

Poetry Series

James Edwin Campbell
- poems -

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James Edwin Campbell(1867-1896)

James Edwin Campbell (1867–1896) was an African American poet, editor, short story writer and educator. He was born in 1867 in Pomeroy, Ohio, and died there in 1896.

According to James Weldon Johnson, there is little known about his early life, which he kept shielded even from his closest associates. He attended public schools in Pomeroy and spent time at Miami College and wrote regularly for daily newspapers in Chicago in the 1880s and 1890s. Campbell participated in a group publication, the Four O'Clock Magazine, a literary magazine that was quite popular for a time. He is best known for his work *Echoes from the Cabin and Elsewhere*, a volume of poetry. His poems are written in the dialect of his subjects, or the vernacular of the time, as well as standard English.

A Love Dream

I know 'twas a dream, yet sweet was the theme,
And I strive to recall its splendor -
My soul upward leaps as Thought backward sweeps
To my dream so warm and so tender.

Where sea billows toss 'neath the bright Southern cross,
By the sea lay I idly dreaming,
While the stars burned a way from Night unto Day
And the waves like helmets were gleaming.

A maid came and stood at the neck of the wood
And her locks on the Night were streaming,
She was tall as pines that rock in the winds,
And her eyes like Orion were gleaming.

She came to me there and caught up her hair
And spread it a mantle above me -
O my soul grew sick and the hot air thick
As she whispered: 'Come sweet, now love me.'

I kissed the red mouth of th' passionate South,
Till my lips with kissing grew husky,
I looked in the eyes that were storm-charged skies,
'Neath the cloud of her thick locks dusky.

Then up the Day came with cohorts of flame
And the Soul of the South Wind left me,
And Joy fled away with the Rise of the Day,
For Day, of my Love had bereft me.

I know 'twas a dream, yet sweet was the theme,
And I strive to recall its splendor -
My soul upward leaps as Thought backward sweeps

To my dream so warm and so tender.

James Edwin Campbell

A Memory Tone

She played,
And gleaming fingers touched the keys,
As if upon their souls she played,
While the mad desire grew fierce to seize
Them in the Bastile, swiftly made
Of my strong hands.

She played,
And o'er white shoulder flung a look
That almost drove me mad with pain;
My love ran toward her as the brook
When bank-brimmed o'er with April rain
Runs swift to sea.

She played -
A brook went purling o'er a stone,
Its rhythmic lip was dripping song;
Upon its bank I stood alone,
With brook and soul in concord strong,
And life so young.

She played -
The tinkling sheep-bells filled the glade,
A thrush's song was in the air;
The water elms threw speckled shade,
Wild flowers were blooming everywhere,
The while she played.

She ceased,
And while white arms were 'round my neck
And kisses on my lips were hot,
And love stood waiting at my beck,
I only know, I recked it naught -
Life seemed so old!

James Edwin Campbell

A Night In June

'What so rare as a day in June?'
O poet, hast thou never known
A night in rose-voluptuous June?
High over all a broad, full moon,
Grey broken clouds that sink and swoon
In floods of light,
Which down the sky's vast steepness pour,
Niagara in all save roar -
Sound lost in sight!

Now serenades the midnight moon,
The beetle's drum, the frog's bassoon,
And mingled with these rises shrill
The piccolo of whip-poor-will
Played in the beech just on yon hill,
Now moon-gold crowned;
Then tinkling notes of light guitar,
With voices softened from afar,
Sight lost in sound!

James Edwin Campbell

A Song

Heigho for a glass, heigho for a lass,
A drink and a kiss, I leave you;
Heigho for a friend that sticks till the end -
Good-bye, my lass, don't you grieve you.

Hurrah for a song that is not too long,
With a jolly roaring chorus,
While our cans beat time to the ringing rhyme
Till the ceiling cracks up o'er us.

Heigho for an eye as blue as the sky
And a mouth that's red and tender;
For a chin that's round and a cheek that's brown
As the oak leaves in November.

Hurrah for a horse on a wind-swept course
And a night as black as hell is,
And a gallop blind in face o' the wind
To calm a soul that fell is.

Heigho for a glass, heigho for a lass,
A drink and a kiss, I leave you;
Heigho for a friend that sticks till the end -
Good-bye, my lass, don't you grieve you.

James Edwin Campbell

Amici Tres

Some friends I had, they numbered three -
Tom, Lee and Ben; staunch friends were we.
O, life was sweet and life was young,
And love filled all the songs we sung.
Boy's love for boy is stronger than
The honeyed love of maid for man,
Like David's love for Jonathan.
Life's tide rolled on, we all grew up
And drained the lees of manhood's cup -
A sweetheart parted Ben and me,
A race for office drove off Lee,
And money loaned was Tom's sole plea -
The money that was loaned by me.

Some friends I had, they numbered three -
My mother, wife, myself. You see
We made another trinity.
The first and second always true,
But shall I tell the truth to you?
I found the third, worst enemy.
More dangerous than the foe without,
Who rushes on with sword and shout,
Is Self, who never makes a din,
But, like a sapper, works within,
Until he undermines the wall
And sends it crashing to its fall!

Again my friends they number three -
Wife, mother, Christ - great trinity!
When in the fiery furnace tried
I found these three walked at my side;
They faced the fiercest furnace heat
That 'gainst my shrinking soul did beat,
Nor storm nor calm nor joy nor grief,
Nor trials sore beyond belief.
Myself within, fierce foes without,
Dismay them not with battle shout.

Again I count my friends as three -
Wife, mother, Christ, the strongest three,
My all sufficing trinity!

James Edwin Campbell

Before The Fire

Before the wide-mouthed hearth I sit,
While rudely roars the wind outdoor;
Upon the walls strange shadows flit
Or dervish-like dance on the floor;
Now softened to a minor strain,
As if it came from far away,
As if the wail of souls in pain,
The long imprisoned sunbeams' lay.

For aeons since when young was Time,
And Earth still wore the flush of Youth,
Long ere the birth of Man and Crime,
And dark-browed Hate and tear-stained Ruth,
The tyrant Sun imprisoned in
The heart of oak and ash his beams
To expiate some unknown sin -
Some woodsprite told me in my dreams.

The flames that up the chimney race
And clap with glee their red, red hands,
Or snap their fingers in my face,
Or 'sault the wall in storming bands,
Are sunbeams bright but now set free
From centuries of prison dark -
A spirit moves each flame I see,
A sunbeam's soul is in each spark.

James Edwin Campbell

Bird-Song

Cheereen! Cheewink! O poet,
We've come to stay, to stay.
Cheereen! Cheewink! You know it,
And smile as we pipe our lay.
Cheereen! Cheereen! Cheewink! Cheereen!
See all the hillsides turning green,
The sun is bright,
The sky is light,
Cheereen! Cheereen! Cheereen!

Cheereen! Cheewink! O poet,
We've come to play, to play.
Cheereen! Cheewink! You know it -
O smile as we pipe our lay.
Cheereen! Cheewink! Cheereen! Cheewink!
O list our notes, they rise, they sink
Upon the air,
So rich, so rare,
Cheereen! Cheereen! Cheereen!

Cheereen! Cheewink! O toiler,
'Tis time to work, to work.
The brook tells thee, the brawler,
'Tis time to cease to shirk.
Cheereen! Cheewink! Cheereen! Cheewink!
Not of the toil but harvest think,
Bring out thy plow,
'Tis work time now,
Cheereen! Cheereen! Cheereen!

James Edwin Campbell

Bohemian Ups And Downs

Way up in a garret high,
Just a few feet from the sky,
Dwell I in Bohemia.
What care I for aught below?
There have I nor friend nor foe;
Pity I the struggling throng
While I live my life of song
Up here in Bohemia.

'Tween my teeth my briar root -
Best of friends, since always mute -
Rare thing in Bohemia.
Upward as the thick smoke curls
What care I for simp'ring girls?
Love is weak; my pipe is strong,
Why for love, then, be the song
Sung here in Bohemia?

Oft my little songs fall flat,
Hungry? What care I for that,
Fasting in Bohemia?
Put my only coat in pawn,
Live on that and still sing on;
Puff my pipe and think I've dined -
Barmecidal feasts I find
Often in Bohemia.

Haply, then, my rhymelets take,
With a check my fast to break,
Feast we in Bohemia.
'Round the corner of the block,
Sign o'erhead a crowing cock,
Mug of beer and sandwich fine;
What care we how nabobs dine,
Feasting in Bohemia.

Friends have I, some three or four -
Quite enough, for who has more,
In or out Bohemia?
With them joy is always young,
Grief is but a song that's sung;
Live we, laugh we debonair,
Skies are bright and winds are fair
Always in Bohemia!

James Edwin Campbell

Compensation

O RICH young lord, thou ridest by
With looks of high disdain;
It chafes me not thy title high,
Thy blood of oldest strain.
The lady riding at thy side
Is but in name thy promised bride,
Ride on, young lord, ride on!

Her father wills and she obeys,
The custom of her class;
'Tis Land not Love the trothing sways-
For Land he sells his lass.
Her fair white hand, young lord, is thine,
Her soul, proud fool, her soul is mine,
Ride on, young lord, ride on!

No title high my father bore;
The tenant of thy farm,
He left me what I value more:
Clean heart, clear brain, strong arm
And love for bird and beast and bee
And song of lark and hymn of sea,
Ride on, young lord, ride on!

The boundless sky to me belongs,
The paltry acres thine;
The painted beauty sings thy songs,
The lavrock lilt me mine;
The hot-housed orchid blooms for thee,
The gorse and heather bloom for me,
Ride on, young lord, ride on!

James Edwin Campbell

De Cunjah Man

O chillen run, de Cunjah man,
Him mouf ez beeg ez fryin' pan,
Him yurs am small, him eyes am raid,
Him hab no toof een him ol' haid,
Him hab him roots, him wu'k him trick,
Him roll him eye, him mek you sick -
De Cunjah man, de Cunjah man,
O chillen run, de Cunjah man!

Him hab ur ball ob raid, raid ha'r,
Him hide it un' de kitchen sta'r,
Mam Jude huh pars urlong dat way,
An' now huh hab ur snaik, dey say.
Him wrop ur roun' huh buddy tight,
Huh eyes pop out, ur orful sight -
De Cunjah man, de Cunjah man,
O chillen run, de Cunjah man!

Miss Jane, huh dribe him f'um huh do',
An' now huh hens woan' lay no mo';
De Jussey cow huh done fall sick,
Hit all done by de cunjah trick.
Him put ur root un' 'Lijah's baid,
An' now de man he sho' am daid -
De Cunjah man, de Cunjah man,
O chillen run, de Cunjah man!

Me see him stan' de yudder night
Right een de road een white moon-light;
Him toss him arms, him whirl him 'roun',
Him stomp him foot urpon de groun';
De snaiks come crawlin', one by one,
Me hyuh um hiss, me break an' run -
De Cunjah man, de Cunjah man,
O chillen run, de Cunjah man!

James Edwin Campbell

De 'sprise Pa'Ty

Bring out my bawnjer, Susan, and Rastus shek de fiah,
De coons am all flockin' in, ur Daddy am ur liah.

Hyuh's some dat's f'um de Bottom an' some dat's f'um de Ridge,
An' bress my soul! dar's Unker Nat f'um way 'yan Mayho's Bridge!

Dar's Tempie wid dat niggah whar waits at de St. Cla'r;
Des watch him how he hol' his cane, an' sabe us, wut a a'r!

Dar's Jinsy an' dar's 'Lindy; dar's Reuben and dar's Jane;
Dar's Mandy wid ur niggah whar po'tahs on de train.

Hyuh's niggahs f'um de country and niggahs f'um de town,
Ur comin' wid ur pa'ty ter s'prise de fambly Brown.

Go git my bawnjer, Susan; you 'Rastus, chunk dat coal!
Gib me yo' paw, you niggahs - Ise happy, bress my soul!

Susan doan' 'low no dawncin', she jined de chu'ch, you know,
Ur pillow in Mt. Zion, an' wut she say gwine go.

B'en baptized in Ol' Mud Creek by Reb'ren Pa'son Snow -
But youse 'lowed ter tu'n de plate an' 'Chase de Bufferlo.'

Kin play 'Hyuh goes de blue-bud' an' 'Honey lub, my sweet,'
An' 'Lunnon Bridge is bu'nin' down' - but doan you cross dem feet,

For Susan orful 'ligious an' mighty 'tic'lar, too -
Kyahful 'bout dem crossin' feet wutebber else you do!

Dar's possum on de table an' coon dar on de she'f,
Dar's cidah in dat brown jug, each niggah he'p hisse'f.

Dar's pie an' cake an' dunnuts an' aig nogg in ur bowl;
Des eat an' drink, youse welcome - Ise happy, bress my soul!

Now, while I chune dis bawnjer, you 'Rastus, git yo' ha'p!
Mek music fur de comp'ny; now, niggah, look right sha'p!

Plunk! plunk! plunk! plunk! plunkety! plunk! plunkety! plunk! plunk!
Plunk! plunkety! plunk! plunk! plunk! plunk! plunkety! plunk! plunk!

'Neah-row my Gawd ter Dee' (now dat chune's fur yo' Mu'rr;
W'en we gits her moll and tim[1], we gwine to play an urr)

Now 'Rock ob Ages,' sof' an' sweet; sing, you niggahs, sing!
Des hyuh dat tenah an' dat bass! Lawd, how dem raftahs ring!

Hyuh Susan's cla'r supranah lif' dem tall notes on high!
She tink'n bout de great white t'rone' an' 'Mansions in de sky.'

Now Susan's in de kitchen ur sottin' out de grub;
Tek erway dat spinnin' wheel an' tote out do's dat tub.

You hyuh dis bawnjer singin'? You reckernize de chune?
'Town gals all come out ternight an' dawnce by light de moon.'

You niggahs git yo' pa'dnahs an' lead dem on de flo' -
Des hyuh dis bawnjer callin' - I cyawn' hol' in no mo'!

'All 'beedyunce ter yo' pa'dnahs!' an' 'Co'nahs all de same!'

Des nebber min' 'bout Susan - I gwine tek all de blame.

Now, 'Fo'wa'd ter de centah!' an' 'Ladies, swing right bac'!
Des watch de dus' ur raisin' an' hyuh de ol' flo' crac'!

Now fastah, fastah, 'Rastus! (De debbil's in dis string)
Des 'Balance all!' you niggahs - Lawd, see dat pidgin wing!

- Fo' Gawd! who dat ur dawncin' wid' dat niggah f'um de town!
W'y bress my soul an' buddy ef dat ain' Susan Brown!

O fastah, fastah, 'Rastus, youse playin' fur yo' Mam,
She done furgot her 'ligion an' dus'n cyah ur--!

You Ike! Come tek dis bawnjer! I gwine ter hab ur fling!
Play fastah, fastah, 'Rastus! Now 'Ebbrybuddy swing!'

James Edwin Campbell

Eclipse

Diana lay sleeping in the West,
Her snowy, lissome limbs were bare;
Her robe had slipped adown her breast
And Phoebus, 'raptured, saw her there.
The sleeper felt his look of flame
And restless, tossed her arms with grace;
Awoke - then blushing at her shame
Within her mantle hid her face!

James Edwin Campbell

Linkum

You axin' sah 'bout Linkum - w'y sho'ly youse been tol'
'Bout my po' chil - Gawd bless him - he died when ten yeahs ol'.
He was ouah younges' baby, you 'min's him wen ur tot,
Ur crawlin' in de ashes an' ebbry blessed spot.
He wuz de sma'tes' baby, an' we des lub him so -
Hit tuk urway de sunshine wen Linkum hed ter go.
W'y, ebbrybuddy lub him - de w'ite folks an' de black',
He so perlately mannahed - he gempman, dats ur fac'.
Fur chile kin be ur gempman ez well ez folks dat's grown,
An' hit was so wid Linkum, hit des bred in de bone.
Yit spite ob all his goodness he wa'n' no stupid chile -
He 'roun de house ur singin' an' whis'lin all de w'ile.
An' saiks how he could whis'le! No red bu'd sing so cl'ar;
He could des morck ur pa'tridge twel pa'tridge come right dar.
I nebber hyuh de red bu'd ur pa'tridge wen dey call,
'Less den I t'inks 'bout Linkum - his song, his larf an' all -
Ur 'scuse dese teahs now honey, some how dey's 'bleged ter come
W'en I tinks 'bout my baby. Up dar you see his drum.
I brung hit from Pint Gladness de Chris'mas 'fo' he died.
Lawd, how he uster thump it, ur ma'chin' full ob pride!
Er-wut urbout his def, sah? I begs yo' pa'don, sah,
Ise back dar wid my baby, ur ma'chin' too I clah.
You see Mis' Bradley hiah'd him ter do de cho's an' sech -
She lib in dat fine buildin', de naix one ter de Che'ch.
Her husban' he de doctah, an' mighty fine dey say;
Dey on'y hab one baby - dey call her Helen Fay;
Dey t'ink so much de baby - ob co'se, de on'y chile;
She pu'ty ez ur picchah - her eyes des full ob smile.
She all time foll'n Linkum, des ebbrywhar he go,
De chile des lub de po' chile - yes sah, dat sutny so.
One day her mammy leab her, ur sleepin' fars' an' soun',
An' in de cyar ob Linkum, while she wen' vis'tin' 'roun'.
W'ile Linkum sottin' watchin' de baby sleepin' fars'
He hyu'd de sweetes' music - Ur ban' wus ma'chin' pars'.
He hyu'd de ho'ns, de cym'uls, de boomin big bass drum -
He knowed des in a minit de minst'ul show done come.
An' closah, closah, closah, de music seemed ter come,
An' loudah, loudah, loudah, he hyu'd de big bass drum!
De chile furgot de baby an' wo't Mis' Bradley said,

He crazy wid dat music ur playin' in his head.
So out de do' wen' Linkum lak wings wuz on his feet -
Lak race hoss on de home stretch ur flyin' down de street.
Gawd knows he couldn' holp it - de music set him wil';
Hit allus so wid Linkum - he des de stranges' chile.

De fiah bells wuz janglin', de crowd wuz rushin' roun',
De smoke hed filled de sta'rway - hit druv de bes' man down.
De women all wuz screamin', an' men ur shoutin' loud,
W'en lak ur flash ob lightnin' ur boy to' froo de crowd.
Right up de blazin' sta'rway; right froo de smoke an' flame,
Arter dat sleepin' baby - He put dem men ter shame!
He wropped her in ur blankit an' down de blazin' sta'r
He brung dat blessed baby widout ur flame teched ha'r!
Out ob dat fi'ry fu'nace like Hebrew chillen t'ree,
Whose comperny wus Jesus, dat ol' King 'Rius see!
Out ob de flames dat sco'ched him - out ob de stranglin' smoke,
Urdown de flame-wropped sta'rway dat 'neaf de bu'nt feet broke!
Out ob de flames ob Hell-fiah in ter de sweet, pyo' a'r
My po' chile brung de baby, an' fallin', drapped her dar!
He on'y des lib one houah - he call me ter de bed -
'I-ort'n'-gone-de-music' an' my po' chile wuz dead!
Ober dar am his grabe, sah; Mis' Bradley buy de stone
Ter put up ober Linkum - Miss Helen, now mos' grown,
She had dem cut dese lettahs on de stone 'bove his grabe:
'de one dat sated all udders, hisse'f he couldn't sabe.'

James Edwin Campbell

Mary Of Magdala

Poor harlot, Mary Magdalene,
Into the feast with trembling crept,
Past frowns that stabbed her with their hate
And falling at His feet she wept.
Self-righteous Simon spurned her there
And marveled that her sinful touch
Displeased Him not, but he forgave:
'Though sinning sore she love'd much.'

Brave, grateful Mary Magdalene,
When Peter all his faith had lost,
Pressed on through swords of arme'd men
And knelt in grief beneath the cross;
She bathed the nail-pierced feet with tears
That mingled with His trickling blood,
While Andrew, Matthew, James and all
Far off in abject terror stood.

Saved, faithful MARY MAGDALENE
Through all that morning's doubt and gloom,
When Hope and Faith had fled the world,
Brought from that empty shattered tomb
The words that thrill a save'd world -
With flying feet and sobbing breath:
'The Christ is risen as he said,
Triumphant Lord of conquered Death!'

James Edwin Campbell

Mobile-Buck

O, come erlong, come erlong,
Wut's de use er hol'in' back;
O, hit it strong, er hit it strong,
Mek de ol' flo' ben' an' crack.
O, hoop tee doo, uh, hoop tee doo!
Dat's de way ter knock it froo.
Right erlong, right erlong,
Slide de lef' foot right erlong.
Hoop tee doo, O, hoop tee doo,
See, my lub, I dawnce ter you.
Ho, boy! Ho, boy!
Well done, meh lady!

O, slide erlong, slide erlong -
Fas'ah wid dat pattin', Sam!
Dar's music in dis lef' heel's song,
Mis'ah right foot, doan' you sham!
O, hoop tee doo, oh, hoop tee doo!
Straight erlong I dawnce ter you.
Slide erlong, slide erlong,
Mek dat right foot hit it strong.
Hoop tee doo, O, hoop tee doo,
See, my lub, I dawnce ter you.
Ho, boy! Ho, boy!
Well done, meh lady!

James Edwin Campbell

Mors Et Vita

Into the soil a seed is sown,
Out of the soul a song is wrung,
Out of the shell a pearl is gone,
Out of the cage a bird is flown,
Out of the body, a soul!

Unto a tree the seed is grown,
Wide in the world the song is sung,
The pearl in a necklace gleams more fair,
The bird is flown to a sweeter air,
And Death is half and Life is half,
And the two make up the whole!

James Edwin Campbell

My Fisher Lass

I stood beside the Summer sea
And watched far out my Fisher Lass
Row swiftly in her boat to me,
And the sea shone like a glass.
She waved her strong, brown hand to me,
The boat flew swiftly in from sea,
The osprey laughed in wild, wild glee
To see her row so swift to me.

Laugh, laugh, sea-birds and glad, glad sea,
My soul laughs too in mad, mad glee;
I catch her in my waiting arms
And lose my fears of wrecks and storms;
I brush the sea-damp locks aside
And kiss the mouth she tries to hide.

I stand beside a Winter sea,
A storm-wrecked boat lies on the shore;
The sea moans sad an elegy,
For my lass rows in no more.
No more across the Summer sea
My Fisher Lass rows into me;
I wait each day upon the shore -
They say that she will come no more.

Moan, moan aloud, thou Winter sea,
My Fisher Lass is lost to me!
The ships ride in, the ships ride out,
I hear their sailors' mournful shout.
Some day, I know, across the sea
My Fisher Lass will row to me.

James Edwin Campbell

My Friends In Bohemia

Friends have I in Bohemia three -
My pipe, my dog, myself, you see
We make a jolly trinity -
We three are careless Bohemians.
When editors reject my 'stuff,'
The larder's lean and things look 'tough,'
My friend, the pipe, gives me a 'puff' -
My friend number one in Bo-he-mi-a.

I look into my dog's brown eyes,
He whines as if to sympathize,
That he's hungry you'd ne'er surmise,
My friend number two in Bohemia.
When I come in I hear his bark
Shout welcome down the stairway dark.
Just strike a match - yes, that's he - hark!
My friend number two in Bo-he-mi-a.

My pipe is more to me than maid,
It ne'er with my affections played,
Nor of my heart a football made -
This friend number one in Bohemia.
My dog is more than man to me,
He never lied to me, you see,
While man has lied to and on me -
God save my friends in Bo-he-mi-a.

James Edwin Campbell

Negro Lullaby

Mammy's baby, go ter sleep,
Hush-er-by, hush-er-by, my honey;
Cross de hyarf de cricket creep,
Hush-er-by, hush-er-by, my honey.
Hoot owl callin' f'um de ol' sycamo'
'Way down yon'er in de holler;
While de whip-po'-will an' de li'l' screech owl
Dey des try dey bes' ter foller.

Hush-er-by, hush-er-by, hush-er-by, my deah,
Hush-er-by, hush-er-by, my honey;
Shet yo' eyes an' drap off ter sleep -
O yo' eyes dey bright ez money!

Mammy's sugah, go ter sleep,
Hush-er-by, hush-er-by, my honey;
Baby stars done cease ter peep,
Hush-er-by, hush er-by, my honey.
De moon raise slim froo de ol' mounting gap,
In hits cradle hits been ur rockin'
De li'l' baby stars all fars' ur sleep -
You chillen bettah stop dat knockin'!

Hush-er-by, hush-er-by, hush er-by, my deah,
Hush-er by, hush-er-by, my honey,
Noddin', noddin', nod - ur sleep at lars,
Sh - sh - sh - sh - my honey.

James Edwin Campbell

Negro Serenade

O, de light-bugs glimmer down de lane,
Merlindy! Merlindy!
O, de whip'-will callin' notes ur pain -
Merlindy, O, Merlindy!
O, honey lub, my turkle dub,
Doan' you hyuh my bawnjer ringin',
While de night-dew falls an' de ho'n owl calls
By de ol' ba'n gate Ise singin'.

O, Miss 'Lindy, doan' you hyuh me chil',
Merlindy! Merlindy!
My lub fur you des dribe me wil' -
Merlindy, O, Merlindy!
I'll sing dis night twel broad day-light,
Ur bu's' my froat wid tryin',
'Less you come down, Miss 'Lindy Brown,
An' stops dis ha't f'um sighin'!

James Edwin Campbell

O, Sweetheart, Sweet

O, sweetheart, sweet of the Long Ago,
Maid of the blue, blue eyes;
You went one day like a Spring-time snow
And you left me here, ah, long ago,
To dream of you there in Paradise,
My sweetheart, sweet of the Long Ago.

O, sweetheart, sweet, so long are the years,
Filled with a sad, sad pain;
There's little of laughter, much of tears,
So weak are hopes, so strong are the fears,
So much of loss, so little of gain
In the harvest of all the years!

But through my pain and thro' all my tears
One thing, sweetheart, I know:
When done with all the long, dreary years,
And shed the last of Life's bitter tears,
I shall find you, my sweetheart, I know.
Then shall I forget all the toilful years
And drown in the sea of love my fears,
My sweetheart, sweet of the Long Ago!

James Edwin Campbell

Ol' Doc' Hyar

Ur ol' Hyar lib in ur house on de hill,
He hunner yurs ol' an' nebber wuz ill;
He yurs dee so long an' he eyes so beeg,
An' he laigs so spry dat he dawnce ur jeeg;
He lib so long dat he know ebbry tings
'Bout de beas'ses dat walks an' de bu'ds dat sings -
Dis Ol' Doc' Hyar,
Whar lib up dar
Een ur mighty fine house on ur mighty high hill.

He doctah fur all de beas'ses an' bu'ds -
He put on he specs an' he use beeg wu'ds,
He feel dee pu's' den he look mighty wise,
He pull out he watch an' he shet bofe eyes;
He grab up he hat an' grab up he cane,
Den - 'blam!' go de do' - he gone lak de train,
Dis Ol' Doc' Hyar,
Whar lib up dar
Een ur mighty fine house on ur mighty high hill.

Mistah Ba'r fall sick - dee sont fur Doc' Hyar,
'O, Doctah, come queeck, an' see Mr. B'ar;
He mighty nigh daid des sho' ez you b'on!
'Too much ur young peeg, too much ur green co'n,'
Ez he put on he hat, said Ol' Doc' Hyar;
'I'll tek 'long meh lawnce, an' lawnce Mistah B'ar,'
Said Ol' Doc' Hyar,
Whar lib up dar
Een ur mighty fine house on ur mighty high hill.

Mistah B'ar he groaned, Mistah B'ar he growled,
W'ile de ol' Mis' B'ar an' de chillen howled;
Doctah Hyar tuk out he sha'p li'l lawnce,
An' pyu'ced Mistah B'ar twel he med him prawnce
Den grab up he hat an' grab up he cane
'Blam!' go de do' an' he gone lak de train,

Dis Ol' Doc' Hyar,
Whar lib up dar
Een ur mighty fine house on ur mighty high hill.

But de vay naix day Mistah B'ar he daid;
Wen dee tell Doc' Hyar, he des scratch he haid:
'Ef pashons git well ur pashons git wu's,
Money got ter come een de Ol' Hyar's pu's;
Not wut folkses does, but fur wut dee know
Does de folkses git paid' - an' Hyar larfed low,
Dis sma't Ol' Hyar,
Whar lib up dar
Een de mighty fine house on de mighty high hill!

James Edwin Campbell

Quatrains

The Earth, a leper foul with scars and sores,
Lay naked in most hideous plight,
When Boreas flung down his ermined robe
And hid from men the sick'ning sight!

Lo where December's snows the deepest lay,
The wheat of June the brightest gleams;
E'en so deep sorrows when with patience borne,
Oft-times nurse joys beyond our dreams!

O, lonely pine on yonder hill,
I hear thy sighing, moaning;
Make concord sad within my soul,
Its countless sins atoning!

James Edwin Campbell

Reincarnation

The clanging fire-bells shook the air,
The maddened crowd roared like the sea
And hurled its human waves 'gainst me -
Then through the smoke a face gleamed fair
A moment brief - and then the crash
As chariot wheels together dash;
Mad horses rear and plunge and scream -
It all comes back, an old, old dream,
The brutal shout that shakes the walls
As in the dust my chariot falls,
The yellow cloud of strangling dust
And I 'neath broken chariot thrust,
The cruel faces from the tiers -
Then through it all a face appears,
With pity sweet and white with fears,
There in the box where Cæsar sneers!

James Edwin Campbell

Richard Iii

I see thy smile; at times, May's warm, young sun,
At times, December's cold and threat'ning sky;
Thy woman's hand aplucking at thy sword,
The lightning lurking in thy deep-set eye.
Alone, thy face a stage whereon doth play
Ambition, Hate, Lust, Murder; flitting out
And in the gloomy wings of thy dark soul -
A fearsome and a most unholy rout!
And yet withal a kingly look oft-times
Conveys an air of high-born royalty
That overshadows all thine awful crimes
And stamps e'en them somewhat with majesty.
Liar, Traitor, Murd'rer through all thy life -
Hero and King at Bosworth's fatal strife!

James Edwin Campbell

Saturday Night At Heinrich's

Heinrich, bring us three bottles of wine -
What shall it be, boys? Sherry or port?
Cheers for old Bacchus, god of the vine,
Jolly old rounder, the Greeks report.
Sherry, sherry, bring us sherry,
Fill the glasses, don't be chary.
Bolt the door on frowning care,
Draw the cork and tilt your chair;
Drink and sing the night away -
Day for work and night for play!

Heinrich, 'nother three bottles of wine,
Brown as the eye of a maid I know -
Cheers for the maiden, cheers for the vine,
Up to your feet, boys, now let her go!
Sherry, sherry, rich brown sherry,
Draw the cork and let's be merry.
Here's to all the brown-eyed maids,
Blue-eyed, black-eyed and all shades;
Drink and sing the night away -
Day for work and night for play!

Heinrich, 'nother three bottles of wine,
And say, good fellow, please chalk it down;
That last you brought was deucedly fine,
Bouquet charming; its color so brown.
Sherry, sherry, rich brown sherry,
Draw the cork and let's be merry.
We must drink if debts are made,
We must drink if they're not paid.
Drink and sing the night away -
Day for work and night for play!

James Edwin Campbell

Sciplinin' Sister Brown

Shet up dat noise, you chillen! Dar's some one at de do'.
Dribe out dem dogs; you 'Rastus, tek Linkum off de flo'!

Des ma'ch yo'se'f right in sah! (Jane, tek dem ashes out!
Dis house look lak ur hog-pen; you M'randy, jump erbout!).

W'y bress my soul, hit's Ef'um - w'y, Ef'um, how you do?
An' Tempie an' de chillen? I hopes dey's all well too.

Hyuh, M'randy, bresh dat stool off; now, Ef'um, des sot down.
Wut's de news f'um off de Ridge an' wut's de news in town?

Now doan' you t'ink dem niggahs hed Susan 'fo de chu'ch
'Bout dawncin' at de pa'ty - dey call dat sinnin' much.

Dey up an' call ur meetin' ter 'scipline Sistah Brown,
But de night dey hol' de meetin' she tuk herse'f to town.

Dey sont de Bo'd ob Deacons, de pahstah at de head,
Ter wait urpon de sistah an' pray wid her, dey said,

But Susan mighty stubbo'n, an' wen dey lif' ur pra'r
She up an' tell de deacons she des wawn' gwine ter cyar.

An' wen de Reb'ren' Pa'son prayed 'bout ur 'sheep wuz los'.
An' 'bout de 'po bac'slidah,' she gin her head ur toss!

I seed de debbil raisin' in de white ob Susan's eyes -
Fyeah she blow dat deacon-bo'd ter 'mansions in de skies,'

I des tuk down my bawnjer an' den I 'gins an' plays;
'Come dy fount ob ebbry blessin', chune my ha't ter sing dy praise.'

De pa'son an' de deacons dey jined me pooty soon;
Lawd! Dat bawnjer shuk itse'f ur-playin' ob de chune!

An' wen dey mos' wuz shoutin', I tightened up er string,
Dropped right inter 'Money Musk' an' gin de chune full swing.

De 'Debbil's Dream' come arter - de debbil wuz ter pay,
Dem niggahs fell ter pattin' - I larf mos' ebbry day!

Deacon Jones got on his feet, de pa'son pulled him down;
I played ur little fastah, an' sho's my name am Brown,

De pa'son an' de deacons jined han's right on dis flo',
Su'cled right and su'cled lef' - it sutny wuz er show.

Dey 'naded up an' down de flo' an' w'en hit come ter swing,
De pa'son gin hisse'f a flirt an' cut de pidgin-wing!

An' we'n urfo' de meetin' dat 'mittee med its 'po't
'Bout Sistah Susan's dawncin', dey cut it mighty sho't.

De chyusman, Mr. Pa'son, said in tones so mil' an' sweet:
'Sistah Brown wa'n't guilty, caze - she nebber crossed her feet!'

James Edwin Campbell

Serenade Song

Hist, Dolores, I am coming,
Gently my guitar I'm thrumming,
'Neath thy casement softly humming,
Dolores, O, carissima!
All the world but me is sleeping,
Nothing but the stars is peeping,
Up to thee my soul is leaping,
Dolores, O, carissima!

Rise, and wide thy shutter flinging,
List, O list, my soul is singing,
All my soul to love's time swinging,
Dolores, O, carissima!
Outward from thy casement leaning,
Turn thine eyes upon me beaming,
Twin stars thro' the darkness gleaming,
Dolores, O, carissima!

Nightly 'neath thy casement singing,
All my soul with passion ringing,
Up to thee my soul I'm flinging,
Dolores, O, carissima!
Thro' the summer's roses hoping,
Thro' the autumn's dead leaves groping,
Where the vine's dead leaves are dropping,
Dolores, O, carissima!

Still, my love, O still thou'rt sleeping,
While my soul for thee is weeping,
While Love's hand the strings is sweeping,
Dolores, O, carissima!
When, O, when, this long sleep breaking,
Will thy love, to life awaking,
On thy lips my kisses taking,
Know thy lover, me, Francisco?

James Edwin Campbell

Some Day Land

Man never is, but always to be blessed.

- Alexander Pope

O, mystic Land of Some Day,
For thee our sails are spread;
Thy mountains blue are looming
Above us just ahead;
'Land ho!' the lookout's calling,
Down oars and sails are falling,
The land is just ahead!

O, ever just before us
Dim, hazy lies thy shore;
We see the breakers rolling,
We catch the mad surf's roar -
Yet vain the helmsman's steering,
Despite our hoping, fearing -
Forever, just ahead!

We know, O Land of Some Day,
That on thy sun-kissed heights
Embodied dreams await us
That filled the long, long nights;
That face to face beholding,
With eager arms enfolding,
These visions we shall clasp.

We know in halls of marble
Play fountains icy cold;
On walls of alabaster
Hang pictures framed in gold;
That thro' the night time calling,
The bulbul's notes are falling
Upon the ravished ear.

We know through thy deep valleys
The purest streamlets flow;
That on thy southern hillsides
The purplest vine-yards glow;
That in thy gold meads reaping,
The fairest maids are sweeping
Their sickles 'round the grain.

Yet never any nearer
Our vessel comes to land,
Though by the prow awaiting,
Right eagerly we stand;
Though winds blow never failing,
Still ever on we're sailing
To thee, O, Some Day Land!

O, mystic Land of Some Day,
Behold our sails spread wide,
As toward thy azure mountains
'Neath softest skies we glide;
'Land ho!' the lookout's calling,
Down oars and sails are falling -
Forever, just ahead!

James Edwin Campbell

Song Of The Corn

O, hits time fur de plantin' ur de co'n;
De groun' am wa'm, de furrers made -
('Caw! caw!' de black crow larf,)
Put ur han'le in yo' ol' hoe blade -
('Caw! caw!') de black crow larf)
O, hits time fur de plantin' ur de co'n.

O, hits time fur de plantin' ur de co'n,
De chipmunk sot on top ur clod -
('Cheat! cheat!' de rahskil say)
He flirt his tail an' wink an' nod -
('Cheat! cheat!' de rahskil say,)
O, hits time fur de plantin' ur de co'n

O, hits time fur de hoein' ur de co'n,
De co'n am up an' full ur grass -
(Hot, hot, de sun hit shine,)
Hit beat de wu'l' how weeds grow fas' -
(Hot, hot, de sun hit shine,)
O, hits time fur de hoein' ur de co'n.

O, hits time fur de hoein' ur de co'n,
Hit stan'in' knee-high in de row -
(Hot, hot, de sun hit shine,)
One mo' time an' we'll let hit go -
(Hot, hot, de sun hit shine,)
O, hits time fur de hoein' ur de co'n.

O, hits time fur de cuttin' ur de co'n,
De blades am dry, de milk am ha'd -
(Hack, hack, de co'n knives say,)
De hawgs am killed an' ren'nered la'd - .
(Hack, hack, de co'n knives say,)
O, hits time fur de cuttin' ur de co'n.

O, hits time fur de cuttin' ur de co'n,
Dars w'ite fros' in de still night a'r -
(Hack, hack, de co'n knives say,)
Come urlong, Sam, le's grin' ur pa'r -
(Hack, hack, de co'n knives say,)
O, hits time fur de cuttin' ur de co'n.

O, hits time fur de huskin' ur de co'n,
De boys an' gyurls am all come out -
(Rip, rip, de brown pegs go,)
You hyuh 'em sing an' larf an' shout -
(Rip, rip, de brown pegs go,)
O, hits time fur de huskin' ur de co'n.

O, hits time fur de huskin' ur de co'n,
Dar's Reuben's side am a'mos' froo -
(Rip, rip, de brown pegs go,)
Hurry up, Sam, deys leabin' you -
(Rip, rip, de brown pegs go,)
O, hits time fur de huskin' ur de co'n.

O, hits time fur de grin'in' ur de co'n,
Run 'long, honey, an' git yo' sack -
(Clack, clack,' de mill wheel say,)
An' put hit on ol' Betsy's back -
(Clack, clack,' de mill wheel say,)
O, hits time fur de grin'in' ur de co'n.

O, hits time fur de grin'in' ur de co'n,
Des ride five mile ur roun' de hill -
(Clack, clack,' de mill wheel say,)
Den dump yo' load at Thompson's mill -
(Clack, clack,' de mill wheel say,)
O, hits time fur de grin'in' ur de co'n.

O, hits time fur de eatin' ur de co'n,

Mammy, bake us ur co'n pone brown -
('Good, good,' de chillen cry,)
Draw up yo' chyh an des sot down -
('Good, good,' de chillen cry,)
O, hits time fur de eatin' ur de co'n.

O, hits time fur de eatin' ur de co'n,
Wid ham an' aigs an' coffee strong -
('Good, good,' de chillen cry,)
Dat big co'n pone hit woan' las' long -
('Good, good,' de chillen cry,)
O, hits time fur de eatin' ur de co'n.

James Edwin Campbell

The Church Rally

Hi! yi! Now ain' I s'prise 'em - you Mistah Mule, git up!
Prince ob de Tribe of Zeb'lon, an' win de silbah cup!

Go long, you long-yurd debbil, an' le' dem weeds urlone,
Urfo' I tek dis blacksnaik an' wa'r you ter de bone.

W'y honey chile, you skyurd me; you did, sah, fur ur fac';
I'se tol'bul well, I tanks you, urscusin' dis ol' back.

You see, de che'ch am raisin' some money fer ter 'rec'
Ur mighty fine new buildin'; nuffin' but pride, I 'spec'.

Dats wut I tell de eldah w'en he come trapesin' 'roun'
Ur axin', 'How much money you gwi' gib, Bru'r Brown?'

I des right up an' tells him 'twan' nuffin' 'tall but pride,
Ur t'arin' down de ol' che'ch - de scriptur's on my side.

He mighty awgmendashus, an' use dem big wu'ds free,
But dar wuz only one t'ing dat settled hit wid me.

He said ez how dem Mefdis', up dar on Mayho's creek,
Hed laid de cornah stone ob dey fine new che'ch las' week.

I ain' gwi' hab no Mef'dis' waship in ur che'ch,
Wid ur great sky-pintin' steeple, ur westerbule an' sech,

Wile Ise ur prayin' membah ob ur che'ch, doan' you know,
Wid ur little mouse-trap balfry an' no glass 'bove de do'.

So dats de how-come-howdy, wen de meetin' come ur 'roun',
De motion fur new buildin' wuz med by Deacon Brown!

Dars twelb ob us ol' membahs fur heads ob tribes put up;
De one whar raise mos' money gwi' git ur silbah cup.

Dey med me Prince ob Zeb'lon, Bru'r Thomas, Prince ob Dan;
Bru'r Moses, Prince ob Reuben, an' Judah's Prince, Bru'r Mann.

De Reubites gin ur fes'bul, Ashies ur bobbycue;
De Gaddites gin ur fan drill an' Simyun gin one, too;

Naptolly gin ur foot race, an' Leebe, big cakewalk,
You orto seed dem niggahs - go 'way, now, doan' you talk!

De prize dat Leebe offe'd wuz fine young Bucksheah shote;
He des ez fat ez buttah, an' right sha'p load ter tote.

De prize wuz won by Nimrod, whar lib on Mill Creek Dam -
Some niggahs said he won hit 'caze he promised me ur ham!

You see, I one de jedges, de contes' mighty close -
De niggahs fell to quawlin' an' lak to fit, nigh mos';

Dars fibe ob us wuz jedgin'; I hel' de 'cidin' vote;
I cas' my voice fur Nimrod - so, cose, he got de shote.

Naix day dat wife ob Johnsings des wen' de roun's an' sed:
(Ef 'twan' dat Ise ur Deacon, I'd bruk dat niggah's head)

Dat Nimrod secon' cousin ter Susan's sistah's son,

An' dat wuz one de reasons de shote by him wuz won;

Dat she come in ter borry some sody fur herse'f
An' seed ur ham ur layin', shote size, dar on our she'f!

Er - wut ur 'bout de ham, sah? Well, now, I des do 'clar,
I ain' gwine mek no 'niance - de ham wuz sholy dar.

Not 'caze hit wuz ur bawgin, but allus on de Dam
Wen dey kills hawgs dey sen's us some sparribs an' ur ham.

My tribe gin 'possum suppah - good Lawd, hit mek me smile -
De niggahs come ur flockin' fur mo' 'an twenty mile;

De princes ob dem ur tribes, dey call fur 'possum roas',
Dey almos' bus' wid eatin', an' me wid larfin' mos'.

Bru'r Mann, de Prince ob Judah, he eat ur 'possum whole -
Dat niggah's stummick rubbah - hit mus' be, bress my soul!

I knowed dem niggahs spen'in' de quarters an' de dimes
Dey raise at cake-walks, fes'buls, dem fan-drills an' sich times;

Fur wen ur man am hongry he hab no fuchah plan;
Hit allus so, from Esau cla'r down ter Brudder Mann.

W'en on de Rallyin' Sunday Mount Zion rocked wid song,
An' de Princes ob ol' Iz'zul wen' ma'chin right urlong,

Ur bringin' up de money dat ebbry tribe done raise,
Dey foun' de Tribe ob Zeb'lon - de Lawd ob hosts be praise -

Hed brung de mostes' money - de eldah call me up,
An' fo' de congregation gin me de silbah cup.

Right dar de Prince ob Judah, he med ur awful fuss -
He spoke right out in meetin' - he mad ur 'nuff ter cuss,

'Bru'r Brown, he needn' swell out lak ur pa'tridge wen dey call:
He didn' raise de money - dat 'possum done hit all.'

James Edwin Campbell

The Courting Of Miss Lady-Bug

Des come urlong, my honey chile an' sot down on my knee,
An' Unker Eph 'll tell you ob de Baid-Bug an' de Flea.

Dese gempmen wen' ur co'tin' ob de sweet Miss Lady-Bug;
She lib at num'mer fo'ty in ur flat quite neat an' snug.

Marse Baid-Bug wo' his crimson ves', his beaver, how hit shine!
De ladies at de winders smiled ez he parsed down de line.

Marse Flea, he wo' ur swaller-tail ob orful stylish gray;
He med Miss 'Skeeter's h'a't beat fas' whar libbed ur cross de way.

She envied sweet Miss Lady-Bug huh comperny so gran' -
She des de meanes' dried ol' maid an' ugly, sabe de lan'!

Marse Baid-Bug retch de reserdence an' 'ting' he ring de bell,
An' out dar come Miss Lady-Bug, hit gin him quite ur spell.

He put his han' urpon his h'a't an' bowed so orful low,
Dat des ur leetle furder an' his nose 'ood tech de flo.'

She bowed him in de pa'lah fine an' took his hat an' cane;
Dat she wuz 'joiced ter see him, O, she showed it mighty plain.

He hemmed an' hawed ur leetle an' den he cross his laigs,
Wen 'tingle' wen' de bell urgin an' knocked him off his paigs.

De do' wuz flung wide open by de butlah, Mistah Gnat,
An' in dar strutted Mistah Flea ur twirlin' ob his hat.

Marse Baid-Bug looked at Mistah Flea an' hate wuz in his eye,
W'ile Flea looked at Miss Lady-Bug ez dough he gwine ter die.

Dey sot an' sot an' looked an' looked an' neider one 'ood go;
Miss Lady-Bug she sot ur tween an' gawrped, des sorter so.

An' still dey sot an' sot an' stared wid eyes des full ob hate,
'Twel Missis Bug called down de sta'rs: 'My deah, hits growin' late.'

Dey grabbed dey hats an' grabbed dey canes an' out de do' dey went;
At five ur clock dat mawnin' Mistah Flea ur challenge sent.

Marse Baid-Bug choose his secon', Mistah Ho'net wuz his name;
He hail f'um ol' Kaintucky an' dey say he sho' wuz game.

De Mud Wasp s'po'ted Mistah Flea, ur gempman tried an' true;
De secon's hed been dar urfo' an' knowed des wut ter do.

Dey met at fo' dat eb'nin' sha'p down hyuh in Fire-Bug Lane,
Now Mistah Flea goes on ur Crutch an' Baid-Bug on ur cane.

An' Lady-Bug? W'y honey chile, de women's all de same;
Dey's built dat way, an' so I s'pose de creeturs ain' ter blame!

Dey fit at fo' dat eb'nin' sha'p; at five de papah's tol'
How Lady Bug hed runned urway wid Captain Cock-Roach bol'!

James Edwin Campbell

The Hawk

This pirate of the over sea,
No black-hulled brig he sails,
No black flag at the mizzen-peak
Flaunts death-heads to the gales.
Yet fiercer than the wild Corsair
This pirate of the upper air.

Watch how he listless drifts along,
His wings with winds at sport -
But look! a sail has hove in sight,
A dove has crossed to port.
See how he crowds on ev'ry sail
And screams his war-cry to the gale.

The frightened dove - a merchantman
Has not a gun to give him fight;
With all her canvas to the wind,
She tacks to starboard, wild with fright.
Ah! vain for her this tack to take,
Like Fate he follows in her wake!

She weakens in her useless flight,
The wind is beating in her face.
But watch him as he drives along,
His ev'ry motion - strength and grace -
She's overhauled! Her course is run!
A fierce, fierce scream, the chase is won!

James Edwin Campbell

The Pariah

Owned her father all the fact'ries
Which their black'ning smoke sent up,
Miles and miles all 'round the country,
From the town by hills pent up.
Traced he back his proud ancestry
To the Rock on Plymouth's shore,
Traced I mine to Dutch ship landing
At Jamestown, one year before.
Thus was she of haughty lineage,
I of mongrel race had sprung;
O'er my fathers in the workfield
Whips of scorpions had been swung.
Years of freedom were her race's,
Years of cruel slavery mine;
Years of culture were her race's,
Years of darkest ign'rance mine.
She a lily sought by all men,
I a thistle shunned by all;
She the Brahmin, I the Pariah
Who must e'er before her crawl.
Fair was I as her complexion,
Honest came my fairness, too,
For my father and my mother
Were in wedlock banded true.
Yes, this mixing of the races
Had been years, long years ago,
That you could not trace the streamlet
To the fountain whence the flow.

Like an eagle long imprisoned
Soared I into realms of light,
Scorning all the narrow valley,
Where my wings had plumed for flight.
In the Sun of modern science
I had soaring bathed my wings,
And rose higher, higher, higher,
'Bove a world of narrow things.
Then on proudly soaring pinions

I forgot my lowly birth,
When Caste's arrow, venom laden,
Struck me, shot me down to Earth.

Kind and friendly had she ever
Seemed and acted unto me,
Till of late a cold restraint
Seemed to bar her manners free.
Then my sens'tive soul quick thinking
That the Pride of Caste was born
In her mind, grew cold and distant,
Though it pricked me like a thorn,
And my thoughts grew dark and bitter,
Bitter as the wild aloe.
I became a sneering cynic,
Deeming every man a foe,
Scorning books while scorning people.
In their pages naught I saw
But I libelled, but I censured,
Every sentence found a flaw;
Till one night the mad mob gathered,
Called in voices wild and loud
I should quickly come before them,
And address the raging crowd.
They were strikers, who were workmen
For her father stern and proud,
And they threatened to destroy him
And his works in curses loud.
At the call I stepped before them,
And they greeted wild and strong,
And my heart grew hot with hatred
Of Oppression, Caste and Wrong,
While the words poured out like lava
From the crater of my brain -
Burning, seething, hissing, raging
With the years of pent-up pain.
They had gathered by the great works,
With their blazing furnace doors,
And the lofty, flaming chimneys,
Up whose throats the hot blast roars;
And the furnace threw its hot light

'Pon their toilworn, swarthy faces,
While the flames from out the chimnies
Painted heaven with their blazes.
In their hands they held their weapons -
Tools for toil, and not for war;
On the great mill rolled and thundered,
Shaking heaven with its jar.
And their brows were dark with hatred,
And their cheeks were hot with rage,
And their voices low were growling,
Like wild beasts penned in a cage.
And the tiger rose within me
With a growl that was a curse,
And I breathed his breath of passion,
And I felt his awful thirst.
But her image came before me,
With her sad, reproachful eyes,
And her locks of sunset splendor
When the summer daylight dies.
Then banished was hot Passion,
While Mercy pleaded low,
And I cooled their angry fury,
As hot iron is cooled in snow.

And she comes and stands before me
As I gaze into the stream,
And I see her, I behold her
As some vision in a dream,
And the waves of love come surging
And they sweep my will away,
For I love her, O I love her -
Aye, forever and a day!
And I called her: 'Edie! Edie!'
As I'd called her oft before,
When as little guileless children
We plucked lilies from this shore.
Oh my voice sobbed like a harp string
When the rough hand breaks a chord,
And it wailed and moaned as sadly
As some broken-hearted bard.
And she came up to me quickly

When I thus wailed out her name,
All her soul rose in her blue eyes
There was ne'er a look of shame,
And she threw her arms up to me
And I caught her to my heart,
While the whole earth reeled beneath me
And the heavens fell apart!

Faint and trembling then I asked her
What the cruel world would say,
While she blushed but spoke out bravely:
'We'll forget the World to-day.
This I only know, I love you,
I have loved you all the while;
What care I then for your lineage
Or the harsh world's frown or smile.
Men are noble from their actions,
From their deeds and theirs alone,
Father's deeds are not their children's -
Reap not that by others sown.
They are naught but dwarfish pigmies
Who would scorn you for your birth;
Who would scorn you for your lineage,
Raise they not their eyes from Earth.
What is blood? The human body?
Trace it back, it leads to dust,
Trace it forward, same conclusion,
Naught but vile dust find you must.
But the soul is sent from heaven
And the Sculptor-Hand is God's
Part and parcel of his being,
While our bodies are but clods!'

James Edwin Campbell

The Point Of View

The poet stood in ecstasy
Before the field with daisies sweet -
A waving sea of white and gold:
'Well named,' he said, 'Sweet Marguerite.
Fair as her own sweet self you are,
You represent her better part -
White as the newest snow without,
And deep within, all gold at heart.'
Then, stooping low with eyes all soul,
He plucked one for his button-hole.

The farmer leaned across the fence,
A scowl was on his wrinkled brow
As on the marguerites he frowned:
'Gosh darn the luck, I'll du it naow;
Them consarned weeds ull taak the place,
They're baout tu run me off the farm;
Them air ox-eyes uv gut tu go
So they wont du the craps no harm.'
Then pulling up an armful - big,
He threw them over to the pig!

James Edwin Campbell

Through October Fields

The startled quail in covies whir
From 'neath your feet as on you stray
Along the narrow thread-like path,
This cool October day.

The grouse's booming drum of bass
Pels from the hollow on your right,
Till 'larumed by your near approach
He wheels in sudden flight.

And on the trunk of yon dead tree
The 'flicker'[1] beats his fierce tattoo,
Then hurls back from his wave-like flight
Defiance shrill to you.

On every side the golden rod's
Long, graceful plumes of tawny gold
And ageratum's purple bloom -
The banners of the wold.

The stubble of the June-reaped wheat
Stands up in bristling ranks of spears,
Its gold is covered now with frost,
Like warriors grey with years.

And over all the golden haze
Soft wraps the brown Earth in a dream,
While every breath across the fields
Rich draughts of rare wines seem.

There in the stream beneath the elms,
The leaves, like ships of Lil'put, fair,
Drift down, sans rudders and sans sails

To ports that lie nowhere.

See in the field beyond the stream,
Pitched wide o'er all the bottom land,
An Indian village quaintly shown,
The cornshock wigwams stand.

Now, you are 'near to nature's heart,'
You lie upon her tawny breast;
You feel her warm breath on your cheek
As in her arms you rest.

James Edwin Campbell

Twice The Maple Blushes

O, twice the maple blushes, blushes rosy, rosy red;
She blushes in the Spring-time,
When aroused from Winter's sleep,
She finds herself all naked
And the gaping world apeek,
O, then the maple blushes, blushes rosy, rosy red.

Once again the maple blushes, blushes rosy, rosy red;
She blushes in the Autumn,
When she lays her robes aside
For the long, long sleep of Winter,
And finds naught 'neath which to hide,
O, then the maple blushes, blushes rosy, rosy red.

James Edwin Campbell

Uncle Eph Backslides

W'y, Sam, I'se glad to see you, I sho' is fur ur fac';
W'y, man, hit teks de lameness right outn' my ol' bac'.

How's Cindy an' de chillen? I'se glad ter hyuh hit, sho' -
O, Susan, she des tol'bul an' I des sorter so.

She done gone ter dat meetin' up dar on Mayho's Creek;
Dem niggahs been ur shoutin' fur nigh mos' on ur week.

An' Susan, she ur leader, wen dey call on Sistah Brown,
She des lif' up ur strong pra'r dat call de hebbins down.

W'y, she done got so 'ligious, I darsn't tek ur dram,
An', Sam, I des ez dry ez de upper Mill Creek dam!

She med me burn my bawnjer an' druv me in de che'ch -
She wawn' gwine hab no bawnjer, no drinkin' an' all sech.

You say you'se got ur bottle? Ur qua't ob fine ol' co'n?
I'se gwine ter mek ur fiah an' put de kittle on.

Hyuh, tek dis bucket, honey, an' run 'long ter de spring,
Wile I goes fur some sugah an' fixes ebbry ting.

You hyuh dat kittle singin'; hit knows wat hit am 'bout -
Hit fill my soul wid 'joicin'; O, Sam, I'se got ter shout!

Now, des put in dat sugah, say, honey, aint dat fine?
Dis min' me ob de ol' time 'fo' Susan fell in line.

Hyuh's luck ter you, my pa'dnah, hyuh's luck ter you, my fren';
Hyuh's long life in dis ol' wu'l, an' hebbin in de en'.

Des fill dat glass urgin, Sam, an' stir dat sugah 'roun -
I doan' cyah dat fur pa'sons an' Sistah Susan Brown.

Hyuh's luck ter you, my pa'dnah, hyuh's luck ter you, ol' fren';
Hyuh's long life in dis ol' wul', an' hebbin in de en'.

Now ef I hed my bawnjer - you done brung yo'se urlong?
Des han' huh out hyuh, honey, an' jine me in dis song:

Uncle Eph's Banjo Song

Clean de ba'n an' sweep de flo',
Sing, my bawnjer, sing!
We's gwine ter dawnce dis eb'nin' sho',
Ring, my bawnjer, ring!
Den hits up de road an' down de lane,
Hurry, niggah, you miss de train;
De yaller gal she dawnce so neat,
De yaller gal she look so sweet,
Ring, my bawnjer, ring!

De moon come up, de sun go down,
Sing, my bawnjer, sing!
De niggahs am all come f'um town,
Ring, my bawnjer, ring!
Den hits roun' de hill an' froo de fiel' -
Lookout dar, niggah, doan' you steal!
De milyuns on dem vines am green,
De moon am bright, O you'll be seen,
Ring, my bawnjer, ring!

Git out dat deck ob kyards, sah, an' we'll des hab ur game -
Nebber min' 'bout Susan, we'll play hit des de same.

I'd hab you fur ter know, sah, ob dis house I'se de head,
An' Susan she de tail, sah, an' she de one dat's led.

Dar, I tu'ned de jack, sah; you'se beggin? Go ur head;
I plays de deuce fur low, sah, an' now de ace am led.

Des fill-dat-glass-ergin S-Sam, dat liquah s-sho-am-f-fine;
D-debbil-tek de meetin's an' S-Susan-n-nebber-min'.

Huhs-luck-ter-you, ol'-p-padnah, huhs-l-luck-ter-you, ol'-f-frien',
Huhs-l-long-l-life-in-dish ol' wu'l', an' hebbin' in d-de-en'.

'Dar, fo' de Lawd, come Susan, now somefin' mus' be done -
Hide dem kyards, quick, niggah, an' do hit on de run!

An' frow dat bottle liquah in dem weeds out de do',
An' stick dis blamed ol' bawnjer dar un'nerneaf de flo'.

W'y, Susan, how's de meetin'? De sperrit runnin' high?
Brer' Johnsing stopped ter se me, ez he wuz parsin' by;

You see, I med de fiah an' put de kittle on -
I knowed dat you'd be tiahd; pra'r's wu'k, des sho's you bo'n.

(Susan goes out to the wood pile.)

Sam, you tek dat bawnjer, an', niggah, des you fly,
'Fo' Susan blows us bofe up ter mansions in de sky.

James Edwin Campbell

Uncle Eph--Epicure

You kin talk erbout yo' 'lasses an' yo' steamin' buckwheat cakes,
'Bout yo' eisters fried in crackers, an' yo' juicy hot clambakes;

'Bout yo' beefsteak fried wid inguns, an' yo' ros'n yeahs ob co'n,
But ol' possum wid sweet taters beats dem all, des sho's you bo'n.

Tek erway yo' Floyd a einge, tek erway yo' fig and date,
An' bring erlong my 'possum on dat bigges' ol' tin plate.

Turnip greens all biled wid bacon an' er co'n pone smokin hot,
I gwi' nebber scratch dat ticket caze it retch ur tender spot.

An' hot biscuits wid hot coffee mek ur mighty han'som pa'r,
W'ile ol' hen biled wid dumplin's, O yes, dat's parsin' fa'r.

But tek erway yo' greens an' bacon, tek erway yo' chicken biled,
An' bring 'possum an' sweet taters - hesh yo' mouf, dey sets me wild!

Sta't him out'n pawpaw thicket, chase him up er 'simmon tree,
W'ile de music ob dat houn' pack sets de woods er-ring wid glee.

Roun' de hill an' troo de bottom, up de holler by de spring,
Ow! ow! ow! ow! des a whoopin'! how dat ol' lead-houn' do sing!

An' you hurry troo de briahts an' you tumble ober logs,
Nebber knowin', nebber cyarin' ez you chyuh dem blessed dogs.

An' w'en dey all sees you comin', how dem dogs sing wid new grace,
Fum de young houn's sweet, cla'r tenah ter de ol' houn's mighty bass.

An' dar on ur lim' er grinnin' wid his tail quoiled mighty tight,
Hangs my fren', ol' Mistah 'Possum - how dem dogs howl wid delight.

An' you crawl out furder, furder, twel you hyuh dat ol' lim' crack,
An' you shake er loose his tail holt, an' you put him in yo' sack.

Den you tote him home an' feed him twel he fat des ez you please,
Den you kill him an' you hang him out er frosty night ter freeze.

Den you stuff him wid sweet taters an 'put butter all ur roun',
Den you put him in de oven an' you bake him twel he's brown.

Oom! all swimmin' in his grabby an' ur drippin' in his fat -
Talk erbout yo' milk an' honey, wut's de hebbenly food ter dat?

Let dat show-ban' play its loudes', let dat 'cession des march on,
I wouldn't stop my eatin' ef ol' Gab'ul blowed his horn!

James Edwin Campbell

Uncle Eph's Banjo Song

Clean de ba'n an' sweep de flo',
Sing, my bawnjer, sing!
We's gwine ter dawnce dis eb'nin' sho',
Ring, my bawnjer, ring!
Den hits up de road an' down de lane,
Hurry, niggah, you miss de train;
De yaller gal she dawnce so neat,
De yaller gal she look so sweet,
Ring, my bawnjer, ring!

De moon come up, de sun go down,
Sing, my bawnjer, sing!
De niggahs am all come f'um town,
Ring, my bawnjer, ring!
Den hits roun' de hill an' froo de fiel'--
Lookout dar, niggah, doan' you steal!
De milyuns on dem vines am green,
De moon am bright, O you'll be seen,
Ring, my bawnjer, ring!

James Edwin Campbell

Uncle Eph's Horse Trade

[Aunt Susan sends Uncle Eph to town to sell the cow. Meeting Farmer Johnson with a dun mule, he makes a trade.]

UNCLE EPH.

'Come out hyuh, Thomas 'Rastus, an' see wut Daddy got -
Woa dar, you long yurd debbil, yo' legs too full ur trot!

Git out de way, you chillun, he mighty full ur fiah,
His mammy was ur Mo'gan, ur jackass wus his siah.

Stop dat you General Jackson! (De Voodoo's in dis mule!)
Say, chillun, whar yo' mammy? (I spec' I been ur fool.)

Ob cose he summat spavin' an' stone blin' in one eye,
An' his ha'r all off in places - dat come all right bimeby.

(Fo' de Lawd, dar Susan - now how I gwine ter 'splain
Urbout dis debblish hoss trade - hit gwine go 'ginst de grain.)

Des look ur hyuh, 'ol' 'oman, I'se traded off de cow;
You bet I med ur bawgin, an' dat youse boun' ter 'low.

De cow was mighty scrawny an' den she mos' wuz dry;
De price ur hay am raisin' - dar's no green in my eye.

I met ol' Fa'mah Johnsing ur ridin' in ter town,
I 'sarbed dis mule's fine action an' axed de gempmun down.

I led him foruds, backuds - his action mighty free,
His mouf I zaminated - his age des tirty-tree.

An' den I mek ur offah - de cow fur Johnsing's mule,
He cussed urroun' ur little - I nebber wuz ur fool.

So Johnsing dribe de cow off, ur wa'kin' doan' you see,
While I come home ur ridin' ez big ez big kin be.

Des watch him trot, ol' 'oman, dat motion's Mo'gan true -
Fine blood gwine tell in muleses ez well ez hosses, too.

I needs him fur de plowin' w'en gyardenin' time come 'roun',
My back done got rheumatics an' I cyawn' spade de groun.'

SUSAN.

'You call dem bones ur hoss trade? You allus wuz ur' fool!
Tuck my cow an' traded fur ur knock-kneed spavin' mule!

Dat blood do tell in muleses; hit tells in niggahs mo' -
De Browns wuz allus triflin', an' Efum, youse mo' so.

I wucked ha'd all lars' summah, w'en you wuz loafin' roun'
Spennin' yo' lars' nickel in dem dram shops in de town,

Ur sweatin' and ur gruntin' in dat ol' washin' tub
Ter buy dat Jussey heffah an' keep you all in grub.

Des come ur little closah, you triflin' lim' ob Ham!
Oom, hoo! I smell de liquah. I knowed you hed er dram.

You long-legged tu'key trottin', black, good fur nothin' fool -
Ur tradin' off my heffah fur yo' match - ur spavin' mule!

Ef I des hed hot watah, I'd scal' you bofe, I 'clar,
You ring bone, knoc-kneed, triflin', ol' saddle-culled pa'r!

Des clam back in dat saddle an' fo' dat sun go down,
You hunts up ol' man Johnsing ez sho's yo name am Brown,

An' gits dat Jussey heffah - I doan' cyah how hits done;
You tu'ns her in dat back ya'd urfo' de risin' sun!'

And Ephraim and the dun mule of Morgan blood descent,
Went galloping down the red road for Farmer Johnson's bent.

At five o'clock next morning when the Shanghai rooster crowed,
The yellow Jersey heifer in Susan's back yard lowed.

When Ol' Sis' Judy Pray

When ol' Sis' Judy pray,
De teahs come stealin' down my cheek,
De voice ur God widin me speak';
I see myse'f so po' an' weak,
Down on my knees de cross I seek,
When ol' Sis' Judy pray.

When ol' Sis' Judy pray,
De thun'ers ur Mount Sin-a-i
Comes rushin' down f'um up on high -
De Debbil tu'n his back an' fly
While sinnahs loud fur pa'don cry,
When ol' Sis' Judy pray.

When ol' Sis' Judy pray,
Ha'd sinnahs trimble in dey seat
Ter hyuh huh voice in sorrow 'peat:
(While all de chu'ch des sob an' weep)
'O Shepa'd, dese, dy po' los' sheep!
When ol' Sis' Judy pray.

When ol' Sis' Judy pray,
De whole house hit des rock an' moan
Ter see huh teahs an' hyuh huh groan;
Dar's somepin' in Sis' Judy's tones
Dat melt all ha'ts dough med ur stones,
When ol' Sis' Judy pray.

When ol' Sis' Judy pray,
Salvation's light comes pourin' down -
Hit fill de chu'ch an' all de town -
Why, angels' robes go rustlin' 'roun',
An' hebben on de Yurf am foun',
When ol' Sis' Judy pray.

When ol' Sis' Judy pray,
My soul go sweepin' up on wings,
An' loud de chu'ch wid 'Glory!' rings,
An' wide de gates ur Jahsper swings
Twel you hyuh ha'ps wid golding strings,
When ol' Sis' Judy pray.

When ol' Sis Judy die -
Froo triberlations justerfied,
I know de gates will des fly wide
An' wid King Jesus by huh side,
Straight froo dem gold-paved streets she'll ride,
When ol' Sis' Judy die!

James Edwin Campbell

When The Fruit Trees Bloom

When the fruit trees bloom,
Pink of peach and white of plum,
And the pear-trees' cones of snow
In the old back orchard blow -
Planted fifty years ago!
And the cherries' long white row
Gives the sweetest prophecy
Of the banquet that will be,
When the suns and winds of June
Shall have kissed to fruit the bloom -
Then Falstaffian bumble-bees
Drain the blossoms to the lees.
When the fruit trees bloom.

When the fruit trees bloom,
Pink the apple, white the plum,
Underneath the knotted boughs
I am holding full carouse;
Drunken with the wine that drips
Downward from each blossom's lips,
While the catbird's strident calls
Seem the laugh of bacchanals
Ringing through these winy halls;
Serenaded by the bees,
Lullabies in minor keys,
Soon I sink in drunken drowse,
When-the-fruit-trees-bloom.

James Edwin Campbell

Winter-Tired

I wus a settin' by my winder
Lookin' out the other day,
On the Airth all white with snowdrifts -
Look you ever which-a-way;
An' while it all wus cleanly
Like a soul that's washed from sin,
I could not help a longin'
Fur the robins an' the green.

I am tired of all this sollum white,
Bare boughs an' tongueless brook;
The Airth is like a shrouded corpse
No matter whur I look.
O, I want to see the robins
An' hear the bluebirds sing,
An' in the pon' below the barn
The bullfrog swear its Spring!

I want to see white turn to brown,
An' then the brown turn green,
The hillsides put their mournin' off
As fifty times I've seen.
O, I want to hear that tongue-tied brook
Go singin' on its way,
Ashoutin' as it runs along:
'The robins 've come to stay!'

James Edwin Campbell

With The Sunrise Gun

And why should I be sad?
And why should you be glad?
To-morrow will come
With the sunrise gun,
When I may be glad
While you may be sad -
Ah, should I not wait till then?

What if the skies are gray
And hide the sun away;
To-morrow will come
With the sunrise gun,
The sun will break through,
The sky will be blue,
Ah, should we not wait till then?

O, sweetheart, 'way with tears,
With wav'ring hopes and fears.
Your lover will come
With the sunrise gun.
He'll bring you gifts from many lands,
He'll kiss your lips, he'll kiss your hands,
Ah, can you not wait till then?

James Edwin Campbell