

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Ralph Hodgson**

**- poems -**

**Publication Date:**

2004

**Publisher:**

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

## **A Wood Song**

Now one and all, you Roses,  
Wake up, you lie too long!  
This very morning closes  
The Nightingale his song;

Each from its olive chamber  
His babies every one  
This very morning clamber  
Into the shining sun.

You Slug-a-beds and Simples,  
Why will you so delay!  
Dears, doff your olive wimples,  
And listen while you may.

Ralph Hodgson

## After

"How fared you when you mortal were?  
What did you see on my peopled star?"  
"Oh well enough," I answered her,  
"It went for me where mortals are!"

"I saw blue flowers and the merlin's flight  
And the rime on the wintry tree,  
Blue doves I saw and summer light  
On the wings of the cinnamon bee."

Ralph Hodgson

## The Bride

The book was dull, its pictures  
As leaden as its lore,  
But one glad, happy picture  
Made up for all and more:  
'Twas that of you, sweet peasant,  
Beside your grannie's door --  
I never stopped so startled  
Inside a book before.

Just so had I sat spell-bound,  
Quite still with staring eyes,  
If some great shiny hoopoe  
Or moth of song-bird size  
Had drifted to my window  
And trailed its fineries --  
Just so had I been startled,  
Spelled with the same surprise.

It pictured you when springtime  
In part had given place  
But not surrendered wholly  
To summer in your face;  
When still your slender body  
Was all a childish grace  
Though woman's richest glories  
Were building there apace.

'Twas blissful so to see you,  
Yet not without a sigh  
I dwelt upon the people  
Who saw you not as I,  
But in your living sweetness,  
Beneath your native sky;  
Ah, bliss to be the people  
When you went tripping by!

I sat there, thinking, wondering,  
About your life and home,  
The happy days behind you,  
The happy days to come,  
Your grannie in her corner,  
Upstairs the little room  
Where you wake up each morning  
To dream all day -- of Whom?

That ring upon your finger,  
Who gave you that to wear?  
What blushing smith or farm lad  
Came stammering at your ear  
A million-time-told story  
No maid but burns to hear,  
And went about his labours

Delighting in his dear!

I thought of you sweet lovers,  
The things you say and do,  
The pouts and tears and partings  
And swearings to be true,  
The kissings in the barley --  
You brazens, both of you!  
I nearly burst out crying  
With thinking of you two.

It put me in a frenzy  
Of pleasure nearly pain,  
A host of blurry faces  
'Gan shaping in my brain,  
I shut my eyes to see them  
Come forward clear and plain,  
I saw them come full flower,  
And blur and fade again.

One moment so I saw them,  
One sovereign moment so,  
A host of girlish faces  
All happy and aglow  
With Life and Love it dealt them  
Before it laid them low  
A hundred years, a thousand,  
Ten thousand years ago.

One moment so I saw them  
Come back with time full tide,  
The host of girls, your grannies,  
Who lived and loved and died  
To give your mouth its beauty,  
Your soul its gentle pride,  
Who wrestled with the ages  
To give the world a bride.

Ralph Hodgson