

Classic Poetry Series

Margaret Curran
- poems -

Publication Date:

2012

Publisher:

Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Margaret Curran(1887 - 1962)

Margaret Curran was born at Colinton near Esk in 1887 and was educated at the Ipswich Convent. She worked as an editor and journalist for *Steering Wheel*, was a sub-editor for the *Toowoomba Chronicle*, and for forty-five years edited the *Country Woman and Producer's Review*. In 1928 she published a small collection of poetry with Carter Watson in Brisbane, *The Wind Blows High and Low and Other Verses*.

The Wind Blows High and Low and Other Verses includes a number of occasional poems in commemoration of Anzac Day, a tribute on the death of Henry Lawson, some nature lyrics, a number of Irish poems, some Catholic religious verse, and a few interesting poems on women and work. Curran's poems on the domestic circumstances of her literary production are interesting for their glimpses of a woman's writing career in a regional city.

Curran was a long term president of the Toowoomba Ladies Literary Society from 1933 to 1963. The Society played an important role in the cultural life of the city and organised annual pilgrimages in honour of George Essex Evans and Steele Rudd. During her time as president Curran was instrumental in organising a national campaign to erect a cairn marking the site of Steele Rudd's birthplace in Drayton.

Her speech at the opening ceremony was indicative of her sense of the civic value of literary culture:

The president of the Steele Rudd Memorial Fund Committee (Mrs Margaret Curran) said during her address that the history of man, which was largely the history of civilisation, might be read in its memorials -- often beautiful, and occasionally grotesque.

The degree of civilisation achieved by any community or country was measured by the attitude of the inhabitants toward its memorials.

Toowoomba was overlooked by a memorial to a poet, George Essex Evans; there was a memorial on the new Toowoomba Highway which had been raised to the memory of Sir Littleton Groom; and in Toowoomba's busiest centre, the tall grey stone of remembrance known as the 'Mothers Memorial' was a stern reminder to the careless passer by that freedom was purchased 'at a great price.' Now, another memorial has been erected only a few yards from the very birthplace of a native genius.

The Toowoomba Literary Society, Mrs Curran added, had begun the movement to provide the memorial ... because it 'did not choose that the land from which he sprung, should be shamed' by utter forgetfulness.

Anzac Eve

In dusk of Eve the city lay-
And Life's dark pall lay o'er my heart;
My feet, by instinct took the way
To that Grey Altar, set apart,
And, sobbing in the dark alone,
I kissed his name upon the stone.

No light had I-But mother heart
Needs no poor earthly light as guide:
My soul rebelled against the part
Fate portioned me ... 'My son that died
Has died in vain, and he and they
Forgotten ... save when women pray.'

Just then the city lights shone out:
Each name shone forth as brightest gold;
A strange, sweet perfume played about
And in my heart crept peace, untold...
I felt ...warm hands ...upon my own ...
My son kept tryst ... at the Grey Stone.

What tales he told ... of high emprise-
Of fuller life beyond the Veil;
How shone the deeds of sacrifice,
As jewels on the Holy Grail.
He blessed me thrice ... I knelt alone,
Shriven and healed ... by the Grey Stone.

Margaret Curran

Wattle Blossom

'In bleak Toowoomba gardens, swept of flowers,
By cold west winds and withering with drought,
The wattles' grey-green leaves show burnishing
Of buds a-burgeoning to radiant bloom;
And in a few brief days the largesse of gold
For every hand to gather, will be thrown
Into the chilly lap of winter days.'

Margaret Curran