of those awful hills
Whose feet are set in splendid spheres of flame,
Whose heads are where the gods are, and whose sides
Of strength are belted round with all the zones
Of all the world, I dedicate these songs.
And if, within the compass of this book,
There lives and glows ONE verse in which there beats
The pulse of wind and torrent -- if ONE line
Is here that like a running water sounds,
And seems an echo from the lands of leaf,
Be sure that line is thine. Here, in this home,
Away from men and books and all the schools,
I take thee for my Teacher. In thy voice
Of deathless majesty, I, kneeling, hear
God's grand authentic Gospel! Year by year,
The great sublime cantata of thy storm
Strikes through my spirit -- fills it with a life
Of startling beauty! Thou my Bible art
With holy leaves of rock, and flower, and tree,
And moss, and shining runnel. From each page
That helps to make thy awful volume, I
Have learned a noble lesson. In the psalm
Of thy grave winds, and in the liturgy
Of singing waters, lo! my soul has heard
The higher worship; and from thee, indeed,
The broad foundations of a finer hope
Were gathered in; and thou hast lifted up
The blind horizon for a larger faith!
Moreover, walking in exalted woods
Of naked glory, in the green and gold
Of forest sunshine, I have paused like one
With all the life transfigured: and a flood
Of light ineffable has made me feel
As felt the grand old prophets caught away
By flames of inspiration; but the words
Sufficient for the story of my Dream
Are far too splendid for poor human lips!
But thou, to whom I turn with reverent eyes --
O stately Father, whose majestic face
Shines far above the zone of wind and cloud,
Where high dominion of the morning is --
Thou hast the Song complete of which my songs
Are pallid adumbrations! Certain sounds
Of strong authentic sorrow in this book
May have the sob of upland torrents -- these,
And only these, may touch the great World's heart;
For, lo! they are the issues of that grief
Which makes a man more human, and his life
More like that frank exalted life of thine.
But in these pages there are other tones

In which thy large, superior voice is not --
Through which no beauty that resembles thine
Has ever shone. THESE are the broken words
Of blind occasions, when the World has come
Between me and my Dream. No song is here
Of mighty compass; for my singing robes
I've worn in stolen moments. All my days
Have been the days of a laborious life,
And ever on my struggling soul has burned
The fierce heat of this hurried sphere. But thou,
To whose fair majesty I dedicate
My book of rhymes -- thou hast the perfect rest
Which makes the heaven of the highest gods!
To thee the noises of this violent time
Are far, faint whispers; and, from age to age,
Within the world and yet apart from it,
Thou standest! Round thy lordly capes the sea
Rolls on with a superb indifference
For ever; in thy deep, green, gracious glens
The silver fountains sing for ever. Far
Above dim ghosts of waters in the caves,
The royal robe of morning on thy head
Abides for ever! Evermore the wind
Is thy august companion; and thy peers
Are cloud, and thunder, and the face sublime
Of blue mid-heaven! On thy awful brow
Is Deity; and in that voice of thine
There is the great imperial utterance
Of God for ever; and thy feet are set
Where evermore, through all the days and years,
There rolls the grand hymn of the deathless wave.

Henry Kendall