

L'Envoi

*You who have lived in the Land,
You who have trusted the trail;
You who are strong to withstand,
You who are swift to assail;
Songs have I sung to beguile,
Vintage of desperate years
Hard as a harlot's smile,
Bitter as unshed tears.*

*Little of joy or mirth,
Little of ease I sing;
Sagas of men of earth,
Humanly suffering,
Such as you all have done;
Savagely faring forth,
Sons of the midnight sun,
Argonauts of the North.*

*Far in the land God forgot
Glimmers the lure of your trail;
Still in your lust are you taught
Even to win is to fail.
Still must you follow and fight
Under the vampire wing;
There in the long, long night
Hoping and vanquishing.*

*Husbandmen of the Wild,
Reaping a barren gain;
Scourged by desire, reconciled
Unto disaster and pain;
These my songs are for you,
You who are scared with the brand:
God knows I have tried to be true;
Please God you will understand.*

The Tramps

Can you recall, dear comrade, when we tramped
God's land together,
And we sang the old, old Earth-song, for our
youth was very sweet;
When we drank and fought and lusted, as we
mocked at tie and tether,
Along the road to Anywhere, the wide world at
our feet.

Along the road to Anywhere, when each day had
its story;
When time was yet our vassal, and life's jest
was still unstale;
When peace unfathomed filled our hearts as,
bathed in amber glory,
Along the road to Anywhere we watched the
sunsets pale.

Alas! the road to Anywhere is pitfalled with
disaster;
There's hunger, want, and weariness, yet oh,
we loved it so!
As on we tramped exultantly, and no man was
our master,
And no man guessed what dreams were ours,
as swinging heel and toe,
We tramped the road to Anywhere, the magic
road to Anywhere,
The tragic road to Anywhere, such dear, dim
years ago.

Prelude

'Twas a year ago and the moon was bright
 (Oh, I remember so well, so well),
I walked with my love in a sea of light,
And the voice of my sweet was a silver bell.

And sudden the moon grew strangely dull,
 And sudden my love had taken wings;
I looked on the face of a grinning skull,
 I strained to my heart a ghastly thing.

'Twas but fantasy, for my love lay still
 In my arms with her tender eyes aglow,
And she wondered why my lips were chill,
 Why I was silent and kissed her so.

A year has gone and the moon is bright,
 A gibbous moon like a ghost of woe;
I sit by a new-made grave to-night,
 And my heart is broken—it's strange, you know.

Comfort

Say! You've struck a heap of trouble—
Bust in business, lost your wife;
No one cares a cent about you,
You don't care a cent for life;
Hard luck has of hope bereft you,
Health is failing, wish you'd die—
Why, you've still the sunshine left you,
And the big, blue sky.

Sky so blue it makes you wonder
If it's heaven shining through;
Earth so smiling 'way out yonder,
Sun so bright it dazzles you;
Birds a-singing, flowers a-flinging
All their fragrance on the breeze;
Dancing shadows, green, still meadows—
Don't you mope, you've still got these.

These, and none can take them from you;
These, and none can weigh their worth.
What! you're tired and broke and beaten?—
Why, you're rich—you've got the earth!
Yes, if you're a tramp in tatters,
While the blue sky bends above,
You've got nearly all that matters,
You've got God, and God is love.

"I were better to die a thousand deaths than live each day as I live!
I have sinned, I have sunk to the lowest depths—but oh, I have suffered so!

Hark! Oh hark! I can hear the bells!... Look! I can see her there,
Fair as a dream ... but it fades ... And now—I can hear the dreadful hum
Of the crowded court ... See! the Judge looks down ...

Not Guilty, my Lord, I swear ...

The bells, I can hear the bells again ...

Ethel, I come, I come!...

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"Rouse up, old man, it's twelve o'clock. You can't sleep here, you know.

Say! ain't you got no sentiment? Lift up your muddled head;

Have a drink to the glad New Year, a drop before you go—

You damned old dirty hobo ... My God! Here, boys! He's DEAD!"

New Year's Eve

It's cruel cold on the water-front, silent and dark and drear;

Only the black tide weltering, only the hissing snow;

And I, alone, like a storm-tossed wreck, on this night of the glad New Year,

Shuffling along in the icy wind, ghastly and gaunt and slow.

They're playing a tune in McGuffy's saloon, and it's cheery and bright in there

(God! but I'm weak—since the bitter dawn, and never a bite of food);

I'll just go over and slip inside—I mustn't give way to despair—

Perhaps I can bum a little booze if the boys are feeling good.

They'll jeer at me, and they'll sneer at me, and they'll call me a whiskey soak;

("Have a drink? Well, thankee kindly, sir, I don't mind if I do.")

A drivelling, dirty gin-joint fiend, the butt of the bar-room joke;

Sunk and sodden and hopeless—"Another? Well, here's to you!"

McGuffy is showing a bunch of the boys how Bob Fitzsimmons hit;

The barman is talking of Tammany Hall, and why the ward boss got fired;

I'll just sneak into a corner, and they'll let me alone a bit;

The room is reeling round and round ... O God, but I'm tired, I'm tired....

Roses she wore on her breast that night. Oh, but their scent was sweet;

Alone we sat on the balcony, and the fan-palms arched above;

The witching strain of a waltz by Strauss came up to our cool retreat,

And I prisoned her little hand in mine, and I whispered my plea of love.

Then sudden the laughter died on her lips, and lowly she bent her head;

And oh, there came in the deep, dark eyes a look that was heaven to see

And the moments went, and I waited there, and never a word was said,

And she plucked from her bosom a rose of red, and shyly gave it to me.

Then the music swelled to a crash of joy, and the lights blazed up like day;

And I held her fast to my throbbing heart, and I kissed her bonny brow;

"She is mine, she is mine for evermore!" the violins seemed to say,

And the bells were ringing the New Year in—O God! I can hear them now.

Don't you remember that long, last waltz, with its sobbing, sad refrain?

Don't you remember that last goodbye, and the dear eyes dim with tears?

Don't you remember that golden dream, with never a hint of pain,

Of lives that would blend like an angel-song in the bliss of the coming year?

Oh, what have I lost! What have I lost! Ethel, forgive, forgive!

The red, red rose is faded now, and it's fifty years ago.