Classic Poetry Series

Stephan Stephansson

- poems -

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Canada

It was formerly believed, on a sea-battered shore
though the storm at home blasted,
that in the distant west there still lay lands,
where calm and sun never ended,
for there the good season had found it's retreat
and freedom and compassion - all that is best.

They set no sail, but thought high,
by the ocean they dreaming stood,
as the sun slid into the lowest west
in the evening's blue-misted spring dusk,
then hope and desire glide out with the breeze
on the still-blank, sun gilt, wide armed sea.

Though oceans still flood, that separate lands,
the passage across is effortless.
And our Markland, Canada, its genius and care
the world held out to you over the sea.
To the Greeks you could only appear in a poem -
but to Icelandic sea kings you gave yourself first.

Still human hope turns its tired eyes
from the east, to dream about you -
you proved good to all, who loved you fervently,
who possess here rapture and home.
And all with you is fullfilled and able to root
which the unquiet spirit has dreamed best.

Stephan Stephansson

In Wartime

In Europe's reeking slaughter pen
They mince the flesh of murdered men
While swinish merchants, snout in trough
Drink all the bloody profits off!

Stephan Stephansson

When I Was an Editor

So maudlin, with pity and pathos I stood
If someone who erred got the lashes;
If hanged, I'd weep over the ashes.
With vocal dispraise such injustice I viewed

But somehow as soon as the war-craze ensued,
When slaughter en masse was the popular mood
And corpses all over the planet were strewed,
With dumb indecision I stood.

For there was the problem of friendships and food
- One's sympathies nobody cashes.
To dampen my conscience-clashes
The cracks in my honor I artfully glued
With unctuous lies that I hastily brewed
- And cheered just as loud as I could.

Stephan Stephansson