

[Cover]
[Centered]Driftwood

[1]
[In handwriting and centered]
Sarah C. Darrow
"[?]," 1903 --

[Typed and centered]
Driftwood
And Other Verse
By
ELLA MORROW SOLLENBERGER

[In handwriting on bottom of page]
A silver gull against the sky,
Over a shinning sea,
The breathe-fire and comparison dear
Are memories [event?] to me --
Ella M. Sollenberger

[2]
[Centered]To
[Centered]Randall, Alive, Richard and Mac

[3]
[Centered]Part I
[Centered]DRIFTWOOD

[4]

[Centered]DRIFTWOOD

On the margin of the deep
With its restlessness, I keep
Tossing, sobbing ceaselessly.

At swelling of the tide,
To thy bosom calm and wide,
Take me to thyself, oh Sea!

Or upon the barren shore
Cast me lifeless - evermore,
Dead and feelingless to be.

[5]

[Centered]SYMPATHY

Amidst a peopled loneliness,
The burning prescience I possess,
Life sudden sun in greyness drear,
Ere floodgates of the soul arise
In cognizance of meeting eyes.
To thee, released and unafraid,
The thought goes forth but half essayed,
Anticipated in its flight,
To greet in turn with keen delight,
Thy rare unfettered subtlety,
Bestowed without excuse or plea
From hidden place of mind or mood,
Accredited and understood,
For what thy heart or nature wills
The tenor of my own fulfills
And alien judgments cannot mar--
I know -- thou -- what we are.

[6]

[Centered]CREATION

An overpowering, primal fierce desire;
Plasmatic shapes, conceived in holy fire
Of hot unrest in impregnating brain;
A drear, uncertain struggle to attain
While quick, elusive, half formed fancies fill
Long futile days and sleepless nights -- until,
In swift, blest travail of the soul,
The poem live -- a breathing, perfect whole.

[7]

[Centered]GENIUS

A chosen few -- those who the God-mark know,
From starry heights to lowest depths may go
And from the darkness and the creature slime,
Pearl laden, rise again to heights sublime.

[8]

[Centered]PIONEERS

Strong men, brave men,
You men who blazed the way,

Whose sharpened axes swung,
And notched here and there a tree
Throughout the tangles wilderness,
Stripping it of clinging vines --
Tenacious, opiate faiths,
That caught and held
Halting, stumbling feet.

Men of spirit and of brain,
You who bore, each upon his brow,
A single, steady ray,
Let me follow in your steps
To the trail's end,
Take from your light and try,
Though lonely with your loneliness,
To penetrate a little farther on
Into the dark forest.

[9]

[Centered]REALITY

Forth from the Vale of Dreams come he,
Dear face and form seen mistily
Yet all his presence a caress.
Enfolded by his tenderness,
Sweet, unregarded hours are spent
In an ineffable content,
Until the nightmare of the day
Sets free once more upon my way
Ghosts of reality -- and then --
To sleep, to dream, to live, again.

[10]

[Centered]TO A --

Instant of time and beauty crushed --
A flash and joyous laughter hushed,
But that brief agony you bore
My soul endures forevermore!

[Centered]RESURRECTION

Mere mockery, that first fair Spring
[Indented]With joyous resurrection rife,
Whose sweet, bright newness could not bring

[Indented]Our severed blossom back to life.

A timeless winter, then from sleep
[Indented]The floweret, each hid long ago,
Grew into faith and love so deep
[Indented]As only deep ploughed hearts can know.

[11]

[Centered]HERITAGE

My sweet, why do I love thee so?
[Indented]Since of my being thou wast part?
For such mere way of nature, no,
[Indented]But that so like to him thou art.

Thou hast his form, his face, his hair,
[Indented]Like his, the color of thine eyes.
And thy wee rose-bud lips do bear
[Indented]His charm of laughter, baby wise.

I cannot think of him away
[Indented]Nor feel, as one bereaved, alone,
In thee, he lives again each day
[Indented]And thus I have you both, my own.

[12]

[Centered]RENUNCIATION

Ah, Dear, I hold you very dear,
For all the bitterness we bear,
Each day returning.

'Tis just that two so far apart,
Yet bound together, keep the heart
Forever burning.

For love of all we could not know
I would in gladness, bid you go
While deeply yearning.

Yet hold me close nor let me miss
The long expiatory kiss,
Our freedom earning.

[13]

[Centered]IT DOES NOT HURT TO DIE

It does not hurt to die --
The long excruciating pain we dread,
Is life -- an ebb tide sigh,
A gentle slipping back -- and we are dead.

[14]

[Centered]THE JOY KILLER

Life so full of wonderful things,
[Indented]Light and love and laughter sweet,
Holding yet, with shafts and stings,
[Indented]Killer of joy, by chance we meet.

Turn we dumbly out of his way
[Indented]Covering brightness till he is past;
Hastener of death, his own decay,
[Indented]Bearing the brand of his lonely cast.

[15]

[Centered]TO --- A FRIEND

A genius for friendship?
You too, my friend ---
Because we know
What friendship means
When comes an end
To dreams
And life can show,
Here and there,
A few who care.
But only one or two,
Tenderly platonic,
May mend brokenly
The dream's rent fabric.
Just one or two ---
I, maybe,
And you.

[16]

[Centered]THE MASTER

Wondrous that thy firm cool hand
[Indented]Should thus take my fevered one,
Vesting me with strength to stand,
[Indented]Faint and trembling, yet alone;

That thy patience calm should show

[Indented]Pitfall and the hidden thorn,
When to pause or onward go,
[Indented]Shielding from the blight of scorn.

If at length I safely rest
[Indented]In the land of Heart's Desire,
Thine the guerdon of the quest ---
[Indented]Thou who held the guiding fire.

All I am or hope to be
[Indented]Insufficient were to pay
My uncounted debt to thee,
[Indented]Master, who has shown the way.

[17]
LOVE'S CHILD

At hand, the longed-for, dreaded, frightened
[Indented]Hour,
Two white clad forms, alert and undistressed,
A woman, summoning all her power,
Unflinchingly to meet the world old test.

Man's quick drawn breath in sympathetic pain;
Fierce, impotent desire to share the strife;
At length, the small, free cry that lifts the
[Indented]Strain,

Then meeting lips in speechless ecstasy,
Fond answering eyes, released from fear:
"How could you, Love, endure all this for me?"
"For you, believe, 'twas truly nothing, Dear."

[18]
[Centered]CREDO

Am I to wear a shining robe
Or end an earthy clod?
I think, when flesh this spirit frees,
I'll just dissolve---in God.

[19]
[Centered]AFFINITY

Blest, doubtless, he who feels his need supplied
In one beloved presence at his side,
But let me find, whate'er the cost may be,

In many souls, some dear affinity.

[20]

[Centered]PIRATE

Dread disturber of the peace
Of woman---when shall it cease,
The adventure of your power?
Why demand her single hour
To prolong you o'er long day,
And having spent, to sail away?

[21]

[Centered]THE MAN WITH JONQUILS

This bleak March day, who rings my bell,
[Indented]Old clothes to buy, new brooms to sell?
A hasty "No" lips form to say
[Indented]The bargainer to drive away.

The door is opened smallest space,
[Indented]Then flung to meet the smiling face
Of man with jonquils, come to town
[Indented]In faded hat and suit of brown.

"Jonquils today for twenty cents?
[Indented]They grow beside our garden fence."
"Just twenty cents?" "Oh yes, you see
[Indented]They're no expense at all to me."

Oh, man with jonquils, what could pay
For glimpse of spring and you today!

[22]

[Centered]RASAMOND

With last perfect petal in beauty unfurled,
Grown fair for the King---sweet Rose of the
[Indented]World.

[Centered]JAMIE

A little child whose love o'er flows
For one and all, a constant stream.
About his tiny world it goes

To meet love coming back to him.

[23]

[Centered]TO

[Centered]LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE

[Slight indent]In the wake of a comet,
[Slight indent]Nebula, I,
[Slight indent]Part of a flaming substance
[Slight indent]Crossing the sky.
[Slight indent]Though I dissolve in ether,
[Slight indent]Mine still the flight
[Slight indent]In the wake of a comet,
[Slight indent]Piercing the night.

[24]

[Centered]YOU

Mortal and immortal you
All my earth and heaven too.

[25]

[Centered]HIS POEM TO THE SEA

Brave plunger in the deep
Thy courage I adore,
Though the tides may sweep
Thee farther from my shore.

Yet never shall be stilled
Your voice from out the sea,
Since strangely thou hast willed
To leave its song with me.

[26]

[Centered]ITALY

A living, achieving present
[Indented]Rising out of the mold of the past,
Beauty and truth and tawdry sham,
[Indented]All into one crucible cast.

Anger and laughter and singing,
[Indented]Drear poverty, gorgeous display,
Dignified pride in ancient fame
[Indented]And carefree life of each day.

Dear paradox land of sunlight
[Indented]Where citrons look up at the snow,
Where littered street or Virgins sweet
[Indented]Are all in the charm that we know.

The dream in the mist, Perugia,
[Indented]The dance of the lads at Capri,
The lure of old Pisa and Roma
[Indented]Will call me again -- Italy.

[27]

[Centered]ENGLAND, 1924

Between the sea and shifting clouds
[Indented]Grey gulls wheel in leisured flight
And rest upon the wave worn shelves
[Indented]Of chalk cliffs, towering softly white.

From grassy nest, a tiny form
[Indented]Goes soaring upward to the sky;
A lark's sweet rapture, trilling down,
[Indented]Is caught in rapture where we lie.

With silent sheep, in wattled fold,
[Indented]Our world the sweeping Sussex Down.
We feel the poppies' dreamy breath
[Indented]And peace in England is our own.

[28]

[Centered]CAMPANE

God cannot be
So far away
When thrice a day
We stop to pray.

At dawn we wake
As slowly swell
The limpid tones
Of matin bell.

The Angelus
Brings pause at noon,
As heads are bowed
And thoughts attune.

L'Ave Maria,

The day is done
And rest and peace
Our benison.

[29]

[Centered]VENICE

Turquoise sky and a saffron sail,
[Indented] Glinting wave and a gondolier,
Golden Halls of a wonder tale,
[Indented]Lilting song and a cavalier.

[30]

[Centered]MICHAEL ANGELO

Unlovely and unloved thy destiny?
Yet god-like love and human thou hast known.
Else whence this rapt, exquisite ecstasy
Quickened to immortality in stone?

[31]

[Centered]NATALE

On Christmas Eve, unnumbered bells sound,
Sound over valley, hill and plain
And countless knees are bent before
The little Jesus, born again.

Yes born again in hearts of men,
Here imaged on his bed of hay
And as the tidings glad ring out,
The ones who love him, come to pray.

[32]

[Centered]THE STRANGER WITHIN OUR GATE

We Flag-born ones, with our blood written creed.
[Slight indent]Should welcome give to every pilgrim band.
The privilege ours, whose brave fore-fathers
[Indented]freed,
[Slight indent]for all oppressed, this wide and generous land.

Should foreigner, just come within our gate,
[Slight indent]Meet fraud and sneering names of "Kike"
[Indented]and "Wop"
With jeers that turn his ready love to heat
[Slight indent]And kill a generation builded hope?

Is it a strange thing that he should rant
[Indent] Against such hospitality and scheme,
In secret meeting place, revenge to take,
[Slight indent] With strike and bomb, for every shattered
[Indented] dream.

As hosts, 'tis our "noblesse oblige" to greet
[Slight indent] The stranger at our door with out stretched
[Indented] Hand,
To help him see how all we have is his -
[Slight indent] And soon his eager soul will understand.

[33]
[Centered] BETHLEHEM

So fair he was, the Hold Child
That shepherds stood by mystified
And beasts were still in wonder mild.
One, brooding by the manger side,
Thought it but mete that men should kneel
And lay their priceless treasure there
But in her heart did she not feel
The hurt of thorns that he must bear?

[34]
[Centered] CANDLES

While closed and dark my house last year
[Indented] And in my hard heart, gloom,
Across the street some candles clear
[Indented] Lit up my shadowed room.

My shades were drawn and yet the beams
[Indented] Somehow would not stay out.
Everywhere I seemed to feel
[Indented] The love of Christ about.

A love that followed me, until
[Indented] This year, from candles bright,
The Christmas message streams to all
[Indented] Who pass my house tonight.

[35]
[Centered] THE EMPTY STOCKING CLUB

A thousand names on tickets

[Indented]To give to each seat
Inside the dear old Play House
[Indented]Which holds the Christmas treat.

A thousand little children
[Indented]Who wait the great surprise
Are led in happy singing
[Indented]Before the curtains rise.

A thousand, thousand blessings
[Indented]On guests and givers fall
For once a year, 'tis surely here,
[Indented]The Christ Child comes to all.

[36]

[Centered]TO MARYLAND LEGISLATORS

Good men of boasted chivalry:
Forego thine ancient sophistry,
Of homage and of service fine,
While yet politely ye decline
To lend an ear to honest claim.
Honor would best deserve the name
And prove a vaunted manhood true
That freely grants a rightful due.
Dost fear that such concession might
Deprive you of your tend'rest right,
Protection of the strong right arm,
And bring the fair ones all to scorn?
Displace the creature of your dream,
Unsexed and monstrous as they seem,
Champions brave, and simply note
That womanly women want the vote.

[37]

A PLEA

[Centered]

Unwatched the hearth fires burn,
[Indented]Loved, little voices plead
And yet we may not turn
[Indented]Aside, a wider need.

So hard the way and long,
[Indented]Give us, ah comrade men,
Our own and to our own,
[Indented]Let us go back again.

[38]

[Centered]KNITTING

Knitting and knitting;
Jacket and helmet,
Mittens and muffler,
Into the mesh of them
Thinking and thinking.

Monarchies crumbling,
Democracies shaking,
The blood of our manhood
Spilling and spilling.
Sorrow and sacrifice,
Fatherless children,
Desolate womanhood
Drudgingly living.

Wanton destruction
That centuries builded.
Nothing is sacred.
Killing and killing.
Passions unbridled,
Lust and despoiling.
What does it matter?
There is no tomorrow.

[39]

Crowned heads and statesmen
Round green baize and carving,
For greed and aggression
Precipitate horror.
May the Hell they've let loose
Take their souls in its keeping!

So little, so futile
This work of our fingers
Yet we keep knitting;
Jacket and helmet,
Mittens and muffler,
Into the mesh of them
Thinking and thinking.

[40]

[Centered]THE CROSS

They bear the sacrificial sign --

Those valient dead in far flung line --
For lives they gave.
A myriad cross to amplify
The Cross of Him who chose to die
The world to save.

Though once through darkness rang his cry,
"Eli Lama Sabachthani!"
His life he gave.
Today too shall live who there have died
The world to save.

[41]

[Centered]THE LAWN --- UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Leaves falling in gentle shower,
Crimson and gold;
Five minutes to the hour,
The Bell's release from storied room;
Leisurely across the grass,
Students go from class to class,
By colonnade and brick arcade,
Drinking in Autumn's glory;
Beautiful, until a night of snow
Brings beauty new
To roof and bough,
Ephemeral beauty, soon to turn,
In icy sheathes a gracious sheen
In Southern sun.
Then halcyon days;
Magnolia scent;
Maples bursting, feathery red;
Carpet of velvet green
From Rotunda to the Hall;
Cool shade in June;
Long line of black gowned men.
Beloved Lawn!
Always we shall recall
Your ever changing loveliness---
A memory, lingering in the heart,
To soften stress
Of Life's grim fight
In bank or bar or mart.

[42]

[Centered]Part II

[Centered]BLESSINGS

[43]

[Centered]BLESSINGS

Hand prints on the bath room towel,
[Indented]Mud upon the clean white steps,
Buttons off and jagged tears,
[Indented]Tossed up rugs and puppy yelps;

Skates and bats about the hall,
[Indented]Pillows soiled in bedtime fight,
Pictures crooked on the wall --
[Indented]And the boys safe home at night.

[44]

[Centered]SONS

By my sunny bedroom window
[Indented]Every afternoon I sew
Waiting for three busy children
[Indented]Presently to come and go.

Soon I hear the front door banging
[Indented]And a scuffle on the stair,
Calls for shoulder pads and helmets,
[Indented]Cries of "Mother, are you there?"

"Look, you see, I've won my Letter.
[Indented]"Aren't you glad as you can be?
"Sew it quickly on my sweater,
[Indented]"Practice game at half past three."

Here and gone again to field games
[Indented]And I'm left alone to sew,
Left a happy, happy woman
[Indented]With three sons to come and go.

[45]

[Centered]INHERITANCE

Why do I fear the wayward turn,
Collapse of will and thoughts that burn
Towards the forbidden, luring thing
For sake of pure adventuring?

Because your mind and temperament
Have from my own, received their bent.

If I have knpt the narrow way
It is that you shall never pay
For what I've done with blush of shame --
My son, for me, will do the same.

[46]

[Centered]MY LITTLE SON

I begged him hard, in foolish mother play,
Not to grow up but, just for me, to stay
A little, little boy.

The seasons swiftly sped, he would grow tall;
In summer, camp; the gridiron in the fall:
A strong, ungainly lad.

His life choice in a West Point training lay
Yet soon beneath the gold and spotless grey,
I sensed a bitter youth.

Stern years until the day they set him free
And, kahki clad, they send back to me ---
A hard, commending man.

Home late, he comes. He's down beside my bed
In hollow of my arm, I find his head.
With one free hand, I smooth and smooth his
[Indented]Hair.
I hear his whisper, "Mother, mother, dear."
"Oh, little, little son."

[47]

[Centered]ORDINARY SEAMAN

I watched my boy go out to sea.
He was so young and fair, could he,
Unhurt and clean, come back to me?

My boy's come back, come back to me.
He's changed -- but in clear eyes, I see
The same dear look that went from me,
The day his boat put out to sea.

[48]

[Centered]THE LIE

It went to bed with me at night.

[Indented]It followed all the day.
It put itself before my books.
[Indented]It would not let me play.

At last I could not stand the thing
[Indented]A single hour more.
I told my mother all the truth
[Indented]I feared to tell before.

I found she'd known it all the time.
[Indented]She hoped I'd tell, you see.
"You've learned a lesson, little boy."
[Indented]Was all she said to me.

Then oh, how glad and free I felt,
[Indented]How clear and bright the sky,
And ne'er again I wish to be
[Indented]Companion to a lie.

[49]

[Centered]THE BOY OF NAZARETH

I like to think about the boy
[Indented]That Jesus must have been,
Of how he played the different games
[Indented]That boys were playing then.

Do you suppose he cried, "I am
[Indented]The captain of this team!"
And fought at once another boy
[Indented]Who tried the place to claim?

And when a poor afflicted lad
[Indented]Came stumbling out to play,
Would he have whispered with the rest
[Indented]And from him run away?

Did he forget the tasks at home
[Indented]Or shirk his work at school?
The kind of boy that Jesus was,
[Indented]Lived by his Golden Rule.

[50]

[Centered]SPRING

In the country where my aunt lives,
[Indented]Sweet blossoms scent the breeze;

Out in the fields are little lambs
[Indented]And blue birds in the trees.

On the city block where I live,
[Indented]"Strawbe'es!" hucksters cry,
And an organ man and monkey,
[Indented]Each afternoon, come by.

[51]

[Centered]THE OPEN FIRE

Of all the things about our house,
[Indented]There's nothing that is quite
So pleasant as the open fire,
[Indented]We light each winter night.

As it grows darker out of doors,
[Indented]The only things we see
Are just the rising, yellow flames
[Indented]And on the couch, us three.

I snuggle close to mother's side.
[Indented]Her other arm's round Sue.
She tells the nicest fairy tales
[Indented]And Bible stories too.

The time is up at eight o'clock
[Indented]And then our prayers are said
And oh, so warm and sleepy
[Indented]We hurry off to bed.

[52]

[Centered]ENGAGED

This is the day he told me.
And so the girl has won?
She's taken only what was hers.
She cannot take --- my son.

[53]

[Centered]THE NEST

Daily care for helpless need;
Clamoring, hungry mouths to feed;
Aiding strong, young wimgs to fly;
Last wee speck against the sky --
Now rest but what care I for rest

Within a silent, empty nest!

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