

Classic Poetry Series

William Wilfred Campbell

- poems -

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An October Evening

1 The woods are haggard and lonely,
2 The skies are hooded for snow,
3 The moon is cold in Heaven,
4 And the grasses are sere below.

5 The bearded swamps are breathing
6 A mist from meres afar,
7 And grimly the Great Bear circles
8 Under the pale Pole Star.

9 There is never a voice in Heaven,
10 Nor ever a sound on earth,
11 Where the spectres of winter are rising
12 Over the night's wan girth.

13 There is slumber and death in the silence,
14 There is hate in the winds so keen;
15 And the flash of the north's great sword-blade
16 Circles its cruel sheen.

17 The world grows agèd and wintry,
18 Love's face peaked and white;
19 And death is kind to the tired ones
20 Who sleep in the north to-night.

William Wilfred Campbell

Avenging Angel, The

1 When the last faint red of the day is dead,
2 And the dim, far heaven is lit
3 With the silvern cars
4 Of the orient stars,
5 And the winged winds whimper and flit;

6 Then I rise through the dome of my aerodrome,
7 Like a giant eagle in flight;
8 And I take my place
9 In the vengeful race
10 With the sinister fleets of night.

11 As I rise and rise in the cloudy skies,
12 No sound in the silence is heard,
13 Save the lonesome whirr
14 Of my engine's purr,
15 Like the wings of a monster bird.

16 And naught is seen save the vault, serene,
17 Of the vasty realms of night,
18 That vanish, aloof,
19 To eternity's roof,
20 As I mount in my ominous flight.

21 And I float and pause in the fleecy gauze,
22 Like a bird in a nest of down;
23 While 'neath me in deeps
24 Of blackness, sleeps
25 The far, vast London town.

26 But I am not here, like a silvern sphere,
27 To glory the deeps of space,
28 But a sentinel, I,
29 In this tower of the sky,
30 Scanning the dim deep's face.

31 For, sudden, afar, like a luminous star,
32 Or a golden horn of the moon,
33 Or a yellow leaf
34 Of the forest's grief,
35 When the autumn winds are atune;

36 There is borne on my sight, down the spaces of night,
37 By the engines of evilment sped,
38 That wonderful, rare,
39 Vast ship of the air,
40 Beautiful, ominous, dread.

41 One instant she floats, most magic of boats,
42 Illusive, implacable, there;
43 Throned angel of ill,
44 On her crystal-built hill,

45 O'er a people's defenceless despair.
46 Then sudden, I rise, like a bolt through the skies,
47 To the very dim roofs of the world;
48 Till down in the grey,
49 I see my grim prey,
50 Like a pallid gold leaf, uncurled.
51 And I hover and swing, until swiftly I spring,
52 And drop like a falling star;
53 And again and again,
54 My death-dealing rain,
55 Hurl to the deeps afar.
56 Then I hover and listen, till I see the far glisten
57 Of a flame-flash blanching the night;
58 And I know that my hate,
59 That has lain in wait,
60 Has won in the grim air-fight.
61 Then I curve and slant, while my engines pant,
62 And the wings of my great bird tame;
63 While the sinister Hun,
64 In his ill, undone,
65 Goes out in a blinding flame.

William Wilfred Campbell

Bereavement of the Fields

1 Soft fall the February snows, and soft
2 Falls on my heart the snow of wintry pain;
3 For never more, by wood or field or croft,
4 Will he we knew walk with his loved again;
5 No more, with eyes adream and soul aloft,
6 In those high moods where love and beauty reign,
7 Greet his familiar fields, his skies without a stain.

8 Soft fall the February snows, and deep,
9 Like downy pinions from the moulting breast
10 Of all the mothering sky, round his hushed sleep,
11 Flutter a million loves upon his rest,
12 Where once his well-loved flowers were fain to peep,
13 With adder-tongue and waxen petals prest,
14 In young spring evenings reddening down the west.

15 Soft fall the February snows, and hushed
16 Seems life's loud action, all its strife removed,
17 Afar, remote, where grief itself seems crushed,
18 And even hope and sorrow are reproved;
19 For he whose cheek erstwhile with hope was flushed,
20 And by the gentle haunts of being moved,
21 Hath gone the way of all he dreamed and loved.

22 Soft fall the February snows, and lost,
23 This tender spirit gone with scarce a tear,
24 Ere, loosened from the dungeons of the frost,
25 Wakens with yearnings new the enfranchised year,
26 Late winter-wizened, gloomed, and tempest-tost;
27 And Hesper's gentle, delicate veils appear,
28 When dream anew the days of hope and fear.

29 And Mother Nature, she whose heart is fain,
30 Yea, she who grieves not, neither faints nor fails,
31 Building the seasons, she will bring again
32 March with rudening madness of wild gales,
33 April and her wraiths of tender rain,
34 And all he loved,—this soul whom memory veils,
35 Beyond the burden of our strife and pain.

36 Not his to wake the strident note of song,
37 Nor pierce the deep recesses of the heart,
38 Those tragic wells, remote, of might and wrong;
39 But rather, with those gentler souls apart,
40 He dreamed like his own summer days along,
41 Filled with the beauty born of his own heart,
42 Sufficient in the sweetness of his song.

43 Outside this prison-house of all our tears,
44 Enfranchised from our sorrow and our wrong,
45 Beyond the failure of our days and years,
46 Beyond the burden of our saddest song,

47 He moves with those whose music filled his ears,
48 And claimed his gentle spirit from the throng,—
49 Wordsworth, Arnold, Keats, high masters of his song.

50 Like some rare Pan of those old Grecian days,
51 Here in our hours of deeper stress reborn,
52 Unfortunate thrown upon life's evil ways,
53 His inward ear heard ever that satyr horn
54 From Nature's lips reverberate night and morn,
55 And fled from men and all their troubled maze,
56 Standing apart, with sad, incurious gaze.

57 And now, untimely cut, like some sweet flower
58 Plucked in the early summer of its prime,
59 Before it reached the fulness of its dower,
60 He withers in the morning of our time;
61 Leaving behind him, like a summer shower,
62 A fragrance of earth's beauty, and the chime
63 Of gentle and imperishable rhyme.

64 Songs in our ears of winds and flowers and buds
65 And gentle loves and tender memories
66 Of Nature's sweetest aspects, her pure moods,
67 Wrought from the inward truth of intimate eyes
68 And delicate ears of him who harks and broods,
69 And, nightly pondering, daily grows more wise,
70 And dreams and sees in mighty solitudes.

71 Soft fall the February snows, and soft
72 He sleeps in peace upon the breast of her
73 He loved the truest; where, by wood and croft,
74 The wintry silence folds in fleecy blur
75 About his silence, while in glooms aloft
76 The mighty forest fathers, without stir,
77 Guard well the rest of him, their rare sweet worshipper.

William Wilfred Campbell

Blind Caravan, The

1 I am a slave, both dumb and blind,
2 Upon a journey dread;
3 The iron hills lie far behind,
4 The seas of mist ahead.

5 Amid a mighty caravan
6 I toil a sombre track,
7 The strangest road since time began,
8 Where no foot turneth back.

9 Here rosy youth at morning's prime
10 And weary man at noon
11 Are crooked shapes at eventime
12 Beneath the haggard moon.

13 Faint elfin songs from out the past
14 Of some lost sunset land
15 Haunt this grim pageant drifting, vast,
16 Across the trackless sand.

17 And often for some nightward wind
18 We stay a space and hark,
19 Then leave the sunset lands behind,
20 And plunge into the dark.

21 Somewhere, somewhere, far on in front,
22 There strides a lonely man
23 Who is all strength, who bears the brunt,
24 The battle and the ban.

25 I know not of his face or form,
26 His voice or battle-scars,
27 Or how he fronts the haunted storm
28 Beneath the wintry stars;

29 I know not of his wisdom great
30 That leads this sightless host
31 Beyond the barren hills of fate
32 Unto some kindlier coast.

33 But often 'mid the eerie black
34 Through this sad caravan
35 A strange, sweet thrill is whispered back,
36 Borne on from man to man.

37 A strange, glad joy that fills the night
38 Like some far marriage horn,
39 Till every heart is filled with light
40 Of some belated morn.

41 The way is long, and rough the road,
42 And bitter the night, and dread,

43 And each poor slave is but a goad
44 To lash the one ahead.

45 Evil the foes that lie in wait
46 To slay us in the pass,
47 Bloody the slaughter at the gate,
48 And bleak the wild morass;

49 And I am but a shriveled thing
50 Beneath the midnight sky;
51 A wasted, wan remembering
52 Of days long wandered by.

53 And yet I lift my sightless face
54 Toward the eerie light,
55 And tread the lonely way we trace
56 Across the haunted night.

William Wilfred Campbell

Canadian Folksong

The doors are shut, the windows fast;
Outside the gust is driving past,
Outside the shivering ivy clings,
While on the hob the kettle sings.
Margery, Margery, make the tea,
Singeth the kettle merrily.

The streams are hushed up where they flowed,
The ponds are frozen along the road,
The cattle are housed in shed and byre,
While singeth the kettle on the fire.
Margery, Margery, make the tea,
Singeth the kettle merrily.

The fisherman on the bay in his boat
Shivers and buttons up his coat;
The traveler stops at the tavern door,
And the kettle answers the chimney's roar.
Margery, Margery, make the tea,
Singeth the kettle merrily.

The firelight dances upon the wall,
Footsteps are heard in the outer hall;
A kiss and a welcome that fill the room,
And the kettle sings in the glimmer and gloom.
Margery, Margery, make the tea,
Singeth the kettle merrily.

William Wilfred Campbell

Dread Voyage, The

1 Trim the sails the weird stars under—
2 Past the iron hail and thunder,
3 Past the mystery and the wonder,
4 Sails our fated bark;
5 Past the myriad voices hailing,
6 Past the moaning and the wailing,
7 The far voices failing, failing,
8 Drive we to the dark.

9 Past the headlands grim and sombre,
10 Past the shores of mist and slumber,
11 Leagues on leagues no man may number,
12 Soundings none can mark;
13 While the olden voices calling,
14 One by one behind are falling;
15 Into silence dread, appalling,
16 Drift we to the dark.

17 Far behind, the sad eyes yearning,
18 Hands that wring for our returning,
19 Lamps of love yet vainly burning:
20 Past the headlands stark!
21 Through the wintry snows and sleeting,
22 On our pallid faces beating,
23 Through the phantom twilight fleeting,
24 Drive we to the dark.

25 Without knowledge, without warning,
26 Drive we to no lands of morning;
27 Far ahead no signals horning
28 Hail our nightward bark.
29 Hopeless, helpless, weird, outdriven,
30 Fateless, friendless, dread, unshriven,
31 For some race-doom unforgiven,
32 Drive we to the dark.

33 Not one craven or unseemly;
34 In the flare-light gleaming dimly,
35 Each ghost-face is watching grimly:
36 Past the headlands stark!
37 Hearts wherein no hope may waken,
38 Like the clouds of night wind-shaken,
39 Chartless, anchorless, forsaken,
40 Drift we to the dark.

William Wilfred Campbell

End of the Furrow, The

When we come to the end of the furrow,
When our last day's work is done,
We will drink of the long red shaft of light
That slants from the westering sun.

We will turn from the field of our labour,
From the warm earth glad and brown,
And wend our feet up that village street,
And with our folk lie down.

Yea, after the long toil, surcease,
Rest to the hearts that roam,
When we join in the mystic silence of eve
The glad procession home.

William Wilfred Campbell

Higher Kinship, The

Life is too grim with anxious, eating care
To cherish what is best. Our souls are scarred
By daily agonies, and our conscience marred
By petty tyrannies that waste and wear.
Why is this human fate so hard to bear?
Could we but live with hill-lakes silver-starred,
Or where the eternal silence leaneth toward
The awful front of nature, waste and bare:

Then might we, brothers to the lofty thought
And inward self-communion of her dream,
Into that closer kin with love be brought,
Where mighty hills and woods and waters, wan,
Moon-paved at midnight or godlike at dawn,
Hold all earth's aspirations in their gleam.

William Wilfred Campbell

How one Winter Came in the Lake Region

1 For weeks and weeks the autumn world stood still,
2 Clothed in the shadow of a smoky haze;
3 The fields were dead, the wind had lost its will,
4 And all the lands were hushed by wood and hill,
5 In those grey, withered days.

6 Behind a mist the bleak sun rose and set,
7 At night the moon would nestle in a cloud;
8 The fisherman, a ghost, did cast his net;
9 The lake its shores forgot to chafe and fret,
10 And hushed its caverns loud.

11 Far in the smoky woods the birds were mute,
12 Save that from blackened tree a jay would scream,
13 Or far in swamps the lizard's lonesome lute
14 Would pipe in thirst, or by some gnarled root
15 The tree-toad trilled his dream.

16 From day to day still hushed the season's mood,
17 The streams stayed in their runnels shrunk and dry;
18 Suns rose aghast by wave and shore and wood,
19 And all the world, with ominous silence, stood
20 In weird expectancy:

21 When one strange night the sun like blood went down,
22 Flooding the heavens in a ruddy hue;
23 Red grew the lake, the sere fields parched and brown,
24 Red grew the marshes where the creeks stole down,
25 But never a wind-breath blew.

26 That night I felt the winter in my veins,
27 A joyous tremor of the icy glow;
28 And woke to hear the north's wild vibrant strains,
29 While far and wide, by withered woods and plains,
30 Fast fell the driving snow.

William Wilfred Campbell

In My Study,

Out over my study,
All ashen and ruddy,
Sinks the December sun;
And high up over
The chimney's soot cove,
The winter night wind has begun.

Here in the red embers
I dream old Decembers,
Until the low moan of the blast,
Like a voice out of Ghost-land,

Or memory's lost-land,
Seems to conjure up wraiths of the past.

Then into the room
Through the firelight and gloom,
Some one steals,—let the night-wind grow bleak,

And ever so coldly,—
Two white arms enfold me,
And a sweet face is close to my cheek

William Wilfred Campbell

On Christmas Eve

In byre and barn the mows are brim with sheaves,
Where stealeth in with phosphorescent tread
The glimmering moon, and, 'neath his wattled eaves,
The kennelled hound unto the darkness grieves
His chilly straw, and from his gloom-lit shed,
The wakeful cock proclaims the midnight dread.

With mullioned windows, 'mid its skeleton trees,
Beneath the moon the ancient manor stands,
Old gables rattle in the midnight breeze,
Old elms make answer to the moaning seas

Beyond the moorlands, on the wintry sands,
While drives the gust along the leafless lands.

William Wilfred Campbell

Out of Pompeii

1 She lay, face downward, on her beaded arm,
2 In this her new, sweet dream of human bliss,
3 Her heart within her fearful, fluttering, warm,
4 Her lips yet pained with love's first timorous kiss.
5 She did not note the darkening afternoon,
6 She did not mark the lowering of the sky
7 O'er that great city. Earth had given its boon
8 Unto her lips, love touched her and passed by.

9 In one dread moment all the sky grew dark,
10 The hideous rain, the panic, the red rout,
11 Where love lost love, and all the world might mark
12 The city overwhelmed, blotted out
13 Without one cry, so quick oblivion came,
14 And life passed to the black where all forget;
15 But she,—we know not of her house or name,—
16 In love's sweet musings doth lie dreaming yet.

17 The dread hell passed, the ruined world grew still,
18 And the great city passed to nothingness:
19 The ages went and mankind worked its will.
20 Then men stood still amid the centuries' press,
21 And in the ash-hid ruins opened bare,
22 As she lay down in her shamed loveliness,
23 Sculptured and frozen, late they found her there,
24 Image of love 'mid all that hideousness.

25 Her head, face downward, on her bended arm,
26 Her single robe that showed her shapely form,
27 Her wondrous fate love keeps divinely warm
28 Over the centuries, past the slaying storm,
29 The heart can read in writings time hath left,
30 That linger still through death's oblivion;
31 And in this waste of life and light bereft,
32 She brings again a beauty that had gone.

33 And if there be a day when all shall wake,
34 As dreams the hoping, doubting human heart,
35 The dim forgetfulness of death will break
36 For her as one who sleeps with lips apart;
37 And did God call her suddenly, I know
38 She'd wake as morning wakened by the thrush,
39 Feel that red kiss across the centuries glow,
40 And make all heaven rosier by her blush.

William Wilfred Campbell

Pan the Fallen

1 He wandered into the market
2 With pipes and goatish hoof;
3 He wandered in a grotesque shape,
4 And no one stood aloof.
5 For the children crowded round him,
6 The wives and greybeards, too,
7 To crack their jokes and have their mirth,
8 And see what Pan would do.

9 The Pan he was they knew him,
10 Part man, but mostly beast,
11 Who drank, and lied, and snatched what bones
12 Men threw him from their feast;
13 Who seemed in sin so merry,
14 So careless in his woe,
15 That men despised, scarce pitied him,
16 And still would have it so.

17 He swelled his pipes and thrilled them,
18 And drew the silent tear;
19 He made the gravest clack with mirth
20 By his sardonic leer.
21 He blew his pipes full sweetly
22 At their amused demands,
23 And caught the scornful, earth-flung pence
24 That fell from careless hands.

25 He saw the mob's derision,
26 And took it kindly, too,
27 And when an epithet was flung,
28 A coarser back he threw;
29 But under all the masking
30 Of a brute, unseemly part,
31 I looked, and saw a wounded soul,
32 And a god-like, breaking heart.

33 And back of the elfin music,
34 The burlesque, clownish play,
35 I knew a wail that the weird pipes made,
36 A look that was far away,—
37 A gaze into some far heaven
38 Whence a soul had fallen down;
39 But the mob only saw the grotesque beast
40 And the antics of the clown.

41 For scant-flung pence he paid them
42 With mirth and elfin play,
43 Till, tired for a time of his antics queer,
44 They passed and went their way;
45 Then there in the empty market
46 He ate his scanty crust,
47 And, tired face turned to heaven, down

48 He laid him in the dust.
49 And over his wild, strange features
50 A softer light there fell,
51 And on his worn, earth-driven heart
52 A peace ineffable.
53 And the moon rose over the market,
54 But Pan the beast was dead;
55 While Pan the god lay silent there,
56 With his strange, distorted head.

57 And the people, when they found him,
58 Stood still with awesome fear.
59 No more they saw the beast's rude hoof,
60 The furtive, clownish leer;
61 But the lightest in that audience
62 Went silent from the place,
63 For they knew the look of a god released
64 That shone from his dead face.

William Wilfred Campbell

Politician, The

Carven in leathern mask or brazen face,
 Were I time's sculptor, I would set this man.
 Retreating from the truth, his hawk-eyes scan
The platforms of all public thought for place.
There wriggling with insinuating grace,
 He takes poor hope and effort by the hand,
 And flatters with half-truths and accents bland,
Till even zeal and earnest love grow base.

Knowing no right, save power's grim right-of-way;
 No nobleness, save life's ignoble praise;
No future, save this sordid day to day;
 He is the curse of these material days:
Juggling with mighty wrongs and mightier lies,
This worshipper of Dagon and his flies!

William Wilfred Campbell

Sky Watcher, The

Black rolls the phantom chimney-smoke
Beneath the wintry moon;
For miles on miles, by sound unbroke,
The world lies wrapt in its ermine cloak,
And the night's icy swoon
Sways earthward in great brimming wells
Of luminous, frosty particles.

Far up the roadway, drifted deep,
Where frost-etched fences gleam;
Beneath the sky's wan, shimmering sleep
My solitary way I keep
Across the world's white dream;
The only living moving thing
In all this mighty slumbering.

Up in the eastern range of hill,
The thin wood spectrally
Stirs in its sleep and then is still
(Like querulous age) at the wind's will.
My shadow doggedly
Follows my footsteps where I go,
A grotesque giant on the snow.

Out where the river's arms are wound,
And icy sedges cling,
There comes to me as in a swoon
A far-off clear, thin, vibrant sound,--
The distant hammering
Of frost-elves as they come and go,
Forging, in silver chains, his woe.

I stand upon the hill's bleak crest
And note the far night world:
The mighty lake whose passionate breast,
Manacled into arctic rest,
In shrouded sleep is furled:
The steely heavens whose wondrous host
Wheel white from flaming coast to coast.

Then down the night's dim luminous ways,
Meseems they come once more,
Those great star-watchers of old days
The lonely, calm-ones, whose still gaze,
On old-time, orient shore,
Dreamed in the wheeling sons of light,
The awful secrets of earth's night.

They come, those lofty ones of old,
And take me by the hand,
And call me brother; ages rolled
Are but a smoke-mist; kindred-souled,

They lift me to their band;
Like lights that from pale starbeams shine,
Their clear eyes look with peace on mine.

In language of no common kind
These watchers speak to me;
Their thoughts the depths of heaven find
Like plummet true. It were a kind
Of immortality
To spend with them one holy hour,
And know their love and grasp their power.

And wrapt around with glad content,
I learn with soul serene,
Caught from the beauty that is blent
In earth, the heaven's luminous tent,
The frost-lit dreams between,
And something holier out of sight,
Glad visions of the infinite.

Then backward past the sere hill's breast,
The spectral moaning wood,
With great peace brooding in my breast,
I turn me toward the common rest
Of earth's worn brotherhood;
But as I pass, a sacred sign,
Each lays his holy lips on mine:--

Gives me the golden chrism of song,
Tips my hushed heart with fire;
Till high in heaven I hear that throng
Who march in mystic paths along,
Great Pleiades, The Lyre,
The Te-Deum of the ages swell,
To earth-tuned ear inaudible.

William Wilfred Campbell

Snow

Down out of heaven,
Frost-kissed
And wind driven,
Flake upon flake,
Over forest and lake,
Cometh the snow.

Folding the forest,
Folding the farms,
In a mantle of white;
And the river's great arms,
Kissed by the chill night
From clamor to rest,
Lie all white and shrouded
Upon the world's breast.

Falling so slowly
Down from above,
So white, hushed, and holy,
Folding the city
Like the great pity
Of God in His love; 20
Sent down out of heaven
On its sorrow and crime,
Blotting them, folding them
Under its rime.

Fluttering, rustling,
Soft as a breath,
The whisper of leaves,
The low pinions of death,
Or the voice of the dawning,
When day has its birth,
Is the music of silence
It makes to the earth.

Thus down out of heaven,
Frost-kissed
And wind driven,
Flake upon flake,
Over forest and lake,
Cometh the snow.

William Wilfred Campbell

Stella Flammarum: An Ode to Halley's Comet

1 Strange wanderer out of the deeps,
2 Whence, journeying, come you?
3 From what far, unsunned sleeps
4 Did fate foredoom you,
5 Returning for ever again
6 Through the surgings of man,
7 A flaming, awesome portent of dread
8 Down the centuries' span?

9 Riddle! from the dark unwrung
10 By all earth's sages;--
11 God's fiery torch from His hand outflung,
12 To flame through the ages:
13 Thou Satan of planets eterne,
14 'Mid angry path,
15 Chained, in circlings vast, to burn
16 Out ancient wrath.

17 By what dread hand first loosed
18 From fires eternal?
19 With majesties dire infused
20 Of force supernal,
21 Takest thy headlong way
22 O'er the highways of space?
23 O wonderful, blossoming flower of fear
24 On the sky's far face!

25 What secret of destiny's will
26 In thy wild burning?
27 What portent dire of humanity's ill
28 In thy returning?
29 Or art thou brand of love
30 In masking of bale?
31 And bringest thou ever some mystical surcease
32 For all who wail?

33 Perchance, O Visitor dread,
34 Thou hast thine appointed
35 Task, thou bolt of the vast outsped!
36 With God's anointed,
37 Performest some endless toil
38 In the universe wide,
39 Feeding or curing some infinite need
40 Where the vast worlds ride.

41 Once, only once, thy face
42 Will I view in this breathing;
43 Just for a space thy majesty trace
44 'Mid earth's mad seething;
45 Ere I go hence to my place,
46 As thou to thy deeps,
47 Thou flambent core of a universe dread,

48 Where all else sleeps.

49 But thou and man's spirit are one,
50 Thou poet! thou flaming
51 Soul of the dauntless sun,
52 Past all reclaiming!
53 One in that red unrest,
54 That yearning, that surge,
55 That mounting surf of the infinite dream,
56 O'er eternity's verge.

William Wilfred Campbell

The Avenging Angel

1 When the last faint red of the day is dead,
2 And the dim, far heaven is lit
3 With the silvern cars
4 Of the orient stars,
5 And the winged winds whimper and flit;

6 Then I rise through the dome of my aerodrome,
7 Like a giant eagle in flight;
8 And I take my place
9 In the vengeful race
10 With the sinister fleets of night.

11 As I rise and rise in the cloudy skies,
12 No sound in the silence is heard,
13 Save the lonesome whirr
14 Of my engine's purr,
15 Like the wings of a monster bird.

16 And naught is seen save the vault, serene,
17 Of the vasty realms of night,
18 That vanish, aloof,
19 To eternity's roof,
20 As I mount in my ominous flight.

21 And I float and pause in the fleecy gauze,
22 Like a bird in a nest of down;
23 While 'neath me in deeps
24 Of blackness, sleeps
25 The far, vast London town.

26 But I am not here, like a silvern sphere,
27 To glory the deeps of space,
28 But a sentinel, I,
29 In this tower of the sky,
30 Scanning the dim deep's face.

31 For, sudden, afar, like a luminous star,
32 Or a golden horn of the moon,
33 Or a yellow leaf
34 Of the forest's grief,
35 When the autumn winds are atune;

36 There is borne on my sight, down the spaces of night,
37 By the engines of evilment sped,
38 That wonderful, rare,
39 Vast ship of the air,
40 Beautiful, ominous, dread.

41 One instant she floats, most magic of boats,
42 Illusive, implacable, there;
43 Throned angel of ill,
44 On her crystal-built hill,

45 O'er a people's defenceless despair.
46 Then sudden, I rise, like a bolt through the skies,
47 To the very dim roofs of the world;
48 Till down in the grey,
49 I see my grim prey,
50 Like a pallid gold leaf, uncurled.
51 And I hover and swing, until swiftly I spring,
52 And drop like a falling star;
53 And again and again,
54 My death-dealing rain,
55 Hurl to the deeps afar.
56 Then I hover and listen, till I see the far glisten
57 Of a flame-flash blanching the night;
58 And I know that my hate,
59 That has lain in wait,
60 Has won in the grim air-fight.
61 Then I curve and slant, while my engines pant,
62 And the wings of my great bird tame;
63 While the sinister Hun,
64 In his ill, undone,
65 Goes out in a blinding flame.

William Wilfred Campbell

The Blind Caravan

1 I am a slave, both dumb and blind,
2 Upon a journey dread;
3 The iron hills lie far behind,
4 The seas of mist ahead.

5 Amid a mighty caravan
6 I toil a sombre track,
7 The strangest road since time began,
8 Where no foot turneth back.

9 Here rosy youth at morning's prime
10 And weary man at noon
11 Are crooked shapes at eventime
12 Beneath the haggard moon.

13 Faint elfin songs from out the past
14 Of some lost sunset land
15 Haunt this grim pageant drifting, vast,
16 Across the trackless sand.

17 And often for some nightward wind
18 We stay a space and hark,
19 Then leave the sunset lands behind,
20 And plunge into the dark.

21 Somewhere, somewhere, far on in front,
22 There strides a lonely man
23 Who is all strength, who bears the brunt,
24 The battle and the ban.

25 I know not of his face or form,
26 His voice or battle-scars,
27 Or how he fronts the haunted storm
28 Beneath the wintry stars;

29 I know not of his wisdom great
30 That leads this sightless host
31 Beyond the barren hills of fate
32 Unto some kindlier coast.

33 But often 'mid the eerie black
34 Through this sad caravan
35 A strange, sweet thrill is whispered back,
36 Borne on from man to man.

37 A strange, glad joy that fills the night
38 Like some far marriage horn,
39 Till every heart is filled with light
40 Of some belated morn.

41 The way is long, and rough the road,
42 And bitter the night, and dread,

43 And each poor slave is but a goad
44 To lash the one ahead.

45 Evil the foes that lie in wait
46 To slay us in the pass,
47 Bloody the slaughter at the gate,
48 And bleak the wild morass;

49 And I am but a shriveled thing
50 Beneath the midnight sky;
51 A wasted, wan remembering
52 Of days long wandered by.

53 And yet I lift my sightless face
54 Toward the eerie light,
55 And tread the lonely way we trace
56 Across the haunted night.

William Wilfred Campbell

The Dread Voyage

1 Trim the sails the weird stars under—
2 Past the iron hail and thunder,
3 Past the mystery and the wonder,
4 Sails our fated bark;
5 Past the myriad voices hailing,
6 Past the moaning and the wailing,
7 The far voices failing, failing,
8 Drive we to the dark.

9 Past the headlands grim and sombre,
10 Past the shores of mist and slumber,
11 Leagues on leagues no man may number,
12 Soundings none can mark;
13 While the olden voices calling,
14 One by one behind are falling;
15 Into silence dread, appalling,
16 Drift we to the dark.

17 Far behind, the sad eyes yearning,
18 Hands that wring for our returning,
19 Lamps of love yet vainly burning:
20 Past the headlands stark!
21 Through the wintry snows and sleeting,
22 On our pallid faces beating,
23 Through the phantom twilight fleeting,
24 Drive we to the dark.

25 Without knowledge, without warning,
26 Drive we to no lands of morning;
27 Far ahead no signals horning
28 Hail our nightward bark.
29 Hopeless, helpless, weird, outdriven,
30 Fateless, friendless, dread, unshriven,
31 For some race-doom unforgiven,
32 Drive we to the dark.

33 Not one craven or unseemly;
34 In the flare-light gleaming dimly,
35 Each ghost-face is watching grimly:
36 Past the headlands stark!
37 Hearts wherein no hope may waken,
38 Like the clouds of night wind-shaken,
39 Chartless, anchorless, forsaken,
40 Drift we to the dark.

William Wilfred Campbell

The End of the Furrow

1 When we come to the end of the furrow,
2 When our last day's work is done,
3 We will drink of the long red shaft of light
4 That slants from the westering sun.

5 We will turn from the field of our labour,
6 From the warm earth glad and brown,
7 And wend our feet up that village street,
8 And with our folk lie down.

9 Yea, after the long toil, surcease,
10 Rest to the hearts that roam,
11 When we join in the mystic silence of eve
12 The glad procession home.

William Wilfred Campbell

The Higher Kinship

1 Life is too grim with anxious, eating care
2 To cherish what is best. Our souls are scarred
3 By daily agonies, and our conscience marred
4 By petty tyrannies that waste and wear.
5 Why is this human fate so hard to bear?
6 Could we but live with hill-lakes silver-starred,
7 Or where the eternal silence leaneth toward
8 The awful front of nature, waste and bare:

9 Then might we, brothers to the lofty thought
10 And inward self-communion of her dream,
11 Into that closer kin with love be brought,
12 Where mighty hills and woods and waters, wan,
13 Moon-paved at midnight or godlike at dawn,
14 Hold all earth's aspirations in their gleam.

William Wilfred Campbell

The Politician

1 Carven in leathern mask or brazen face,
2 Were I time's sculptor, I would set this man.
3 Retreating from the truth, his hawk-eyes scan
4 The platforms of all public thought for place.
5 There wriggling with insinuating grace,
6 He takes poor hope and effort by the hand,
7 And flatters with half-truths and accents bland,
8 Till even zeal and earnest love grow base.

9 Knowing no right, save power's grim right-of-way;
10 No nobleness, save life's ignoble praise;
11 No future, save this sordid day to day;
12 He is the curse of these material days:
13 Juggling with mighty wrongs and mightier lies,
14 This worshipper of Dagon and his flies!

William Wilfred Campbell

The Sky Watcher

1 Black rolls the phantom chimney-smoke
2 Beneath the wintry moon;
3 For miles on miles, by sound unbroke,
4 The world lies wrapt in its ermine cloak,
5 And the night's icy swoon
6 Sways earthward in great brimming wells
7 Of luminous, frosty particles.

8 Far up the roadway, drifted deep,
9 Where frost-etched fences gleam;
10 Beneath the sky's wan, shimmering sleep
11 My solitary way I keep
12 Across the world's white dream;
13 The only living moving thing
14 In all this mighty slumbering.

15 Up in the eastern range of hill,
16 The thin wood spectrally
17 Stirs in its sleep and then is still
18 (Like querulous age) at the wind's will.
19 My shadow doggedly
20 Follows my footsteps where I go,
21 A grotesque giant on the snow.

22 Out where the river's arms are wound,
23 And icy sedges cling,
24 There comes to me as in a swoon
25 A far-off clear, thin, vibrant sound,--
26 The distant hammering
27 Of frost-elves as they come and go,
28 Forging, in silver chains, his woe.

29 I stand upon the hill's bleak crest
30 And note the far night world:
31 The mighty lake whose passionate breast,
32 Manacled into arctic rest,
33 In shrouded sleep is furled:
34 The steely heavens whose wondrous host
35 Wheel white from flaming coast to coast.

36 Then down the night's dim luminous ways,
37 Meseems they come once more,
38 Those great star-watchers of old days
39 The lonely, calm-ones, whose still gaze,
40 On old-time, orient shore,
41 Dreamed in the wheeling sons of light,
42 The awful secrets of earth's night.

43 They come, those lofty ones of old,
44 And take me by the hand,
45 And call me brother; ages rolled
46 Are but a smoke-mist; kindred-souled,

47 They lift me to their band;
48 Like lights that from pale starbeams shine,
49 Their clear eyes look with peace on mine.

50 In language of no common kind
51 These watchers speak to me;
52 Their thoughts the depths of heaven find
53 Like plummet true. It were a kind
54 Of immortality
55 To spend with them one holy hour,
56 And know their love and grasp their power.

57 And wrapt around with glad content,
58 I learn with soul serene,
59 Caught from the beauty that is blent
60 In earth, the heaven's luminous tent,
61 The frost-lit dreams between,
62 And something holier out of sight,
63 Glad visions of the infinite.

64 Then backward past the sere hill's breast,
65 The spectral moaning wood,
66 With great peace brooding in my breast,
67 I turn me toward the common rest
68 Of earth's worn brotherhood;
69 But as I pass, a sacred sign,
70 Each lays his holy lips on mine:--

71 Gives me the golden chrism of song,
72 Tips my hushed heart with fire;
73 Till high in heaven I hear that throng
74 Who march in mystic paths along,
75 Great Pleiades, The Lyre,
76 The Te-Deum of the ages swell,
77 To earth-tuned ear inaudible.

William Wilfred Campbell

The Winter Lakes

1 Out in a world of death far to the northward lying,
2 Under the sun and the moon, under the dusk and the day;
3 Under the glimmer of stars and the purple of sunsets dying,
4 Wan and waste and white, stretch the great lakes away.

5 Never a bud of spring, never a laugh of summer,
6 Never a dream of love, never a song of bird;
7 But only the silence and white, the shores that grow chiller and dumber,
8 Wherever the ice winds sob, and the griefs of winter are heard.

9 Craggs that are black and wet out of the grey lake looming,
10 Under the sunset's flush and the pallid, faint glimmer of dawn;
11 Shadowy, ghost-like shores, where midnight surfs are booming
12 Thunders of wintry woe over the spaces wan.

13 Lands that loom like spectres, whited regions of winter,
14 Wastes of desolate woods, deserts of water and shore;
15 A world of winter and death, within these regions who enter,
16 Lost to summer and life, go to return no more.

17 Moons that glimmer above, waters that lie white under,
18 Miles and miles of lake far out under the night;
19 Foaming crests of waves, surfs that shoreward thunder,
20 Shadowy shapes that flee, haunting the spaces white.

21 Lonely hidden bays, moon-lit, ice-rimmed, winding,
22 Fringed by forests and crags, haunted by shadowy shores;
23 Hushed from the outward strife, where the mighty surf is grinding
24 Death and hate on the rocks, as sandward and landward it roars.

William Wilfred Campbell

To a Robin in November

Sweet, sweet and the soft listening heaven reels
In one blue ecstasy above thy song
In the red heart of all the opening year,
In the hushed murmur of low dreaming fields
Hung under heaven 'twixt dim blue and blue;
Where the young Summer, purpled and pearled in dew,
Mirrors herself in June, and knows no wrong.

Sweet, sweet, throwing thy lack of fear
Back to the heart of God, till heaven feels
The throbbing of earth's music through and through.

Dreaming in song,—great pulsing-hearted hills,
Cradling the dawn in mists and purple veils
Of vapors, over pearls of lakes and brooks
Girdled about the neck of half the world,
When the red birth of the young dreaming June
Kisses the lands with gales, and murmurs, and trills
Of melody, lips that blossom with tales
Of music and color and form and beauty of looks
And snowy argosies in heaven furled,
All summer set to one sweet warbled tune.

And thou, red-throated, comest back to me
Here in the bare November bleak and chill,
Breathing the red-ripe of the lusty June
Over the rime of withered field and mere;
O heart of music, while I dream of thee,
Thou gladdest note in the dead Summer's tune,
Great God! thou liest dead outside my sill,
Starved of the last chill berry on thy tree,
Like some sweet instrument left all unstrung,
The melodious orchestra of all the year.
Dead with the sweet dead summer thou had'st sung;
Dead with the dead year's voices and clasp of hands;
Dead with all music and love and laughter and light;
While chilly and bleak comes up the winter night,
And shrieks the gust across the leafless lands.

William Wilfred Campbell

Winter Lakes, The

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Under the sun and the moon, under the dusk and the day;
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