

Classic Poetry Series

Thomas E Spencer

- poems -

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Do I Love Thee

I ask my heart, "Do I love thee?"
But how can I e'er forget
The feelings of joy and rapture
That thrilled me when first we met?
The memory of each glad meeting
Is treasured within my heart,
Which has well-nigh ceased its beating,
Since, in sorrow, we had to part.

Each night, as I seek my pillow,
I murmur a prayer for thee,
I breathe thy name, as the sunbeams
Flash red on the eastern sea.
Thy spirit is still the beacon
That guides me 'mid care and strife,
And there 'twill remain for ever,
My darling, my love, my life.

Thomas E Spencer

Farewell

As we travel Life's weary journey,
And plod through the gathering years,
With our burdens of care and sorrow,
O'er a pathway bedewed with tears.
If, perchance, for a fleeting moment
Our hearts should with rapture swell,
We have added but one more sorrow,
When we bid the glad time "Farewell".

I have watched the bright dawn awaking,
And noted each changing light,
As the sun, in its morning splendour,
Dispelled the dark gloom of night.
I have welcomed its bright rays stealing
Over hill-top, and wood, and dell;
Yet, my joy was alloyed with sorrow,
As I bade the bright stars "Farewell".

I have seen the red sun descending
To its home in the glowing west,
Whilst the tremulous voice of nature
Was solemnly lulled to rest.
I have welcomed the stars, appearing,
And greeted them one by one,
Yet, my greeting was toned with sadness,
As I said "Farewell" to the sun.

When we welcome the summer sunshine,
Farewell to the flowers of Spring.
Adieu to the fruits of Autumn,
When we welcome the frosty king.
Good-bye to the joys of childhood,
When vigorous youth appears;
Then - a season of strife and turmoil,
And - farewell to the vanished years.

I am sighing a farewell message,
As I sit in the gathering gloom.
Farewell to all earthly sorrows,
Then - rest, in the silent tomb.
Farewell to the trees, and flowers,
To mountain, and stream, and dell,
Farewell to the glorious sunlight,
To the moon and stars, "Farewell"

Thomas E Spencer

How McDougal Topped The Score

A peaceful spot is Piper's Flat. The folk that live around -
They keep themselves by keeping sheep and turning up the ground;
But the climate is erratic, and the consequences are
The struggle with the elements is everlasting war.
We plough, and sow, and harrow - then sit down and pray for rain;
And then we get all flooded out and have to start again.
But the folk are now rejoicing as they ne'er rejoiced before,
For we've played Molongo cricket, and M'Dougal topped the score!

Molongo had a head on it, and challenged us to play
A single-innings match for lunch - the losing team to pay.
We were not great guns at cricket, but we couldn't well say, "No!"
So we all began to practise, and we let the reaping go.
We scoured the Flat for ten miles round to muster up our men,
But when the list was totalled we could only number ten.
Then up spoke big Tim Brady: he was always slow to speak,
And he said - "What price M'Dougal, who lives down at Cooper's Creek?"

So we sent for old M'Dougal, and he stated in reply
That he'd never played at cricket, but he'd half a mind to try.
He couldn't come to practise - he was getting in his hay,
But he guessed he'd show the beggars from Molongo how to play.
Now, M'Dougal was a Scotchman, and a canny one at that,
So he started in to practise with a pailing for a bat.
He got Mrs Mac. to bowl him, but she couldn't run at all,
So he trained his sheep-dog, Pincher, how to scout and fetch the ball.

Now, Pincher was no puppy; he was old, and worn, and grey;
But he understood M'Dougal, and - accustomed to obey -
When M'Dougal cried out "Fetch it!" he would fetch it in a trice,
But, until the word was "Drop it!" he would grip it like a vice.
And each succeeding night they played until the light grew dim:
Sometimes M'Dougal struck the ball - and sometimes the ball struck him!
Each time he struck, the ball would plough a furrow in the ground,
And when he missed the impetus would turn him three times round.

The fatal day at length arrived - the day that was to see
Molongo bite the dust, or Piper's Flat knocked up a tree!
Molongo's captain won the toss, and sent his men to bat,
And they gave some leather-hunting to the men from Piper's Flat.
When the ball sped where M'Dougal stood, firm planted in his track,
He shut his eyes, and turned him round, and stopped it - with his back!
The highest score was twenty-two, the total sixty-six,
When Brady sent a yorker down which scattered Johnson's sticks.

Then Piper's Flat went in to bat, for glory and renown,
But, like the grass before the scythe, our wickets tumbled down.
"Nine wickets down for seventeen, with fifty more to win!"
Our captain heaved a heavy sigh, and sent M'Dougal in.
"Ten pounds to one you'll lose it!" cried a barracker from town;
But M'Dougal said "I'll tak' it mon!" and planked the money down.
Then he girded up his moleskins in a self-reliant style,

Threw off his hat and boots, and faced the bowler with a smile.

He held the bat the wrong side out, and Johnson with a grin
Stepped lightly to the bowling crease, and sent a "wobblor" in;
M'Dougal spooned it softly back, and Johnson waited there,
But M'Dougal, crying "Fetch it!" started running like a hare.
Molongo shouted "Victory! He's out as sure as eggs,"
When Pincher started through the crowd, and ran through Johnson's legs.
He seized the ball like lightning; then he ran behind a log,
An M'Dougal kept on running, while Molongo chased the dog!

They chased him up, they chased him down, they chased him round, and then
He darted through a slip-rail as the scorer shouted "Ten!"
M'Dougal puffed; Molongo swore; excitement was intense;
As the scorer marked down twenty, Pincher cleared a barbed-wire fence.
"Let us head him!" shrieked Molongo. "Brain the mongrel with a bat!"
"Run it out! Good old M'Dougal!" yelled the men of Piper's Flat.
And M'Dougal kept on jogging, and then Pincher doubled back,
And the scorer counted "Forty" as they raced across the track.

M'Dougal's legs were going fast, Molongo's breath was gone -
But still Molongo chased the dog - M'Dougal struggled on.
When the scorer shouted "Fifty" then they knew the chase would cease;
And M'Dougal gasped out "Drop it!" as he dropped within his crease.
Then Pincher dropped the ball, and as instinctively he knew
Discretion was the wiser plan, he disappeared from view;
And as Molongo's beaten men exhausted lay around
We raised M'Dougal shoulder high, and bore him from the ground.

We bore him to M'Ginniss's, where lunch was ready laid,
And filled him up with whisky-punch, for which Molongo paid.
We drank his health in bumpers, and we cheered him three times three,
And when Molongo got its breath, Molongo joined the spree.
And the critics say they never saw a cricket match like that,
When M'Dougal broke the record in the game at Piper's Flat;
And the folks were jubilating as they never did before;
For we played Molongo cricket - and M'Dougal topped the score!

Thomas E Spencer

The Song Of The Sundowner

I'm the monarch of valley, and hill, and plain,
And the king of this golden land.
A continent broad is my vast domain,
And its people at my command.
My tribute I levy on high and low,
And I chuckle at Fortune's frown;
No matter how far in the day I go,
I'm at home when the sun goes down.

In the drought-stricken plains of the lone Paroo,
When the rainless earth is bare,
I take toll from the shepherd and jackeroo,
And I sample their humble fare.
Not a fig care I though the stock may die,
And the sun-cracked plains be brown;
I can make for the east, where the grass is high
I'm at home when the sun goes down.

When river and creek their banks o'er leap,
And the flood rolls raging by;
When the settlers are mourning their crops and sheep,
I can watch them without a sigh.
What matter to me if their fences go,
If their horses and cattle drown?
I can find a good meal when the sun is low,
And a home when the sun goes down.

So I wander away at my own sweet will,
Be it northerly, south or west;
When I'm hungry my paunch I can always fill,
When I'm tired I can always rest.
I care not what others may do or think,
I'm a monarch without a crown'
I can always be sure of my food and drink,
And a home when the sun goes down.

Thomas E Spencer

The Voice Of The Willows

Hiding away from the sunlight,
Close by a rippling stream,
Hallowed by childish fancies
And many a waking dream;
There is my royal palace,
Within it my regal throne,
The former, a grave of willows,
The latter, a mossy stone.
And legends of hope did the willows tell
To my childish ears, in that rustic dell.

Here, in my sunny childhood,
I dreamed in my mystic home,
Weaving the fairy garlands
To wear in the years to come.
Friendship, and love, and honour,
They all were to be my own;
The future was strewn with roses,
As I dreamed on my mossy stone.
And still through the leaves, as they fluttered or fell
The breezes sang, in the willow dell.

Visions of hope are departed,
Fairy-like dreams have fled.
The thorns still remain, but the roses,
Like friendship and love, are dead.
The breezes sigh through the willows,
I ponder and dream alone
Of the life beyond the river,
As I sit on my mossy stone.
And the breezes sound like a funeral knell,
As they sigh and sob, through the willow dell.

Thomas E Spencer

Think Of Me

Think of me, when 'mid joy and gladness
They bark glides smoothly down life's tranquil stream.
When thy life, free from care or sadness,
Is calm and peaceful as a summer dream.

Think of me, though thy path be dreary,
Though care and sorrow may thy life enshroud;
When crushed hopes make the heart grow weary
And life seems darkened by a wintry cloud.

Think of me, let thy heart grow kinder
In summer's sunshine or in winter's gloom,
Think of me, when thy sole reminder
Is but the shadow of my silent tomb.

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