

Classic Poetry Series

Hugh McCrae

- 5 poems -

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Hugh McCrae (4 October 1876 - 17 February 1958)

Hugh Raymond McCrae was an Australian writer.

McCrae was born in Melbourne, the son of the Australian author George Gordon McCrae. He was originally articled to an architect, but later took upon writing and acting, settling eventually in Sydney and Camden. His works are notable for a sense of lightness and delicacy, and he had produced, in addition to a volume of memoirs, a considerable body of verse, and a light operetta, an edition of his grandmother's journal, and a volume of prose pieces.

He wrote a fantasy play *The Ship of Heaven* which was produced by the Independent Theatre in 1933, for which Alfred Hill composed and conducted the music.

McCrae was well known to a number of distinguished figures in Australian artistic and literary circles. He is remembered for his friendships with Norman Lindsay and [Kenneth Slessor](http://www.poemhunter.com/kenneth-slessor/), but he was also friendly with such figures as [Christopher Brennan](http://www.poemhunter.com/christopher-john-brennan/) and [Shaw Neilson](http://www.poemhunter.com/john-shaw-neilson/).

Works:

Satyrs and Sunlight (1909)
Columbone (1920)
Idyllia (1922)
Satyrs and Sunlight (1928; Fanfrolico Press)
The Mimshi Maiden (1938)
Poems (1939)
Forests of Pan (1944)
Voice of the Forest (1945)
Story-Book Only (1948)
The Ship of Heaven (1951)

Memoirs

My Father and My Fathers Friends. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1935

A Bridal Song

SHE is more sparkling beautiful
Than dawn-light seen thro' tears
The weeping worlds of Paradise
Shed down upon the spheres.

Her eyes are bright and passionate
With love's immortal flame—
The flowers of a wildwood tree
In petals write her name.

Her breath of life 's so wondrous sweet
The bees halt, in amaze,
Their streaming honey-laden fleet
Above the meadow ways;

And every little singing thing
Atween the breasted hill
And God's high-vaulted cloistering
Upraises with a will

Paeans of laud, and cheery chaunts
Of her, who now is mine—
Queen-Angel of angelic haunts
Thro' months of mead and wine.

Hugh McCrae

Australian Spring

The bleak faced Winter, with his braggart winds
(Coiled to his scrawny throat in tattered black),
Posts down the highway of his late domain,
His spurs like leeches in his bleeding hack.

He rides to reach the huge embattled hills
Where all the brooding summer he may lie
Engulfed in Kosciusko's silent snow,
His shadow waving o'er the lofty sky.

And jolly Spring, with love and laughter gay
Full fountaining, lets loose her tide of bees
Upon the waking ember-flame of bloom
New kindled in the honey-scented trees.

The old, old man forsakes the chimney-hole,
Where erst he warmed his bones and lazy blood,
And, clasping Molly to his wheezing breast,
Triumphant floats, cock-whoop, upon the flood.

Hugh McCrae

Mortgaged

These spotted trousers, now too short,
Were once some verses smoothly wrought,
The worn-out bluchers on my feet
Twin sonnets to My Lady Sweet,
This 'decker' hanging round my nose
The product of an ODE TO ROSE;
The collar, tie and underpants
Are still an editor's advance
For some wild Bacchanalian song
The gods, I hope, will send along...
To work a dead horse off one's hand
(More so, of Pegasus's brand)
Is what a poet hates to do,
Yet still is what Fate drives us to.
Ah me, I feel my soul is ripe
For forty couplets' worth of tripe,
Three lines of beer, a verse of bread,
But O ... I'll have to pay instead
That d___d old Editor!!

Hugh McCrae

Never Again

SHE looked on me with sadder eyes than Death,
And, moving through the large, autumnal trees,
Failed like a phantom on the bitter breath
Of midnight; and the unilluminated seas
Roared in the darkness out of centuries.

Never on earth, or in the holy sky,
Beyond the limits of the secret ring
God walls about His Kingdom jealously,
Has ever been a fairer, sweeter thing
Than she: more fair than all imagining.

Never again! though I should waste the hours
To search the galleries of angels thro',
Or, in the exhalation of the flowers,
Gaze for her spirit, tremulous as dew,
To reascend the unfathomable blue.

I seek her in the labyrinthine maze
Of stars unravelling their golden chain,
And, from my cavern, mark the lightning blaze
A pathway for her down the singing rain.
In vain, in vain: she cannot come again.

Hugh McCrae

Song of the Rain

Night,
and the yellow pleasure of candle-light....
old brown books and the kind, fine face of the clock
fogged in the veils of the fire - it's cuddling tock.

The cat,
greening her eyes on the flame-litten mat;
wickedly, wakeful she yawns at the rain
bending the roses over the pane,
and a bird in my heart begins to sing
over and over the same sweet thing--

Safe in the house with my boyhood's love
and our children asleep in the attic above.

Hugh McCrae