

HIGH ROADS OF TEXAS VERSE

THESIS

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By

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PREFACE

Numerous books on Texas have been written for children. The economic wealth and power of the state has been presented in a most inspiring and entertaining form. Its scenic beauty has been alluringly described. The story of its glorious past and the valor of its heroic sons have been told and retold with epic grandeur.

Not a few collections of Texas poetry have been published, but as yet no one volume has been compiled which attempts to interpret Texas in complete poetic form.

The need of such a book became evident in 1936 during Centennial year when the eyes of the nation were focused on Texas. A wave of patriotic enthusiasm swept through the state, and the schools soon felt the necessity of teaching state loyalty and state pride from every possible approach. The demand for books on Texas was adequately met by writers in every field except verse, and up to the present time no publisher has offered an edition of poetry which will give the children of Texas a cultural appreciation of their state.

To supply this need "High Roads of Texas Verse" began to be shaped and has continued to grow until it reached its present form. The contents of the volume represent, for the most part, the research, taste, judgment, and selection of some two hundred children of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade

standing in the Edgar Allan Poe Junior School at San Antonio, Texas. The study extended through two semesters. The poems were obtained largely from the Poe Junior School Library, the Texas Poetry Society Year Books, the University of Texas Loan Library, the San Antonio Carnegie Library, and from volumes or copies of poems loaned by many of the authors.

In all, approximately three hundred fifty poems were collected, each dealing with a common theme--Texas. From these, some one hundred fifty were selected as being representative in form and content. The final choice was made by a vote of the groups who had carried on the study.

Through the influence of Mr. Merrill Bishop, Director of English in the San Antonio Junior Schools, two hundred copies of the book were printed by the Board of Education and placed in the school libraries of the city.

Since then a more selective and comprehensive survey of Texas Poetry has been made by the teacher who directed the initial study with the result that the book has been considerably enlarged and revised. For this further research and investigation, the library of the Southwest State Teachers' College rendered valuable assistance.

The book now contains approximately three hundred of the best poems that have been written on Texas. The authors represented in the book are not all citizens of the state. Many

are native Texans, some have been within our borders a long time, others have only passed through. Yet all have caught the spirit of our hallowed shrines, the far-reaching sweep of our vast plains, the varied color of our fields and prairies, the sleepy rhythm of our gulf and slow-moving Texas rivers, and the dynamic energy and individualism of our people. All this we, too, have sensed at some time or other, but have been unable to put it into words.

For the purpose of interpretation, the contents of the book have been divided into certain groups. Some of these are regional, such as the West and the Gulf Coast. Other groups were made according to the dominant theme. None of the divisions are arbitrary and there is much over-lapping in all.

For the convenience of both reader and student, a table of contents introduces each section. Brief biographical sketches are also given of each author represented in the book. Last of all is listed a comprehensive bibliography of source materials employed.

It cannot be claimed that all the poems included in the book are of the highest literary standard. All, however, have been published, most of them in the better magazines and anthologies of the country. The contents, having been compiled largely by children, and primarily for children, have been kept within the range of their understanding, experience, and

interest. For this reason long subjective poems and experimental forms have been omitted.

Most of the verse is contemporary, because of its concreteness of subject matter and freshness of spirit. A few poems of the early Texas poets have been included, but only those which conform to the general pattern and theme.

The poetry of Texas poets is the common heritage of every Texas child. It was to preserve this heritage, as well as to help the children of Texas to envision their state through the poet's eyes and to love it with the poet's heart, that "High Roads of Texas Verse" was designed.

Texas Poetry of Today

Texas is rich in all the resources of which poetry is made. No state can boast of a more romantic past. The imperial vastness of its horizons, the varied beauty of its landscapes, the plentitude of its natural wealth, and the surging life of its people are the very materials which inspire poets to lofty and poetic utterance.

Twenty years ago poetry in Texas was of minor importance, both in quality and quantity. Few Texas poets had gained any national recognition and most of their work was traditional, in both form and spirit. Verse writing was considered "high-brow." Texans had yet to learn that poetry was an essential part of man's daily life and an expression of his natural environment.

Since then poetry in Texas has undergone a radical change. A poetic renaissance has been gradually taking place. As a result, much creditable verse has been and is being written both in and out of the state. Not a few Texans are winning favorable recognition in the better poetry magazines of the nation. Much of this poetry will live because of its beauty of form and truth.

Credit for initiating and promoting this movement belongs, without doubt, to the Texas Poetry Society, organized in Dallas in 1921 by Hilton Ross Greer, literary editor of the Dallas News, and Therese Lindsay of Tyler, in cooperation

with a group of other outstanding Texas poets. Through the publication of the Society's year book, containing the best poems submitted by its members each month, in addition to three special prize poems, one of which must be on a Texas theme, interest in verse writing has been aroused, until it has almost assumed the form of an epidemic.

In recent years, several Texas colleges and universities have made an appreciable contribution to the Texas poetry movement through their various poetry magazines and verse collections. Foremost in this group, is Southern Methodist University, which has inspired and trained many young Texas poets through its poetry club, "The Makers," and through its publications, "Prairie Pegasus," now discontinued, and the "Southern Review," which still survives.

Mary Hardin-Baylor College has done much toward stimulating high school and undergraduate interest in verse writing because of its state-wide poetry contests and its annual publication of a collection of college verse.

In 1928, Southwestern University joined in the college poetry movement by producing a small book of student verse entitled "Pirate Gold,"

Contemporary with this movement, "College Rhythms" was issued by Southwest Texas State Teachers' College at San Marcos, Texas.

At Kingsville a group, called "The Border Poets," is now publishing a monthly poetry magazine under the leadership

of Frances Alexander and Frank Goodwyn, both of whom are outstanding Texas poets and teachers in the College of Arts and Industries.

Since the organization of the Texas Poetry Society more than twenty years ago, similar local groups have sprung up all over the state. Almost every city of any size has a poetry club of some kind. Houston has its "Scribblers;" San Angelo, its "Poetry Society;" Corpus Christi, its "La Senisa;" and Dallas, its "Pen Women."

The Avalon Poetry Shrine, built in 1940 by Lilit Lorraine at 621 Sunshine Drive in San Antonio, has established a unique and interesting poetry center for that Southwestern city. The Shrine maintains hospitable quarters for visiting poets and solicits, from all Texas authors, contributions of framed copies of poems to be hung on its walls and books of Texas poetry for its library. The "Avalon Poetry Club," which holds weekly meetings at the Shrine, is open to all San Antonio poets who wish to submit their work for criticism and publication.

Further importance has been given to poetry in Texas through the many anthologies which have been published in recent years. The first of these, "Voices of the Southwest," compiled by Hilton Ross Gree, was published by the MacMillan Company in 1923. This was followed in 1934 by "New Voices of the Southwest," edited jointly by Hilton R. Greer and Elberta E. Barnes.

"Prairie Nights and Yucca," published in 1934 by John L. McCarty of Dalhart, features the poetry of the Texas Panhandle group. "The Golden Stallion," an anthology of Southwestern verse, collected by D. Maitland Busby, a leading Colorado poet, also includes a fair representation of the best in Texas poetry. "Texas Legacy," by Leola Christi Barnes, published in 1936, is a compilation of Texas verse, containing many poems which have not previously appeared in other Texas collections. "Texas Poets," by Henry Harrison, a poetry publisher of New York City, has over three hundred poems in it, all representing the work of eighty-three outstanding Texas poets.

Two books of general information on Texas poetry are of comparatively recent date. Vaida Stewart Montgomery's "A Century with Texas Poets and Poetry," published by the Kaleidograph Press, gives a valuable survey of the progress Texas poetry has made during the past hundred years. Florence Elberta Barnes' "Texas Writers of Today," published in 1935 is a book of five hundred ten pages containing a comprehensive study of contemporary Texas writers, more than half of whom are poets.

Texas also boasts of one national magazine of verse. "Kaleidograph," published monthly in Dallas by Whitney and Vaida Stewart Montgomery, ranks first among the better and more successful poetry magazines of the country.

The editors of this publication are particularly open-minded toward new talent of high order. Through its annual award of one hundred dollars for the best poem published in Kaleidograph each year and the publishing at intervals of the Kaleidograph anthology, this magazine is making a fine contribution to the cause of poetry both in and out of the state.

Thus the poetry of Texas is gradually coming "into its own." The poet is no longer regarded as a useless manufacturer of fine phrases. His work is the expression of life, especially the ever changing life about him. For this reason, the verse of the Texas poet is vastly important; and his contribution in shaping the cultural pattern of Texas is as valuable as that of the settler, the statesman, and the historian.

The children of Texas should know these trouoadours of their "Lone Star State" and appreciate the part they have played in shaping and interpreting its destiny.

To this end, "High Roads of Texas Verse" was compiled and is now offered as a fitting memorial to all Texas Poets who have so truthfully and loyally devoted their talents to the cause of keeping faith with the past, present, and the future of "Texas, the Marvelous."

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POETS AND PIONEERS

The poet and the pioneer go down the world
together,
Brave soul, timid soul, weak man and
strong
One leaves his white bones along the trail
he travels,
The other leaves his heart throbbing put into
a song.

Years may come, years may go, with the changes
that they bring us,
Babylons may crumble and new Babylons
arise,
But the ages that come after us will know as
we are knowing
That white bones last forever, and a good
song never dies.

--Whitney Montgomery

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CATTLE

Other states were carved or born,
Texas grew from hide and horn.

Other states are long or wide,
Texas is a shaggy hide,

Dripping blood and crumpled hair;
Some fat giant flung it there,

Laid the head where valleys drain,
Stretched its rump along the plain.

Other soil is full of stones,
Texans plow up cattle-bones.

Herds are buried on the trail,
Underneath the powdered shale;

Herds that stiffened like the snow
Where the icy northers go.

Other states have built their halls,
Humming tunes along the walls.

Texans watched the mortar stirred,
While they kept the lowing herd.

Stamped on Texan wall and roof
Gleams the sharp and crescent hoof.

High above the hum and stir,
Jingle bridle-rein and spur.

Other states were made or born,
Texas grew from hide and horn.

--Berta Hart Nance

BLEAK MAGIC

I wish that I were tramping
 On Texas plains alone
 With space like a flowing river
 And night like a wishing stone.

I could look across the heavens
 As red men did of old
 And find the stars, like berries,
 Dripping red and gold.

I wish that I were tramping
 On sturdy Texas ground.
 Its bleakness has a magic
 No opulence can sound,

Clean-cut as leaves of cacti,
 Open as soothing sky
 And the long array of cloud herds
 Grazing bulkily by!

And, Oh! this tonic freedom,
 This wider breathing span
 Where nature's clean economy
 Sweeps the heart of man!

I wish that I were tramping
 On Texas plains alone
 With space like a flowing river
 And night like a wishing stone.

No din with a scythe to sever
 The tortured nerves apart;
 Only untarnished silence
 Warm against my heart.

--Lucia Trent

TEXAS

Texas is a tall land
Where hills and hopes are tall;
And Texas is a big land,
Not even its silence small.

Its towns are far between
Like Texas cowboy's words,
But they straggle wide as wide
As Texas cattle herds.

Texas men are tall men,
Long and lean and wise.
Texas men are square men,
As broad as Texas skies.
....But you enter Texas best
Through Texas women's eyes.

--Ralph Cheyney

WE WHO LOVE TEXAS

My dreams were cradled in her amplitudes,
My torch was lit at an immortal shrine;
Could I do less than sing a triumph-song
When all her valiant heritage was mine?

My soul came from her immensities,
And I shall be content if in the end,
Like the last shadow on her loneliest peak,
My soul with her immensities shall blend.

--Lilith Lorraine

TEXAS

Texas is a blue land
 A gold land in spring,
 Golden fire of huisache,
 Bluebonnet rioting.

Texas is a wide land,
 Wide as Texas sky
 And space the gown she's wearing
 On flowered breast and thigh.

Texas is a strong land,
 Strong as Texas Steer
 Or men who flung this glory
 Along a bleak frontier.

Texas is a poets' land,
 A land to dream of when
 Heaven will be stirring
 Beneath the hands of men.

--Lucia Trent

TEXAS

Vast plains and mountains
 Anchored high
 Against a sweep of cobalt sky;

Bluebonnet praries,
 Cotton land,
 Blue curve of Gulf, white curve of sand;

South winds and northers
 Breaking trail
 With fruited breath, with snowy veil;

Where buffalo
 And cattle ranged,
 And men rode hard while flags were changed;

Roping from red
 Stampede of war
 A maverick state, the Lone White Star.

--Marie Barton

I LOVE TEXAS

I love Texas:
Texas folks;
Long-horned cattle;
Cowboy jokes;

Cotton fields;
Forest of pine;
Stretch of prairie;
Sulphur mine;

Forest of derricks
Where oil wells flow;
Cold blue norther;
Ice and snow;

Scorching desert;
Blistering sand;
Magic valley
Of Rio Grande;

Driving sandstorm;
Gentle rain;
Acres of blue bonnets;
Fields of grain;

Granite Capitol;
City streets;
Venerable missions;
Scraggy mesquites;

Busy sea ports;
Sunny beach;
Orchard larger than
Vision's reach;

Towering mountains;
Caverns low;
Bold sky-scrappers;
Alamo

Land of heroes,
 Land of flowers,
 Giant friendly
 State of ours,

All these things
 We have in you,
 I love Texas
 Through and through.

--Edwardine Crenshaw Couch

STATE SONG

The singers filled the tiny schoolhouse stage
 With youth and vigor in a studied pose,
 I watched them from the peak of middle age,--
 There was a card; the sturdy voices rose:
 "God bless you, Texas
 And keep you brave and strong."

And while they sang I thought, and pitied us,
 Who had been young without that song to sing--
 A bugle for a patriot,-- and thus,
 It made me glad to hear the voices ring.

Outside was Texas, sparkling to the door,
 With rounded hill and prairie-mist of green,
 Bluebonnets on the scented valley floor,
 And mocking-birds that rhymed away unseen.

And here was Texas, in the simple hall,
 The manly students with their chiming throats,
 Their task the building of our country's wall,--
 And with a sob I whispered to the notes:
 "God bless you, Texas,
 And keep you brave and strong."

--Berta Hart Nance

CINQUAINS OF TEXAS

Blue

Foothills on the desert
 Horizon are blue...blue until
 The traveler reaches them...
 Then, in the distance other
 Foothills are blue...

The blue distance of the desert
 Causes one to race after it...
 Desert blue is alluring...
 It disappears when one draws near.

Dawn

At dawn
 The distant butte
 Is an Indian brave of old
 Who wraps a red blanket about his
 Bronze shoulders and broods in
 Melancholy silence.

Storm

The storm
 Is a black vulture
 That flies low over the prairie
 And grabs a village
 In its claws.

Twilight

Twilight
 Is a dark robed
 Priestess who walks across
 The desert foothills turning on
 The stars.

--William Allen Ward

WAGONS AT LUSK

Sometimes when the grass in Texas
 Is deep and green and lush,
 And the wind dies down at evening,
 I can hear through the deepening hush:
 The sound of covered wagons
 Creaking in box and spoke,
 I can see them stop at nightfall,
 I can hear the supper smoke.
 And voices call through the darkness--
 Lonely and strange they sound
 In the vastness of the prairies
 Between the sky and the ground.

And the ones who have chosen Texas
 Because of its clean red loam,
 Who are forging ahead to claim it
 And name it for their home,
 Dream awhile in the darkness:
 An ancient wonder dream--
 They see homes rise on the prairies,
 See schools and churches gleam
 Against the red of the sunset,
 Against the rose of the dawn,
 And, although their old homes call them,
 Tomorrow they will move on.

Men and women and children,
 Facing the arduous toil
 Of rearing walls, and of wresting
 A living from the soil;
 The Texas wind on their faces,
 The Texas sun on their backs
 Their only link to the old home
 The wavering wagon tracks.

Sometimes at twilight I see them,
 These strong, sturdy pioneers,
 I call through the dark and hail them
 Across the lengthening years:
 And I lift a hand to bid them
 God speed on the way they go.
 I have a debt I would pay them,
 I have a debt that I owe
 To the founders and builders of Texas
 Grouped in these shadowy camps,

Who kindled the first home fires
And lighted the first home lamps.
The roots of my home run deeper,
Its walls climb nearer the sun
Because these brave ones finished
The task that they had begun.

--Grace Noll Crowell

INVITATION TO TEXAS

It is bluebonnet time on the prairies of Texas,
A sun-glintered plain of the loveliest blue
Stretches for miles with its Raphael tinting
And something within me is singing for you.

The huisache is blazing with yellow, gold blossoms,
And each old mesquite tree is frilled out in lace,
The laurel is fragrant with festoons of purple,
And nothing is lacking except your own face.

Oh, for a galloping ride on the prairie,
Laughing with you at the scurrying quail,
With the wind in our faces while urging our ponies
To race with the wind down the old Spanish trail!

Write me-- no, wire me the time you are coming,
And the land that is sweeter than honey today
With the scent of verbenas, huisache and laurel
Will be sweeter tomorrow with you on your way.

--Hazel Harper Harris

TEXAS

I went a- riding a- riding,
 Over a great long plain.
 And the pain went a- sliding, a- sliding,
 Away from my bridle-rein.

Fields of cotton and fields of wheat,
 Thunder-blue gentians by a wire fence,
 Standing cypress, red and tense,
 Holding its flower rigid like a gun,
 Dressed for parade by the running wheat,
 By the little bouncing cotton. Terribly sweet;
 The cardinals sing in the live-oak trees,
 And the long plain breeze,
 The prairie breeze,
 Blows across from swell to swell
 With a ginger smell.
 Just ahead, where the road curves around,
 A long-eared rabbit makes a bound
 Into a wheat-field, into a cotton-field,
 His track glitters after him and goes
 still again
 Over to the left of my bridle-rein.

But over to the right is a glare-- glare--
 glare
 Of sharp glass windows.
 A narrow square of brick jerks thickly up above the
 cotton plants,
 A racous mercantile thing flaring the sun
 from thirty-six windows,
 Brazenly declaring itself to the lovely fields
 Tram-cars run like worms about the feet of
 this thing,
 The coffins of the cotton-bales feed it,
 The threshed wheat is its golden blood.
 But here it has no feet,
 I has only the steep ironic grin of its
 thirty-six windows,
 Only its basilisk eyes counting the fields,
 Doing sums of how many buildings to a city,
 all day and all night.

Once they went a- riding, a- riding,
 Over the great long plain.
 Cowboys singing to their dogey steers,
 Cowboys perched on forty-dollar saddles,
 Riding to the North, six months to get there,
 Six months to get to Wyoming.
 "Hold up, paint horse, herd the little dogies,
 Over the lone prairie."
 Bones of dead steers,
 Bones of dead cowboys,
 Under the wheat, maybe.

The skyscraper sings another way,
 A tune of steel, of wheels, of gold,
 The ginger breeze blows, blows all day
 Tanged with flowers and mold.
 And the Texas sky whirls down, whirls down,
 Taking long looks at the fussy town.
 And old sky and a long plain
 Beyond, beyond, my bridle rein.

--Amy Lowell

TEXAS

I crave not for her cities
 Nor towns where man hath trod,
 But I love her lonely prairies,
 Her great wide skies of God.

I love her lazy rivers
 That wed the Mexique sea,
 And, oh, her heaven-born breezes
 Breathe rarest songs to me.

Oh, if I could but sing them,
 Could hymn pure Nature's bars,
 Those songs would live forever
 And echo through the stars.

Would echo till the angels
 Attuned the free refrains,
 And breathed celestial music-
 The poetry of the plains!

I love the Mesa Mountains
 That woo the Texas skies,
 'Neathe azure veils of beauty,
 The dream of Paradise.

I love her sweeps of distance,
 Her drowsy miraged seas,
 Her choirs of singing songsters,
 Her weeping bannerea trees.

And when the sunset's laces
 Befringe the couch of night,
 I love her royal pictures
 Of far eternal light.

Oh, if I could but paint them,
 Could hint the twilight's art,
 What scenes of heavenly splendor
 Would gild each human heart.

Vain, vain such fond ambition,
 Man is but earthy sod,
 His efforts are as nothing
 Beside the works of God.

Yes, you can have the city,
 Its fuss and fun and care;
 Give me a life of freedom,
 'Midst castles in the air.

Your operas' stifled music
 Contains no songs for me--
 I want the vibrant breezes,
 The anthems of the sea.

Give me the low of cattle
 The coyote's lone "ki--oo:"
 The sighing of the Norther,
 The owl's "Whit-tu-woo."

I ask not for companions
 Whose presence might intrude;
 My dearest friend is Nature--
 I love the solitude.

Ah, who would then be richer?
 My wealth is all divine--
 The clouds, the stars, the prairies,
 The world, the world, is mine?"

--Larry Chittenden

SONG OF THE FORERUNNERS

The men who made Texas
 Rode west with dazzled eyes
 On the hot trail of the Future,
 To take her by surprise;

They were dreamers on horseback,
 Dreamers with strong hands,
 Trailing the Golden Lion
 Who couches in far lands:

Old men and young men, little men and tall,
 Bad men and good men--but strong men, all.

The women who bore Texas
 Could see beyond the sun:
 They sat on cabin doorsteps
 When the long day was done,

And they crooned to lusty babies,
 But their look was far away--
 For they gazed straight through the sunset
 To the unborn day.

Stern women, laughing women, women stout or
 small,
 Bronzed women, broken women--brave women, all.

The men who made Texas
 Laughed at fate and doom--
 Dreamers on horseback,
 Men who needed room;

And the women in young Texas,
 Hanging homespun clothes to dry,
 Loved a prairie for a dooryard,
 For meeting-house, the sky--

Wide visions and wide spaces, man and land were
 large of lung:
 Texas knew not cheap and easy, slack and small,
 when she was young!

But the men who made Texas
 Left their work half-done--
 For nothing stands full-finished
 Beneath the spinning sun;

And the women who dreamed Texas
 Had much work to do
 When they lay down for their last sleep
 In a land still new;

And a yet-unbuilt Texas, cloud-paved and
 glimmering,
 Burns yet before the eyes of us, who toil and
 dream and sing.

--Karle Wilson Baker

GOLIAD

Let no ploughshares turn the sod,
 Nor ever sound
 Of merriment be heard.
 Let only cypress and weeping willow
 Hallow the ground
 Where Fannin's men were massacred.

--Marie Barton

TRIUMVIRATE

There is no breeze in Texas - only wind.
 What breeze could catch and roar against
 a Nation's ear
 The whisper of a sword drawn through the sand?
 What breeze could lift the heavy curtain of a
 hundred years
 To show the rising of a single, burning star?
 It is a mighty anthem that the proud wind sings--
 A lusty song that needs a lusty throat!

There is a glare and fury in the Texas sun
 Not to be borne by frail and timid things.
 To face its glance and live is to have proved
 A kinship with Olympus--those
 Who prosper in its blaze can rightly claim
 Blood brotherhood with Vulcan!
 Was blue Damascus steel forged at an ember heat?

The rain sweeps down on Texas like a tribe
 Of Tejas warriors bent low above the necks
 Of nervous Mustangs galloping outstretched.
 The crystal arrows slant into the earth, transparent
 hooves
 Flash cleanly in and out of clinging, waxy soil;
 And from each hoof print, from each bloodless arrow
 wound
 Springs vividly the beauty of a prairie flower.

Sun, Wind, and Rain--you watch above the people of
 your plains
 As might have watched three stern old Tejas chiefs
 Proving by torturous rites their young, unfeathered
 sons.
 We face you proudly, knowing that you yearn
 That we be proud and win our right to wear
 The gold and silver feathers of the Sun and Rain,
 The splendid purple feather of the Wind.

--Hallie King Van Reekum

ALAMO

The city ebbs around her walls of stone;
 Haggard and old, she muses, as the stream
 Flows by oblivious, "Why stand alone
 To guard the phantom of a perished dream?"
 From out the pulsing throng that knows no curb
 There comes a little lad with careful tread,
 His footfall gentle lest he might disturb
 The peace of fallen heroes, long since dead.

Small hands caress the grey historic wall,
 He turns to whisper, "Father, it was here
 That Travis stood," the muted accents fall
 To stir the waiting shadows far and near;
 The hoary mission flings her challenge high:
 "For such as he, my dream shall never die!"

--Goldie Capers Smith

THE HEROES

Sons of a land betrayed and wronged are they,
 Whose feet are set to the immortal height,
 The draggled columns in whose desperate might
 The Saxon blood hath voiced itself today.
 And thou, Martin, whose thirty cut their way
 Through hostile lines with succour in the night;
 And thou, brave Bonham, who returned to fight
 And die beside thy comrades in the fray.
 Mild Austin, who of duty knows the worth
 And unto others give the laurel wreath;
 And Houston, burly chief of wit and brawn,
 The Atlas of his little Western earth;
 And Travis last, who opens unto death
 As one that hears Christ calling through the dawn.

--Stark Young

THE PIONEER

He could not breathe in a crowded place--
 He wanted his air and his open space--
 He watched while civilization neared
 On a path through the wilderness Boone had cleared,
 Saw highways hiding the Indian trails:
 West fled the bear and the elk and the deer--
 "I've got to go," said the Pioneer.
 He whistled to his dog and called to his wife,
 Loaded his rifle and sharpened his knife,
 Tossed in his wagon a pan or two--
 Texas-bound, to a land plumb new.
 They watched him go, and shook each head--
 "Shiftless fool--better stay," they said.
 Not a sign they saw that might denote
 That a Nation rode in a coonskin coat.

--William B. Ruggles

VISIONS OF THE ALAMO

I often wished to stand within those walls,
 But thought if once I felt the surge that
 swells,
 As rolling waves beat to emotion's calls,
 My heart would fill with dirges and farewells.
 And then--I thought, but only once, to bear
 The wild disrupting, tearing of my mind,
 In living over every moment there,
 True agony was all that I would find.

Yet on a day of silver misting rain,
 I was a pilgrim to that holy shrine,
 To feel in solemn stillness a refrain
 Of some sweet song I long had known
 was mine.

O, Alamo, your tumult is no more--
 Did any others, leaving, kiss your door?

--Dorothy B. Robbins

THE ALAMO

You dream through all the days, gray Alamo,
 Your face becalmed and seamed like some old nun,
 Left tranquilly aslumber in the sun;
 Your baptism of blood, so long ago,
 A crimson rose within your patio
 Records; frail Queen's-crown vine has scaled
 and won
 Your courtyard wall; the years have stilled your
 gun,
 Immortal now in memory's folio.

The jangling clamor of the crowded street
 Is lost within the silences you know.
 There is the sense of those unseen who tell
 Of sword-drawn line to cross, and no retreat;
 High courage shines; dim phantom candles glow,
 And, inwardly, one hears your evening bell.

--Dorothy Callaway

TREATY OAK

Your history my mind knows well;
 Romantic stories I can tell:
 The Indians gathered in my shade
 To hold their big powwows, and trade;
 The wild coyote and the buffalo
 I've seen most freely come and go;
 I've seen the covered wagon pass
 And leave dim trails across the grass;
 The swarthy black-eyed Spaniard go
 With quiet tread to Mexico;
 I've seen trail-driver who went forth
 With plodding herds out to the north;
 And heard the coy-boy's piercing cry
 As he with lasso galloped by.

--Eric Henry Miller

CENTENNIAL CHALLENGE

A hundred years since Travis bled
 To save the Alamo,
 A hundred years since Goliad
 Was lit by battle-glow,
 A hundred years of fashioning
 The empire that we know.

A hundred years--and thundering hoofs
 Give way to drooping wings,
 A hundred years, yet every heart
 In sacred memory clings
 To those who cut the pathless trails
 Where now the motor sings.

A hundred years from now, shall we
 From Time's veiled mysteries
 The unborn generations dower
 With gifts to equal these
 A hundred years of brotherhood
 A hundred years of peace.

--Lilith Lorraine

THE REPUBLIC

Rejoice, O Texans, in your liberty!
 The thunder of your guns hath girded round
 The world, Southward the tyrants ye shall hound,
 And havoc cry among them as they flee.
 O stay, white gull, and carry over sea
 The word that freedom now her home hath found.
 To us shall Europe send her treaties bound
 In gold, America proclaim us free.
 Lo, in the East a light, the day hath dawned.
 Where from the West the ancient night is dying.
 And from the uncertain crowd, whose gropings mar
 Her plan, and through the venturous rabble spawned
 By chance on her, emerges Houston-crying--
 Burly and strong, "On, Texas, with thy star!"

--Stark Young

THE AX IN THE HANDS OF A MAN

Now, men owe much to the righteous sword,--
 It has won them life since the tale began;
 But they owe far more, did the leaves record,
 To the stubborn ax in the hands of a man.

The road through the wilderness it cut;
 It cleared the space for the saving corn;
 Hewed log and rafter and beam for the hut
 Where stalwart sons and daughters were born.

Houston, and Sherman, and brave Lamar,
 On a day of glory they won fair fame,
 While the sun looked down at a rising star
 And the stout "Twin Sisters" spoke in flame.

Praise to these heroes, and praise to their swords--
 They leaped as one steel to the stern attacks:
 But praise in like measure the heart accord's
 To Erasmus Smith and his valiant ax!

For the two at a stroke, hemmed the foe's retreat,
 And blazed new trails for the freeman's feet.

--Hilton Ross Greer

DIEZMO

The Red-caps shot them-- one in ten--
 Who drew the fatal bean,
 The vultures found them martyred men,
 And picked their bodies clean.

But martyred bones are magic seed
 To grow a beanstalk from--
 They satisfied her moonstruck need,
 So Mary planted some.

She watered them with fervent tears
 Until the hybrid bloomed
 With white pods that allayed her fears,
 With black beans for the doomed.

These black she plucked and hid from sight
 And lo! when Fisher's men
 Drew from the mug, they all drew white,
 Not black--not one in ten!

--Virginia Lee McConnell

SAN JACINTO

Here the hands of time stood still
 A fatal quarter of an hour
 While Texas ground in Freedom's mill
 The bloody grist of alien power.

--Marie Barton

GOLIAD

One time I went to Goliad
 (It was springtime then, in Goliad.)
 We walked beyond the little town
 To the mission on the hill.
 Along the road white poppies grew,
 (How many flower names you knew!)
 The April air was clean and blue;
 The April air was still.

And when we reached the mountain top
 Encircled with an ancient wall
 Fast crumbling to decay,
 A startled chorus, piercing, sweet,
 Came sparkling from each ruined retreat
 Where Spanish monks with sandled feet
 Once knelt along to pray.

How firm the little chapel stood!
 Its mossy stone, its seasoned wood,
 Its cross still lifted bravely
 And serenely to the sky!
 I can't go back to Goliad
 (To lovely, dreary Goliad,)
 But the magic of that morning
 Will be with me when I die.

--Elizabeth Ann Little

TEXAS POET

When all this lyric madness shall have
 perished
 Tuck me to sleep in some fair Texas hill.
 Let me lie cradled on the breast that
 fed me,--
 Let me lie cradled in her arms, until
 Aeons shall pass and roll their fire
 above me
 Welding to hers my fiber and my bone.
 I shall be happy, there, remembering!...
 Even in dust, my heart will know
 its own.

--Georgie C. Bader

GOLIATH

Now I tell what I knew in Texas in my early youth,
 (I tell not the fall of Alamo,
 No one escaped to tell the fall of Alamo,
 The hundred and fifty are dumb yet at Alamo,)
 'Tis the tale of the murder in cold blood of four
 hundred and twelve young men.

Retreating they had form'd in a hollow square with
 their baggage for breastworks,
 Nine hundred lives out of the surrounding enemies, nine
 times their number, was the prize they took in advance,
 Their colonel was wounded and their ammunition gone,
 They treated for an honorable capitulation, receiv'd
 writing and seal, gave up their arms and march'd back
 prisoners of war.

They were the glory of the race of rangers,
 Matchless with horse, rifle, song, super, courtship,
 Large, turbulent, generous, handsome, proud, and
 affectionate,
 Bearded, sunburnt, drest in the free costumes of hunters,
 Not a single one over thirty years of age.

The second First day morning they were brought out
 in squads and massacred, it was beautiful early summer,
 The work commenced about five o'clock and was over by eight.

None obey'd the command to kneel,
 Some made a mad and helpless rush, some stood stark
 and straight,
 A few fell at once, shot in the temple or heart, the
 living and dead lay together,
 The maim'd and mangled dug in the dirt, the newcomers
 saw them there,

Some half-killed attempted to crawl away,
 These were despatch'd with bayonets or batter'd
 with the blunts of muskets,
 A youth not yet seventeen years old seiz'd his
 assassin till two more came to release him,
 The three were all torn and covered with the boy's blood,
 At eleven o'clock began the burning of the bodies;
 That is the tale of the murder of the four hundred
 and twelve young men.

--Walt Whitman

THE PIONEER WOMAN

Slowly westward trudged the oxen,
 Bearing in their covered vans
Man of valor loving lineage
 Woman with inspiring hands.

Queen of old in vaunted glory
 Is a pigmy weak and frail
When compared or weighed in balance
 With the woman of the trail.

She was ever tense and wakeful,
 Pointing onward day and night,
Cheering man who lagged or faltered
 Ere he reached the distant sight.

When at last the trek was ended,
 Far upon an unknown plain,
Siren winds defied and mocked her,
 Savage redmen shrieked disdain,

Days, and weeks, and months, like ages,
 Dragged their cull and lonely way,
Still she drudged with dogged patience,
 Smiling grimly through the fray.

Hands that once wore silken mittens,
 Roughened now by grind and toil,
Never faltered in their mission
 Tempting fruit from virgin soil.

Far into the night, her vigil
 Visioned civilization's trend,
And the children of her bosom
 Were imbued to comprehend.

Monuments now mark the pathways
 Pioneering man has trod,
God alone in love has planted
 Prairie flowers on her sod.

--Byrd Friend

CAVALIERS

How do we deem these wide plains commonplace,
 Or think the old hills barren of desire,
 When Romance walks them with up-lifted face,
 And Passion leaps them like a living fire?
 Do we forget--once streams ran liquid gold,
 And high Adventure stalked the silver wind?
 Heedless of danger--reckless--eager--bold--
 Men rode and fought and laughed and dreamed
 and sinned,
 And loved--mad loves, and little loves and
 light,
 Under the love-mad white moons of the South,
 Hard men who fought all day and danced all
 night,
 And died at daybreak for a scarlet mouth?

Are Maximilian--Miramon--Marquez
 Sweet sounding syllables and nothing more?
 "Hill of the Bells" some pleasant, unknown place?
 Carlotta--but a name not heard before?
 Magruder--Shelby--Maury--where are they?
 The plains forget, the old hills cease to know,
 That once high-hearted, arrogant and gay,
 These men of fire rode out to Mexico;
 The sun a glory and the wind high bliss,
 While dark eyes dimmed and red lips dropped
 that day,
 And many a white hand fluttered with a kiss,
 And many a heart broke as they marched away.
 They fought--and no man ever died, 'tis said,
 But the wail of some hurt woman rent the air--

Love is it done? Romance--is it dead?
 And stalks there no Adventure anywhere?

--Grace Noll Crowell

PIONEER MOTHER

I would not sing her praise in mimicries
Of cloying sweetness couched in hackneyed
rimes,
That garb the women of the wilderness
With the pale graces of decadent times.

Her beauty is a legend now, her touch
On pain-etched brows, a fragrance almost
fled,
But her undaunted courage is a torch
Flung to our hands from the immortal dead.

And I, into whose wakening soul she breathed
The breath of ancient wisdom, whispering low,
"Better the lone pine on the mountain top
Than all the bleating flocks that range below."

I praise her not in dreary monotones
Of mother-worship, she was this to me,
A daring more audacious than the stars,
A vastness more embracing than the sea.

She was a spark from finely tempered steel,
A flaming challenge ringing down the years,
For whoso treads the Pathless Trails must wield
A weapon more effectual than tears.

--Lilith Lorraine

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IN EARLY SPRING

Silent upon the prairie falls the warm rain,
 Slow-dropping, dropping from the low, dull
 clouds.
 An old, old pain, long frozen in the gloom,
 Tears at the bare earth's heart.
 The prairie's bosom stirs; the wild, green,
 tender blades of grass come forth,
 Piercing the wet, black earth where the rain-
 drops fall
 Slowly and softly like big, splashing tears.
 Out of the travail and the age-old pain, the
 spring is born.
 In tears and sacred joy, the prairie gives it
 birth.

--George D. Bond

APRIL RAINS

There is a magic in the April rains
 That fall day-in, day-out upon the
 prairie;
 Silver the big drops fall through the
 gray day,
 And silver at night they gleam on the
 long grasses
 When the dim stars show.
 Soft is the music of their silver-
 clinking,
 And soft their patter on the lone,
 dwarf trees;
 Over the prairie grasses and the flowers
 They drop a veil of music and of color,
 A silver veil that sings a silver song.
 And through it breaks the purple and
 the gold of vivid Texas flowers.

--George D. Bond

EARLY APRIL

The slopes are covered now with tender green,
 And yellow larkspur flames along the fields,
 The wind no longer bites, as winter yields
 Its place; the nearing sun is faintly seen
 Through rolling drifts of pearly haze; between
 The gates of dusk wild geese lift up their
 shields;
 A farmer boy along the roadside fields
 At intervals, an ax; and robins preen.

The elm puts on a robe of fairy lace,
 The rushing veins of oak and walnut sing,
 And all the little thickets join the race
 To meet half way the promises of spring;
 The wise mesquite alone has not believed,
 And stands in wintry blackness, undeceived.

--Berta Hart Nance

TO APRIL

You came so softly, yet so bright and gay
 Your steps were primrose petals, and your lips
 Were coral curves that kissed the silver day
 And laughed at clouds that moved like phantom
 ships,
 Your heart was singing, "Joy, oh joy returns,"
 A song that stirred the wind and stars again,
 And redbuds flame like living hope that burns
 Forever in the secret thoughts of men.

Day after day, while you are walking here
 And spilling sunshine on each lifted wing,
 I shall go dreaming where the roads are clear,
 And in my dream another day in spring
 Shall bloom, new-risen, and the one with me
 Will smile and whisper, "It is April--see..."

--Kate Randle Menefee

NECESSITY

I might find fuller happiness a while
 Where birches silver-fringe your northern lakes,
 Delighting in your brief, bright summer's smile,
 Rejoicing when each kindled maple takes
 Bewildered fire for southern eyes to see,
 Or watch, content, your slow, white winter by;
 But spring--what has your laggard spring for me
 Who needs blue-bonnets sweeping to the sky?

How should I walk a mincing round of days,
 When every heart-beat lifts a voice to speak
 Of redbuds bursting in a rosy haze
 Along the windings of a Texas creek,
 Or fix my fate where there was never heard
 The insistence of a moon-mad mocking bird?

--Marie Grimes

SPRING IN EAST TEXAS

Today I stood with aching throat
 In sunny meadows, starred with fold,
 Where daisies open drowsy eyes
 When burnished buttercups unfold.

And I have paused in wonderment
 Before a dazzling dogwood tree,
 To barter care for shining dreams,
 Beneath its green-white mystery.

And close beside Spring's queenly bride
 The redbud's winsome sprays
 Are lifted to a mist-veiled sky,
 The tree-tops thrill to roundelays.

Of mocking-birds and cardinals,
 Cascading silver-sweet,
 When wayward wild verbenas
 Spread a carpet at my feet.

But oh! the witching fragrance
 Of a fair crabapple tree
 In crinkled, rosy-petalled frock,
 Awakens grief--and ecstasy;

For intermingled with delight,
 Comes grey remembering--
 And joy--that stabs my heart with pain:
 I've one less Texas Spring.

--Mary S. Fitzgerald

"NOW THAT APRIL'S THERE"

I know the poet's longing
 Whose words were half a prayer:
 "Oh, to be in England,
 Now that April's there,"
 For I would be in Texas
 When Spring is in the air.

A million glowing redbuds
 Are blazing in the woods,
 A world of prairie blossoms
 Are wearing prim, blue hoods
 And fields are running over
 With flower-bargain goods.

The scent of new turned acres
 Is fresh upon the breeze,
 The fragrance of verbenas
 Invites the honey bees,
 And there is nothing half as sweet
 As blooming laurel trees.

Thank God I know that Beauty
 Is not in tree nor bloom,
 But in the heart that gives it
 Appreciating room;
 And so I weave my April
 Upon a poet's loom.

--Hazel Harper Harris

WEAVING TIME

It's weaving time in Texas,
 They're weaving carpets there;
 They're mixing in the greensward
 A million colors rare.

There are miles and miles of carpet
 Spread out for dancing feet,
 That touch the far horizon
 Where sky and flowers meet.

It's weaving time in Texas,
 And Spring's the mistress there,
 Directing southern maidens
 With dark and flowing hair,

To form the leaves and flowers
 Into a oold design;
 To weave the blues and scarlets
 Into a pattern fine;

To broider in the redbird
 With gorgeous butterflies,
 Till all the Texas landscape
 A paradise defies.

--William Dyer Moore

WEST TEXAS SUMMER

June: Cloud-land

Cloud-land is fairy land
 In our prairie home;
 Great clouds and small clouds,
 Evermore they roam.

Gray clouds and gay clouds,
 Violet and gold,
 Rose clouds and pearl clouds,
 When the day is old.

Cloud-land is castle-land,
 Battlement and tower,
 Brave knights and dragons,
 Lady in her bower.

Cloud-land is wonder-land,
 Genie, prince, and elf,
 Hyaph and jinn and pixie,
 I've seen them all myself.

July: Song of the Song-Sparrow

A gush of song amid the dew
 At morning, when the world is new;
 O little happy heart, sing on!

A carol near a secret nest,
 When glowing, noontide brings its rest;
 O little loving heart, sing on!

A ripple in the glooming gray,
 A warble at the close of day;
 O little trusing heart, sing on!

August: Day By Day

Day by day the rain walks nearer,
 But we languish in the heat,
 And no blessed breath of coolness
 Comes to cheer our dusty street.

Only from the tracks to northward
 Comes the clang of cattle-cars,
 And the wail of sullen cattle
 Waiting at the stock-yard bars.

On the drooping garden-flowers
 Falls the white dust of the street;
 Day by day the rain walks nearer
 But we wither in the heat.

--Berta Hart Nance

DROUGHT

The golden west has occasional dearth
 Of rain, Drouth stalks the tortured land with want,
 And herds of starving cattle, thirsty, gaunt,
 Seek waterholes that scarcely cover earth.

The cattle low and strain for water there;
 They roll their listless eyes and vision flees;
 Their tongues loll out; they fall upon their knees,
 Then prostrate lie and groan in dumb despair.

There is no aid for creatures such as they.
 The waterholes are graves for cattle in the mire;
 They rise and fall and trample and expire
 Until the herds are lost and fallen to decay.

--Edna Coe Majors

DROUGHT

An angry monster stamps the land,
 Dust fogging from his feet,
 And parches grass and leaf and stem
 With breath of airy heat.

One eye he blazes at the fields,
 Forbidding crops to grow,
 And with the other scans the sky,
 Commanding clouds to go.

Bold streams he robs of song and speech,
 The thinking pools sips dry;
 And where his grip is tightest, elms
 And ancient oak trees die.

--Walter R. Adams

THREE LEAVES FROM A TEXAS SUTTER

Summer, like an old mesquite,
 Shook her branches over me;
 I turned drowsy eyes to see
 Line and contour of a tree;
 On my face on my eyes
 Three leaves fell and only three.

This is a new way the thicket has
 Of wearing her green hair;
 This a new way the field has
 Of looping the blue air.

This is a deep blue--a bright green--
 And a new road to follow;
 Berries prickle the undergrowth;
 Water lies in the hollow.

The first leaf fell, and cool and thick,
 I felt its comfort on my mouth,
 Through its pulp as through a wick
 Oil of life was warm and quick,
 And June passed over the South.

Weeds now in the pastures--
 And the sound of a grasshopper's wing;
 The bitter smell of the weeds catches the
 throat;
 The dry sound of the flight clutches and
 stings.

Weeds now in the pastures--
 Rag weeds higher than a young man's head.
 This for a while is Beauty's only drink--
 This for a while is Beauty's meager bread.

On my eyes I caught the press
 Of the second leaf's caress
 Leather-hard and leather-thin,
 Still it spoke of Loveliness
 And a pungent strength within.

Under the wind the bones of the garden rattle;
 Only a lizard springs from the burning ground.
 Pomegranates hang and break in the withered
 hedges,
 Spilling their rosy fruit without a sound.

Today a flock of blackbirds swooped in
 the sunlight,
 Making their wings a fantasy of shade;
 The drouth moved backward a little, scenting
 autumn;
 The heat stirred up from its sleep, caught
 and afraid.

Ultimate and brittle-brown,
 The last leaf fell sharply down--
 Fell and crumpled in its fall.
 In a half a second's space
 It was dust upon my face,
 And when I turned my eyes to see
 Leafy sorrow of a tree,
 There was nothing over me--
 There was nothing there at all.

--Siddie Joe Johnson

SOUTHERN NIGHT

Dusk touched the hills to quietness
 while bells
 Spoke musically of time. In citadels
 Of sweet-gum trees a twittered
 argument
 Proved nests were ready, called the
 daylight spent,
 Allotted room for every fluttering wing;
 When this was settled, frogs began to sing
 In bayou hollows and the first pale
 star
 Of turquoise evening sent its silver bar
 Across the valley where a misty town
 Awoke in elfin lights as dark came
 down.
 Because we knew no magic words to
 say,
 We kissed and, silent, walked the
 star-sweet way.

--Evantha Caldwell

DROUGHT

Like an army left in a desert world,
 Stand the ranks of corn with their banners furled;
 And their plumes droop low on that side and this,
 While their rusty blades swing curved and curled,
 Like writhing serpents that touch and hiss.

And with nostrils wide stand the panting kine
 On the outer edge of the drought-fire's shine;
 And their breath is as hot as the blaze that trims
 With yellow and brown the prairie pine
 From its topmost tips to its utmost limbs.

Over the opened earth with its scars, alas!
 With its withered flowers and frazzled grass,
 Not a shadowing cloud does come or go:
 Only the shimmering heat hosts pass
 On tiptoe ever, and to and fro.

And the dust lies deep everywhere, everywhere,
 On the doorstep wide, on the winding stair,
 And as far beside as the eye can scan:
 And it seems from the hush of both song and prayer,
 That it lies as deep on the heart of man.

And under the sun that molten clings
 In the haze-hid sky, like an omen swings
 A speck as large as a human hand--
 A voiceless vulture on tainted wings,
 The shadow to cool the land.

--John P. Sjolander

SUMMER NIGHTS IN TEXAS

Days must be hot to make the cotton white,
 And have their own peculiar yellow glare,
 But when the Gulf wind blows its way at night,
 There is no lovelier darkness anywhere.
 I lift my face--I turn toward the South,
 My hair blows loose--the wind along my path
 Is like a drink to any thirsty mouth;
 Is like a plunge in some soft--water bath.

I drink the wind! I bathe in it! I dive,
 With outstretched arms, a swimmer in my glee!
 The wind has made me gloriously alive,
 Its waves roll in, and they sweep over me!
 No day can be too hot, too long and bright,
 If it be followed by a Texas night.

--Grace Holl Crowell

RONDEL FOR SEPTEMBER

You thought it was a falling leaf we
 heard:
 I knew it was the Summer's gypsy feet;
 A sound so reticent it scarcely stirred
 The ear so still a message to repeat--
 "I go, and lo, I make my going sweet."
 What wonder you should miss so soft a
 word?
 You thought it was a falling leaf we
 heard:
 I knew it was the Summer's gypsy feet.

 With slender torches for her service
 meet
 The golden-rod is coming; softer slur-
 red
 Midsummer noises take a note replete
 With hint of change; who told the mock-
 ing-bird?
 I knew it was the Summer's gypsy feet--
 You thought it was a falling leaf we
 heard.

--Karle Wilson Baker

COTTON

I climb, at dusk, the narrow trail
 That leads me, stone by stone,
 Up to the slim hill's yellow crest,
 Where broom weeds long have blown;
 And there I pause and turn to look--
 A sort of goodnight view--
 Upon the still September field,
 Where soon shall fall the dew.

And as I look I half forget
 Such painful things as these:
 Torn fingers, aching, painful back,
 And bruised and crimson knees.
 For beauty robes the resting earth;
 The toilsome field below
 Is magical and calm and cool
 With green--and drifted snow!

--Walter R. Adams

INDIAN SUMMER

The quail drift out in coveys now
 Below the wide arroyo's rim;
 The sun-drenched dust hangs in a haze
 That veils the mountains, blue and dim.

The gray doves wing their steady flight,
 A wedge of wild geese, flying high,
 Fling to the watching world below
 A happy, vagabonding cry.

A mystic chill pervades the air--
 A tingling blend of frost and fire--
 That quickens heart beats, brings to life
 Some unremembered old desire.

--Nancy Richey Ransome

OCTOBER

First days in Autumn make me catch
 my breath
 In sheer amaze that I shall see again
 The fruitful beauty of the earth in death
 Across the painted pageant of the plain:

A lilac dawn comes up and fades to gray,
 A thin white scarf of wild birds trails the sky,
 The sumacs fire a torch to light the day,
 And pearly rustlings of the frost drift by;

Against the curve of distant hills, the blue
 Of smoky mist falls into purple night;
 The pale gold sickle of the moon lifts new
 To hew a circled radiance of dim light.

How strange it is that autumn days will lend
 Such beauty wantonly for death to spend.

--Lexie Dean Robertson

A TEXAS CANVAS

If I could paint October days
 With Queen's Crown flowered in sunlashed
 sprays
 That glow from pink to coral hue,
 With morning glories, sapphire blue,
 And flaming orange cosmos--then
 When somber days are come again,
 My canvas, colorful, would cede
 Its brilliancy to days in need.
 The winter winds would hang it high
 Upon some drear, sun-clouded sky,
 And men would say at evening's lull,
 "Is not the sunset beautiful?"

A pencil makes a poem quaint,
 But oh, what might be done with paint!

--Hazel Harper Harris

TEXAS AUTUMN

Now autumn beats like music at my breast,
 The color down the land is like a cry,
 The winding roadways will not let me rest,
 And distance is a call against the sky.
 The haze runs shouting out across the
 hills,
 Here autumn follows with its smoke and
 flame,
 Upon a day like this the landscape spills
 A glory that has never had a name.

Who has not seen a Texas field grown old
 With clinging cotton--waiting some dark
 hand--
 Or seen blurred fields--where purple
 thistles glow--
 Has missed too much of beauty--this I know.

--Grace Noll Crowell

NOW, THE FROSTED THICKETS

Now are the frosted thickets white with blossom,
 And now the yellow honey-bee has come,
 Finding this wild fruit better to his liking
 Than all the gardens he has journeyed from.

Stark by the roadway hang the thorny branches,
 As yet bereft of leaf or bud of leaf,
 While in the undergrowth the pale mist gathers,
 Lovely past man's remembrance or belief.

Always the year swings onward to this moment,
 Larks in the meadow—grass and brush in flower
 Nothing can mar the sureness of this coming,
 Nothing obscure the bright, inevitable hour.

--Siddie Joe Johnson

NOVEMBER

November is a beautiful word with a sound
 like water;
 Watery rhythms go flowing through it in
 tumbling floods.
 And it has a courage that is good to re-
 member--
 Not faint, like April, or troubled with March's
 moods.

It has a lovely completeness, like some task
 finished;
 It is grayly-golden as a full-fledged plover,
 And sound as a chestnut kernel without its
 sweetness,
 And has but little interest in any lover.

Foxes adore it, and the dull persimmon
 Turns to the color of a faded ember;
 It has a fuller bin than the months before it,
 And a tranquil beauty that is good to
 remember.

--Marvin Luter Hill

SILENT AUTUMN

Is there no loveliness of autumn mood
 That flames in wanton riot through the plain
 Can teach my dullard heart to sing again?
 Is there no solace in the lassitude
 Of quiet empty fields, not long stripped nude
 Of harvest? No healing of my pain
 In silvered tassels of the river cane
 Steeping dark roots in mirrored solitude?

I search in vain the sumac's crimson trail--
 No migrant bird has left a lyric note
 That I may beg; there is no sound along
 The purple-shadowed hills except the wail
 That echoes from my own pain-tortured throat,
 "Oh, color, break my heart, but give me song!"

--Lexie Dean Robertson

AUTUMN SONG

A cry that cuts me sharp as the cry
 Of a woman watching her first-born die--
 Wild geese and the north wind blowing.
 Far-seen in a wavering line they fly
 With wings outspread against the sky--
 And where shall they be going?

A weary team and a gleaming plow,
 Beads of sweat on the plowman's brow,
 And the brown earth turning, turning.
 The sun's dusk low and over a bow
 The thin moon lifts its shining prow--
 When shall they be returning?

Whether the winter come late, come soon,
 Watching the stars and wistful moon,
 We have no way of knowing,
 Yet the north wind spells an old night-rune
 Like a broken harp and out of tune--
 And what shall it be blowing?

The wheel of seasons turning slow--
 In the tangy air a hint of snow,
 In the wood a partridge drumming.
 The time to reap and the time to sow,
 The time when leaves of the burr-oak blow--
 Wild geese are coming, coming.

Whenever I hear their Viking cry,
 Pausing to watch them passing by,
 I have no time for sowing,
 Nor may I gather the tangled rye.
 Wild geese, wild geese against the sky,
 Must you be going, going?

--William E. Bard

AUTUMN

Autumn is a wounded Robin
 Feeling still the urge to sing.
 Autumn is the dying year
 Thinking nervously of spring.

--Walter R. Adams

RARE DAY

It was a magical day that knew no lack,
 Despite the sweep of autumn flame and frost;
 It was as though my crowded heart had back
 Each shining thing that it had loved and lost.

--Walter R. Adams

BLUE NORTHER

Crisp, scattered leaves mobilize about the door.
 The sky is full of intentions it has not yet
 confided
 To us. Clouds hurry two-ways.
 One high white clabber-bank seems entirely still.
 The cattle low often; they have never left the
 gate.
 It is warm and all the doors are open.
 Suddenly it seems impossibly dark.
 I glance at the North.
 Bordered at the horizon by a thin light line
 A curtain of black approaches with urge and speed
 In a moment the wind has lost its indecision
 And bounds out of the north whistling a thin
 blue wail.
 Doors bang; leaves, milk-pans, windows
 Fly, scurry, and rattle,
 While we rush to the rescue of the flowers!
 Below the curtain is a fringe of rain,
 Hard, dashing rain.
 The curtain has become a hood, and moves on
 Crowding the crescent of light in the south
 Below the horizon. In a moment the rain is gone.
 The light line in the north widens. A clean
 open blue
 Grows until it takes the sun.
 Urged before it, the clouds look black,
 helplessly defiant,
 And the trees, even a naked pole,
 Whine in tortured protest before the relentless
 wind!

--Therese Lindsey

ONE WINTER DAY

The farmer's kitchen housed the most of them,
 With one at college, two on week-end pleasuring
 That January morning, dun and gray.
 The oatmeal dishes steamed, the biscuits hot
 And generous sausages with coffee
 And milk for the youngsters, also ribbon cane.
 Then breakfast over and to each a task.

Out from the town a mile or more we were
 Living on black land. The muddy road caught
 And held all wheels as in a vise. Shut in--
 But what of that? We had the creek roaring by
 A bird whistling in a hackberry, and crows
 Cawing, cawing from the orchard, telling
 The rain had ceased after an all night downpour.
 We had the braying of the donkey and
 The merry clucking of hens, the sounds of cattle,
 And a boy at the barn singing "Red Sails"--

--Dorothy B. Robbins

YEAR'S CYCLE

Always there comes a time when fields lie fallow,
 Wrapped in a winding sheet of gray-spun days;
 Holding the dormant seeds for some tomorrow,
 Storing their strength for warm awakening rays.

Then from earth's travail, tuned to storm and laughter,
 Flashes the promise born of budding life;
 Bowing and dancing to the spring's glad music,
 Cutting the pregnant silence like a knife.

After the long slow days of labored waiting,
 Work and strength and fierceness of the sun;
 Sudden to harvest and the year's fruition;
 Earth writes her poem and her song is done.

--Lyra Haisley Sparks

CHARGE OF A TEXAS NORTHER

Blustering over the naked hills,
Swooping down the valleys,
Roaring along the lone highways,
Shining through sinuous alleys;

Storming the portals of mansion and hut,
Rattling their doors and their shutters;
Spreading a cold white winding-sheet
On city streets and gutters;

Glazing the surface of placid lake,
Choking the garrulous river,
Driving the stinging needles of sleet
Where huddled cattle shiver;

Beating the wild birds' fluttering wings,
Felling them by my power,--
Lashing the forests in surly pride,
I live my furious hour!

Man and beast are alike to me,--
Old or young: I care not whether
They live or die. Make way, make way,
I bring you bitter weather.

--Mary S. Fitzgerald

BLUE WHISTLE

Across the plain the norther blows
Its cutting, brittle, cold blue whistle;
It moves on nimble, icy toes;
Across the plain the norther blows,
Where Lipans once drew willow bows;
It moves among the oak and thistle--
Across the plain the norther blows
Its cutting, brittle, cold blue whistle.

--William Allen Ward

ODE TO THE NORTHER

Thrice welcome to the Norther,
 The Norther roaring free,
 Across the rolling prairies
 Straight from the Arctic Sea!
 Avaunt, ye western breezes
 And southern zephyrs warm!
 Here's to the cold, blue Norther,
 The stern, relentless storm!

I'm tired of love and laughter,
 Tonight I long for war,
 For the bugle blasts are sounding
 From the heights of Labrador.
 "Whoo--hoo!" the winds are wailing
 Their muffled reveilles,
 And 'round my chimney fortress
 Roar angry, shoreless seas.

Wild storms and wants and dangers
 Will thrill a poet's heart,
 And free a Viking spirit
 Far more than feeble art.
 So welcome to the storm wind!
 The Northers I invoke.
 Here's to the strong, gray weather
 That makes the heart of oak.

--William Lawrence Chittenden

IN WINTER

All winter long the prairie lies remembering;
 Old, old, and gray, and blurred with drifting mist,
 Silent and listening, harkening to the rain,
 Hearing the wind scream in its desert places.
 The cotton rows stretch long and brown and lifeless,
 The stubble fields are still and sad as death;
 The prairie lies defeated, broken-hearted,
 Conquered by winter, brooding in the cold--
 Pining for fields where the tall, green grass is waving,
 Longing for flowers that springtime brings,
 Brooding, and thinking of its endless past,
 In the rain and the mist.

--George D. Bond

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THE WHITE-THROATED SPARROW

Ere the first buds of April blow
 In sunny woodland sides,
 By ways I know, in thickets low,
 The little whitethroat hides.

His wavering wood-notes wild I hear:
 "O sweet! sweet! sweet to me."
 Serene and clear, remote, yet near,
 His timid melody.

He will not stay though orchards gray
 Put on their pink and white;
 He must away before the May,
 Across the hills at night.

Oh, give to me the dripping tree,
 And tremendous and thin,
 The whitethroat's whistled minstrelsy
 Where April days begin.

--W. W. Christman

A BLUEBIRD

Nobody has ever told me how a bluebird sings.
 It is like a butterfly whispering secrets to a
 pear-blossom;
 It is like the elf-high blades in the oat-field
 telling each other how it feels to be up;
 It is like the voice of a brook where it steps over
 a stone;
 It is like a happy thought talking;
 It is like the taste of spring water;
 It is like the brown glee of the ploughed ground.
 Nobody has ever been able to tell how a bluebird
 sings
 And neither am I.

--Karle Wilson Baker

ROBINS

No flame had tipped the redbud or the haw
 With magic of the spring, but when I saw
 The year's first robin dropping from the sky
 Their beauty stung me like a sudden cry.

March brought a flash of color to my tree
 That winging soon departed, leaving me
 A moment's largess like a treasured song
 Whose strains of living music linger long.
 And when I looked outside at early dawn
 There was a robin hopping on the lawn--
 I knew that overnight Spring had come.

--William E. Bard

CERTAIN OF SPRING

Clear as a trumpet disturbing the silence
 Of the dark night--
 I hear the cry of the wild-goose passing
 On his north flight.

Creature of instinct or urge or compulsion--
 Wiser than I--
 Taking the lyrical call to adventure
 With a glad cry!

His is the freedom that carries dominion
 To the sky's rim!....
 I, wide awake to the blare of the trumpets,
 Cry after him!....

Some dormant thing in my blood has awakened--
 Some magic thing!
 Certain I am that the winter is breaking--
 Certain of spring.

--Georgia C. Bader

RED BIRD

Red bird, red bird, whistling on a tree,
 You are all the flame and fire that have burned
 in me;
 You are all the passion and the rapture I have
 known;
 You are all my heart-break, whistling there alone.

Red bird, red bird, there is much to do,
 I have not a moment's time to be watching you.
 Now you go, but oh, that flame against the sky,
 It is not a red bird, it is I.

--Grace Noll Crowell

A CARDINAL

A cardinal bird on a cedar tree
 Tipped and tilted and whistled to me;
 Dipped the bough and darted his head,
 An ardent flame of glowing red.

Perfect beyond my wondering word,
 The cedar tree and the cardinal bird,
 The glass and the depth of the evergreen,
 The fire of the red-bird's crimson sheen.

Here was an altar to God's high name
 And the bird was the sacred candle flame,
 He swung and poised and kindly stayed
 Until my prayer of thanks was made.

Then with a flutter of good-bye
 He burned his way into the sky,
 Leaving clear in my memory
 A cardinal bird in a cedar tree.

--Charlene B. Underwood

THRUSHES

Through Tanglewood the thrushes trip
 As brown as any clod,
 But in their spotted throats are hung
 The vesper bells of God.

And I know little secret truths,
 And hidden things of good,
 Since I have heard the thrushes sing,
 At dusk, in Tanglewood.

--Karle Wilson Baker

CARDINAL DOWN-TOWN

A scarlet suit, a neat biretta set
 Above his twinkling eyes; a powerful beak
 Fit for seed crushing; hardly singing yet,
 Except the "chip, chip, chip" he needs must speak

Because his mate's about. A mulberry tree,
 Half bare and crooked, is his only perch
 Save the high wire; and you can only see
 Dull yards and alleys, roofs and chimney-smirch.

Fine he should linger in a spot so drear
 When all his crimson brothers have a wood
 Or field to play in! Fine, to let me hear
 Spring's earliest note, authentic and so good.

They call him "cardinal." The butterfly
 He chases, rends, would not perhaps do wrong
 To gasp out "Pirate!"--but not so do I
 To my small priest of beauty, prince of song.

--Jeannie Pendleton Hall

DOVES

Children like doves because of their sickle-wings,
 With whistles under them
 Men like them for their gentle, still, grey manners--
 They are never ruffled like women.
 Old people like doves because of their haunted voices;
 They understand what they mean.
 God likes doves because they are doves:
 They mourn softly.

--Harle Wilson Baker

THE TRYST

When spring is fresh from the hands of God,
 And my first plow furrow streaks the sod,
 They follow me up and down the row,
 Blackbird, Field Lark, Dove, and Crow.

And with the rest is a little Kildee,
 With one leg off close to his knee,
 And he whistles and chirps as he hobbles along,
 The happiest bird in all the throng.

For three years past this little Kildee
 In the spring of the year has met with me,
 And it seems as if he could tell, somehow,
 The very day when I'll start my plow.

I may hunt in every conceivable spot
 Just the day before, but I find him not;
 But ere I have driven my plough a rod,
 He is hopping around from clod to clod.

I wish he could talk, I'd question him
 To tell me the way he lost his limb;
 I'd ask him to tell me where he past
 The long, bleak days since I saw him last.

I hate to think that a day must be
 When either I, or the little Kildee,
 Must break the tryst we have kept so true
 Year after year; when the spring was new.

But let that pass, we are happy now
 Trailing along behind the plough,
 Doing our best the bridge to span
 That lies between the bird and the man.

--Whitney Montgomery

YOU'LL NEVER SEE A CROW IN TOWN

I often think it's marvelous,
 The birds that come to dwell with us
 Here in the city's smoke and grime,
 For I can look out any time
 And see a Cardinal or Jay,
 And I have heard a Mock-bird play
 His silver flute the whole night long,
 And I have heard a Robin's song.
 The other evening after dark,
 I heard an owl in the park;
 I've heard a whippoorwill complain,
 And heard a Rain Crow cry for rain,
 But search the city up and down,
 You'll never find a Crow in town.

A Crow belongs to field and wood,
 Where he can have his solitude,
 And sit upon an old dead tree
 And study his philosophy;
 Where he can feel the spring winds blow,
 And watch the corn and melons grow,
 And match his wits with farmer men
 And steal a little now and then--
 I think I'd rather be a Crow
 Than any other bird I know!

--Whitney Montgomery

THE BLACKBIRD

Small, friendly brother of the crow,
 How sleek and bright your feathers are;
 Your glossy coat gives out a glow
 As brilliant as a shining star
 As you step proudly, looking wise,
 With your sharp-sighted, golden eyes.

You need not fly away from me;
 Eat all the bugs and worms you find
 For I am not your enemy
 But I love you and all your kind;
 The very hand that modeled you
 Made me, your friend, and brother, too.

--Lester Green

MUSIC MAD

The mocking bird is music mad tonight,
 He thinks the stars are notes;
 That he must sing each spattered star, and be
 A choir of many throats.

The earth is his cathedral, and its dome
 Is all the light pricked sky,
 The pear tree is his choir loft,
 And there he flings his mad songs high.

The moon-white blossoms are young girls to him,
 Who kneel at night to pray;
 The buds, their rosaries--the little winds
 Are whispered prayers they say.

He thinks he is the whole cathedral choir,
 And bursts his little throat;
 I lie awake--and do not breathe--lest I
 May miss one single note!

--Grace Noll Crowell

REDBIRD

Fiery one, fiery one,
 Lighting the rain,
 Where do you find
 That blazing stain?

You sit in the cedar,
 And dazzle my eye,
 And taunt me like banners
 Streaming by.

Pensive grey titmouse
 And plain, brown thrush
 Eat of my berries
 From every bush,

Bathe in my rain pool,
 Drink at my pan,
 Yet grow no colors
 But grey and tan;

Peck at the crumbs
 On my door-step stone:
 You forage beside them--
 You burn alone.

Are you off at daybreak
 To slake your needs
 With some red comets
 Sizzling seeds,

Or blazing sunward
 Higher and higher,
 Do you bathe in a fountain
 Of primal fire?

Fiery one, fiery one,
 Thing apart--
 Coal in cedar's
 Sombre heart,

Brand in the dimness,
 Flag in the sun--
 What is your secret,
 Fiery one?

--Karle Wilson Baker

REPERTOIRE

The Blacksnake got my Cardinal,
 My sweet Canary died;
 The Linnit and the Oriole
 Have quit the countryside.
 There's not a Catbird in my hedge,
 A Robin or a Jay,
 And yet I hear them everyone
 Singing all the day.

Mocking Bird, Mocking Bird you have
 every note
 That ever fell upon the air from a singer's
 throat.

Songs of every bird I know--
 You have these and more;
 You sing a hundred different notes
 I never heard before.
 Sometimes I think you reproduce
 In your wild melodies
 The songs of long lost troubadours
 That sang in Eden's trees.

Mocking Bird, Mocking Bird, through your
 trebles run
 All the songs of all the birds since the
 world begun.

Man has done uncanny things
 With his cunning brain;
 From little coils of shining wire
 Dead singers sing again,
 And songs are borne to us through space
 As far as East from West,
 But only God could make a bird
 To sing for all the rest.

--Whitney Montgomery

WHITE HERON

From the shadowy branches of the towering
 pines
 Emerges a white-feathered bird; is it
 fashioned of snow?
 So cool it appears against the dark foliage;
 Like a pattern clipped from a fleece of cloud;
 Downward it sails--more silent than silence
 can be--
 Its wings wide-spread, making no motion;
 Lo, a luminous bird is alighting--
 A white heron stands by the still marsh
 water;

Enraptured I gaze on this miracle that is
 transpiring--
 This winged, wild creature, unfearing,
 Stands as graceful and tall as a pictured white
 heron,
 Of laquer and gold on an old Chinese screen.

A shot rends the air!
 The white heron has fallen!
 Wings that have soared are forevermore still;
 Blood-stained and crumpled the rare, lovely
 creature,
 That but a fluttering breath-space ago
 Was a wisp of white cloud
 That the wind was pursuing--

The pine trees sway softly;
 Bowing their heads, they whisper together--
 Chanting a dirge for the white heron fallen
 Beside the marsh water.

--Lois Vaughan McLain

TO A SCARLET Tanager

O, scarlet bird with lightning wing,
 You dazzle my enraptured eye,
 You seem to trail a streak of flame,
 As you go darting swiftly by.

Are you a spirit messenger
 From some far distant magic isle
 Where beauty's essence is the soul
 And melody is nature's smile.

No art can copy your red hue,
 Its depth and purity of tone,
 And such entrancing waves of sound
 Are gifts from God to you alone.

O, scarlet bird, I love you so,
 Take my spirit on with yours
 To dwell with you eternally,
 In sound and flame in the great
 out-doors.

--Martha Lavinia Hunter

A SCARECROW

Some sticks, some strings, a hat, some rags
 and straw;
 Yes, laugh, old crow, you know now how 'twas made.
 But in your heart own up you were afraid,
 And fearing, kept yourself within the law.
 But say, old crow, forget what you just saw,
 There is a live thing keeping in the shade,
 For which that scarecrow stood in masquerade--
 It nearly caught you when you shouted--"Caw."

Fly, fly! old crow. That ever-living thing
 Has heard your mocking laugh, and flung its
 dart;
 Fly swifter, swifter, to your sheltering wood,
 And there all humbly, fold your swarthy wing,
 And say unto your wildly beating heart:--
 "Lord, send us scarecrows--fool us to be
 good."

--John P. Sjolander

BUZZARDS

I scarcely mind the rotting smell
 Of a carcass on a lonely hill,
 If I may steal up close and watch
 Dark buzzards take their fill.

Old-looking buzzards, darting about
 A crumpled, useless horse or kine;
 I see a drama worth the cast
 When tugging vultures dine....

And sometimes think if I should die
 Alone, while on a country stroll,
 It would be well to let them wreck
 The temple of my soul.

--Walter R. Adams

THE SUMMER Tanager

"Better come here!" he says among the leaves,
 "Better come here!" Up where the branches sway,
 His delicate, high, insistent speech he weaves
 Among the green hours of the summer day.
 A hundred times I catch his gay suggestion
 For one glimpse of his bosom's rosy glow--
 The glow that sends dim memories back, to question
 Old gardens, bright with zinnias in a row.

They say, O free-born, that you only call
 Your green-gold mate, your splendor-dusted love
 Nor think of wistful, groundling me, at all
 Smiling and peering for you, there above!
 I know you taunt me brother for my good:
 "Better come here!"--How gladly, if I could.

--Karle Wilson Baker

IN THE CANYON

The eagle eyed
 From the canyon rim
 The mountain goat
 Far under him.

With sudden speed
 From out the sky
 The eagle swooped
 With piercing cry.

The wise gray goat
 Leaped from the boulder
 To the canyon wall's
 Thin rock-rimmed shoulder.

And held with foot
 Well trained to grip
 The peak or crag
 Without a slip.

The eagle missed
 And flew away
 To watch and swoop
 Some other day.

--William Allen Ward

GREY

Up among the grey clouds,
 Through the grey rain,
 The wild ducks are trailing
 Their wavering chain.

Frailer than a lace-thread,
 Through the waste of grey,
 Steadily the wraith-chain
 Drags my heart away.

--Karle Wilson Baker

TO THE PRAIRIE QUAIL

Pretty little creature,
 Are you fowl or bird?--
 Trotting down the cow trail
 Following the herd.

Well you know the cow-men
 When the north winds blow,
 And the trails are covered
 With a quilt of snow.

And you watch the wagons
 As they scatter food--
 Enough for the cattle
 And for your brood.

So you follow after
 While the snow comes down--
 Cunning little bird-fowl,
 In your gingham gown.

--Vaida Stewart Montgomery

FLAMINGOES

God must have used dawn tinted snow
 To form these lovely birds;
 Then tucked a rose of sunrise glow,
 Too beautiful for words,
 Beneath each wing.

Like fragile statuettes, or flowers
 Upheld by slender stem,
 They wear the cool of dawning hours,
 For God breathed into them
 Eternal spring.

--Maude E. Cole

THE SONG OF THE OWL

Oh-ho! oh, ho-ho! He is lost in the wood,
 Where the wind and the cark are asleep;
 And he cannot get out, though he shout and
 he shout,
 For the sound of my voice it will turn him
 about,
 Where the thickets are huddled and deep.

Oh-ho! oh, ho-ho! On the edge of the wood,
 By the tarn that looks up at the moon,
 I saw him at eve cause a maiden to grieve,
 And now he will know how a voice can deceive,
 Until death is the tenderest boon.

Oh-ho! oh, ho-ho! He will list for my voice,
 And follow wherever it leads;
 And through bramble and thorn, that are biting
 like scorn,
 I will take him until of his beauty he's shorn,
 And for mercy in anguish he pleads.

Oh-ho! oh, ho-ho! Oh, there is a morass,
 At the end of the winding lagoon,
 Where the ooze darkly creeps out of treacherous
 deeps;
 There my voice will be hushed as the maiden's
 that sleeps
 By the tarn that looks up at the moon.

--John P. Sjolander

WILD GEESE

Listen to the grey geese sing
 Under the autumn moon.
 Like swift grey ghosts they swing,
 Chanting a high clear tune.

Cleaving the midnight sky,
 A shadowy host in flight,
 They sing of their destiny
 And speed through the cold moonlight.

--Patrick D. Moreland

WILD GEESE

I hold to my heart when the geese are flying--
 A wavering edge on the high, bright blue--
 I tighten my lips to keep from crying:
 "Beautiful birds, let me go with you!"

And at night when they honk and their wings
 are weaving
 A pattern across a full gold moon--
 I hold to my heart that would be leaving
 If it were freed to fly too soon.

I hold to my heart that would be going--
 A comrade to wild birds in the air,
 As wayward as they--and never knowing
 Where it is going--and never care--

I hold to my heart--for here lies duty--
 And here is the path where my feet must stay--
 But O, that quivering line of beauty,
 Beating its beautiful, bright-winged way!

--Grace Noll Crowell

THE LAST BOB WHITE

Oh, how they murdered poor Bob White today!
 The booming guns were heard on every side,
 From early morn till evening passed away,
 The frightened coveys scattered far and wide.

No spot on earth could hide him from his foes,
 For keen of scent the eager pointer came,
 And flushed him from the ground, and as he rose
 He fell before the hunter's deadly aim.

But when the day was done, and all was still,
 And twilight's purple shades began to fall,
 From off the summit of yon leafy hill
 I heard the echo of a lonely call.

It called into the night, but all in vain,
 For none of his feathered mates was there
 To send the call responsive back again,
 And come to meet him through the chill night air.

They say this wanton slaughter is not sin--
 That birds and beasts were made for men's delight,
 But oh! there is such lonely sadness in
 The plaintive calling of the last Bob White.

--Whitney Montgomery

FORGOTTEN

A dull glow in the west like fires burned out,
 A late dusk carrying the lonely cry
 Of wild geese, as their slow path parts the sky.
 What stirs the old mill pond? Drifting about
 The barnyard geese have sense of some strange things:
 Their aimless floating quickens as they see
 Cutting the still, cool water noiselessly,
 A gray bird bring to rest a silvery wing.

They hiss the graceful creature, half aware
 Of kinship dim and haunting. Does a dream
 Come back of reedy marshes, and the gleam
 Of star-marked roadways charted on the air?
 The strong wings lift and seek far worlds they know;
 Let no wild heart be left that cries to go!

--Grace F. Guthrie

THE MOCKING BIRD'S SONG IN AUTUMN

Gray autumn days have dimmed his coat,
 And ruffled it around his throat;
 But there's a twinkle in his eye,
 As whistling autumn winds run by.
 For even when the days grow chill,
 A singer is a singer still;
 It is the time, not he, that's wrong;
 The sad days need the gladdest song.

And so with closely folded wings,
 Facing the autumn wind, he sings,
 The memory of little cares
 Is woven in his tender airs,
 And joys remembered still impart
 Sweet trills that come straight from
 the heart.

For what is him is autumn's hue,
 Who lived and loved a summer through?

The singing heart knows no regrets;
 For one lost joy two more it gets.
 The yester joy seemed most complete,
 Tomorrow holds two twice as sweet.
 Ah, that is what the singer sings
 The while he shapes the wondrous
 things
 Whereof he builds strange dreams come
 true.

Oh! there's a shaping power in song
 That makes hearts glad, and glad hearts
 strong.
 For unto him does autumn bring
 Not winter thoughts, but dreams of spring,
 When he shall flash his wings in flight,
 And pour out songs of pure delight
 Upon the little world that seems
 The fairest world of all his dreams.

--John P. Sjolander

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WILD PLUM

Not far ahead, a tiny tree,
A white-bloomed thing of witchery,

Burned like a ghost-fire in the wood
At sun-down. Going near, I could

See, swaying there a gay petite
Bright dancer in a dusky street.

Then fancy let her be the lass
I loved and lost in youth's morass

Of thorny grief and petalled joy,
And dreams grown taller than a boy--

I took the hands held out to me,
My soul in redolence set free.

--Walter R. Adams

RED BULS

Now I have come to watch for it as one
Goes seeking an oasis through dry lands,
Before the earliest spring days have begun
I search for it with eyes, and heart, and hands,
And suddenly down some dim wooded way
I catch the glimmer of a misty light--
The smoke of lavender through leafless gray
That clutches at my throat, and blinds my sight.

And soon each little spangled red bud tree
Will loose its loveliness upon the air,
To shake my heart with quivering ecstasy,
And leave me breathless--wordless--but aware
That never would a Southern spring be spring
Without this delicate, frail blossoming.

--Grace Noll Crowell

PEACH BLOSSOM TIME

Down in the orchard the wild birds are singing,
 "Peach-blossom time!"
 White-petaled, gold-hearted daisies are nodding,
 "Peach-blossom time!"
 South winds are blowing, and bear on their pinions,
 Fragrance sublime,
 Stolen from the groves of magnolia and orange,
 In sunnier clime.

Hearts are rejoicing, and nature o'erflowing,
 'Tis peach-blossom time!
 Blue birds are mating, and billing, and cooing,
 "Peach blossom time!"
 Peach-blossom time with its wondrous elixir,
 Bounding along,
 From tiptoe to temple; and oh, how the heart-strings
 Vibrate with the song!

Open, O delicate, shell tinted petals,
 Soft as the light,
 Yield up the aroma wrapped up in your bosoms
 Of rose tint and white
 Music and melody ring in the woodlands,
 Morn, noon, and night,
 Bursting from sweet feathered throats, in a
 rapture
 Of wildest delight!

Strange does it seem that these orchards of blossom
 A few weeks ago
 Stood facing the norther, their bare arms extended
 Laden with snow;
 But warm rains and sunshine, and God's wondrous
 power
 Hath clothed them in garments surpassing all texture
 Of hands not divine.

Then open your dainty hearts, pour out their
 fragrance,
 Ablution divine!
 While angel-voice sings in the breeze to the
 earthland,
 "Peach-blossom time!"

--Mrs. Belle Hunt Shortridge

ELM-LACE

The old, old elm has put on clouds of lace
 Delicate as a bride's. A dawn-like grace
 Covers a million dark twigged memories.
 A dryad gaiety is in her face,
 And, light as lilac-spray against the skies,
 New wonder is upborne by ancient stress.
 I marvel at a mortal thing so wise
 To heal the feud of Time and Loveliness!

--Karle Wilson Baker

MIRACLE

Without warning, in the night my single plum tree
 Opened her thousand little, black-gloved hands,
 And morning saw in each a lacy handkerchief
 Unfold and lift its white and perfumed edges to the sun.
 Then suddenly upon her crooked elbow
 In answer to come unheard summoning,
 A redbird took its place,
 Raised his bright head
 And instantly the silver morning air,
 All the silver in the shining, morning air
 Was chiming, changing, chiming.
 And something, older than myself, in me
 Twisted so with joy, or pain,
 Or something I could not explain, or name,
 That I could neither move nor speak,
 Could scarcely breathe.
 How then could Eve,--poor little naked Eve,
 Shivering and staring from behind the early leaves
 Endure the shock of that first sudden coming
 Upon a thing like this,
 Prepared by not one miracle of not one single year,
 When all my score on score of filled-up years
 Have left me unprotected,
 Unprepared?

--Sunshine Dickinson Ryman

GREAT ELMS

Spring Evening

Here in the dusk an evening star is hung,
 A sickle moon swings out above the town.
 The great elms, green and lacy-leaved, look down
 Upon the shadow patterns that they weave,
 And I have loved the spring upon this street--
 The fragile little tunes new leaves have sung.
 Small mating nests great sheltered limbs have held
 Beneath their emerald arch for homing feet.
 And I have held my heart and listened long
 To all the beauty spring puts in her song.

Winter Evening

Here in the night--the dusk is quickly dead,
 A round moon lights the clear, cold winter sky.
 The thousand opals inlaid overhead
 Look down upon this same street that I know.
 And I who thought that beauty could not stay
 When leaves are gone and limbs turned eony,
 Behold an etching where gaunt trees have spread
 A loveliness of rare tranquility.
 I watch...hold to my heart and catch my breath
 At beauty in a night as calm as death.

--Clara Hood Rugel

TO AN EARLY BLOOMING PEACH TREE

Forbear to waken your sleeping buds
 Yet awhile, though the urge be strong:
 Better stand bleak on the edge of spring
 Than barren summer long.

--Walter R. Adams

RIVER ELMS

I love to sleep out doors beneath an elm
 Where spreads a canopy of frail green lace
 Between me and the moon--
 A fragile lace made silvery with stars.
 I lie in radiant dusk and watch the trace
 Of shadows in the circled realm
 Below the tree till the warm dark unbars
 Each secret lure of June.

Such nights bring to my heart a rich content
 And oneness with the earth, for then I know
 The feel of breathing sod,
 The deep dreams of the river rushing by
 Beneath sweet alder blooms that fall and scent
 The frothy water, Once when a low
 And simple prayer went lifting toward the sky
 An elm tree talked with God.

--Lexie Dean Robertson

WINTER MOODS

A painter can paint the woods
 As they look when the trees are bare,
 But a painter can never paint
 The spirit of sadness there.

A poet can sing of the woods
 As they look when the leaves are gone,
 But a poet can never catch
 Their sad, sweet monotone.

Alas for the poet's song,
 Alas for the painter's art;
 Walk alone in the winter woods
 And let them break your heart.

--Whitney Montgomery

PINES IN THE RAIN

This hour that I have loved so was silver
 green and brown--
 A listening hour in the pine-woods where I
 have learned so much.
 Soft through the tufted branches the dim rain
 sifted down,
 Tipping with rayless jewels the low plumes I
 could touch.

I wish I could write a poem that was tall
 and straight as a pine:
 I wish it could say to someone what the
 pine-trees say to me.
 I think their way of talking would be no
 better than mine,
 If I were as sure and simple and quiet as a
 tree.

--Karle Wilson Baker

BOIS D'ARC AT NIGHT

The moon has made a jewel of my tree,
 A thorny bois d'arc clawing at the eaves
 When little winds, perhaps afraid to be
 Alone at night, make playmates of the leaves:
 Dense pointed leaves, whose lacquered greenness shines
 Like fragments of a shattered star that found
 (Not death, but life that sparkles like new wines)
 A bed of ease before they smote the ground.

But these are jewels one may never hold,
 No matter how alluringly they glow
 In silver radiance or fire of gold--
 I yearn to clasp the shining tree, but know
 If I should lift to reach one jeweled leaf,
 A thorn would sip my blood--leave germs of grief.

--Walter R. Adams

WILD PLUM BLOSSOMS

Among the rocks that crown a tawny hill,
 The wild plum thicket clings with taloned feet,
 And cowers while the gray northwesterners beat
 Across the valley; but just now the thrill
 Of spring is in the air, and robins thrill
 Along the creek, and in the dark mesquite
 Are orioles, and so the plum boughs greet
 The year with fragrant beauty, pale and chill.

And there are bees that hum the whole day
 through,
 Or sober moths that doze for half an hour,
 And early butterflies that pause and cling
 Among the lacy drifts of honey-dew;
 And last a cardinal, a singing flower,
 Will stop to preen a rosy satin wing.

--Berta Hart Nance

THE ARCHER

Spring sent an arrow from her bow
 That only grazed the mark,
 Earth knew a momentary glow,
 A few notes from the lark.

And then she took a truer aim
 And loosed another dart,
 And Winter felt a shaft of flame
 That pierced him to the heart.

New life awoke in fields and wood,
 The birds sang full and free,
 And Winter bled, I saw his blood
 Upon a redbud tree.

--Whitney Montgomery

THE ELOPEMENT

The pine-tree is a man-tree,
 The proudest tree that grows!
 Lifting his solemn head-plume
 Up in the air he goes;

His is the staunchest column,
 His is the stiffest leaf;
 And when he cries, a man's voice
 Groans with a strong man's grief.

The cedar-tree is a lady!
 Light as a ship she goes,
 Dipping her feathery rigging,
 Bending to wear the snows,--

Some night they will be married--
 Something will send for me--
 An owl will hoot in the starlight,
 And I'll slip out and see.

--Karle Wilson Baker

MESQUITE

Poets sing of stately trees that rise
 Like sentinels on lofty mountains,
 Of bearded trees that cling
 Together in marshy glade lands of the
 south;
 But, did they, I wonder, ever see
 A lacy-leafed mesquite
 Give beans to starving sheep and
 cattle
 In a drouth?

--Ruth McCauley Thorne

ON THE FALLING OF A LEAF

There is more grief
 In the falling of a leaf
 Than in the sudden doom
 Of scented bloom,

For blossoms go
 That crowding fruit may grow;
 They do not leave the tree
 In poverty.

(I wonder why
 When certain persons die,
 Life seems a winter tree,
 Its leaves set free?)

--Walter R. Adams

SPANISH OAKS

Spanish oaks are lovely when
 Against the winds of fall,
 In oriental coloring,
 My land puts on her shawl.
 Like senoritas' wind-blown scarfs,
 With faintly rustling thrills
 These Spanish Oak mantillas
 Enfold the Bosque Hills.
 They hang their gold and crimson folds
 Along the canyon's side;
 By frescoed hall and lowly hut
 Their fabric flutters wide--
 And, I would be in Texas when
 First northers spread the frills
 Of Spanish Oak mantillas that
 Enfold the Bosque Hills.

--Gussie Osborne

MY NEIGHBOR'S TREE

There is a tree that lives next door,
 A green and gracious sycamore,
 And though she knows herself a queen,
 And though a hedge is set between,
 She covers all my little house
 With tasseled canopy of shade
 And showers of emerald and jade.

My neighbor scarcely knows the tree,
 Within his wall, so close to me,
 So close that I could touch the nest
 Of orioles within her breast,
 So close that I can feel the stir
 Of every life that throbs in her.
 All through the night when dark is deep,
 I feel her breathing round my sleep,
 Crooning and murmuring lullabies
 Until she sees the lighted skies
 And wakes me with the robin's song.

Though summer's drouth is hard and long,
 I never heard my tree complain
 Of too much sun or lack of rain,
 But when the rare wind soothes her leaves
 She scatters music round my eaves,
 And when rain comes she gently spills
 The cool drops down my window sills.

My neighbor scarcely knows the tree
 Within his wall so close to me,
 As some men scarcely know their wives,
 Living beside them all their lives.
 And this he does not know at all--
 That on my side of his brick wall,
 I thank him from his shaded door,
 And bless him for his sycamore.

--Margaret Belle Houston

TO A DEAD TREE STANDING

Year in, year out, you stand, though dead--
 Flayed by the lightning's fiery hand.
 Not knowing that the dead lie down,
 You stand,

Defiant still to warring winds,
 Bleak and wearing a gnarled frown,
 So pitifully unaware that the dead
 Lie down.

--Walter R. Adams

SPANISH MOSS

The forest leaves are turning red and falling,
 Leaving the old trees bare;
 And through the boughs the autumn winds are
 sighing;
 Winter is drawing near.

Yet, twining around, the branches nude
 enwrapping,
 The gray moss closer clings,
 Faithful and true in winter as in summer,
 Its love and friendship springs.

Oh, good gray moss, may I ever have near me,
 As thou so true a friend,
 Amid life's storms, as when 'tis calm--as
 faithful,
 As constant to the end.

And when life's weary pilgrimage is ended,
 My tomb with flowers wreath,
 As thou, the old tree--loving, mournful,
 sighing,
 Enclasps it still in death!

--Friench Simpson

RETAMA TREES

When first I saw retama trees bedecked
 With long, green fronds like fairy-made chenille,
 And clustered yellow flowers, crimson flecked,
 Attracting bees with honey-hoarding zeal,
 My heart leaped up at beauty's swift appeal.

I thought a thousand birds of paradise
 Adorned green boughs for my delighted gaze,
 Or else great crowds of topaz butterflies
 Had settled there to make corsage bouquets
 For folk like me who walk down prairie ways.

But now I know these were but fancy's thrills
 For they are gypsy maids in kirtles green;
 Each wears a long fringed scarf adorned with frills
 Of yellow swiss that catch the sunlight's sheen,
 And each one twirls a magic tambourine.

One belle of Romany with ankles slim,
 Capricious wanderer of Texas trees,
 Stands close beside my door (a homing whim)
 To learn a city's strange amenities
 And bids me "Merry-O" with every breeze.

So I no longer search for happiness,
 For love's untasted honeycomb,
 But drape my shawl around my gypsy dress
 In fancy when my spirit longs to roam,
 And find romance, though rooted here at home.

--Hazel Harper Harris

LOCUST

I breathed the perfume of a locust
 tree
 One night in summer when the moon
 was high,
 The ghosts of all my loves went drifting by,
 And all my Junes came rushing back to me.

--Lois Peck Ecksten

WIND IN THE PINES

Out in the dark pines, hear the wind crying,
Crying like wandering birds, weary-winged, heavy
 with fright;
Crying like desolate birds, lost and aimlessly
 flying;
Keening the anguish of all things lost in the
 lonely night.

Ah, hear that wild sough, now rising, now dying--
Now rising to fill the night with the clamor of
 fear and pain;
Hear it and turn to me, comfort me, still my
 heart of this crying,
Lest I, too, be lost in mad flight, and never
 be found again.

--Grace Ross

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BLUEBONNETS

There is a Spanish legend
 That with a sense of loss
 The weeping mother wandered
 Beyond the burdened cross;
 And that where'er her mantle
 Trailed o'er the forest way
 A flower caught its color
 And holds it still today.

It was our own Bluebonnet
 That bent its graceful stem
 Beneath her gentle footsteps
 And robe's embroidered hem.
 And all our Texas prairies
 This tender truth confess,
 That everywhere their blossoms
 Wear hues of Mary's dress.

--Mary Hunt Afflect

WHITE IRIS

They left you here and all is wilderness now
 Tenacious grass, mesquite, and thorny bush,
 And not a friendly hand to grub and plow
 Through husky roots that dig and reach to crush
 Your fragile bit of life. Yet through the years,
 And many years have passed since they have gone,
 You mark the spot where once were pioneers;
 A remnant of their dreams you carry on.

When winter comes you fold your arms and sleep,
 And near your heart your petals form and sing
 Till comes the time that you awake and leap,
 With silken flags unfurled, to meet the spring.
 Each year you thrust green swords toward the sun
 In stern defiance of oblivion.

--Maude E. Cole

HUISACHE BLOSSOMS

Thousands of wee balls,
Fluffy and sweet,
Trim every huisache
Found in our street.

Hundreds of petals
Make up each ball,
Little round spikelets,
Scarce petals, at all.

Odor of roses,
Powdery gold,
Spring's scented messages
These blossoms hold.

Wee yellow sachets,
Dusting their sweet,
Bring gay fairyland
Right to our street.

--Gussie Osborne

LOVELY GHOSTS

Do you recall bluebonnets down a lane,
Perfumed, sunlit, and blue as April skies--
As blue you said as were my dress and eyes,
Or other hours of silver April rain
We read a favorite book to Spring's refrain,
Or evenings that we counted fire flies
Along the river's bend? --Do such scenes rise
For you, a phantom troop that years retain?

The lovely ghosts of all our yesterdays
Make little need of words from you and me,
Who have outdistanced words eternally;
We know communion's deeper, fleshless ways,
And youth may go, and sun and silver showers,
Yet not disturb love's hoard of treasured hours.

--Dorothy Callaway

I SAW MY FIRST BLUE BONNET FIELD

I saw my first bluebonnet field today,
 It took my breath away.
 It was so blue beneath the Texas sky,
 It made me want to cry.
 And Oh, I was so very glad to see
 That beauty spread for me,
 And infinitely pleased that God should
 take
 Such trouble for my sake:
 To let the old crown-crueted earth break
 through
 With such strange heavenly blue;
 To let a barren field be frosted white
 With such strange heavenly light;
 That He would take the pink that dawns
 all wear
 And let them sparkle there.
 I watched the field upon my knees today--
 It made me want to pray.

--Grace Nell Crowell

MATUTINAL

The poppies smile in the morning light,
 Not knowing that the hurrying night
 May bring the doom
 Of their oright bloom.

Not knowing their ranks may soon be thinned
 By a whirling wind,
 Or the last of them be slain
 By a sudden hail or rain,
 The poppies smile in the morning light.

Unmindful of the hurrying night,
 I, too, shall smile...in the morning light.

--Walter R. Adams

TEXAS BLUEBONNETS

They came in those quaint little bonnets,
 Just as the winter was done--
 Dear little, gay little bonnets,
 Dazzlingly blue in the sun;
 They came with a rush down the hillside;
 They trooped up the far side again--
 Dear little, gay little bonnets
 Daringly blue in the rain;
 They argued a bit at the railroad;
 They laughed at the roar of the train
 But swung with the wind in their bonnets
 And spread themselves wide on the plain...
 Each one in a blue little bonnet,
 They came when the winter was done--
 Dear little, quaint little bonnets,
 Gay in the rain and the sun.

--Kathrine Hymas Williams

INDIAN BLANKET

Indian blanket! Quaint idyllic name,
 Or blood-wrought symbol of a dying race;
 It clothes a thousand threadbare hills with flame
 And routs with beauty all the common-place
 Old straggling roadsides and neglected fields.
 It lifts a gleaming trail at dawn, wine-red
 And edged with mullein, and at dusk it yields
 The legend of a people at whose tread
 The earth was shaken: Long the war-whoop rang
 And huddled bodies lay with scalps as white
 As peeled willows...yet no minstrel sang
 Their Odyssey, no poet rose to write
 Their Illiad--only a flower springs
 From flinty earth to mark their wanderings.

William E. Bard

POMEGRANATE BLOSSOMS

Here in the marvelous half dusk of the South
 An Oriental bush flames out with fire,
 Each blossom is a lover's scarlet mouth;
 Each petal is a blinding swift desire.
 The passion flower of the East has stirred
 To quick red flame the smouldering Southern night.
 A man's persistent, eager voice is heard--
 He pleads with one--"Return, O Shulamite".

The park becomes the garden of a king;
 And older than life the lover's call sounds on.
 Faint scents of spikenard and saffron bring
 The breath of winds that blow from Lebanon;
 And the fire of a red pomegranate's flower
 Makes me a prince's daughter for an hour.

--Grace Noll Crowell

BLUEBONNETS

Bluebonnets; who called you that I wonder?
 "Buffalo Clover"--born in the thunder
 Of heavy hoofs--is a better name.
 Gone is the buffalo (ours is the shame),
 And pushed is the clover from pasture-fields
 To barrener places where still it yields
 A passion of blossom, a splendor of spread
 Whose beauty no traveler has credited.

Pick the fine blues, of the finest-- your
 choice--
 And bound the plains by the sound of your
 voice,
 But as far as you look still this blue you
 will see,
 Two oceans of turquoise in ecstasy!
 Where the sky takes off the two blues dim--
 One up, one down; two seas, one rim!

--Therese Lindsey

SONGS FROM THE TRAFFIC

The black haw is in flower again,
 The redbud's rosy tide
 Splashes the wood and stains the shade
 Where dog-tooth violets hide.

(Manhattan--Manhattan--I walk your streets
 today,
 But I see the Texas prairies bloom a thousand
 miles away!)

Primroses burn their yellow fires
 Where grass and roadway meet.
 Feathered and tasseled like a queen
 Is every old mesquite.

(It's raining in the barren parks, out on the
 prairie side,
 The road is shining in the sun for him who cares
 to ride!)

The plum trees' arms are burdened white,
 And where the shrubs are few
 Blue bonnets fold the windy ways--
 Is any blue so blue?

(Clouds of them, crowds of them, shining through
 the grey,
 Bluebonnets blossoming a thousand miles away!)

How could I live my life so far
 From where March plains are green,
 But that my gallivanting heart
 Knows all the road between?

(Manhattan--Manhattan--when you jostled me today,
 You jostled me a-galloping a thousand miles
 away!)

--Margaret Belle Houston

THE BLUE BONNET OF TEXAS

It blooms upon our prairies wide
 And smiles within our valleys,
 A Texas flower and Texas' pride,--
 Around its honor rallies;
 And every heart beneath the blue
 Transparent sky above it,
 In Texan-wise, forever true,
 Shall fold and hold and love it.

The winds that softly round it blow
 Breathe out in song and story
 The fame of bloody Alamo
 And San Jacinto's glory;
 And every where beneath the sky
 That lovingly bends o'er it,
 With glowing heart and kindling eye,
 All Texans true adore it.

It blossoms free in homes and fields
 Made by love's labor royal;
 To Fleur-de-lys or Rose none yields
 Allegiance more loyal!
 And to the world its fame shall go
 And tell the Lone Star's splendor--
 Of hearths and homes that gleam and
 glow,
 Of loving hearts and tender.

'Tis Texan in its beauty rare,
 To honest hearts appealing;
 And can there be a fame more fair,
 Or deeper depth of feeling?
 For Texas hearts, in Texan-wise,
 Are true to the Blue Bonnet,
 And love it as the bright blue skies
 That pour their blessings on it.

--John P. Sjolander

TO A TEXAS FRI. ROSE

A flake of cloud was trembling cast
 Where April walked in dew;
 Earth loved the alien, made it fast;
 It blushed, and then was you.

So light it seems you'd upward go;
 Then tender turn and cling,
 And like a maid at nod and no,
 Grow sweeter wavering,

Still in two worlds you hold a dower:
 The snowdrop of the air
 And rose of the earth, here in one flower
 A double beauty dare.

Lut this thing lack you. (May it be
 You will not lack it long!)
 You've no estate in poesy;
 No pedigree in song.

What lovers of the stern frontier
 Here halted, no less brave
 For wondering how you'd glowing cheer
 An uncompanied grave?

Heroes, but not of those who go
 To conquest pen in hand,
 So left your loveliness to blow
 Unmeasured and unscanned.

Your robe, though royal from old time
 Ere rose and daffodil,
 Must, for the want of broidered rhyme,
 Kirtle a gypsy still.

So shyly glowing, meekly gay,
 And so for music meet,
 I wonder what would happen, say
 If I were Herrick, sweet.

Surely he'd smuggle, you somehow
 Into the Muses' hall
 And proud court flowers there should bow
 To a new queen lineal.

With hint and smile he'd fix your sound
 Unquestioned dynasty,
 Sending the happy whisper round,
 Beauty is pedigree.

And Grasmere's sage, if hereabout
 He found your face at dawn,
 Would silent sit the full day out,
 And dark would come too soon.

Then mumbling home he'd take you too,
 Imprisoned in a line;
 No more would you need sun or dew
 Who there so fixed would shine.

O delicate barbarian,
 I've no immortal art
 To sing you as the laurelled can,
 But travel in my heart.

And though my way be bare and brown,
 And miles grow long for me,
 I vow I will not set you down
 This side of Castaly.

--Olive Tilford Dargan

THE TEXAS PLUME

Last night I heard a far-off haunting sound
 Of trumpet-calls on elfin clarinets,
 And saw a host of fairies dance around
 Their kind and queen in golden coronets.

The fireflies held the lanterns. Crickets sang.
 The flowers filled the air with faint perfume.
 The feast began. The buglers ran to hand
 Their scarlet trumpets on a Texas plume.

--Nancy Richey Ransome

DOG-WOOD

Silver-slippered April
Runs across the hills,
Music of her laughter
Tangled in the rills,

We trace her steps in violets
Her eyes in fleur-de-lis,
But would you know the heart of her,
Seek out a dog-wood tree.

--Mary S. Fitzgerald

THE LETTER

(Bluebonnet Time in Texas)

Dear,

I shall come when April comes
And we shall come together--
Just think of that hundred and fifty miles
With the mischievous April weather;
Dear, I am counting the days till then--
Till April and I ride forth again.

Of course I shall make an early start--
Say five or six or seven--
But then if those sweet little maids are out
In bonnets as blue as heaven,
I know I shall halt at the very first one,
So daringly blue in the shy April sun!

Now dear, if I linger a bit on the way
Or ride straight through or whether...
We two shall come together--
Together through mischievous shower and shine
Until then goodbye,

As ever,
Thine,

--Kathrine Hymas Williams

PURPLE THISTLES

In spring a nomad heart beats wild within
 My breast; a lute sounds plaintively all day
 Beyond the hills, where paling colors thin
 To wantonness--where dancing sunbeams play.
 I watch the drifting clouds, the quivering
 rain,
 A drenched pine tree, a soaring silver wing;
 The flame of redbud on a winding lane.
 These hold my heart entranced--a pagan
 thing.
 And down the road when snowwhite dog-wood
 blossoms.
 An April wind still whispers, "Come away."
 And I hold close the heart that longs to stray
 Far from the shelter of my humble rooms.

But peace enfolds me when the thistles
 spill
 A fringe of purple on an autumn hill.

--Clara Hood Rugel

LAUREL TIME IN TEXAS

It is laurel time in Texas, windy March and laurel
 time,
 And heavy scented purple plumes,
 Close--clustered like wisteria blooms,
 Adorn the glossy evergreens ere Spring is in its
 prime.

Oh, laurel time in Texas lures the bargain,
 hunting bees,
 And from each laurel parasol
 There comes a buzzing folderol
 That murmurs down the hill to ride the prairie
 winging breeze.

O, laurel time in Texas overflows with laugh-
 ing hours,
 The throats of mocking birds are wells
 Whence bubble Springtime villanelles,
 And sunbeams glance and glint on swaying purple
 flowers.

O, laurel time in Texas is a short but lovely
 while,
 And stems protest with bitter scent
 Against marauder's ravishment,
 For every tree would lift its blooms to Heaven's
 springtime smile.

--Lazel Harper Harris

A BLUE BONNET PICTURE

New York was an alien land to me
 Until the day I found
 A painting in a gallery--
 A strip of Texas ground--
 And this small square of land and sky
 Was many a league of blue.
 I held my breath as the wind went by
 Over this blue bonnet view,
 Over my land where the sunlight spills
 Gold on a bluebonnet plain--
 Bluebonnets blurring the far, low hills
 An asphodel blue after rain.
 I was off and away with the wind in my hair
 Where the blue stretches out in the sun,
 And those who have tasted the tang of the air
 Know the joy of a prairie run.
 Sea-blue and sky-blue and cornflower blue
 Spread out over miles in the Spring--
 Bluebonnets bright in the sun or the dew,
 The shade of a bluebird's wing!
 So when these gray steel buildings hide
 My sky and dim my room,
 I bless the artist who lets me ride
 Out where the bluebonnets bloom.

--Hazel Harper Harris

TOWARD BLUE BONNET TIME IN TEXAS

(The Answer)

Dear,
 I shall answer your letter today
 With the tip of a blue bird's feather.
 I am glad, glad, glad, you are coming to me
 Along with the April weather;
 And my little white house where laughter
 lives,
 Will be glad of the joy that your presence
 gives.

Its fresh ruffled curtains will watch down
 the road
 For the very first glimpse of your bonnet;
 The kettle will sing, and the silver will
 shine,
 Your table have flowers upon it,
 And the gold shaded lamp by your favorite
 chair
 Will be waiting at twilight to shine on
 your hair.

Outside in the garden the laurels will
 gloom,
 And the bees make a welcoming humming,
 The pomegranate blossoms will flame in the
 sun
 And the mocking birds sing of your coming.
 Don't tarry too long on your bluebonnet way,
 The collie and I will be counting each day.

--Hazel Harper Harris

PRICKLY PEAR BLOSSOMS

Like an ancient green-gray castle,
 Set with ramparts spiked and bold,
 Prickly pears upon the prairie
 Spread their breastworks scarred and old.
 Every barbed defiant turret
 Every battlemented ledge
 Is a redoubt of protection
 For the blossoms on its edge.

There they spread their swiss like ruffles
 In soft pastels of yellow glow,
 Till the wind and sun of noonday
 Change them to a crimson glow.
 They are safer than a princess
 In her tower of yester years,
 These frail blossoms, so well guarded
 By a phalanx of bright spears.
 On the parapet I see them,
 While the perfume of their gowns
 Float across the plains of Texas
 Down to little prairie towns;
 And I marvel at such beauty,
 Shielded here on sun-parched sod--
 Seeing this small flower defended,
 Can I lose my faith in God?

--Gussie Osborne

AT LAUREL-BLOSSOM TIME

I know a little bungalow
 Upon a windy hill,
 Where purple-flowered laurels grow
 Beside a window sill.
 All day it waits for me to come,
 All night it prays in vain,
 Each sunny, blue-eyed day is dumb,
 Nor can the dusk explain.

Oh, how I miss its sheltering arms,
 Its sanctity sublime
 The grace of its remembered charms
 At laurel-blossom time.
 So when my heart is purified
 And sings again in rhyme,
 Home, home again, I'll bravely ride
 At laurel-blossom-time.

Whate'er the world may think of me,
 My little house will know
 That I come riding worthily
 Where laurel-blossoms blow;
 And where their fragrance fills the air
 Contented will I live,
 My little house will want me there,
 Will love me and forgive.

--Hazel Harper Harris

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(Rivers and Roads)

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THE ROAD TO TEXAS

Beside the road to Texas
 My father's mother lies,
 With dust upon her bosom,
 And dust upon her eyes.

Oh, cruel road to Texas,
 How many hearts you broke
 Before you gave to Texas
 The rugged strength of oak.

--Berta Hart Nance

SUN-QUEST

All across the fallow fields and up the bluegrey valleys
 The lane went winding, grey and golden, like a dim romance;
 The friendly fogs were lifting where the white road dips
 and dallies,
 The wind went up the singing hills and down the singing
 slants.

High-hurting from the pasture gate, I sent a redbird winging--
 (And wander far a-field today, but turn again for home!
 Oh, the maples and the sumac and the little wild things
 singing,
 And morning going over me in fairy-dews and foam!

I think it was a day like this that man stood up rejoicing
 And glimpsed across the distances a trail he had not trod,
 And heard in some forgotten dawn a vague familiar voicing,
 And saw himself the image and the favorite of God.

There must be something wonderful among the fields a-borning,
 Or what a waste of loveliness to start a morning on!
 There must be something strangely sweet beneath our feet--
 beneath our feet!
 There must be something glorious behind the doors of dawn!

--Irene Jones

RESACA OF THE RIO GRANDE

Verbena crowds the right-of-way
 Along the wheel-tracks. Light of day
 Might almost come from threaded-gold
 The forests of the Luisache hold.
 Yucca guards her great white candle.
 Flowers and shrubs warn: "Do not handle."
 So full are all of them of thorns.

A quiver of wind tinsels with light
 The dreaming Resaca where the white
 Frail plantain blooms, converting all
 The shining space to a silken shawl
 Quilted with little glancing seams
 The wind has fashioned out of gleams.

Meanwhile the river hurries by,
 But these waters dreaming lie.

--Therese Lindsey

THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL

St. Augustine turns westward to the sea;
 Her pathway is a scarf across the breast
 Of opal distances. Here romance prest
 Bright lips upon the cheek of proud grandee.
 Pale mosses silver every ancient tree
 With pendant wreaths to honor men who rest
 Remote from yearning tides. The saffron west
 Flames to the paean of faith's victory.
 A thousand roses fill the languid air
 With passionate regret; a strange delight
 Beats in the pulse to a lost refrain;
 Reflections gleam, like myriad fireflies, where
 The eager spur once sparkled in the night--
 Yet clings the charm and mystery of Spain.

--Virginia Spates

RED RIVER

God called the waters on that misty day
 And they went roaring to the place He set;
 Dark, stormy waters learned to know their
 bounds!
 Affrighted inlets would not dare forget.

A lonely river sought a friendly land
 That later felt the thundering buffalo;
 Reflected redder than its ruby drops,
 It saw the eyes of Indian camp-fires glow.

In autumn heard the bugling call of stag,
 The mocking bird in spring; and ever knew
 When old pecan trees flung their green aloft
 Above the ground dyed rich with vivid blue.

It leaped to hear the first quick rifle shot
 That sang of stirring days that were to be:
 Impress of booted heel upon its banks
 A clean, bright flag--a flood of industry.

Still on and on its ruddy currents flow
 Life-giving blood. Deep beats its deathless
 heart
 As when the voice of God has called to them,
 And set the waters of the earth apart.

--Virginia Spates

SABINE BOAT SONG

The moon above, like a maiden in love,
 Looks timidly down at her face in the stream,
 While together we two in our open canoe
 Glide away from the shore, in a dream, in a
 dream,
 Glide away from the shore in a dream

With the moon overhead and the stars overhead
 And the moon and the stars in the mirroring
 stream,
 Oh, love, we will float in our Indian boat,
 Away from the world in a dream, in a dream,
 Away from the world in a dream.

Oh, hark to the song as we hurry along,
 The song from the cypress that leans to
 the stream;
 'Tis the same magic bird that the Indians
 heard,
 And called it the bird of a dream, of a
 dream,
 And called it the bird of a dream.

Oh, love, it is here, in the Southland dear,
 That the waters are sweetest in life's deep
 stream;
 It is here, that we, 'neath the orange tree,
 Will make it come true, our dream, our dream,
 Will make it come true,--our dream.

--Ernest Powell

THE ROAD OF MIDNIGHT PAGEANTS

This is no common roadway. Spain and France
 Sowed every sentient clod with brave romance;
 The cloven hoofprints of the buffalo
 Outlined its course, three centuries ago,
 A day when lures of water edged the wind;
 Comanches stalked them, swift and moccasined;
 Conquistadores and their followers pressed
 Sternly toward empire in a fabled west;
 Haply along it, as in azure flame,
 Maria de Agreda's spirit came;
 The gaunt Franciscan next, with holy urge,
 Barefooted, at his waist the knotted scourge;
 Then prairie-schooners of the pioneer
 Led Anglo-Saxons to a new frontier.

Here surged the longhorn herds in bellowing hosts,
Spurred on, with shouting, to the tracing-posts,
And gay vaqueros, singing, galloped down,
Dreaming of dusk-eyed beauty in the town.

Missions and forts have crumbled. This remains,
A memoried roadway through the Texas plains:
To either side the prairie, like a sea
That scorns a share, rolls vast and billowy:
And ever when the day fails, overhead
Stretches another prairie, starred and dread,
Where often at the hushed and mystic hour
The great moon blows, a silver cactus flower,
And in its light dead centuries walk free
On this old road in ghostly pageantry.

--Hilton Ross Greer

ROADS

There are prairie roads gawed deep
by rain,
And harvest roads through fields of grain;
Inviting roads that climb a hill
And nose their way where blossoms spill;
Roads that defy forbidding peaks,
And roads that follow rambling creeks;

But always a touching thing to me
Is a road left off entirely.
It seems to call day after day;
To beg that someone go its way;
That friendly hands once more repair
The ragged holes that streamlets
wear.

And though forsaken it calls on
Till slowly comes oblivion.

--Maude E. Cole

IN PRAISE OF THE GUADALUPE

If you have seen the Guadalupe,
 The diamond-bright, the diamond-fair,
 The cypresses, a feathered troop,
 The banks of fern that nestle there,
 The huisache groves that scent the air,
 To meaner streams you may stoop
 If you have seen the Guadalupe.

If you have known the Guadalupe,
 The diamond-bright, the diamond-clear,
 The cedar hills, a goodly troop,
 The birds that carol through the year,
 The dappled groups of stealthy deer,
 To far-famed streams you cannot stoop
 If you have known the Guadalupe.

If you have loved the Guadalupe,
 The diamond-bright, the diamond-rare,
 With emerald pools, a wondrous troop,
 And lacy falls that flutter there,
 And ripple-songs that fill the air,
 To other streams you will not stoop,
 If you have loved the Guadalupe.

--Berta Hart Nance

CEDAR BAYOU

On Cedar Bayou's flowery banks
 Where summer always stays,
 And where the reeds in solid ranks
 Move when the South wind plays,
 And all the birds with glad hearts sing
 To them that they love best,
 Oh, there we do our sweethearting,
 And there our lives are blest.

On Cedar Bayou's gentle slopes
 Where days wear sunny smiles,
 And where the prairie, sown with hopes
 Shines golden-green for miles;
 And where the fleecy Gulf-cloud roams
 A dreamship far above,
 Oh, there we build the happiest homes,
 And work, and pray, and love.

Dear Cedar Bayou, loveliest
 Of all the lands we know,
 Where earth gives us the most and best
 For cares that we bestow;
 And where no earthly joy we miss
 From love's abundant store.
 Oh, there we live our lives in bliss--
 And heaven is just next door.

--John P. Sjolander

SPRING ON THE COLORADO

Through all the echoing aisles today
 A blithe wind whistles like a boy;
 The long, gray mosses swing and sway,
 The ripples sing a song of joy.

Here where a liveoak leans from shore
 To scan the quiet pool's expanse,
 And sees along the crystal floor,
 Its leaves in rhythmic shadow-dance.

Outstretched on silken sward, I lie,
 And while I quaff from lyric streams
 Low flute-notes from some covert nigh
 Make music for my April dreams.

Above me bends a sky as soft
 As love's deep eyes when rapture-wet;
 Afar the dark hills lift aloft
 Their misted peaks of violet.

The time's mad fever throbs not here,
 Where slow, white sunbeams filter down,
 It pulses yonder, where uprear
 The clustered towers of the town.

But here the truant dreamer flees
 A cramping world of little men;
 Beneath these brave unselfish trees,
 Clasps heart with good warm earth again.

--Hilton Ross Greer

VAL VERDE
 (The San Felipe River)

At one bound
 Out of the ground
 A river is born!
 Val Verde is the name they bring
 To the valley round this spring,
 Where strange fishes, powder-blue
 Like the waters' mystic hue,
 Float purposeless,
 And dawdle in that clear cold stress.
 Out of these blue, unfathomed deeps
 A volume of swift water leaps--
 And flows,--
 Nor seasons change, nor intermittence
 knows.

But now no more it leaps all year
 A lavish waste save where the deer
 Or cresses drink. No more
 It winds its own devised way
 Where wary schools of fishes play
 And little brown muchachos wade
 Beneath the willows' timid shade.
 This wizard river,--
 Life of the town and fortune-giver,--
 Consents to pause and bless the land
 Before it joins the Rio Grande.

--Therese Lindsey

SAN JACINTO'S WATER

I am San Jacinto's water,
 Thundercloud and Rainbow's daughter;
 Born amid the lightning's whiteness,
 Borne to earth in drops of brightness---
 Mortals call my coming Rain.
 As I fall with fairy fleetness
 Eager earth my spirit's sweetness
 Drinks to quench a thirst consuming,
 Drinks to keep her flowers blooming---
 Then the grass looks up again.

From the earth the river drew me,
 Gave its lilting laughter to me,
 Imbued me with its melody,
 Sent me a singing to the sea---
 Singing, happy, unafraid!
 Always onward I go wending
 Down a pathway never-ending,
 Silver sand beneath me gleaming,
 Cypress trees above me dreaming,
 Lilies resting in their shade.

When at dawn the trees are weeping,
 Then through placid pools I'm creeping
 Where the wild gray bass is sleeping,
 Ere he wakes to join me leaping
 O'er the tumbled rock below.
 O'er the shallows dancing, splashing,
 Jeweled spray in dawn's light flashing,
 On with rippling laughter speeding
 Down my sylvan way unheeding,
 Caring not where to I go.

When tall stately pines are sighing,
 When the whippoorwills are crying,
 And old hermit owls are brawling
 Where thin astral mist is falling---
 Then I croon a lullaby.
 But when Dawn in opal splendor
 Flings her gleaming lances slender,
 Rends the veil of night asunder
 Forth to march in pristine wonder---
 Then I chant a paean high.

San Jacinto's singing water,
 Thundercloud and Rainbow's daughter---
 Sings the crown thrush never sweeter,
 Flees the red stag never fleeter
 Than I on my Naiad feet.
 Always merry I go wending
 On my journey never-ending;
 In the hills the river caught me,
 To the shining sea it brought me,
 Laughing, singing as we meet.

--J. M. Pratt

TEXAS ROADWAYS

Planned roads are prim roads, wherever they may be,
 No romance clings to them, and no quick surprise;
 But the vagrant Texas roads, winding far and free,
 Run to meet adventure and romance before your eyes.

Naked redskins blazed these trails, distant years
 ago,
 Taking their swift loping way where tall grasses
 grow,
 Leaving through that inland sea's endless ebb and
 flow,
 Paths where green waves parted at their feet to let
 them through.

Sinewed mustangs found those trails and followed
 where they led;
 Covered wagons in their wake crossed the prairie
 loam,
 Bearing men and women with their gaze fixed far
 ahead,
 Following those first dim trails that were to lead
 them home.

Thus the Texas roads were made, thus today they
 wind,
 Paved, perhaps, and broad and white, but still
 across the years
 Come the sound of feet and hoofs and wheels long
 left behind
 By the redskin and the mustang and the pioneers.

--Grace Noll Crowell

TEXAS RIVERS

There's a land that is woven with rivers that wind
 Through its intricate valleys and vales;
 It's a land that the Spaniards were anxious to find,
 Say the oldest of legends and tales;
 And they gave to each river its colorful name,
 For the Spaniards were quick to perceive
 All the beauties of nature as onward they came
 To the land they regretted to leave.

In the warm southern lowlands that run to the sea,
 There's a stream that is gilded indeed;
 And the richest of fruits yearly cling to the tree
 Where the winds kindly scattered the seed.
 De Leon was the first to discover its course,
 And he hailed it "Nueces" to be;
 For its banks then adorned to its furthest source
 The pecan, like a wild Eden tree.

By the Bay, Matagorda, La Salle swept ashore,
 To the lithesome Lavaca at peace;
 'Twas the first to unburden its wild savage lore,
 And to beckon the traveler surcease.
 Near her banks fed the buffalo, lord of the range;
 Of his flesh did the wayfarer eat,
 And the Spaniard came later his fortune to change,
 With Lavaca, the Cow, at his feet.

In the hills where the sun never falters its light,
 Is the fairest of rivers that flow.
 On its banks shady trees overlap in their might;
 In its waters the lily pads grow.
 And tradition will tell why the lilies are white,
 And the waters of crystal are fair:
 They were sent to San Marcos, a token of light--
 In a world full of darkness and care.

In the heart of the land that the Texans first knew
 The red Colorado is free;
 Through the red and the black, intermingled the two,
 Flows this full, mighty stream to the sea.
 It has witnessed the fires of a tyrant's cold lair;
 It has seen the lean files of the brave;
 Of its beautiful coves is the artist aware;
 By its side is the pioneer's grave.

In the Concho which rises far out in the West
 They were soon to discover a shell,
 Which contains the most beautiful gem at the crest;
 Of its marvelous beauty they tell.
 Its clear waters are cool for the antelope's drink,
 And it travels the path of the deer;
 And the rustler rides far to bend over its brink,
 Or to linger in shades that are near.

On a thousand bright summits with grass growing o'er
 There's a land that the cattlemen love;
 For their ranges all run to the streamlets which store
 Of the wealth from the cool springs above.
 By its Sulphury Springs did the outlaw intomb
 Many mule-loads of silver and gold;
 And these rivulets run where the lily's in bloom
 To Lampasas, the lovely and cold.

'Cross the grip of the Panhandle, far to the north,
 Circling round to the mightiest dell,
 The Canadian River in legend fares forth
 Of the stolid Pueblo to tell.
 Though its regions were dear to the savage nomad,
 Nevermore will it hark to his lay;
 And no more will it sally in soothing the sad,
 To the warrior's mournful array.

There's a land that is woven with rivers that wind
 Through its intricate valleys and vales.
 It's a land that the Spaniards were anxious to find,
 Say the oldest of legends and tales;
 And they gave to each river its colorful name,
 For the Spaniards were quick to perceive
 All the beauties of nature as onward they came
 To the land they regretted to leave.

--Paul Morgan

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(Prairie and Farm)

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COTTON PICKERS

Swiftly down the tawny rows
 A devouring monster goes
 Crashing its disturbing way
 Through the quiet autumn day....
 Reaching out with claws and teeth
 For the cotton in its sheath--
 For the cotton blowing there
 In the bright October air;
 Greedy in its appetite
 For the manna, snowy-white,
 Gathering with tooth and claw
 Food to feed its hungry maw,
 Leaving in its avid haste
 Crashing stalks and cotton waste.
 "Not perfected yet," they say,
 But it goes its new-found way
 Down the cotton rows today.

And beneath blue Southern skies
 Many watch with anxious eyes;
 And idle hands, distraught, afraid
 Before the thing that men have made
 To take their place, their ancient toil,
 Their lifetime work on Southern soil:
 Back-breaking work; heart-breaking work,
 A driving thing they could not shirk,
 And yet a thing so much their own
 That it belonged to them alone:
 The fields were theirs--each hill and hollow,
 The cotton rows were theirs to follow,
 And there was sun and wind and laughter,
 And song--and tears, but good rest after
 The long hard day, and there were coins
 To pay for aching backs and loins;
 And there was sense of work well done
 Trudging home at set of sun,
 With something of toil's dignity
 To set their tired spirits free.
 And now--along the tawny rows
 The great devouring monster goes
 To do the work a swifter way,
 Accomplishing within a day
 Much more than many countless hands,
 But Oh, the cry along the lands:
 "It does our work! If we are through,
 What shall we do? What shall we do?"

--Grace Noll Crowell

BLACK HANDS

The bales are rumbling into town,
 The white fluff showing,
 And back of the thunder of the trucks
 A high wind is blowing,
 Over the land lying
 Low and flat in the autumn light,
 And there is a crying
 Of black crows, circling crows,
 And there is a drifting
 Of cotton through the thinning stalks,
 And a sad song lifting
 Reedy-sweet on the thin air,
 As black backs are bending,
 Working slowly, surely out
 To a long row's ending.
 Black hands, black hands,
 Reaching out to gather
 The clinging shreds of whiteness in,
 Fingers tough as leather.
 Stripping, pulling, picking it,
 And a weighted sack follows
 Up the little swells of ground,
 And down the slanting hollows.
 Old men young men,
 Women bent from tugging
 Burdens down the clutching rows;
 Mere babies lugging
 The whiteness gathered through the day,
 Their small hands flying
 Like fluttering blackbirds, and their eyes
 Heavy with crying.
 Black hands, black hands,
 How soon they are forgotten!
 The gins, the trucks, the trains, the ships,
 Crammed with cotton:
 Cotton for the world's marts,
 Cotton for the weaving
 Of clothing for the hosts of earth.
 White beyond believing
 In the cotton for soft beds at night,
 Cotton for the waiting
 Maws of guns, its whiteness crushed
 To powder for men's hating.
 Endless bolls, and endless bales:
 Cotton, cotton, cotton;
 But the black hands, the serving hands,
 How soon they are forgotten!

--Grace Noll Crowell

AN AIRPLANE CROSSES A COTTON FIELD

Upon a stream of low-hummed song,
 Against a sapphire sky,
 Bright-bodied, glides a comely plane
 Like a giant dragonfly.

And from a world of brown and white
 Lint-tortured eyes look up;
 Tired eyes that see adventure cling
 To a blue inverted cup!

--Walter R. Adams

THIS FOR SEEING

So strange the story cotton blooms
 unfold!
 With all the colors that will tinge the day,
 A single-shining flower will start the play
 Of living thoughts--dreams never growing old.
 Born in the shuttle of a beam of gold,
 The bloom's first robe is white, its heart a
 gay
 Sky-patterned star that gleaners cannot
 weigh.
 What changes come when strength and hope
 grow bold!
 White is forsaken for the raptured glow
 Of rose, that burns into the purple dusk.
 Then in the hour of summer's overthrow,
 While winds distill the harvest's blended
 musk,
 The fleece is found, its whiteness like
 the snow,
 And treasure of the bloom slips from its
 husk.

--Kate Randle Menefee

WHITE HARVEST

Heat! Heat! Heat!
 And the fields a-sprawl in the sun
 Still to the soundless beat
 Of a triumph nearly done.

Pain and throb and tear!
 Silent and in the night,
 The earth has come to her labor there
 And borne a changeling of white.

White! White! White!
 Ah, what curious thing
 That God and earth and man should light
 The fire of such fostering!

Whisper and stammer and scream:
 "Cotton!" and man has heard
 The sturdy step of a living dream
 In the call of a golden word.

Noise! Noise! Noise!
 From wagon and motor and cart
 From men and women and boys--
 Each with a gypsy heart.

Heart and foot and hand
 Alert with the Gypsy urge,
 They take to the road in a careless band--
 To the fields in a spoiling surge.

Day! Day! Day!
 As long as there's light to see,
 They toil in the furrow's whitened way
 Till every stalk is free--

Free and dusty and brown!
 Withered and futile and bare--
 Bare of the precious thistledown,
 In the trembling, heat-warped air.

Night! Night! Night!
 Laughter and sudden guitar
 And the warming prick of campfire light
 By the lanes where the pickers are.

Laughter and color and song
 To a clinking silver pledge,
 While a white sun pours and the season's long,
 And a whole wide land's on edge.

Dust! Dust! Dust!
 On road, on field, on tree,
 Where movement and haste have become lust,
 A creed, and a victory;

Where harbor and city and town
 Gather the treasure-bales
 Into their tills as the loads roar down
 Over the Texas trails.

Ships! Ships! Ships!
 At Corpus and Galveston!
 They shake the spray from their salty lips
 And trace their spars on the sun;

Sun and moon and stars
 They pattern while huskies make
 Swift emptiness of the white-piled cars--
 Swift music the heavens take.

White! White! White!
 Gone as a fever goes--
 Gone in a mad, gin-whistled flight
 To a great, ship-whistled close,

And cool and lonely and still,
 At the hush of the Autumn rain,
 The Texas fields sleep soft-until
 White harvest is come again.

--Siddie Joe Johnson

FIELDS

All fields are epic--or old fields or new fields--
 Furrowed and seamed as a deep thinker's brow:
 Bounty comes out of them,--beauty and splendor
 Etched with the point of a turning-plow.

Dreams have a place with them--shelter and promise;
 Out of their travails are miracles born....
 Men give their lives to these great masterpieces,
 Fields....and their faith in a row of green corn.

--Georgia C. Bader

WINDMILL

Everyday against my sky
 A windmill proudly stands,
 Marring my horizon
 With its waving hands.

Quarrel about it as I will,
 It still is standing there
 Arrogant in squalor,
 And never seems to care.

Perhaps I should ignore it,
 But I am not that wise;
 And so I keep complaining
 At beauty in deep disguise.

--H. W. Schrieber

PLOW BOY

Is there need, plow boy, for you to hurry
 Down the row; through youth? Note the panting team
 And you--you are warm, and learning to worry;
 Come idle awhile in the shade by the stream.

Long, long are the days of the summer for toiling;
 They are best always, with a little play,
 Though the ripened grain in the fields be spoiling--
 Come idle awhile where the green boughs sway.

When you are cool as a willow bending
 Over the singing water, lad,
 Then pile your clothes for the fairies' mending
 And leap and swim with the trout and the shad!

When you return to your mares and whistle,
 You will find them fresh for another row,
 And find the plow more sharp for the thistle
 And the vine and the burr you would not have grow.

--Walter R. Adams

THE TENANT'S WIFE

I could but pity her--the tenant's wife,
 Who all her years had lived upon a farm
 With the simple luxuries of life,
 Her old grey house devoid of every charm.
 Yet once inside I listened as she told
 How tasks were met and how she lived
 each day
 And sensed the sweetness one brief
 hour could hold
 Within a room where love and peace
 held sway.

Her children call her blessed even now;
 The kindness of her voice and gentle tone
 Are healing music; and I marvelled how
 She lead my thoughts to heights I had not known,
 So when I took her hand to say goodbye
 I pitied some one else, and she was I.

--Willie Sowell Robertson

DIRT FARMER

He finds beauty among these simple things:
 The path a plow makes in the rich, red loam,
 Gay sun-gold in ripe wheat--a plover's wind--
 A cow-bell, tinkling as the herd comes home.

He treads the soil, with earth-love in his heart,
 Watches the young crops spring from fertile ground.
 Loves the warm rain that makes the peach buds start.
 Land--and a man--in close communion bound.

--Arden Antony

PANTOUP.

(In a Texas Farm-House Kitchen)

It's dinner time once more
The men will soon be in,
They'll dirty up the floor.
This batter is too thin.

The men will soon be in,
The meat is almost done,
This batter is too thin,
And cooking is no fun.

The meat is almost done.
I'm almost cooked myself,
And cooking is no fun!
The pitcher's on the shelf.

I'm almost cooked myself.
Oh why are stoves so hot?
The pitcher's on the shelf
Oh where's that little pot?

Oh, why are stoves so hot?
My fingers are all burned.
(Oh where's that little pot?)
These pancakes must be turned.

My fingers are all burned
I get so tired of this--
(Those pancakes must be turned)
To rest would be such bliss.

I get so tired of this
I'd like to run away--
To rest would be such bliss
If only for a day.

I'd like to run away
Back east to old Lagore
If only for a day--
It's dinner time once more!

--Edyth Renshaw

HOUNDS

My horn hangs idle on the wall,
 My gun stays on the rack;
 My hounds have gone into the night,
 I cannot call them back.

Dave had a bass-horn in his throat,
 A silver bell had Queen,
 And Lady blew a bugle call
 That filled the stops between.

When they cross the Pleiades
 And reach the Milky Way,
 I'll bet the Saints forget to sing
 And the harps forget to play.

--Whitney Montgomery

MY CHOICE

I know not what I might have found
 Beyond this little spot of ground
 Where I have spent life's daily round.

I might have touched the hall of fame,
 Or garnered wealth, and just the same
 I might have found disgrace and shame.

I only know that I have trod
 A pathway close to nature's God,
 Along a flower-covered sod.

And could my youth come back to me,
 My choice for life again would be,
 My little farm and liberty.

--Whitney Montgomery

HILL GARDEN

God planted a garden,
 Man plowed it up,
 Verbena, daisy and buttercup.

God said, "For man
 To plow is good,
 I'll move my garden to a wood."

Man cut the trees
 And dug the ground;
 Soon not a blossom could be found.

God said, "Wheat makes
 The body whole,
 But man needs beauty for the soul."

So he moved His garden
 To a hill
 And there it blooms and ever will.

--Maude E. Cole

PORTRAIT OF AN EAST TEXAS FARM WOMAN

Her old rough hands betray the drudgery
 Of farmhouse tasks that come with poverty.
 Her time from bed to bed is over-filled
 With toil: baking, churning, washing,
 sewing.
 The halt and dragging in her walk is
 proof
 Of long, long windy fields and labor
 done
 Alongside of her man beneath the sun,
 And too, there is a hint of children
 borne
 In damp cold houses and of death at dawn.

--Jake Zeitlin

HERITAGE

He took to wife a winsome lass and gay
 Who in the cotton picked as much as he
 She made a hand, the neighbors say,
 Till she came twenty-three.

Each day she toiled as long as light held out,
 Then as the cotton blurred upon her sight,
 Long rows of fleecy stars came out
 And she picked half the night.

He too beheld, above the lights of town,
 The whited harvest open and his wife,
 A froglike creature crawling down
 The endless row of life.

At dawn he called her but she did not wake,
 Nor feel the baby nudge her empty breast
 He said, "I thought to have her tale
 A spell of needed rest."

The baby lived frail likeness with her name,
 To feel the crushing, blind impact of life,
 Foredoomed to bondage, she became
 A cotton picker's wife.

--William E. Bard

THE DROUGHT

A red mouthed reptile by whose fiery tongue
 The fields are licked of green, the orchards stung,
 The pastures burnt as with a blighting brand
 Swept back and forth across the heated land;
 Whose touch is poison, and whose torturous tread
 Sets quivering all the withering earth with dread--
 A grim, slow-moving monster whose hot breath
 Enkindles desolation, famine, death.

--James Courtney Challis

DROUTH

The parched plain and the oare tree
 Wait for rain impatiently,
 Watching the clouds that rise and hover,
 Dalliant as a careless lover.

I, who am barren, turn my eyes
 Forever away from fertile skies,
 Lest I reveal, as earth and tree,
 Eager potentiality.

--Vaida Stewart Montgomery

FEED MILL AT NIGHT

Corn sheller and feed grinder resting great
 steel muscles through a hot night
 After a hot day.
 Moon picks a dust-paled path to a shining steel
 lever.
 Air stifles with the smell of too dry grain.
 Higer and corn piled high behind grinder and
 sheller.
 Whisper of rats' feet on grey floors.
 And a gray cat crouching in a deeper shadow,--
 waiting--.
 Nothing startles them
 But a ragged oak bough, like a ghostly hand,
 trying at the window.

Outside, night huddles under the oak
 And in the shadow of the corn-chute.
 Moonlight dances on the hoof-crushed grass.

Inside, nothing but a musty smell.
 The pick, pick, pick, of weevils in the corn.
 Whisper of rats' feet on the floor.
 And the silence of a cat leaping from the
 shadow of the huge corn sheller.

--Augusta Naunheim

ABSENT

Yesterday the neighborhood
 Gathered in its Tolling Wood
 To work the graves of friend and foe--
 I alone declined to go!

And though I knew that sprout and oriar
 Daily reached their foul arms higher,
 I did not mean to be unkind,
 And could not think the dead would mind.

For clutching song was with me then.
 How could I put away my pen
 For spade or hoe--or flower seeds
 To plant among clipped roots of weeds?

I feared that if I went along
 I should be forced to entomb the song
 That begged for wings and space to fly--
 Too young, too glad a thing to die!

The living may not understand;
 The dead are wiser, and more bland.
 They will forgive me any spring
 That I am left at home...to sing.

--Walter R. Adams

SATISFIED

I thank the gods that I was born
 Surrounded by green fields of corn,
 And that the pathway of my feet
 Has been the country, not the street.

A country woman shares my fate
 When life is sweet or desolate;
 And this last boon I humbly crave--
 To sleep within a country grave.

--Whitney Montgomery

PRAIRIE-LOVER

This drab prairie holds for me
Beauty; others can not see.

Neither flower nor tree has lent
Baubles for her ornament.

Underneath her placid breast,
Is allurements none have guessed.

As a woman who is wise,
Knowledge smoulders in her eyes.

Though she thwart me by her will,
I must be her lover still.

--Vaida Stewart Montgomery

INDIGENOUS

A gray sky and a wide low land,
A cotton field with the white fluff blowing,
A colorless landscape has the need
Of a red bandanna showing.

It calls like a voice for a purple scarf,
For a crimson skirt, and an orange jacket;
For a gleam of a white sack down the rows
With a deft dark hand to pack it.

These ebony ones with their mournful songs,
Their light-heart ways and their easy laughter,
Belong to the landscape as rain belongs
With the sunshine flowing after.

The old fields take on beauty and light;
These brilliant garments are high flags flying
What clear brave color the old world needs
To keep the heart from crying!

--Grace Noll Crowell

OLD FARMER

Once, restless as an April bough
 Wind-blown I would have quit the plow
 And wandered with a gypsy well
 Through other, fairer lands; but now--

These acres that belong to me
 Are all of earth I care to see.
 Here I'm contented as a hill,
 Here anchored like an aging tree.

--Walter R. Adams

NIGHT FROM AN INTERURBAN

On the prairie, in an interurban car, under the
 moon,
 When the sky is empty of stars,
 There are strange voices whispering to us from the
 moon and from the land,
 And from the tall trees silvered by the moon in
 ancient creek bottoms where an aboriginal
 silence lies hovering.
 Let the wind rush round the hurtling, swaying car;
 Let the car run reckless like a frightened thing
 under the sky;
 Only the voices still come vibrating to the rhythm
 of the crashing wheels,
 Only the ancient silence still hides among the
 trees and in the shadows on the bare ground.
 We are alone, alone; we shall cry to the gods in
 vain;
 The sky is empty of everything but the old, withered
 moon, the old, aboriginal moon, and it has a
 league with the prairie.

Let us pull the windows tight and shut it all out,
 Let us gaze at the warm, soft colors on car ads,
 reading them idly,
 Let us be bounded by four walls and our own souls,
 forgetting the dread vastness of the night;
 Maybe then we may not feel that the interurban is
 a thing alive with fear,
 Maybe the smothered squawking of the horn will sound
 less terrified and strange.

--George D. Bond

CORN SILKS AND COTTON BLOSSOMS

Corn silks and cotton blossoms,
 Flowers of the South
 Thirty years I've tended them:
 Through the rain and drouth--

Thirty years I've tended them,
 Toiling hard and long,
 Dreaming now and then a dream
 That turned into song.

Here I bind them in a wreath
 For all the world to see;
 Corn silks and cotton blossoms,
 And the heart of me.

--Whitney Montgomery

A COTTON PICKER

The woman wearily sighs as she lays
 The heavy strap of cuck across her heart
 She gently smooths the harsh creases apart
 That glister her snow white breast, while
 she sways
 To gather the prisoning locks, that daze
 Her soul. Burrs prick her hands until
 they smart
 With bloody pain. She looks up with a
 start
 To see the pickers ahead as in a haze.

Then valiantly she tries to match the speed
 Of husband and children; who swiftly pick
 The snowy fetters that chain them to toil.
 They bend from dawn to weary dusk to feed
 The yawning jaws of debt; while her
 heart-sick
 Brain schemes to save her daughters from
 the soil.

--Leola Christie Barnes

COTTON PICKERS

Fat brown baby asleep on a sack,
 Sad-eyed woman with bended back;
 Weary man who had known defeat,
 Dull-voiced youth with dragging feet;
 Red-lipped girl with tangled hair,
 Resentful of passers-by who stare--
 Endlessly snatching dry clusters of white,
 Their thoughts are of little rest for the
 night.

Count them--these bolls--count by the score;
 For it must take a million, and even more,
 To buy a rough shirt, for a sun-burned back;
 Two million--three--bring meat to the shack.
 Pain and cold and hunger and cotton,
 Lips and hearts that have almost forgotten
 Joy and laughter and singing of song...
 Pickers of cotton for oh! how long?

--Peggy Caldwell

COTTON PICKIN'

Dust on de sunshine and lint on de air,
 Cotton pickin' stahsted an' de day mighty fair,
 Big gin a-huamin' an' de coons gittin' money,
 A bale by tomorrow ef de sky keep sunny.

Tramp pickers commin' by de truck and de' waggin',
 Wash tubs and women folks, cotton sacks and baggin',
 Rice trucks a-bilin' up de dust an' de debil,
 Waggin' line waitin' wid de beds piled lebel.

Mexican no sabby, but 'e know how t' pick;
 Six cent cotton make de boss sorta sick.
 Eve'rybody buisy cause de day mighty fair,
 Wid dist in de sunshine and lint on de air.

--Lucile Donaldson Goodlett

POOR-WHITE SHRECK

His house, gaunt relic of his sires,
Slackens its hold upon the hill;
His clay-and-stubble chimney leans
To sagging roof and moldering sill.

His harsh and slanting acres wear
The tatters of depletion now,
As waste and wilderness reclaim
The fields that knew his father's plow.

His lank hog roots an avid snout
In shucks and cobs beneath the bin,
Unwholesome remnants of the crop
Of rusty nubbins gathered in.

His cows turn rough and slatted sides
To meet the chilly hilltop wind;
They give, for desultory care,
A product blue and hunger-thinned.

At night his window scarcely makes
A flickering square against the gloom;
A flame no more than candlelight
Trembles and blows within his room.

No thought of moment vexes him;
He sees no vision heaven-sent;
Idle and vacuous-faced he sits,
Rapt in the folly of content.

--Grace Ross

PRAIRIE WIFE

She heard the bitter wailing of the wind
Around the shack, throughout the endless night,
In angry blasts that soughed about the door,
And lashed the snow into fantastic drifts;
Beyond the open where the prairie lifts
In low, sage hills, a gaunt world caught the spoor
Of recent game, and followed swift in flight
A zigzag trail. The brittle silence dinned

Into her ears, her limbs grew cold as death,
 She slept at last, and waking, arms reached out,
 To touch the pillow where his head should lie;
 But from her twisted lips no startled cry
 Only within her eyes was put to rout
 The futile hope, and fear caught at her breath!

The seasons woo the prairies, autumn gales
 Bawl like the white-face cattle in the hills,
 And drive the drifting thistle-weeds in mounds
 Against the straggling fence that hems the shack;
 She lies awake and stares into the black
 Eternal gloom, while strange staccato sounds
 Unravel the spun silence; ghastly thrills
 Tear at her intellect.....His shadow, trails

Beyond the open where the prairie lifts,
 In low, sage hills, their seeking spirits merge
 Within the frothy entity of night;
 A skulking wolf bears down in sudden flight,
 With savage cry, where eerie trails converge;
 Back to the empty shack the echo drifts!

--Ollie L. Roediger

SONG OF THE CORN

I was dry and dusty,
 I was weak and weary;
 Now I'm glad and lusty,
 And the earth looks cheery.
 O the soaking,
 Mirth-provoking,
 Laughter-making rain;
 Soft and silky,
 Mild and milky,
 Grows my golden grain.

Listen to the laughter
 That my leaves are making,
 When the wind comes after
 Kisses, softly shaking.
 O health-giving,
 Breath living
 Heaven-pouring rain
 Come, caress me,
 Kiss me, bless me,
 Once, and once again.

Let your hearts be singing;
 Peal your paeans, peoples;
 Set the joy-bells ringing
 In the lofty steeples.
 Praises render
 To the sender
 Of the joyous rain;
 Of the living,
 The life-giving,
 Of the precious rain.

--John P. Sjolander

WINGS

A single white-winged pigeon
 That had followed the plow all day
 Took to the air at sundown,
 Circled, and flew away.

And the boy who plowed the hillside
 Halted his tired team
 And watched it go over the tall, green trees,
 With his deep, brown eyes a-gleam

The years have flown as the bird flew,
 And the field lies fallow now,
 And hid by the red clay soil
 Is the share of the rusted plow,

And the bones of the tired horses,
 With all of their plowing done,
 Are scattered over the hilltop,
 Whitened by rain and sun.

And what of the dark-eyed boy
 Who plowed the lean hillside?
 A dreamer's feet are restless
 And a dreamer's world is wide.

But today a whitewinged airplane
 Came out of the distant blue--
 Dropped down on the fallow hillside
 And circled a time or two,
 Then took off over the tall, green trees,
 The course that the pigeon flew.

--Whitney Montgomery

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(Places and People)

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SOME TOWNS OF TEXAS

I

The City of the Alamo

I went but once to San Antonio--
 I brought away a thousand hours' delight,
 Remembering her sweet air, her subtle, bright
 Insouciant smile. Hers is the darkling glow,
 The heavy-lidded fire of Mexico,
 Blown on by Northern airs, washed in the
 Light of white high plains. No net of words shall
 quite
 Snare her: for she will blow a kiss, and go--

Yet this is but the scabbard for her sword
 The filigreed setting for her sombre, red
 One jewel. Leave the Plaza in the sun,
 Wayfarer: bare your forehead, speak no word--
 Here Bowie sleeps upon his bloody bed,
 Travis, across the carriage of his gun.

II

Nacogdoches Speaks

I was the Gateway. Here they came and passed,
 The homespun centaurs with their arms of steel
 And taut-strings: wild wills, who thought to deal
 Bare-handed with jade Fortune, tracked at last
 Out of her silken lairs into the vast
 Of a man's world. They passed, but still I feel
 The dent of hoof, the print of booted heel,
 Like prick of spurs--the shadows that they cast.

I do not vaunt their valors or their crimes:
 I tell my secrets only to some lover,
 Some taster of spilled wine and scattered musk.
 But I have not forgotten; and, sometimes,
 The things that I remember rise, and hover
 A sharper perfume, in some April dusk.

III

Austin

She leans upon her violet hills at ease
 At the plain's edge: innocent and secure,
 Keeper of sacred fountains, quaintly sure,
 Greek draperies fluttering in the prairie-breeze.
 She stands tip-toe and looks across the seas,
 Where older lands and richer shrines allure,
 Wistful, that she is young and crude and poor--
 But secret-sure that she is proud as these.

Her sons bring delicate plunder home, to grace
 Houses discreet, and gardens sweetly walled--
 She is enamored of the fit and fair.
 Far-gathered treasures in her love find place:
 White peacocks where the prairie-scooners crawled
 Italian roses in her sunburnt hair.

IV

Dallas

Her birthday is Tomorrow; throbbing Power
 Dilates her heart. She has no time to love
 Old, gentle things; nor ever backward move
 The hinges of her iron doors, where tower
 The scaring exhalations of an hour
 Of iron music. But in vain Power strove
 With Beauty, ever. From her garden-grove
 She comes, and smiles; and lo, an iron flower!

So I have seen this city, on a night
 Of rain, a-blossom in a mist of gold:
 So followed stamen-streets, that turned to
 bright

Rivers of jewels, like the fabulous, old
 Torrents of emerald, ruby, chrysolite,
 Whereof, in rich old days, the traveler told.

V

Houston Remembers the Old South

She dresses in the mode, and she assumes
 The visage of the hour--for she is wise
 And strong, and subtle in the mysteries
 Of power. She courts no backward-looking dooms.
 Yet, breathing through her spirit's secret rooms,
 Lovers may catch the perfume of old sighs,
 And in her heart are moonlit balconies
 Tall, white old pillars, and magnolia-blooms.

For here that fragile yesterday, apart
 In the still light of lovely, vanished things,
 By hasty mind and heedless eye unguessed,
 But faithful still to the remembering heart,
 Bends to a shadowy harp with muted strings--
 Her face star-white, and jessamines at her breast.

--Karle Wilson Baker

REMEMBRANCE

Oh, dear, dear heart, my memory is aglow
 It must be Spring in San Antonio--
 A thousand million golden huisache balls
 Perfume the country side, and old gray walls,
 Memorials of a day long gone, are graced
 With happy blossoming vines, close interlaced.
 Cathedral chimes and mission bells still hold
 A note of old romantic times when bold
 Was every priest and lover. Sweet the breeze
 That runs to tease the grave, moss-mantled trees,
 And capers over bridges, reaching down
 To switch the river's opalescent gown.
 Soft mellow day with sunshine filtering through
 Mesquite lace leaves! Would I were there with you.
 And we were very young again to tread
 Our once romantic way; I'd lay my head
 Against my heart and lift my lips to share
 Your own when twilight tiptoes there!

--Hazel Harper Harris

SONNETS OF A SOUTHERN CITY

I Morning Magic

How have you grown so lovely overnight,
 My city of pale mists and circling wings?
 If I could catch this brief, translucent light,
 Or sing one song your serried skyline sings;
 If I could set some swift appraisal down
 To hold this mood, this white look of a bride,
 That lies like holy magic over town,
 I think at last--I should be satisfied.

I soon will pass--the moment that was mine--
 A heart-beat--a quick breath--and now I know
 I have no words for this--no words that shine
 To make a white page gleam, and glint and flow.
 No gold words can I borrow, none will lend,
 And I have but dull copper coins to spend.

--Grace Noll Crowell

II Babel

Thrusting itself up through the heat and haze
 This Babel spreads its wings to reach the sun.
 The little men who builded, stop to raise
 Awed, blood-shot eyes to mark what they have done.
 A million strident voices cleave the air;
 Our language is confounded--while man seeks
 In anguish for an old lost joy, and there
 Is none to understand the thing he speaks.

We have grown bold with living, drunk with power;
 We have forgot the plains strong men have trod;
 The flash and fret and glint of one brief hour
 Has taken on the form and face of God
 God help us--who have grown so dumb and blind--
 To speak once more the language of our kind.

--Grace Noll Crowell

BOX-CAR LETTERS

Alone on the hill where the sun goes down
 I plunder the earth from my little town;
 But the spoils I bring in my fairy sack
 Are scattered and spilled on the railroad track...
 For there, on the siding, the box-cars doze,
 And this is the way their dreaming goes;

"Sault Sainte-Marie and Chicopee,
 Miami and San Antonio,"
 They call like a lover's song to me,
 Call, and I want to go!

Santa Fe, Norfolk and Kalamazoo,
 Sacramento, Mobile, Peru--
 How, do you think, you could tamely bide
 In the one small spot where your heart was tied,
 When those haughty drudges came creaking through,
 Tearing your anchored heart in two,
 Each with a name on its stolid side
 Two feet tall and ten feet wide,
 That rings like a chime for you?

The wanderer's day will have one good hour,
 And every roadside one magic flower;
 They wither and droop if you stay too long,
 The perfume goes like an ended song.
 I would come back to the ways I know,
 But I would not stay when I want to go!

Wichita, Bangor, and San Jose,
 Ypsilanti and Monterey--
 They flutter my peace like the tang of spray!
 From high dream-pasture homing down
 To the fold of my heart in little town,
 I have to wait at the railroad track
 On a trundling train with a snorting stack!

The engine's a genie, a grimy scamp
 Who turns a philosopher into a tramp.
 Denver, Seattle and Calumet,
 Natchez, New Haven and Laramie--
 Go on with your lumbering lure, and let
 A poor philosopher be!

--Karle Wilson Baker

IN SAN ANTONIO

When I walked down the street today
 In San Antonio,
 I let my glad exploring feet
 Decide the way to go.
 They wandered down the plaza way
 Past San Fernando, then
 The Palace of the Governors
 Caused them to turn again.
 But soon I found they wished to go
 Beyond the market stalls;
 And on the way I saw small shops
 Like swift-nests in the walls.
 I heard the tuneful pit-a-pat
 Of slender, dark-skinned hands,
 And smelled tortillas, brown and crisp,
 Behind the little stands.
 I heard enchanting, eager sound
 Of voices and guitars,
 And thought of slender, gay young men
 Who sang beneath the stars.
 (I saw Canary Islanders,
 And men from Spain and France;
 I watched a padre strive to end
 A weird savage dance.
 He pointed to the Missions, off
 Beyond the little town--
 It was my mind that saw those things!)
 And then my feet turned down
 The street before the Menger. Soon
 They reached the Alamo--
 I don't remember after that
 Just where we thought to go--
 My spirit like a pair of winds,
 Flew back a hundred years:
 The siege, the fight, the tragic fall--
 My eyes were filled with tears.

Oh, charming San Antonio,
 Bright romance fills the air
 Above your narrow winding ways,
 And in your sleepy square.

--Nancy Richey Ransome

THE LITTLE TOWNS OF TEXAS

The little towns of Texas
That nestle on her plains,
And gather close the inland roads,
The homing trails and lanes;
The little towns of Texas
That sleep the whole night long,
Cooled by a scented southern breeze,
Lulled by its drowsy song!

The little towns of Texas
Will ever seem to me
Like stars that deck a prairie sky
Or isles that dot a sea;
Like beads that sparkle here and there
On Texas' flowered gown;
Like figures on its rich brocade
Of purple, green and brown.

The little towns of Texas
Seen through the prairie haze,
How fair and fresh and free they lie
Beneath the golden days!
Not crowded in deep valleys,
Not buried in tall trees,
But open to the sun, the rain,
The starlight, and the breeze!

The little towns of Texas,
What pretty names they bear!
There's Echo, Garland, Crystal Springs,
Arcadia, Dawn, and Dare;
There's Ingleside, and Prairie Home,
And Bells, and Rising Star.
God keeps them childlike, restful, clean,
Pure as the prairies are!

--Clyde Walton Hill

DAILY BREAD
(Nacogdoches, Texas)

My little town is homely as another
 But it is old,
 And it is full of trees,
 And it is covered with sky.
 My heart lives in a little house with a fire
 in it.
 And a pillow at night,
 And is fed daily by laughter and cares,
 And the dear needs of children;
 But my soul lives out of doors.
 Its bread is the beauty of trees,
 Its drink, the sky.
 There is a moment on winter evenings
 When the gray trees on the bare hills turn rosy,
 And all the smoke is blue.
 Then I go forth with my basket for manna.
 And sometimes,
 When the air is very clear,
 And the moon comes before the dark,
 God himself brings me green wine in a cup of
 silver
 And holds it for me
 While I drink.

--Karle Wilson Baker

CITIES

Dallas,
 A pompons-girthed merchant
 Who, after a day of bartering among his bales,
 Sits down to talk of culture.

Houston,
 An old Southern gentleman,
 Seated on the verandah of a mansion with white
 columns;
 The air magnolia-scented,
 Negroes singing at sundown.

San Antonio,
 A Spanish Grandee,
 In velvet trousers and a jacket with silver buttons,
 Taking his siesta in the patio of a palace,
 Lulled by a light guitar and the splash of a little
 fountain.

Fort Worth,
 A bronzed cowboy,
 With spurs clanking,
 A bandana knotted at his throat,
 Quick to laugh, or shoot, or take a drink;
 A ring-tailed tooter from Bitter Creek--
 At his saddle-horn a lariat
 With which he tries to lasso the stars.

--Boyce House

A SAN ANTONIO GARDEN

I know a quaint old garden
 In San Antonio,
 A walled-secluded garden,
 A Spanish patio.
 Along its narrow pathways
 Leaf-filtered sunlight falls
 On rose and amarillis
 And ivied, weathered walls.
 There, like a far faint echo,
 Is heard the city's din;
 The curious who pass by
 Can never look within;
 And, always when I enter
 That garden cool and sweet,
 I thank the Spanish grandee
 Who walled it from the street.
 If I could build a garden,
 It would not be for show,
 But a still, restful garden,
 Like that old patio.

--Gussie Osborne

MEDINA LAKE

Medina Lake in jewel beauty lies
 Below the point where horse and rider stand.
 A thousand wandering seagulls overhead
 Seem close, that one might touch them with
 his hand.
 But far below like melted turquoise poured
 Into a giant setting cedar-green,
 The lake, secure, lies in the massive arms
 Of miles of hills that guard its glimmering
 sheen,
 So still--so blue that it would seem to vie
 With heaven's hues and thus out-blue the sky.

--Nancy Fritz Moon

LITTLE TOWNS OF THE PANHANDLE

Up and down the hills you go
 In winding ways that sudden end;
 Your paved and ordered streets fray out
 Into little paths that interlace;
 From fringy screen of strong salt-cedar hedge
 You venture forth with holy calm,
 And head held high you walk your way
 With sweet and gracious dignity.
 A soothing town, a restful town.
 From strife and stress I slip away
 To you Aristocrat of towns:

Canadian.

From out the depths of gulch and gorge,
 Red rock and rugged cedars and haze of blue,
 Upon the curving brilliance of the plain,
 You have lifted you. And on your heart
 You have builded wall that sheltered youth,
 Hurrying, hopeful, growing youth,
 That backward looks to life all new,
 And lays familiar hand on both,
 Oh, town of promise and of past:

Canyon.

--Laura V. Hamner

BACK TO MEDINA
(A Town in the Texas Hills)

I followed a road that trails and twines
Over the hills and away
Like a silvery ribbon run in and out
Through the buttercup gold of the day;
By noon I had come to that sprawling house
At the sign of the laurel tree,
And pale were its walls in the lilac shade--
Just as they used to be.
Cray pigeons slumbered in cooling eaves
While, aimlessly, one and one,
Smoke-colored sheep moved across the field
In the drowse of a summer sun;
Buttercups, daisies, and dandelions
Climbed over each hill with me,
And the wind was sweet with a hundred sweets--
Just as it used to be.
O, I know every lure that a heart can feel
When southern sunshine spills
And I know ever scent that winds bring back
From a romp in the Texas hills;
But my cup of liveliness overflowed
Mounting the last long steep
Where Medina lay in the hill's green lap,
Like a little white lamp asleep.

--Kathrine Hymas Williams

TROUBADOUR

A hundred cities have I known--
But San Antonio
Can lure me back a thousand miles
To one still patio.

I've often risen early
And walked abroad at dawn
That I might catch the wanton
Without her make-up on.

But like a lovely courtesan
 Who scorns the morning after,
 She smiles at me, all dewy eyed,
 And gives me mocking laughter.

At noon she peeks behind her fan;
 She flirts down dusky streets;
 She teases me with honeyed words,
 Who never cared for sweets.

Once gay adventure pulled me down
 Along a booming coast;
 I saw a tango danced one night,
 And knew my heart was lost.

Where El Camino Real runs
 Along a mission wall;
 I smelled the fragrance of blue dusks--
 I heard her old bells call--

So I have come back home again
 To this shameless coquette
 To sing my love beneath the moon--
 And I am singing yet!

--Jan I. Fortune

CORPUS CHRISTI, BODY OF CHRIST

I never gaze upon your sparkling sea
 But what there comes in vision glorious,
 Not the Pale Martyr shrined on Calvary,
 But Christ arisen and victorious.

Above, the tangled sun-rays of His hair
 Fall round you in an aureole of light,
 And at your feet the ocean of His love
 Sweeps shoreward winged with majesty and might.

Shall not His spirit lead invisibly
 Where His transcendent beauty flames and gleams?
 Keep to this vision, sons of destiny!
 Hold to this faith, white city of my dreams!

--Lilith Lorraine

MARTYRS

A motley throng
 Of tourists from the street
 Desires to see
 Where mortal heroes fought
 To death for them.

Expanding with conceit
 Of native pride,
 They talk of states bloodbought,
 Of one who asked
 Of men to lift his cot,

But once outside
 They murmur, "O how hot!"

--Leola Christie Barnes

SOLEDAD STREET
 (San Antonio, Texas)

Soledad Street is the jolliest street!
 Everyone smiles that you happen to meet
 And signs of all colors enchantingly tell
 The things you may eat but you never can spell;
 Francisco Poblano is flashing to you
 That he sells "enchiladas" and "cabrito," too--
 Not that it matters in Soledad Street
 Where everything's nice that you happen to eat,
 And everyone smiles that you happen to meet,
 For Soledad Street is the jolliest street!

From evening to midnight the limousines go,
 And everyone smiles, if he means it or no;
 For the music is playing and tables are spread
 And the "Spanish Fandango" goes round in your head;
 Old china is gleaming where dim lanterns burn
 And sputter and weaken--then stars take a turn;
 But nothing much matters in Soledad Street
 Where everyone smiles that you happen to meet,
 With a song in his heart and a dance in his feet--
 Oh, Soledad Street is the jolliest street!

--Kathrine Hymas Williams

ST. MARY'S BRIDGE
(San Antonio, Texas)

Close by St. Mary's bridge at night,
Forsaken and alone,
An aged woman crouches low
As quiet as a stone.

She holds up to the passers-by
Her crippled, wizened palms,
And searches wistfully each face
In mute appeal for alms.

The crowd unheeding surges on,
But I must pause to cast
A penny for my conscience' sake,
Before I hurry past.

And yet--as I go on my way,
Aloof in silks and furs,
I know that much I count as mine
Is less of mine than hers.

--Iva Milam Blount

THE BEGGAR AT SAN FERNANDO CATHEDRAL

Outside the iron gates you sit,
Your back is hunched, your fingers knit,
Each day I pass, I try to scan
Your face--

Am I the "Good Samaritan"
To you, or am I one to pass you by,
Cold to your shape and down cast eye?
Too many of your kind in life I meet
To drop a coin in every cup upon the street.
But you, alas you really may need aid,
Your knitted fingers, twisted back, you may have
made,
Or nature may have left you with this curse.
No more I pause but now open my purse
And drop a coin within the cup, nor wait
To hear your thanks or snarl of hate.

--Merrill Bishop

TRAVIS PARK

When days are drear and branches drip
 From dawn till early dark,
 How cheerless and deserted are
 The branches in the park.

But when the sun shines out again,
 The idlers, one by one,
 Come trooping back to warm themselves
 Like lizards in the sun.--

The young men, listless with despair
 Stretch aimlessly and sigh,
 The old men nod their heads and dream
 And let the days go by.--

Across the way, in cushioned ease,
 Are other idlers, too,
 Who wonder why those in the park
 Don't find some work to do.

--Iva Hilam Blount

THE MARKET PLAZA

Squalor and dirt, I disagree--
 Aroma of corn and hot tamale,
 Smouldering charcoal and tortillas,
 Tables with oilcloth for bright mantillas,
 Black haired ninas with eyes of brown,
 Sweet señoritas with gay colored gowns,
 Soft, low music and voices which sing,
 While up from the ovens chili they bring.

Squalor and dirt,--I see it not so,
 A mirage at night of Mexico.

--Merrill Bishop

HUISACHE AVENUE
(San Antonio, Texas)

Long, long ago a path grown venturesome
Trudged up old hills where laurel evergreens
Hung purple clustered blooms for honeydoms,
And greening fretwork of mesquite made screens
With tasseling art. It wound its gypsy way
Where huisache trees with fragrant yellow balls--
Gold vanities with quaint old world satchet--
Stood listening to redbird madrigals.
Descending hills, it paused at eventide
As violet shadows came for rendezvous
Down hollows cool. Where ruby wine cups vied
In loveliness with wild verbenas blue
The little path has long since journeyed far,
Like Hiawatha, toward the setting sun,
But now, ere gleams the quiet evening star,
A hundred hearts turn home when day is done
To bungalows beneath the same old trees
That blossom still. A hundred children note
The happy hum of laurel-loving bees,
And watch the scarlet flash of cardinal's coat.
Spring still embroiders girdles of her own
With winsome winecups and verbenas blue;
The little path that journeyed went alone--
Spring stayed to walk the asphalt avenue!

--Hazel Harper Harris

SAN ANTONIO

Huisache and flowering retama,
Willows where still waters flow,
Moonlight on palm-shadowed plaza,
Cathedral bells solemn and slow--
Though from the City of Missions
Long be my absence, I know
Always the memory will linger--
Huisache, retama, and willow,
Moonlight, the plaza, the river,
Bells, and the white Alamo.

--Mary K. Armstrong

CITY OF LIVING COLORS

San Antonio, city of living colors,
 Red and yellow, white, green and blue:
 Red of bougainvillea
 And red of silken shawls around bare
 shoulders
 And red of roses on fiesta day;
 But white of the little empty mission
 Ringed around with tall sky-scrappers;
 And yellow of sunlight, golden, glaring
 On the green of the springtime tender grass--
 So long spring lingers, green and soft,
 Under the blue, blue, bright blue sky.

Shift them and match them, the changing colors,
 Yellow and red, green, white and red
 Red, white and blue in bars and stripes and
 stars,
 Fluttering flags of vivid patches,
 With always the red of blood at the Alamo
 And the red of lips that sing on the plaza
 And the red of strings of drying peppers
 In San Antonio, city of living colors.

--Rebecca W. Smith

HYPOCRITES

Oil derricks, swathed in snow
 Stand under cobalt skies,
 Marking each rod,
 Like pillars of white loveliness
 Built up to God.

So shining and immaculate
 They seem,
 One would not know
 That gaunt black ugliness lies hid
 Beneath the snow.

--Lexie Dean Robertson

PIONEER: THE VIGNETTE OF AN OIL-FIELD

I

All day the wagons have gone by
 In a great cloud of dust on the highway,
 The horses plodding with down-hung heads,
 The harness clanking dully,
 Or sometimes jingling with little bells.
 The drivers sit immobile on the great iron pipes
 Like stolid images dressed in coarse cottons
 With dusty hats pulled low, shading dull un-
 seeing eyes.
 A wheel jolts cruelly in a deep rut,
 The dust swirls in a choking fog,
 But the driver sits unmoved, staring ahead.
 All day the wagons pass in a long dust-enveloped
 line.

II

Sunset with derricks standing stark
 Against the skyline.
 Grim sentinels, black and cruel,
 Against the golden splendor of the west.
 Row upon row they stand,
 Scarring the soft bosom of the prairie,
 Silhouettes of wealth and toil and service,
 Stark against the scarlet glory of the skyline.

III

At night the rough unpainted shacks are crowded,
 With pushing, jostling, coarse humanity,
 Eager to spend.
 The gambling hall is brilliant with mirrored
 lights.
 The plank-floors creak beneath the muddy-booted
 feet;
 And officer of the law leans against the door
 And hears the click of the dice, the whir of the
 wheel,
 Unheeding
 Painted women, nakedly-dressed, eye every man,
 From under half-closed purple-tinted lids.
 In a drug store a reeling loafer drinks raw gin
 Handed boldly across the counter.
 The blare of a saxophone
 Syncopates through the open window of a dance hall,
 The people surge through the streets pushing each
 other,
 Hurrying from one plank shack to another,
 Eager to spend.

IV

In the moonlight between neglected rows of cotton
 Waits a throng with silent listening,
 The derrick, its raw newness listening in the
 moonshine,
 Stands aloof and unconcerned.
 Thousands of feet beneath the cotton roots
 Sounds a faint whispering.....
 Something released from its dark prison
 Is making its way skyward.
 Gathering force it deepens into a grumbling roar.
 Suddenly straight to the white moon
 Shoots a mighty column of flowing gold.
 It towers poised for an instant,
 Then bursts into a shower of yellow globules
 That tumble back upon the earth who sent
 them forth.
 It is all over in a moment,
 The derrick stands blackly dripping,
 The people laugh and clap each other on the
 shoulder,
 Thinking only of dollars.

V

It is Sunday, but the town toils on unknowing.
 The smell of crude oil hovers like a tainted pall
 Over all the rough unpainted shacks.
 The wagons lumber through the streets
 With loads of clanking pipe;
 The drill bits on unceasingly into the deep
 hot earth;
 The stores ply their daily trade
 With apples and with dusty purple grapes set out
 in front.
 From the Hotel Gladys painted girls dash out--
 Returning later some are not alone.
 There is no Sabbath quiet in all the town
 Excepting only in the weedgrown graveyard
 Where the dead lie waiting,
 And even there the evil smell of crude oil lingers.
 Oh, for a town of little homes
 With church bells quietly ringing.

--Lexie Dean Robertson

MILLIONAIRE MUD

The sky is latticed with derricks.
 We smell oil.
 The soil
 Is greasy with it.
 It reeks all over the timbers, the ground
 and men.
 It blankets the stream and soaks up all of
 its stars.
 Grim with its grime,
 Men's faces are lit with the greed of it,
 Greed like the gold-seekers knew.
 The dumb, awkward heads of the pump-shafts
 Stagger and labor as if they were sentient
 beings
 And wanted it, too.
 The drill sites deep.
 The engines blow and keep
 Their red mouths open.
 An ancient stillness waits below.
 When the sharp, far feel has pierced to its
 caverns,
 Oil vents its pent breath in one long sooty
 gush,
 Then plunges out of the pipe-mouths
 With a guttural gulp and thud,
 Black stuff that's rank and sticky--
 The millionaire mud!

--Therese Lindsey

OIL WELL FIRE

Far off it is a rainy smudge against the sky;
 Nearer, a storm-cloud in a fear-locked dream;
 A mile away it is a volcano, savage and satonic.

The old woman on the hill says, "See,
 The Devil has poked a hole through the ground--
 Look at his black arm waving in the flame!"

--Grace Ross

THE OIL WELL

In Palo Pinto County, once
 I saw a well "come in,"
 An amber column pushed to spray
 Ethereally thin.

Two vivid opal rainbows spanned
 The mist as sheer as dawn,
 And they who owned it stood beneath--
 Oh, magic mist, fall on!

So precious was the virgin stuff
 A fragrance seemed to dwell
 Within the pungent odor blown
 So widely round the well.

Was this a million years ago,
 A trillion lotus-blooms?
 Distilled by what old chemistry
 In what abysmal rooms?

Earth must have had us in her mind
 So aptly to bestir
 And store away such potent brew--
 Or do we rifle her?

A city--maybe mints of gold,--
 A country-side's advance--
 Potentially all these are in
 This amber circumstance.

--Therese Lindsey

CONCHITA

Poised for her dance, Conchita stands,
 Youth's fire in her feet and hands.
 The passion flower of her race
 Is blooming briefly on her face;
 Her hair is dusky tropic night
 That holds one spangled star of light.
 Twin poppy petals are her lips,
 Small crimson shells, her finger tips;
 Her teeth are glistening ivories
 With laughter rippling down the keys.

Her form, a willow by the river...
 Her bracelets clink, her earrings quiver,
 Her castanets sound suddenly,
 And she in fire and flame set free;
 A swirl of scarlet, black and gold,
 A thing too light and swift to hold;
 She is the wind that climbs the sky,
 She is a shout, she is a cry,
 She is all Youth released, but Oh,
 How strange, how strange that she must go:
 A high wind spent, a flame blown out,
 The silence following the shout.

--Grace Noll Crowell

THE HOT TAMALES MAN

Old Mexican tamale man,
 You, trudging, come at twilight's lull
 Tight-strapped upon your back a can
 That holds your wares delectable:
 "Ta-ma-le, Cal-i-en-te!"

Singsongy sweet, along the street,
 Your cry brings all the children out,
 And those who have a dime must greet
 Your steps with an arresting shout:
 "Ten, please!" "And ten!" ("Veinte!")

With smiling beam and knowing gleam,
 You swing your load down to the curb
 And lift the lid, Oh, savory steam
 Imbued with chili pod and herb
 And pepper hot, ("Picante")!

Shuck, sweet of sun, wraps well each one,
 Ground, seasoned meat within a case
 Of meal mush steamed till fully done--
 Rare tidbit of a Southern race,
 Tamale, Caliente!

A vender old? Nay, I behold
 A flash of senorita's eyes,
 A dash of Indian bravery bold,
 Moon-lyre, heart-fire---romance that cries
 "Ta-ma-le, Cal-i-en-te!"

--Hazel Harper Harris

MEXICAN SERVANTS

Soft fall their foot-steps,
 Soft their eyes gleam,
 Light petals drifting
 Into my dream.

Low fall their voices,
 Murmurous tones,
 Cool waters flowing
 Over smooth stones.

Dim fall their shadows,
 Mistical shawls,
 Phantom caresses
 On rose-tinted walls.

In God's closed garden
 Safe would I be,
 Served I my master
 As they serve me.

--Lilith Lorraine

THE OIL FIRE

The lightning strikes, a sudden blinding flash
 Of forked fire, a rending, tearing crash,
 A deafening roar that shakes every ground,
 A sharp report, a sudden cracking sound!

That tank is struck! The mounting flames leap high
 In wild fantastic light against the sky.
 The strong steel crumples writhing in the heat
 Twisting grotesquely, savage heat waves beat.

I see furnace blasts along the reeling air,
 The oil fields lit and crimsoned with the glare
 In wild unearthly beauty. Heavy, low
 The black smoke hangs above the sullen glow

In rolling clouds with red flames bursting through.
 The whole earth has a lurid crimson hue,
 The curious crowds that gather in to gaze
 In half awed silence watch the great tank blaze,

In devastating splendor. Far and wide
 The sullen smoke hangs low on every side,--
 The giant tank boils over, every where
 A boiling flood of flame. The scorching air

Is blistering; blinding, seething torrents flow
 In red cascades of flame. The savage glow
 Of molten smoulders, twisted, scarred;
 The oil soaked ground is blasted, burned and charred.

All that remains to show the great fire's track
 Is smouldering ruin, shriveled, seared and black.

--Violet McDougal

GIRL IN THE DOOR

Shanty set by the side of the road--
 Web-hung window--earthen floor
 Glimpsed in a wedge through the wide
 door-crack--
 And girl in the door.

Mexican girl in a lovely line
 There against the rotting wall,
 Her bright dress on the dull boards sharp
 As a sudden call.

Shanty set in a barren place.
 Drab and shadow more and more
 Yawn till they swallow the house and path
 And girl in the door.

Mexican girl in a single sheath
 Of cotton the shade of the fading rose,
 Spelling a still, mysterious word
 That nobody knows.

Shanty and shadow quickly passed,
 But what lies after--what before--
 The sagging door with its dusty crack
 And girl in the door?

--Siddie Joe Johnson

NOT- GUILTY

I cracks my door
 An' there's Miss Mat,
 De white woman
 Whar I cooks at.

Her look mad,
 Says, "Mawnin, Lou,
 Somebody have stole
 My fine year-screw."

"Dat sho am bad;
 Who think it can be?"
 She says she think
 It mought be me.

"Not me, Miss Mat!
 Mammy learnt me well
 Niggers that steal
 Gwine fry in hell."

Miss Mat look funny
 Lak her ain't hear.
 "Watch out, Lou,
 What dat in yo' ear?"

Dar swung dat bob.
 'Fo Gawd I swear
 I ain't no notion
 How come it dere."

Now Ise in jail,
 My eyes on de street,
 They'll miss dis gal
 When the time comes to eat.

They mought come get me,
 Mought go my bail,
 Caze a mighty fine cook
 Am setten in jail.

--Kate McAlpin Crady

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(The Gulf Coast)

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THE LAND I KNOW

These are the songs I sing of the land I know--
 Tall, cool songs going down to the Southern Gulf--
 Maybe no better songs than my brothers sing--
 Maybe no better land than my brothers go--
 But always my song and my land, and, so, beloved.

This is the dream I've made
 In the yellow heat and the thin
 Mesquite-tree shade.

These are the bones I worry--
 Coyote call and cactus bloom
 and agarita berry.

Star lying low in the East, and moon in the West,
 And the night a velvet hood for my heart to wear.
 From horizon rim to horizon rim, one vast
 Loveliness, alone and asleep in the passing dark--
 Loveliness, lovely and still in the jeweled air.

"What shall it be?" the stars asked.
 The wind keened, "What shall it be?"
 I touched my lyre. "Night-song," I said,
 "From one who has loved the sea."

The moon in the West was questioning
 And curved to a golden stain,
 The land it touched was a level land,
 "--and one who has loved the plain."

The oleander hedges bloomed red
 As a young girl's mouth.
 "Another song--and the singer, the same--
 But one who has loved the South."

Wind in the shaparral, curled like a blacksnake
 whip,
 Lashing with tender lashes the ones it owns--
 Drawing a dusty circle about the bones
 And the flesh and the mind of a chosen few.
 Wind on the roadways, going somewhere North,
 Somewhere North to get ragged and edged and die--

Not pausing as it goes, but issuing forth
 Its own lamentation, its own ultimate cry.
 I, too, should cry at exile's beginning, I think,
 Pushing away from my mouth, pushing away with both
 hands
 Cups of strange beauty offered me to drink.

There will be other roads and days, but never this:
 The checkered pattern of mesquite and cane
 Sewed to a net to catch the summer in--
 Curved to a cup to hold the harvest moon.

There will be other memories and other dreams,
 But never again the level fields gone white
 Against the twisted thickets I have loved
 With such a passionate and long delight.

There will be other fragrances, but none so keen
 As cotton opening to the pungent air
 Already heavy with the neighboring sea,
 Already drugged with sweet bay everywhere.

--Siddie Joe Johnson

HIGH NOON - GALVESTON BEACH

Blue is the sea: a glittering incredible blue
 Wrought from the indestructible heart of flame:
 Blue are the luminous levels of the sea,
 Glowing profoundly blue when the blazing whirl
 That is the sun burns up across the sky
 And poises on the summit of the world.

No ships invade the glitter, and no clouds
 Soar up to drift across the blinding sky;
 And only long waves webbed with veins of foam
 And jetting silver spray, glide up the beach
 Like lazy bright-blue dragons crawling up
 Out of the deepest grottoes of the sea.

It is the Sun's moment: Man is alien
 And inarticulate: and man's proud ships
 And man's exultant enterprises spin
 Into the dying memory of a dream:
 Flame is triumphant, burning even water
 And burning the imperishable sky
 And burning the unconquerable sea!

--Stanley E. Babb

STAR ABOVE THE DUNE

Over the dune
The grasses,
And in the grass,
A star.

I turn my face
From the water,
For waves are so fine
And far,

And full moons
Over the water
Are arrogant
To surpass.

I much prefer
This rarer thing--
A star in the
Tangled grass.

--Siddie Joe Johnson

A SONG OF SHIPS

Valiant ships and beautiful
Proudly swaying by:
Clipper-ships with wind-filled sails
Against a lyrie sky.

Tramp-ships--ugly in a harbor
Loading cotton bales--
Are rarely beautiful at sea
Struggling with great gales.

Gaunt skeletons of broken ships
Scattered down a beach
Where only grey waves shove and shout
With wild, unchanging speech!

--Stanley E. Baab

ROCKPORT
(Texas Coast)

I want to go back to that trysting place
 Where Texas meets the sea
 In her wide-armed way,
 In the wind and spray,
 With far-flung skies and free--
 I want to be there when the dawn rides by
 Waking to gold the gray;
 And the aged salt cedars
 Straighten a bit;
 Saluting the strong, young day...
 I long to be there when the stars tumble down
 The walls of the night-blue sky;
 And watch from my window
 A timid moon
 That, at length, walks royally...
 But, Oh, to awake in the still small hours
 When the sea birds talk with the wind;
 And the night is a story,
 Wondrously told,
 And breathlessly heard to the end.

--Kathrine Hymas Williams

MARSHLAND

Water and reeds and a rustling wind;
 A blackbird tilting a mullion tall,
 The circling whir of a night hawk's wings;
 A kildee's chirp and a loon's shrill
 call.

Night coming down on the low marshland,
 A star peering out of a western sky,
 And floating down from the darkening heights
 The plaintive honk of a wild fowl's cry.

--Grace Noll Crowell

GALVESTON BEACH

A century of yesterdays ago
 Old Jean Lafitte once paced along this beach
 A glorious privateer with flying hair--
 A cutlass dangling from his hip, a brace
 Of silver-mounted pistols in his belt--
 His grey eyes bright for conquest of new shores,
 For captured cargoes of rare sprinkling jewels
 Stolen by Spaniard from Peruvian tombs,
 Stout oaken casks of Jamaica rum,
 Ingots of gold and heavier leather bags
 Of silver dust from distant Darien.

Old Jean Lafitte once paced along these sands,
 Surveyed the misty sea for Spanish galleons
 Sweeping up from Panama with gold
 And precious freights--lusted for the sharp
 High clamour of battle: rattle of pistol-shots--
 Thunder of broadsides--crash of falling spars--
 Loud cries to Christ for quarter--shouts of joy--
 spurts of hot blood--surrender--sharp commands--
 The eager landing of treasure-chests--
 And then the scuttling of the captured vessels:
 The wild red laughter of the rioting flames
 Above a littered sea...

Old Jean Lafitte once wandered down these sands,
 And watched the day's red death, the swirling
 gulls,
 The golden doubloon of the rising moon,
 Remembering days of splendour: mornings when
 He buried gold ashore on Los Muertos,
 Midnights when his schooner "Pride"
 Cut past Nigger Head with all sails drawing,
 Wild battles with great storms of Yucatan,
 And nights with wine and girls at Porto Bello....

Old Jean Lafitte once paced this beach and cried
 From wanderlust that shook his heart, and looked
 Up to the sky for winds and clouds, and told
 His aves on the rosary of stars,
 And then along the last bleak beach of life,
 He proudly strode, and out across the sea
 Into the white mists of oblivion...

--Stanley E. Babb

WAVELETS AT NOON

The little waves sneak up the beach
 Drowning my feet in spray,
 And then they turn and scamper back,
 Laughing out merrily.

They bid me come and follow them,
 And throw my rhymes away,
 They bid me leave my pipe and books
 And sail the blue-green sea.

And when they see me hesitate
 And wonder what to say,
 They run along the beach and laugh
 Their little scorns at me.

--Stanley E. Babb

WAVES AT SUNSET

You'll never know how fine a thing is life,
 How good it is to laugh and be alive,
 Until you've caught the marvelous running strife--
 The long lithe curl--the poise--and the sudden dive
 Of breaking waves....You've never seen the face
 Of beauty, till you've tramped the beach and known
 The lift of green waves and their brilliant grace
 Toppling and swirling into glittering foam.

Oh, nothing is more lovely than the sea
 Jumbling in turmoils of bright ravelling spray
 And singing out its ancient litany
 All down a beach at the dim edge of day
 When wild red sunsets smoulder in the sky
 Drenching the sea with beauty recklessly.

--Stanley E. Babb

GALVESTON

O fated victim of the Gulf's great storm!
 But yesterday thy proud, imperious form
 Stood monarch-like above the southern sea
 Whose warm waves washed thy feet so tenderly;
 The lofty head held high with power rife,
 That hot heart throbbing with commercial life.

Today, proud city of the waters deep,
 Thou art laid low, and many people weep!
 Wind-swept and water-soaked thy ghastly face
 Thy desolated heart a burial place;
 While o'er thy breast the rage-spent sea-wind
 tolls
 The death-knell of six thousand struggling
 souls!

--James Courtney Challis

MIDNIGHT - A MEDITATION

"Now more than ever seems it rich to die
 To cease upon the midnight without pain"--
 Thus once wrote Keats, hearing the high sweet rain
 Of deathless birdsong tumbling from the sky
 In ecstasy--the nightingale's thin cry
 Trembling through the dark--a living strain
 Of wild immortal music bright with pain,
 The lyric chorale of infinity.

Perhaps if he could tramp along this beach
 And hear those gaunt black waves and seagulls make
 Wild antiphonies, he would love such tunes
 Above the night-bird's minstrelsy, and break
 His heart with hungering for the sea,
 And deem its runes a lovelier threnody.

--Stanley E. Babb

SUNSET-MOOL

Outward bound for Singapore
 Steaming to Cathay,
 A tramp-ship shoulders across the sunset
 Through a race of wind-flung spray.

I watch the ship: a fading blur
 Against the flaming sky;
 While grey waves tumble along the beach
 And sea_gulls skirl and cry.

My dreams lift their wide eagle-wings
 And follow the ship away,
 Outward-bound for Singapore,
 Steaming to Cathay.

--Stanley E. Babb

SEA-WIND ON THE PRAIRIE

When wild geese mutter from the smoky sky,
 And tawny leaves drift slowly to the ground,
 The sea-wind leaves the waves; its piercing cry
 Upon the prairie slopes begins to sound.
 O how it mourns along the dim ravine,
 And how the tortured mesquites twist and lean,
 While, like an angry tide, the wind beats on!
 The wash of waves throbs in the prairie cane,
 To die away along the upland heath,
 And now a crash of doom comes from the plain,
 The sound of breakers as they bare their teeth.

And lonely folk start from their inland sleep,
 In terror for men drowning in the deep.

--Berta Hart Nance

TWILIGHT AND EARLY STARS

Beauty cries out to see the sun go down
 It is so lovely, such a magic thing
 Falling through subtly-woven webs of
 dusk
 Like a flame-bright orange sinking out
 of sight
 In a pool of fragile, twilight-colored
 water.

Beauty cries out to see such loveliness
 Fade suddenly away, and Beauty's tears
 Run down the sky in a rain of silver
 stars.

--Stanley E. Babb

SHIPS AT SUNSET

The old ships come,
 And the old ships go;
 And the sluicing waves
 Surge to and fro.

The old ships go out
 Over the sea,
 And the green waves lift
 Incessantly.

Grey seagulls cruise
 High in the sky,
 Echoing the wave-wash
 In their shrill cry.

And the seagulls swerve
 Along the sea,
 And there's loneliness
 In the heart of me!--

A loneliness
 And a deep desire
 To rove out across
 The sunset's fire;

To follow old ships
 Along the seas
 To the farthest beaches
 Of the Celebes...

Did Keats or Shelly
 Ever tramp a beach
 And greet old ships
 With similar speech?

--Stanley E. Baob

THIS BE MY LAND

This be my land, for I am bred of it:

The fields of cotton, stretching flat and wide,
 Rippled by winds that sing above the sea;
 Mesquite and cactus growing close beside
 The gleaming sand-dunes; and a live-oak tree
 That stands alone in bluebonnets. Deep skies
 That dip across to meet the fishing boats
 Or earth that cracks in parching heat. The cries
 Of mocking-bird and sea-gull add their notes
 To melancholy whispers on the shore.
 A lazy, treacherous river gently flows
 Into the bay. The twisted cedar trees; the roar
 Of rhythmic, pounding waves. No winter snows
 Are here, but suddenly on warm fall days
 A wind from out the north swoops down to chill
 The heart of life, yet soon is gone. The rays
 Of drowsy winter suns are brightly still,
 Caressing tropic winters that touch the coast
 In salty mildness. . . . Fog and drizzling rain,
 Or gales that lash exultantly and boast
 Their power within the driving hurricane.
 Here was my sculptor; it has fashioned me
 And formed my heart. I know of other lands
 Hemmed by mountaintops, and I can see
 That beauty is enshrined an other sands,
 This but a fragment of a fitted whole,
 But it is part, my part, where lives my soul.

This be my land, for I am bred of it.

--Lyra Haisley Sparks

LORD OF THE WINDS

I praise the Gulf Breeze,
 Chanting his glory,
 Lord of the Hurricane,
 Mighty and hoary,
 Knouting the billows
 That pound the beaches,
 Hurling the stinging rain
 Until the forests
 Shriek with the pain.
 Astride his black charger,
 Keen for the race,
 He topples the lofty
 Down from their place.
 He strikes the bare earth
 Till his knuckles gleam white,
 And the she wolf and panther
 Whimper in fright.

Swift as a shadow
 He bends the red clover;
 Rifling her honey,
 The conscienceless rover;
 Caressing young lovers
 He kisses their white skins
 Till they laugh in their sleep
 Forgetting their sins...

I praise the Gulf Breeze,
 Lord of all Winds.

--Virginia Spates

A SAILOR'S SONG

As I sail home to Galveston
 In Oleander time,
 I sing a chantey of the sea,
 A swinging seaman's rhyme;
 And tell the wind to wing my words
 Across the churning foam
 To let my own dear folk rejoice
 That I am coming home.

Although I leave the rolling keel,
 The waves and briny spray,
 The gulf is bluer far to me
 Than Naples' cobalt bay;
 And yearningly I face the west,
 Dyed orange, plum and lime,
 As I sail home to Galveston
 In Oleander time.

Salt cedars will be feathered pink,
 And every humble street
 Will flaunt the yellow, rose and white
 Of oleanders sweet;
 What joy my heart anticipates
 In this sea-girdled clime
 As I sail home to Galveston
 In Oleander time!

--Hazel Harper Harris

PRE-SEASON

Only last week this cluttered beach was bare,
 Curved as a shell is curved, its loneliness
 Touched by the strange sea's passionate cares,
 But never wholly eased. A bright despair,
 Part of the sun and wind, hung always there,
 Sealing this beauty with its own impress.
 Even the gulls were lonelier emphasis
 Along the lonely reaches of the air.

What had the sandy shore to do with fields
 Grown heavy as the harvest comes to birth,
 That silence, once unsullied, now should be
 Stained with the crazy fruit the season yields?
 What curious sympathy of earth for earth
 Quickens this far-flung curving of the sea?

II

Theirs was a bitter dream, but still a dream,
 Who came from everywhere, but nowhere much,
 And drew their march (if you could call it such)
 Here to a close. By truck-load, flivver, team,
 And different roads they came, led by a gleam

As white as sea-foam flung for them to touch
 Perhaps for the first time. (Oh, hope they clutch,
 Light the dull eyes by being what you seem!)

Too early yet! They know it, but they stay
 Here where the silence was--here where the moon
 Piled black and silver shadows on the foam.
 Too early yet! But here beside the bay
 The wind is good, even at shadeless noon,
 And they have called far poorer places home.

III

This is the picker's camp a little space;
 Beauty is torn to make the picker's nest;
 Silence is gathered from the beach's breast
 To line the noisy wagon-children's place.
 The gulls cry louder now. Their shadows trace
 A specter on the sands the sea has pressed.
 The day is startled from its bright unrest;
 The night is frightened by a hungry face.

Here with the run-down car--the wagon-bed--
 The picker's past is crushed in box and bin;
 The future sleeps its pre-birth sleep beneath
 The opening boll--the blossom's white and red;
 Only the present, as the sea comes in,
 Slips its lone poignance to a hurried sheath.

--Siddie Joe Johnson

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THE DESERT

Sand and endless sweep of cacti;
 Gnarled mesquite and prickley pear;
 Ocotillo, stately, flame-tipped;
 Sky of turquoise; crystal air.

Through a haze of amber sunlight
 Sapphire mountains touch the sky--
 Stealthily a lean coyote
 Stills a gopher's frightened cry.

Overhead a buzzard circles,
 Watching, waiting, patiently;
 Long-eared rabbits, still as statues,
 Wait beneath a stunted tree.

Presently dead stillness hushes
 Every sound. The desert sleeps.
 Far away a wispy dust cloud
 Spirals up and onward creeps.

--Nancy Richey Ranson

TO A GIANT CACTUS

Oh, cactus of a desert land,
 Fenced in by naked hills,
 What is there in that barren sand
 That needs such sentinels?
 Abristle in the glaring heat,
 Alike to friend and foe,
 Hoarding water cool and sweet,
 That lets you live and grow.
 Like a cross with arms outflung
 Stark beauty doomed to die;
 For those hot sands that gave you
 birth
 At last will crucify.

--Almeda Harding Shurbert

SAND STORM

The west wind blows
 The drifting sand:
 I watch it sift
 From a Cosmic Hand--

Dust of the stars,
 Dust of the sea,
 Dust of the dead,
 Ceaselessly--

Mountains and men
 Who left no trace,
 Ride with the wind
 In a dusty race;

Dark multitudes
 Go swiftly by,
 As I must ride,
 As I must fly.

Shall I behold
 The drifting sand
 When my dust blows
 Across the land?

--Patrick D. Moreland

SAND STORM

A blush
 Like sunset, lies across the west;
 A hush
 Like midnight, hovers over the plains;
 A brush
 Of breeze ripples the prairie's crest,
 A rush
 Of wind, and lo, the sand storm reigns!

--Vaida Stewart Montgomery

SONG OF THE PLAIN

A proud wind, a free wind,
 And smooth acres swinging
 In sea-green, and jade-green
 And year-old brown;
 A glad wind, a sure wind,
 And field birds winging,
 With mad, racing tumble-weeds
 Light as thistle-down.

A home-wind, a hearth wind,
 And men drawn close together;
 With heart-strength and arm-strength
 That lift and laugh along
 The brave wind, the sure wind,
 The wine in the weather;
 Spirit of the Plains-folk
 Woven into song.

--Grace F. Guthrie

SANDSTORM

The sun is shining yellow like a piece of clay;
 The air is choking, filled with flying dust.
 It is high-noon, but twilight holds the day,
 And every living thing has coat of rust.
 Sand, bellowing and belching, casts a blight
 Upon the land, so calm a time ago.
 Thousands of gritty demons take to flight
 And thrust the world in ruthless vertigo.

Old-timers bark back to their yesterdays,
 And tell weird tales of how the storm came then,
 The while the fiends beat on, and new relays
 Of stinging devils stab their chatter thin.
 The sandstorm is a scourge West Texas knows
 More ravishing than drouths and wind and snows.

--William Russell Clark

DESERT SUN

Miles and miles of sunshine
 And the gray of the rusty sage;
 While far in the distance slumber
 Red cliffs as old as age.

Dust and heat waves shimmer
 In the glare of the glistening sheen;
 Eyes and senses weary
 For a glimpse of something green.

Miles and miles of sunshine--
 Not a shadow or shade in sight--
 Desert glare engulfs us,
 And we pray for the coming night.

--Annabel Parks

CACTI

For ages you have known but desert sand,
 Where thirsty winds have licked the earth
 bone dry;
 Have caught the sparks from sunset to
 supply
 The needed flame to make your buds expand.
 But now, because you wear the desert brand,
 Bubbed in by currents from a heated sky,
 They have transported you to satisfy
 The craze for novelty that sweeps the land.

You conquered death and ruled the arid
 spots;
 Were not molested until vagrant man,
 Even in search of ways to rearrange
 The world, uprooted you for garden plots.
 Will you be reconciled and fit his plan,
 Or will your beauty perish by the change?

--Maude E. Cole

DESERT SONG

There's no hiding here in the glare
of the desert.
If your coat is sham the sun shines
through;
Here with lonely things and the silence
There is no crowd for saving you.

Here love lasts a little longer
And hate leaves hear a heavy scar--
But we, with the desert's beauty of
distance,
Are always dreaming of places far.

If you have come to start a kingdom--
Our eyes have looked on Rome and Tyre!
But if you come with dreams for baggage,
Sit with us by the cedar fire!

--Glen Ward Dresbach

FORT PHANTOM HILL

They tell us that gray shades assembled here
At dusk, upon this hill where long ago
The redman and the shaggy buffalo
Fell back before the warrior pioneer.
Nothing is left between these peaceful fields
To say who won or lost who fought or fell;
Nothing save ruined chimneys and well,
These, and the shadows that the twilight yields.

Now there is rustic peace upon the place,
A calmer wildness than was here of old;
Lee, and his men have vanished, and the foe
Are dust upon the brown earth's wrinkled face.
But some say that when the norther bleak and cold
Whines round the hill, pale ghostfires leap and
glow.

--John Knox

BURRO BELLS IN THE MOONLIGHT

Down a trail of the mountain,
 Far out through the cedared dells
 And on through the sands turned silver,
 I heard the burro bells--
 Like bells made out of the moonlight,
 On a phantom burro train
 Coming from El Dorado,
 To fade on a moonlit plain.

Far, by some lost mine's portal,
 I heard a coyote cry--
 But I heard no shouts from a driver
 When the burro train went by,
 No beat of hoofs in the moonlight,
 No clank of the saddled ore--
 Only the passing music
 Of bells the burros wore.

Down a trail of the mountain--
 Then where across the plain?
 I strained my eyes in the moonlight
 To see the burro train---
 And saw but the drift of shadows
 Past heights, through cedared dells,
 Then heard drift out in silver
 A fading sound of bells.

--Glen Ward Dresbach

RANGE CATTLE

The cattle drifted slow across the plain
 Munching the sparse dry grass and clumps of sage,
 And now and then they caught the smell of rain,
 Born on the wind. A sudden cry of rage
 Broke from the herd bulls' throats as lightning flashed
 From out the black massed clouds with somber din,
 While howling wind and hail and thunder crashed
 Across the range; and darkness gathered in
 The lowing herd, with great eyes wide with fright
 Their bodies huddled stark against the night.

--Ollie Roediger

CYCLE

Can you blame the wolf for killing
 If the calves are fat, and chilling
 Northers bend his bony frame?

Must the coyote and the vulture,
 Disregarding Nature's culture,
 Leave the carcasses in shame?

Now the prickly-pear is thriving
 In the bone-dust, but the driving
 Motorist can never see

All the death behind the living,
 And the weaker still are giving
 To the stronger.....endlessly.

--Marvin H. Miller

DESERT DUSK

The sun half-loath to quit day's parted husk,
 Goes down, lingering on the yucca-tips
 As if to stay the slow advancing dusk
 With one last fiery apocalypse.
 The early stars are lighted in the sky
 Where crimson and magenta smoulder. Far
 A coyote lifts a lonely, quavering cry
 Unto what ever wolfish gods there are,
 Voicing his deep insatiable lust to kill,
 And far the answer of the hunting pack
 Is borne to him. Suddenly all is still--
 The quarry turns, gray shadows at his back...

In some deep canyon-bed tomorrow's sun
 Will glance upon a fresh-picked skelton.

--W. E. Bard

FUNERAL

Out on the prairie the small owls call;
The cattle are holding a funeral.

They mill around a stack of bones,
And grieve their dead in plaintive moans.

Each must sniff at the carcass there--
A hunk of hide and horn and hair.

He was their brother, before he fell,
A victim of drouth, or of stampede's hell.

Now he is dead, and they bleat and bawl.
While over the prairie the small owls call.

--Vaida Stewart Montgomery

THE BURRO

He's little and he's stubborn and he's tough
He's patient till you try to overload,
And then he doesn't argue, or get rough,
He simply plants his feet, and spurns the road.

He'll go where horse or even mule would balk,
His tiny feet have carved a trail through hell,
If meditative burro just could talk,
What grisly tales of horror he could tell!

He's watched the puny mite that we call man
Go raving mad with hunger, and with thirst,
He's lifted tired eyes to Heaven's span,
And simply cocked an ear when God was cursed.

Alone, among the rattlers and the sand,
He'll forage far and trace the hidden spring,
Then lift his head to bray, "Ain't Nature grand?"
It's gratitude that makes the burro sing.

--L. Case Russell

THE RIO GRANDE HILLS

When I rode south at twenty,
 Then first I saw them stand,
 The little hills of Mexico,
 Across the Rio Grande.

I have seen taller hillsides,
 But none that spoke to me
 Of love and welcome danger
 And all that came to be.

The years have bloomed and faded,
 I'll never ride again;
 The bugle of adventure
 Must sound for younger men.

But still they seem to beckon,
 Across the yellow sand,
 The little hills of Mexico,
 Along the Rio Grande.

--Berta Hart Hance

THE LAW WEST OF THE PECOS

You ruled beyond the Pecos, feudal, bold,
 Dispensed high-handed justice from your chair,
 The kings with vested sovereignty of old
 Could well have learned of you, and felt despair.
 Tall tales still linger--that you fined the dead
 "For packing guns," or closed the court to scan
 The statutes, finding "Not a word," you said,
 "Against the law to kill a Chinaman."

Your law is gone, Judge Bean; the West is tamed,
 And all sedately now the Pecos flows.
 There is still justice,--not the kind you named,
 But dull and drab, that precedents impose
 Yet all Romance gained flavor from your leaven,--
 I hope they've given you a court in heaven!

--Dorothy Calloway

NIGHT SKETCH

Autumn night--
 Aloof and strangely cool;
 A high white moon
 Stenciled in the east;
 Bridal wreath,
 Embroidering a tremulous silence
 Along the weathered palings
 Of the fence;
 A silhouette of slender palm leaves
 Tapping
 The blue grey silence of the night;
 And from the distance shadows
 Of the old fort
 Comes the long full blasts
 Of a silvered bugle--
 Taps.

--Lois Virginia Davidge

THE SONG OF THE COYOTE

I stood beneath a huge, protecting oak
 The bark of which was rough but beautiful,
 The night was dark, the thickness of the air
 Confused the clouds above and made them dull.

Then from the distant cliffs, I knew not where,
 There came a cry that froze the heavy air--
 A wild thin wail that chilled the cliffs afar--
 A spurned coyote howling to a star.

I thought: though poets laud the feeble bird,
 Of this coyote, none have said a word,
 Yet ah, the power of that eerie cry
 To thaw the soul and melt into the sky.

Malignant as they are, throughout the wood
 The meanest often have a touch of good.

--Frank Goodwyn

CAVALCADE

Indian, trapper, cowboy, pioneer--
 With what an abandon they ride, arrayed
 In crude and savage splendor! The cavalcade
 Has topped the distant rise as cavalier
 As in the day they rode this grim frontier;
 Who bravely in its conquest-drama played
 Their tragic roles, now turning undismayed,
 Wave nonchalant farewell and disappear.

The desert gives no quarter, asking none.
 The players go, the mighty stage remains
 Insensate, dull beneath the desert sun.
 Yet by their camp-fires when the day is done
 Men hear the beat of hoofs across the plains,
 The rumble of approaching wagon trains.

--William E. Bard

SUNSET ON THE DESERT

Tawny and sinister this desert land
 Has stretched its length, its broad and endless way.
 Far to the south the ancient mountains stand,
 Barren of beauty, stripped of grace today.
 The high sun raises its merciless white heat,
 Only a wild and savage growth is here.
 Long, long and weary hours, then cool and sweet,
 A small wind ruffles the land, and night is near.

The sun hangs low--a strange wild radiance
 Is flooding the land--the ocotillo's tips
 Are points of fire--the yucca's green spears dance,
 The sand is scarlet as the red globe slips
 Beyond the far horizon's rim. A hush
 Is on the land, before a canvas spread,
 As God Himself stoops down and with a brush
 Paints the wide desert purple, blue, and red.
 The mountains are as luminous and bright
 As if each held some incandescent light.

--Grace Noll Crowell

THE CACTUS

How crabbedly it grows--
 Enmeshed in bitter thorn
 As if to life it owes
 The acridness of scorn.

But O, the tender and
 It offers to the sun!
 And petaled out, what flood
 Of beauty is begun.

This inconsistency
 Is paradox, in part;
 And you, whose words sting me
 May wear a flower at heart.

--Lucie Gill Price

SHEEPHERDER

Six months ago I quit my dogs and flock
 To come down-hill, and I been farming since;
 Broke up my land, and traded for some stock,
 Dug me a well, and strung a line of fence.

I guess I ought to be content: my hay
 Is thick along the ditch and ankle-deep,
 My Jersey brought a heifer calf to-day,
 And fellows don't get nowheres herdin' sheep.

But when the flocks go by me left or right,
 Somehow I can't do nothin' till they pass:
 I climb the barn to watch them out of sight,
 And sniff the dusty sheep-smell in the grass.

And when strays bleat at night from some
 hill-shelf,
 I hate my plow, by God! --and hate myself.

--Fay M. Yauger

LOCOED

I am a locoed yearling;
 My father was the boldest oull
 That ever roamed the West;
 A baroed wire fence
 To him meant little more
 Than a briar vine,
 And every oull
 That crossed his path
 Was branded
 By my father's mighty horns.
 My mother always walked
 With head erect
 With the foremost of the herd.
 I might have been the peer
 Of any monarch of the plains.

But before the taste of milk was off my
 tongue
 I chewed the loco weed;
 It stunned me into a thin,
 The cowmen call a "dogy."

The other day the ranchers came and drove
 the herd
 To other pastures,
 Because the drouth had parched the grass
 And sapped the watering places.
 I lagged, until they had to cut me out,
 And, as the last hoof passed, I heard a cowboy
 say:
 "Poor little devil, he just can't go no further!"

I saw them outlined on the farthest hill,
 And in my feeble way I tried to go,
 For they were headed for a land untouched
 By the fevered breath of drouth.

In fancy I could see the flowing streams
 And waving grasses,
 And hear the rustle of green cottonwoods,
 Generous with their shade.

When the cool night gave me heart again
 I struggled after.
 How long I trailed them, I will never know
 Nor just how far my puny legs had traveled.
 The days were filled with tortures
 And the nights with terrors.

A thousand times I sighted pools
 Of silvery water just ahead,
 And as often saw them vanish,
 And instead were yellow lakes of fire,
 My breath grew hotter than the prairie wind.

The lazy vultures circled overhead,
 Content to wait
 And take their chance with the coyotes
 That haunted me.

At last I stumbled into a fence and fell;
 There in a canyon, miles away
 From any other dwelling
 Was the shack of a homesteader.
 The owner sprang upright but quickly stooped
 And laid his gun aside,
 And bent above me with a question in his eyes.
 He seemed no more than a shadow
 Of any man that rode behind the herd.
 His fingers trampled as they stroked my
 scrubby hide.

"So! You bear the brand and earmarks
 Of the herd that passed this way.
 You knock-kneed, measley creature
 With your thickly swollen tongue;
 Torn with thorns and bruised and bleeding,
 Locoed, too, without a doubt,
 Starved and perishing--I wonder--
 Did those scoundrels cut you out?
 Leave you without a chance!
 That's the way they serve a weakling--
 Cut us out, without a chance!"

I felt a drop of water on my parching skin
 As his shaking hands caressed me.
 "And yet--there is a chance, and I will give
 you one.
 What's mine is yours, there's water in my tank
 to run us both
 Until it rains--if rain it ever does--
 If not we'll go down together.
 Henceforth we are brothers.
 Who knows? The spring
 May bring green pastures flowing streams.
 Fresh courage to us both.
 Perhaps together we may yet fight back.
 I, to, am locoed!"

--Vaida Stewart Montgomery

MOODS OF THE PANHANDLE

Brooding

Under the young green of the grass
 Mile upon mile of softly rolling plain
 Stretches away to the west.
 The dark swords of bear-grass
 Stand guard over the silence.
 Strange how white are bleaching bones
 In such a lonely place.

Illusion

Far across the dry sand of the river
 The cliffs lie in a shifting haze.
 Many times each day,
 From the door of my house on the mesa,
 I watch their changing hues.
 Each time I find new colors there,
 Pale grey, gold, lilac, rose and blue--
 A shimmer of pastel shades.
 As the hours drift past
 I think the cliffs
 Must catch their rainbow lights.

Ecstasy

I stand on the edge of the mesa,
 And my lover, the rushing wind,
 Comes laden with the freshness of the sage.
 His eager lips touch my hair.
 As I stand laughing and lift my arms to him,
 A swift joyousness fills me,
 And I become elusive--intangible--
 One with the wind.

Passion

Hour after hour, the wind, a maddened giant,
 Rushes across the plains,
 Whipping mercilessly upon the tender green of
 spring,
 Where there is no respite, no fitful gusts
 Within whose spaces some relief can come.
 My garden is bare,
 Stripped of its springing life.
 The sweet freshness of my house
 Is filled with a shifting, stiffling current
 That will not let me breathe.

I long for evening,
 When the wind with tired sighs,
 Shall lie down
 To gain new strength
 Before another day.

Repose

Tall reeds gleam dark against the sunset,
 Half buried in the sand,
 Against a line of fence-posts
 Hung with sagging wire,
 The flaming sunset darkens,
 And grey night holds the plains.

--Ruth Garrison Frances

YUCCA BY THE ROADSIDE

Long ago, the red of clay
 And my crumbly shelving rock--
 These I saw, and, far away
 Shaggy bison-hump and hock,

And the velvet backs of deer,
 And the rabbit's tearing pace,
 (Bulging eye and streaming ear,)
 And the Indian's stealthy grace.

Yet, though now no horses shy
 At a skill half-hid in grass,
 And the sleek black highways lie
 Where the dim trail used to pass,

Cactus, Caliban of plants,
 Still disports with twisted limb;
 Butterflies about him dance,
 Making golden sport of him.

Redbirds dress as for a ball
 When the March winds hush and warm,
 I upon my crumbling wall
 Lend to June my silver charm.

Spite of all the loud new ways,
 Here my spiky leaves grow thick,
 And from out their green I raise,
 Holy, white, my candlestick.

--Jeannie Pendleton Hall

PRAIRIE GHOST

Down near the Animas Well, they tell,
 Where silvered grasses lean,
 And near to the Rio Grande sand
 Where tall winds curve and keen,

An old ranch gate has a ghost to boast,
 And never that gate can be
 Fastened all night by plier of wire
 And never by lock or key.

Perhaps an Indian Chief in grief
 Rides in high disdain,
 Rides his ancient path in wrath
 For the loss of his open plain.

No tracks are left on the ground around--
 No skillful Indian brave
 Would leave a sign on trail or rail
 From either side of the grave.

Only the scorn of his mind we find--
 Scorn that the tall and free
 Open a gate to the stars afar,
 Then close it with lock and key.

--Frances Alexander

PALO DURO CANYON

Dawn

Dawn stirred beneath the night's soft coverlet,
 Awoke and bathed herself in sparkling dew;
 Then fragrant as a rose began to stroll
 Along the canyon's trail and caught a view
 Of tiny birds, astir within their nests
 That frescoed painted walls o'er hung with blue.

Morning

She saw the busy Sun begin to make
 His lovely filigree of golden lace,

And watched the spangled water leap the rocks
 And run away with laughter on its face,
 While Morning made inspection of her frocks
 And chose the one that matched her winsome
 grace.

Noon

The weary Sun God, craving rest, saw Noon,
 And caught the dazzling maiden to his breast--
 He wooed her underneath the shady trees
 And taught her how to follow Love's behest--
 She nestled with contentment, in his arms,
 And never thought to question were it best.

Night

He left her Creamy-eyed and went his way
 And worked his magic until Dusk had neared
 With pale mauve veils, to shrine the dying Day,
 The canyon rested--jeweled Night appeared,
 When sunset-rose had turned to ashen grey,
 A low-swung starlight all the scene endeared.

--Nora Hefley Mahon

LITTLE HOUSES IN THE WEST

You stand in lonely valleys where the sun
 Of western afternoons makes the hills gold
 Against the blue, while clouds that are your ships
 Sail on aloft with dreams stowed in the hold.

You dot the breathless hilltops here and there,
 That crouch upon the sun-baked, thirsted sands
 With tumbleweeds that race like ghostly steeds
 Into the night, guided by phantom hands.

The long flat plains know well your squatted shapes
 Facing the salted winds that run ashore
 Singing of ships somewhere beyond your ken
 Bringing their low-voiced chanteys to your door.

The mountains know your wood smoke, and the streams
 Have caught the brave reflection of your light,
 Swift rains have beaten drums upon your roof
 And helped to make symphonies of the night.

Your roofs stare back at sun and moon and star,
 Indifferent to high winds and the rain,
 As long as smoke curls from your chimney piece
 And candlelight shines from a window pane.

--Crystal Hastings

IN PRAISE OF IMPERFECTION

The imperfections of the earth,
 The crudest things thereof,
 Have claimed my stanchest loyalty,
 And my dearest love.

I have loved the prairie
 Since I saw her wear
 A jagged canyon on her breast
 Like a croix de guerre.

I have loved mesquite trees
 Since a winter day
 When they bared their gnarled limbs
 In a brave ballet.

And when I first saw cactus blooms
 On a hunchbacked stem,
 I foreswore all other flowers
 And gave my love to them.

The wounded, writhen, homely things,
 Earth or flower or tree,
 Have always claimed my dearest love
 My stanchest loyalty.

--Vaida Stewart Montgomery

DESERT SYMPHONY

Dawn

The dunes are nuns at prayers; silver and still
 They kneel, God's suppliants, in the pearly-grey light
 Of dawn that breaks in silences to shrill
 That bird songs fall upon the rim of night;
 The sun, a trumpet-flower beat from gold,
 Sways on its hidden stem and drenches earth
 With yellow pollen that dispels the cold
 And brings the desert heat again to birth.

The slim, tall yucca trembles where I stand;
 Its daggers lift their points to feel the sun
 That sharpens them to thin designs on sand;
 I touch the white buds, all, and choose but one.
 And will she come my tall, pale yucca flower?
 Her voice, like haunting, whispers of old tunes,
 Holds me here waiting, waiting for an hour
 When she may come to me across the dunes.

Heat

You hear the droning locusts and the sweet,
 High piping of cicadas from the bed
 Of Seven Devils Creek, where the mesquite
 Thorns snare the sun and seem to burn with red?
 Even mesquite is parched to feel this sun.
 The sandlike strips cut from a metal heaven!
 See how the writhing heat waves have begun
 To rise? The devils,--were there only seven?

Cobalt and silver and the green of jade...
 Heat weaves a half transparent tapestry;
 Then dizzily the waves of color fade
 And swirls of glitter make a filigree--
 A filigree of glare and yellow light
 That burns into our eyes through afternoon.
 Even in dusk that brings a cool blue night
 I see the heat waves dancing on the moon.

Night

See how the sage brush slants before the wind,
 A mad wind crying for the slim witch girl
 Shadowed against the moon. The broom weeds bend
 And now the sand imps have begun to whirl
 Out of the dark in frantic ecstasy.

The cactus devils! There!...the silhouettes
 Against the white sand, reeling drunkenly!
 The stars are gone, but still the lone wind frets.

The dark has walled us in. El Paso's lights
 Are clotted out, and only sand is here,
 Pale sand that keeps the secret of these nights,
 Too ghostly beautiful to harbor fear.
 The grasses shiver at the lonely song
 The mad winds make a nocturne of despair.
 A gaunt-limbed coyote's howl echoes along.
 The witch girl in the moon lets down her hair.

--Cherie Forman Spencer

WEST TEXAS WIND

There was a time I hated you, loud West Texas Wind,
 Assaulting with your caustic sand while tirelessly
 you dinned
 With raucous bag pipes blowing till the berten
 traveler must
 Imagine howling coyotes hidden in the choking dust.

But I have come to love the roaring challenge of
 your call,
 A dare to match my strength against your pelting
 arsenal;
 The surge of you exhilarates and keeps the spirit
 flexed,
 Exulting in the press of life that holds a stirring
 text.

The bagpipe-coyote motif blends within the larger
 theme
 An organ oratorio whose harmony of scheme
 Can change a lusty movement to a murmured lullaby
 And roll a final battle song triumphant to the sky.

--Ruth Humphreys

THE PRAIRIE DOG

(Another vanishing settler from the Abilene Country)

Hip! Hip! You little devil sitting out there in
the sun!
What is that you're always saying? See the little
rascals run!

"Cheep, cheep, cheep--we don't like strangers,
Cheep, cheep, cheep--this is our home,
Chip, chip, chip--now don't you come here,
Cheep, cheep, cheep, chi, chip, cheep--chome!"

He has vanished in his castle, always built
in holy ground
On the Western Texas prairies--hundreds of them--
all around.
They are brown or red or tawny, larger than
the largest rat,
Half a squirrel, half a rabbit, and as active as
a cat;

Short of tail which wags with business very hard
on grass or grains;
Skipping, playing, tripping, praying--round their
pulpits on the plains.
They do not live with snakes or owls--that idea
is absurd,
For we watched them scold such neighbors, aye,
And this is what we heard:

"Cheep, cheep, cheep--now don't you come here.
Cheep, cheep, cheep--this is our home.
Cheep, cheep, cheep--we hate intruders
Cheep, cheep, cheep, chi, chip, cheep chome!"

--William Lawrence Chittenden

THE RANCHMAN'S RIDE

Hurrah for a ride on the prairies free,
On a fiery untamed steed,
Where the curlews fly and the coyotes cry,
And a fragrant breeze goes whispering by;
Hurrah! and away with speed.

With left hand light on the bridle-rein,
And saddle-girths cinched behind,
With a lariat tied at the pommel's side,
And lusty bronchos true and tried,
We'll race with the whistling wind.

We are off and away, like a flash of light,
As swift as the shooting star,
As an arrow flies toward its distant prize,
On! on we whirl toward the shimmering seas;
Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!

As free as a bird o'er billowy sea
We skim the flowered Divide,
Like seamews strong we fly along,
While the earth resounds with galloping song
As we plunge through the fragrant tide.

Avaunt with your rides in crowded towns!
Give me the prairies free,
Where the curlews fly and the coyotes cry,
And the heart expands 'neath the azure sky;
Ah! that's the ride for me.

--W. Lawrence Chittenden

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THE PADRE'S BEACON

With eager eyes an Indian peered
 Into the darkness of the night,
 And his canoe he swiftly sheered
 From right to left from left to right;
 For lost within the blinding fog,
 He saw the mad waves roll and toss,
 And found both snag and sunken log
 But not the Padre's beacon cross.

He dipped his paddle in the sea,
 And found its depth now less, now more;
 And where he thought the pass would be
 He only found a weedstrewn shore.
 He questioned of the hidden star,
 And counseled with the waning moon,
 But found no answer, near or far,
 Only the lone cry of the loon.

And he had steered by wave and wind
 To where the beacon cross should be,
 That marked the place where all might find
 The way into the Trinity.
 For there, among Cypress trees grown gray,
 The padre's little hut showed white,
 Beneath a shining cross by day,
 And in a taper's gleam by night.

But vandal hands had cut adrift
 The padre's beacon in the night,
 And without prayer, and without shrift,
 A sea wrecked soul at dawn took flight,
 And now who sails the bay at night,
 And scans the dark with eager eyes,
 Out of the sea, grown gray with light,
 Can see a beacon cross arise,

For since that night long, long ago,
 When clouds hang wide and fogs lie deep,
 For him that laid that beacon low
 There is no rest in death, or sleep,
 All night he lifts it from the sea,
 All night he strives, and strives in vain;
 He stands it up, but when set free
 It sinks into the sea again.

--John P. Sjolander

DEATH RODE A PINTO PONY

Death rode a pinto pony
 Along the Rio Grande,
 Beside the trail his shadow
 Was riding on the sand.

The look upon his youthful face
 Was sinister and dark,
 And the pistol in his scabbard
 Had never missed his mark.

The moonlight on the river
 Was bright as molten ore,
 The ripples broke in whispers
 Along the sandy shore.

The breath of prairie flowers
 Had made the night-wind sweet,
 And a mocking-bird made merry
 In a lacy-leafed mesquite.

Death looked toward the river,
 He looked toward the land,
 He took his broad sombrero off
 And held it in his hand.
 And Death felt something touch him
 He could not understand.

The light's at Ladden's ranch-house
 Were brighter than the moon,
 The girls came tripping in like deer,
 The fiddles were in tune.

And Death saw through the window
 The man he came to kill,
 And he that did hesitate
 Sat hesitating still.

A cloud came over the moon,
 The moon came out and smiled,
 A coyote howled upon a hill,
 Sat hesitating still.

Death drew his hand across his brow,
 As if to move a stain,
 Then slowly turned his pinto horse
 And rode away again.

--Whitney Montgomery

CORONADO ON THE TEXAS PLAINS

I see him on that sailless sea
 Where never a billow breaks
 He rides like a king of destiny
 The unmarked road his charger makes

Up from the desert hills of the south,
 Right on the spectral coursors glide.
 Gallantly on that unknown sea
 The troopers ride and ride.

Flash in the morning sun
 Their arms like a phantom brigade,
 As rings on the air the victory song
 Of the Spanish Cavalcade.

Waves from the spear of a cavalier
 The martial banner of mighty Spain.
 Flee the antelope and the deer--
 Not a foe on the boundless plain.

He reins his steed on the cap-rock's edge;
 Gleams in the sky his burnished blade--
 Boldly ride to their leader's side
 The Spanish cavalcade.

His eye sweeps over the far-spread land,
 As kindles ambitions glowing fire.
 A conquerer's sword in his up-raised hand
 Waves proudly over that vast empire.

Cibola's fabled gold forgot,
 Boldly on they ride and ride.
 Each captain dreams of castled wealth,
 He of embracing a princess bride.

I see them when the summer has waned,
 Returning from the march they made.
 Humbled in the conquerer's pride--
 Broken the Spanish Cavalcade.

Wrecked and lost on that sailless sea
 Where never a billow breaks,
 Each sadly returns by the unmarked path
 His jaided burro makes.

--J. Park Massey

THE SCHOOL BUS

(The Mother Speaks)

We lived ten mile back upon a ruddy road,
 I scarce could git to meetin' 'cept on horseback.
 And me always with a new baby to nurse!
 We never saw anything but crops,
 Nor planned anything but taxes!
 We never expected our children to go to school
 Beyond the fourth grade,
 And only if there was money enough to pay the teacher,
 Or if the roof of the school house didn't cave in.

We aimed to give 'em schoolin' if the egg-money
 Could buy their books, th t's all;
 Or if the sorghum made enough of syrup!

We was so pore, no shoes, no Sunday hat,
 Only the doerstep to set on in the evenin'!
 Only one bed and that my mother gave me,
 (The little fellows had to sleep on pallets).
 You cain't see why I'm cryin' at the School Bus?

Little Texana! Oh! She shore is handsome,
 With eyes as sweet as blueconnets in the springtime,
 And Lee, he always fixed his daddy's harness;
 They can larn how to do right smart, I reckon,
 And me and dad not knowin' how to cipher!

My children go to school now to a big school,
 The State gives them their books;
 They ride twelve mile.
 And when I fix their lunches
 (Salt pork and cornbread and a sweet potato),
 They say it's not the thing.
 Domestic Science and a Red Cross woman
 Say I'm not fitten for to feed my children.

I never heard the like!
 And yet,
 My kids will be like other folkses!
 I wanted them to be like that!
 I wept and prayed to Gowd that He would make them
 The kind I could not be with all my honin'

We live ten mile back on a ruddy road.
 I see the School Bus--
 That is why I'm cryin'.

--Nora Barnhart Fermier

THE BOAT THAT NEVER SAILED

Like the moan of a ghost that is doomed to roam,
Is like the noise of the wind in Hungry Cove.

And the orrier bites with a sharper thorn
Than the fang of hate, or the tooth of scorn.

And the twining vines are as cunningly set
As ever a poacher placed snare or net.

And the waves are hushed, and they move as slow
As fugitives making headway, tiptoe.

For Nature remembers, as well as Man,
The time and the place, and the Mary Ann.

The time, man-measured, was long ago,
Some seventy fleeting years, or so.

The place, where the sea was with light agleam,
And the shore shone white as a maiden's dream.

And the Mary Ann--(how a prayer prevailed!)
Was the name of the boat that never sailed.

For the men who built it, a blackguard twain,
Had taken a maiden's pure name in vain.

And she prayed that for taunts, and for many mocks,
The boat would not move from its building blocks.

But the builders laughed at the maiden's prayer,
And spat on her name they had painted there,

And swore, in defiance of God and man,
They would launch the boat named the Mary Ann.

But when they stood ready at stern and stem,
The boat fell down on the heads of them;

And no one came to where crushed they lay,
And no one will come until this judgment day;

For their guards are briars with thorns that bite
With a pain as keen as the sting of spite.

And their only dirge is the song of the loon,
When the sea is black in the dark of the moon.

--John P. Sjolander

BUG-A-BOO WOOD

If you go in the spring to Bug-a-boo Wood,
 A prettier sight yo 'll never see;
 The redbud bush in a scarlet hood,
 And a robe of snow on the dogwood tree.

But you'd better go in the broad daylight,
 And you'd better come out while still its day,
 For those who visit the wood at night
 Are never the same again, they say!

Blanch was pretty and Blanch was good,
 But Blanch was a simple, trusting thing,
 And she hung herself in Bug-a-boo Wood
 One night when the year was in the spring.

She hung herself in a gown of white
 To a dogwood tree that was in full flower,
 And the spell that came to the wood that night
 Has never left it to this good hour.

Something means that is not the wind,
 And an odor of death is in the air,
 And something will stalk you from behind
 That you never see, but you know it is there.

A great white cat with eyes of fire,
 At the midnight hour walks to and fro,
 But it never leaves a track in the mire,
 And it never leaves a track in the snow.

And hunters say when the night comes on
 That their hounds will bristle and up and away
 To Bug-a-boo Wood, and cry till dawn
 On the track of something they never bay.

Oh, Bug-a-boo Wood is a lovely sight
 In the green of spring or the gold of fall,
 But some who go to the wood at night
Never come back at all!

--Whitney Montgomery

DAN CAMRON

Dan Camron came to Springhill in the fall,
 A husky fellow nearing twenty-one,
 Plain as a shoe, but handsome as a god.
 He wanted work, and work was what I had,
 For wearily the fields had turned to cotton,
 And maize heads ripened to a golden yellow
 Were hanging heavy, ready for the knife.
 And so I hired him and he made good--
 So good that when the harvesting was done
 I hired him for all the coming year.
 And he was just efficiency itself;
 A better hoe-hand never shook a hoe;
 A better plow-hand never pulled a line
 Across a mule's back; and it was a joy
 To hear his ax talk on a frosty morning.
 He loved his work, and he loved nature too,
 For sometimes he would halt his team afield
 To listen to the clear call of a bird
 Or watch a butterfly go drifting by.
 He stayed with me three years, a happy soul
 If ever there was one, out in the fall
 That marked the third year of his stay with me,
 I saw Dan Camron undergo a change.
 His face took on a hue of thoughtful sadness,
 And to his eyes a far away look came.
 The shadow grew and grew, until one day
 He came to me and asked me for his time.
 I questioned him and he spoke to the point:
 "I'd like to stay right here at old Springhill,
 And just keep drifting as I'm drifting now,
 For I have been the happiest man alive;
 But happiness won't build a bank account
 Nor spread a couch of comfort for old age.
 I'm going to try my fortune in the city."
 And so Dan Camron went, and years went, too
 Before I heard another word of him;
 And then, one day I noticed in the paper
 Where Daniel Camron had been made cashier
 Of some big bank out in a western city.
 His rise was rapid; later on I read
 Where he had married into a wealthy family,
 And finally his handsome picture graced
 The front page of the paper, for old Dan
 Had been elected mayor of the town.
 But we are fools who sit and watch a play:
 We never know what the next act will be
 Until the curtain rises; often then
 The things we see we cannot comprehend!

One day I picked the daily paper up,
 And this black head-line stared me in the face;
 "Dan Camron Suicides - The Cause Unknown."
 But it was not all mystery to me,
 For being a farmer I could understand:
 If once the soil gets you in its grip
 It always kills you one way or another.

--Whitney Montgomery

THE WITCH OF LAS NORIAS'

"Flee to the casa
 And shut the door,
 La Bruya rides
 With the wind's roar.
 Rosita heard
 Her screech-owl cry,
 Juan saw her lantern
 Float in the sky.
 Her black skirt fluttered
 As she went by
 On wings el diablo
 Lent her that night
 In the dark of the moon
 When he brought her the light.
 She has gone to the village
 To buy of the brew
 Mad Fedro sells
 When the moon is new.
 When she comes back,
 Somebody--will--die;
 And it might be you!
 Hush, don't cry,
 But hide in the casa
 And speak no more;
 She may think we are gone
 And pass our door."

--Lucy Gill Price

THE BOX CANYON

The blades of bunch grass glinted in the sun
 Across the rocky hills the stunted cedar
 Was stunned with glare, and lizards would not run
 Till nearly stepped upon...A weather breeder
 Is what a day like this is called by one
 Who knows such silence and such lack of motion
 In hills about the desert. Storm may follow
 The hush, and swirl the sands in dazed commotion
 And drive all things that live to ledge and hollow.

The heat waves swerved along each level spot
 And haze was heavy on the higher places
 Where mountains lifted, and the air was not.
 A worn team often left a slack in traces
 Before the wagon. He who drove forgot
 To notice it. The woman resting under
 The wagon's dusted, ineffectual cover
 With weary senses heard the wheels like thunder
 Upon the stones, and watched the hazes hover.

Their crops had failed upon the prairie land
 Far to the east where the drouth was yet unbroken,
 And they had wandered west to make a stand
 Against new odds of which they had not spoken--
 With hopes that hardy heart and willing hand
 Upon new soil would win them some conclusion
 From all the doubt of work that had beginning
 In will to come triumphant from confusion
 Of fates that left but little for the winning.

The lands they reached had schooled them yet again
 In all the hardness of an endless oattle.
 Mile after mile they saw no sign of rain.
 When wheels were still they heard the bunch grass rattle
 They found, in creek-beds, moistened sands to fain
 Of tepid water, and but rabbits scurried
 Across the hunter's path when day was ending.
 The horses chewed at hardened grass and worried
 The bitter bark of boughs not worth their bending.

They had not dared to think of turning back
 There was no hope in that. They kept on going
 By narrow roads, and sometimes by a track
 Across the sands where herds left hoof marks showing.
 They looked for rich land that had been their lack
 And hoped to plant the seeds that they were keeping
 Safe in the wagon with their few belongings.
 Even in these bared lands they dreamed of reaping
 Reward last to end their simple longing.

And now and then the strange land held a lure.
 A narrow valley would be glad with branches
 Of willows, and spring water cool and pure
 Would give them new hopes of their better chances
 To find a spot where farming would be sure
 To give them harvest, in some wider places
 Between the weathered hills. The twilight falling
 Would then make a softer line upon their faces--
 Though from the gloom the coyotes were calling.

At last the man said, "Guess it's time to stop.
 It looks like there might be some water yonder...
 The horses stagger, tired enough to drop."
 The woman said, "I thought I heard some thunder
 Above the wheels. See where the mountains prop
 The heavy sky up, how dark clouds are gathered."
 The man drove on into a canyon rearing
 High walls of rock. The horses weak and lathered
 Sniffed on the air the water they were nearing.

The kind of canyon that they reached is called
 Box Canyon due to long box-like formation
 Of level floor and straight sides. Stony, walled,
 It shuts itself in from the dread relation
 With sands to endless drouth so idly sprawled,
 And keeps its world of mountain water flowing
 In narrow stream, of sprouts forever budding
 Between the wash-outs, and of grasses growing,
 When given time, between storms and their flooding.

When storms come on the mountain and the rain
 Pours there, no rain may reach the lower levels
 Save in the floods that rush down to the plain
 And hurtle headlong, filled with desert devils,
 With crest as high as trees where creek beds strain
 To carry floods in canyons filled and foaming.
 And men who know these lands have little likeing
 For cool box canyons. When in desert roaming
 They keep to levels from the flood's quick striking.

The wagon lurched between the canyon's cool
 And shadowed walls, just wide enough for going
 Of team and wagon. Farther on a pool
 Widened where little willow trees were growing
 And, seeing it, the team began to drool,
 Chewing their bits and tugging at the traces.
 The man leaped down and then began unhitching.
 The horses had new interest in their faces,
 Their eyes were staring and their lips were twitching.

The man and woman held the horses back
 From too much water after their long thirsting.
 The man then said, "This is a rocky track
 And we must stop and camp." The thunder, bursting
 From dark clouds far away came like a crack
 Of whips, so suddenly was silence broken.
 The woman knelt to drink and saw with wonder
 Her sunken eyes filled with her fears unspoken...
 Above them cracked the long whips of the thunder.

The horses raised their heads and whinnied then
 To sounds of running hoofs on stony places
 Above them, and the quiet came again...
 A man looked down into their upturned faces.
 "Get out!" he yelled, "You're resting in a pen
 That has one outlet. Quick! A flood is coming
 Or, I'm a fool. Man, can't you see it raining
 Up in the mountains?" And he stared, summing
 Their ignorance up, his anger slowly waning.

"You're strangers here, I guess," he said at last
 While man and woman hurried with the hitching.
 "There is a place to turn. Now do it fast!"
 The horses trembled and their muscles, twitching
 Showed their excitement. Cool and comfort passed
 In that swift turn and drive. The wagon swaying
 Rattled along the canyon floor...The stranger
 Rode at the rim above them. Lightning, playing,
 Snapped fiery fingers in the dance of danger.

The wagon reached the canyon's opening.
 The stranger led them to the higher levels.
 The horses panted and sweat poured to sting
 Their reddened eyes..."It's raining hell and devils
 Up in the mountains. See the flood-crest swing
 Into the canyon there!" he said, "It's tearing
 Along as high as trees, and it's a wonder
 That flood is not upon you. I was swearing
 I'd be too late for you and you'd go under."

The man and woman stared, first at the rush
 Of flood, then at the one who came when seeing
 Their danger as they entered to the hush
 Of cool walls, and they wondered at this being
 Near them in lands so vast...They felt the crush
 Of waters they escaped, and, in escaping,
 They felt the olden and unchanging blessing
 That, unexpected, comes and helps the shaping
 Of lives whose words do least of the expressing.

THE COWBOY'S CHRISTMAS BALL

Way out in Western Texas, where the Clear Fork's
 waters flow,
 Where the cattle are a-browsin' and the Spanish
 ponies grow;
 Where the Porters come a-whistlin' from beyond
 the Neutral Strip;
 And the prairie dogs are sneezin', as though they
 had the grip;
 Where the coyotes come a-howlin' round the ranches
 after dark,
 And the mockin' birds are singin' to the lovely
 meadow lark;
 Where the 'possum and oadger and the rattle-snakes
 abound,
 And the monstrous stars are winkin' o'er a wilder-
 ness profound;
 Where lonesome, tawny prairies melt into airy
 streams,
 While the Double Mountains slumber in heavenly
 kinds of dreams;
 Where the antelope is grazin' and the lonely
 plovers call,--
 It was there I attended the Cowboy's Christmas
 Ball.

The town was Anson City, old Jones' county
 seat,
 Where they raised Polled Angus cattle and waving
 whiskered sheat;
 Where the air is soft and bammy and dry and full
 of health,
 Where the prairies is explodin's with agricultural
 wealth;
 Where they print the Texas Western, that Hec McCann
 supplies
 With news and yarns and stories, of most amazing
 size;
 Where Frank Smith "pulls the badger" on knowing
 tender feet,
 And Democracy's triumphant and might hard to
 beat;
 Where lives that good old hunter, John Milsap,
 from Lamar,
 Who used to be the sheriff "back east in Paris,
 sah"
 'Twas there, I say, at Anson with the lovely
 Widder Hall
 That I went to that reception, the Cowboy's
 Christmas ball.

The boys had left the ranches and come to town
 in piles;
 The ladies, kinder scatterin', had gathered in
 for miles.
 And yet the place was crowded, as I remember
 well,
 'Twas gave on this occasion at the Morning Star
 Hotel.
 The music was a fiddle and a lively tamborine,
 And a viol came imported, by the stage from
 Abilene.
 The room was togged out gorgeous--with mistletoe
 and shawls,
 And the candles flickered festions, around the
 airy walls.
 The wimmen folks looked lovely--the boys looked
 kinder treed,
 Till the leader commenced, yelling, "Whoa,
 fellers, let's stampede,"
 And the music started sighing and a-wailing
 through the hall
 As a kind of introduction to the Cowboy's
 Christmas Ball.

The leader was a feller that came from Swendon's
 ranch,--
 They called him Winay Billy from Little Dead-
 man's Branch.
 His rig was kinder keerless, --big spurs and high
 heeled boots;
 He had the reputation that comes when fellers
 shoots.
 His voice was like the ougle upon the mountain
 height;
 His feet were animated, and a mighty movin' sight,
 When he commenced to holler, "Now fellers, shake
 your pen!
 Lock horns ter all them heifers and rustle them
 like men;
 Saloot yer lovely critters; neow swing and let 'em
 go;
 Climb the grapevine round 'em; neow all hands do-
 ce-dol
 You maverick, jine the round-up--jes skip the
 waterfall,"
 Huh! hit was getting active, the Cowboy's Christmas
 Ball.

The boys was tolerable skittis), the ladies power-
 ful neat,
 That old bass viol's music just got there with
 both feet!
 That wailin', frisky fiddle, I never shall for-
 get;
 And Windy kept a-singin' --I think I hear him
 yet--
 "Oh, X's chase yer squirrels, and cut 'em to our
 side;
 Spur Treadwell to the center, with Cross F.
 Charley's Bride,
 Doc Hollis down the center, and twice the ladies'
 chain
 Van Andrews, pen the fillies in Big T. Diamond's
 train.
 All pull your freight together, neow swallow fork
 and change;
 Big Boston, lead the trail herd through little
 Pitchfork's range.
 Purr round yer gentle pussies, neow rope and bal-
 ance all!"
 Muh! Hit were getting active--the Cowboy's Christ-
 mas Ball.

The dust riz fast and furious; we all jes galloped
 round,
 Till the scenery got so giddy that T Bar Lick
 was downed.
 We buckled to our partners and told 'em to hold
 on,
 Then shook our hoofs like lightning until the early
 dawn.
 Don't tell me 'bout cotillions, or germans,
 No sir-ee!
 That whirl at Anson City jes takes the care with
 me.
 I'm sick of lazy shufflin's of them I've had my
 fill,
 Give me a frontier bread-down, backed up by Windy
 Bill.
 McAllister ain't nowhere, when Windy lead the show;
 I've seen 'em both in harness and so I ought ter
 know.
 Oh, Bill, I shan't forget yer, and I oftentimes
 recall
 That lively gaited sworray--the Cowboy's Christ-
 mas Ball.

--Larry Chittenden

THE BALLAD OF JEAN LA FITTE

I'll sing the ballad of Jean La Fitte,
 A right good man was he,
 For he was tall and brave and strong,
 And learned in gallantry.

In Louis' town in the early days
 He felt the wander lust;
 With his stern bright eyes as cold as
 steel
 He picked his men of trust.

A hundred and twenty who sought romance
 And craved life daring and free
 Called Jean La Fitte their captain
 brave,
 And they lived right merrily.

He sailed the gulf and captured the ships
 Of Mexico, England and Spain,
 And with the treasure, he as king
 On Galveston Island did reign.

Now on this island there were three
 trees,
 Three trees alone were there,
 He took the island from Indian braves,
 But he treated them good and square.

In a large Red House this pirate prince
 Held court right royally,
 With all his men dressed up on gold
 They served him loyally.

Old Louis' regent sent a notice wide
 That for Jean's own handsome head
 He'd give a bounty of good red gold
 To the one who would bring him dead.

But Jean, the daring and jovial knave,
 Laughed at this with glee,
 And he offered back the same reward
 To the one who would make so free.

And many's the time he would lay his head
 Against this self-same card
 While he laughed and joked with the chief
 gendarme
 And called the man his pard.

But as time went on adventures palled,
 He ordered his tribe to disband,
 And with gloomy step and broken heart
 He paced the glistening sand.

And three of his men from a sheltered
 nook
 Heard as he paced, a groan,
 "Under the trees, the three lone trees
 Lies all my treasure alone."

With gluttonous greed they chose their
 tools
 And quickly sped them there;
 They dug the earth and found in the soil
 The corpse of a maiden fair.

It was his wife--his fair young wife
 And 'twas not Spanish gold,
 They tremblingly cursed as they crossed
 themselves
 In the damp night air and cold.

Then Jean La Fitte in a scarlet suit
 Went sailing out to the bay,
 His good ship "Pride" from Texas shore
 Carried him far away.

But oft in the night in Galveston
 His spirit is heard to moan,
 "Under the trees--the three lone trees
 Lies all my treasure alone."

--Mrs. Lois C. Magnuson

CERELLE

There was a score of likely girls
 Around the prairieside,
 But I went down to Galveston
 And brought me home a bride.

A score or more of handsome girls,
 Of proper age and size,
 But the pale girls of Galveston
 Have sea-shine in their eyes.

As pale as any orange flower,
 Cerelle. The gold-white sands
 Were like her hair, and drifting shells,
 White fairy shells, her hands.

I think she liked my silver spurs
 A-clinking in the sun.
 She'd never seen a cowboy till
 I rode to Galveston.

She'd never known the chaparral,
 Nor smell of saddle leather,
 Nor seen a round-up or a ranch,
 Till we rode back together.

Shall I forget my mother's eyes?
 "Is this the wife you need?
 Is this the way you bring me rest
 From forty men to feed?"

Cerelle--I think she did her best
 All year. She'd lots to learn.
 Dishes would slip from her hands
 And break. The bread would burn.

And she would steal away at times
 And wander off to me,
 And when the wind was in the south
 She'd say, "I smell the sea!"

She changed. The white and gold grew
 dull,
 As when a soft flame dies,
 And yet she kept until the last
 The sea-shine in her eyes.

There are (I make a husband's boast)
 No stronger arms than Ann's
 She has a quip for all the boys,
 And sings among the pans.

At last my mother takes her rest,
 And that's how things should be.
 But when the wind is in the south
 There is no rest for me.

--Margaret Bell Houston

THE BLACK BULL

The black bull tossed his head and stamped
 Defiant rage as, undisturbed,
 Flies drank his blood. But quick winds curbed
 His seething anger: To the cramped
 Dark stall that swam with steaming mire
 It brought a faint, far scent that tore
 Him through and through--a scent that wore
 The breath of sage beneath the fire
 Of desert noonday. On hot wings
 It came, as when the old winds stirred
 Sand-sharpened through the heat-drowsed herd.
 It drenched him with the feel of things
 Uncaged. As the brief comfort goes
 He strains to follow--and again
 Knows out the evil scent of men.
 The scent he hates. His proud neck bows,
 His quivering nostrils drip and spread
 A pink-tinged ooze. Tireless he jars
 His pinioned sides against the bars;
 Tireless he flings his heavy head.

A bugle's blare with answering roar
 To climb and clamor through the stone.
 The hateful strength that mocks his own
 Is baffled when a glaring door
 Blinds him with light that surges in.
 Spurning its flame, he rushes past
 The wall, to meet a swift dart cast
 And his arched neck spurts blood, The din
 Swells to wild tumult as a gate
 Swings wide, and Fury hurtles through
 The narrow opening into
 The shrieking ring. With all the hate
 That hunted wild things summon, dark
 In body tense and horns swung low
 The black bull reaches for his foe
 As sure as an arrow for its mark.
 Headlong into the sickening flash
 Of color loosed on every side
 As shimmering, silken scarves fling wide
 To sear like flame, cut like a lash.

Charging, he sees his foemen glide
 Behind a welcoming shelter-wall.
 Does some vague god of justice call?
 There is no place a bull may hide.
 And now swift, piercing barbs shoot pain
 White hot from streamered darts that cling
 And flaunt their tinsel'd billowing
 Above a widening crimson stain
 That on his reeking coat is spread.
 A human understanding lifts
 Its challenge, as he stands and sifts
 And weighs and waits. Slowly his head
 Circles the ring. Color gone mad
 Moves daintily like grasses swayed
 By summer winds. A cavalcade
 Of cowering horses, spurred to add
 Their pitiable part, wild-eyed,
 Each one a padded craven, nears
 Those ivory, rage-sharpened spears.
 Strong horses cringe and armed men ride.

Still the gay flags move in and out.
 Proud helmets lift, then with slow grace
 They touch the ground; and all the place
 Answers the moment with a shout.
 Now quick as thought, as sure as breath
 Mad horns, mad hooves, mad body hurl
 Themselves against the silken swirl
 Bright with the pageantry of death.
 The bull is stricken--falls--but pride
 Fans dying strength, makes dim eyes clear
 To mock the ill-disguised fear
 Of sharp, mad horns that do not hide.
 A sudden instinct tells him why
 The ring is cleared till only one
 Resplendent cloak gathers the sun,
 One blade has loosed its silver cry.
 Death waits. The black bull strains to rise
 And life is kind--he stands again;
 But the bright blade strikes truly then,
 The bull, half-risen, shudders, dies.

Above, a black speck circles, stills.
 Silence denies the tumult flown;
 Death with bared head waits there alone
 And scent of sage blows from the hills.

--Grace F. Guthrie

LASCA

I want free life, and I want fresh air;
 And I sigh for the center after the cattle,
 The crack of the whips like shots in a battle,
 The melody of horns and hoofs, and leads
 That wars and wrangles and scatters and spreads;
 The green beneath and the blue above,
 And dash and danger, and life and love,
 And Lasca!

Lasca used to ride
 On a mouse-gray mustang, close to my side,
 With blue "serape" and bright belled spur;
 I laughed with joy as I looked at her.
 Little knew she of books or creeds;
 An "Ave Maria" sufficed her needs;
 Little she cared, save to be by my side,
 To ride with me, and never to ride,
 From San Saba's shore to Lavaca's tide,
 She was as bold as the billows that beat,
 She was as wild as the breezes that blow;
 From her little head to her little feet
 She was swayed in her suppleness to and fro
 By each gust of passion; a sapling pine
 That grows on the edge of Kansas bluff,
 Or wars with the wind when the weather is rough,
 Is like this Lasca, this love of mine.
 She would hunger that I might eat,
 Would take the bitter and leave me sweet;
 But once, when I made her jealous for fun,
 At something I whispered, or looked, or done,
 One Sunday in San Antonio,
 To a glorious girl on the Alamo,
 She drew from her girle a dear little dagger,
 And--sting of a wasp!--it made me stagger!
 An inch to the left, or an inch to the right,
 And I shouldn't be maundering her tonight,
 But she sobbed, and sobbing so swiftly bound
 Her torn "rebosa" about the wound
 That I quite forgave her. Scratches don't count
 In Texas, down by the Rio Grande.

Her eye was brown--a deep, deep brown--
 Her hair was darker than her eye;
 And something in her smile and frown,
 Curled crimson lip and instep high,
 Showed that there ran in each blue vein,
 Mixed with the milder Aztec strain,
 The vigorous vintage of old Spain.

She was alive in every limb
 With feeling, to the finger-tips;
 And when the sun is like a fire,
 And sky one shining, soft sapphire,
 One does not drink in sips.

The air was heavy, the night was hot,
 I sat by her side, and forgot--forgot
 The herd that were taking their rest,
 Forgot that the air was close oppressed,
 That the Texas norther comes sudden and soon,
 In the dead of the night, or the blaze of
 the moon--
 That once let the herd at its breath
 take fright,
 Nothing on earth can stop its flight,
 And woe to the rider, and woe to the steed,
 Who falls in front of their mad stampede!

Was that thunder? I grasped the cord
 Of my swift mustang without a word.
 I sprang to the saddle, and she behind
 Away! on a hot chase down the wind!
 But never was fox-hunt half so hard,
 And never was steed so little spared;
 For we rode for our lives. You shall hear
 how we fared
 In Texas, down by the Rio Grande.

The Mustang flew and we urged him on;
 There was one chance left and you have but one.
 Halt! jump to the ground, and shoot your horse;
 Crouch under his carcass, and take your chance;
 And if the steers in their frantic course
 Don't batter you both to pieces at once,
 You may thank your star; if not, good-bye
 To the quickening kiss and the long-drawn sigh,
 And the open air and the open sky,
 In Texas, down by the Rio Grande.

The cattle gained on us, and, just as I felt
 For my old six-shooter behind my belt,
 Down came the mustang, and down came we,
 Clinging together, and--what was the rest?
 A body that spread itself on my breast,
 Two arms that shielded my dizzy head,
 Two lips that herd on my lips were pressed;
 Then came thunder in my ears,
 As over us urged the sea of steers,
 Blows that beat blood into my eyes;
 And when I could rise--
 Lasca was dead!

I gouged out a grave a few feet deep,
 And there in Earth's arms I laid her to sleep;
 And there she is lying, and no one knows,
 And the summer shines, and the winter snows;
 For many a day the flowers have spread
 A pall of petals over her head;
 And the little gray hawk hangs aloft in the air,
 And the sly coyote trots here and there,
 And the black snake glides and glitters and slides

Into a rift in a cotton-wood tree;
 And the buzzard sails on,
 And comes and is gone,
 Stately and still like a ship at sea;
 And I wonder why I do not care
 For the things that are
 Like the things that were--
 Does half my heart lay buried there
 In Texas, down by the Rio Grande?

--Frank Desprez

KENCHACA'S GHOST

Where Kendall Hills rise tier on tier
 Above deep canyon rims,
 Their brows wound light with scarfs of
 cloud,
 In heights the eagle skims,
 There hangs a ruin upon the slope,
 Gaunt walls where moonlight spills,
 The stronghold of Kenchaca, once
 A bandit of the hills--
 A caballero of easy grace,
 But in whose mocking eyes
 Bold arrogance and cruelty
 Escaped a thin disguise.
 A dashing silver figure,
 He galloped through the hills,
 At his side a sharp stiletto
 And a knotted sash's frills,
 In a charro hat of silver,
 A rich cape lined with silver,
 On a swift horse, white like silver,
 He rode the plains and hills.

Rough mounds of earth or broken stone,
 His castle walls now lie.
 Through hills that echoed laugh and jest,
 The lean coyotes cry;
 And where the bandit stabled his steed
 Or buried his stolen gold,
 There slips about among the ruins
 Manchaca's ghost. It is told
 That when the moon glides down the slope
 And dimly lights the stone
 Of broken arch and fallen tower,
 Manchaca rides alone,
 Rides through the canyon and up the hill--
 A muffled, distant sound
 Of galloping hoofs in ghostly beat
 Upon the stony ground;
 For still, in a garb of silver,
 With spurs of tinkling silver,
 On a swift horse, white like silver,
 He gallops over the ground.

He stops at last beside the ruins--
 A shadow against the wall--
 There, some have heard his wild, free laugh,
 His step in the empty hall;
 But never a peon enters there
 The one small wing that stands,
 Too much they fear Manchaca's blade,
 Manchaca's spectral lands
 And mocking smile, as when, long ago,
 He laid men low at will,
 When many a fellow bandit slain
 Was buried on the hill--
 For graves they dug, but knew it not
 When treasure they went to hide;
 Since "Dead men tell no secrets"
 Was Manchaca's law. They died,
 When he drew his blade of silver,
 Where the moonlight spilled white silver,
 Where crimson blood was silver,
 When thus a bandit died.

Manchaca's raids were made by night
 When moonlight touched the plain.
 He left small towns and caravans
 In mourning for their slain,
 When back to the hills with his men he flew,
 Away to his own stronghold,
 Secure against pursuing bands,
 And safe with goods and gold.
 And, bold Manchaca prospered till
 His men suspicious grew.

Some asked for missing comrades, and
 Manchaca feared they knew.
 He called a master workman then.
 "Build me a vault," he said,
 "A secret place, with passage leading
 Underground to some cliff-head."
 Thus he spoke, his smile like silver,
 With soft words, as smooth as silver,
 While the moon poured pale, white silver
 On Manchaca's haughty head.

The builder made the passage well,
 With vaults beneath its floor.
 The exit reached a canyon cliff;
 The entrance was a door
 So well concealed and intricate,
 Within a corner dim,
 Manchaca could not find it till
 The builder guided him.
 To these vaults he brought his treasure:
 Gold and silver, goods and wine.
 One vault a sepulchre became.
 Its doors wrought strong and fine
 Hid the two who moved the riches--
 Silence deep their only boon,
 In the vault they died in darkness
 With the paling of the moon,
 When its last rays, trembling silver,
 Turned the greying walls to silver,
 Touched Manchaca with pale silver,
 When he stepped beneath the moon.

From the passage door he hurried,
 Met the builder on his way
 Who remarked, "The work is finished.
 I shall go at break of day."
 "Go at dawn! You! thought Manchaca, "and
 You know the passage made!"
 One swift flash! The man lay dying, as
 Manchaca sheathed his blade.
 Dawn was breaking, and Manchaca paused
 To watch his bandits ride,
 A phalanx--serapes flying--dashing
 Up the mountain side;
 But, the face of bold Manchaca blanched
 With fear. There followed fast
 Brave pursuers up the hillside, near
 The grim stronghold at last.
 Through the gates, in dawn's grey-silver,
 Bandits rushed with goods and silver;
 Through the gates, a flash of silver,
 Brave pursuers followed fast.

"Quick! The guns!" Menchaca ordered, but
 Too late. They were inside,
 And a pale dawn bore mute witness how
 A cornered bandit died.
 All was lost! Menchaca running sought
 The secret passage door,
 But he stumbled on the builder dead
 Upon the patio floor.
 "Sainted Madre!" cried Menchaca--
 Slipped in blood when he would rise.
 Then an arm in justice lifted closed
 Menchaca's cruel eyes.
 Of the hidden door and passage,
 There are none to tell.
 Only dead men know the secret.
 They have kept it well.
 Only they could find the silver,
 Goods, and chests of gold and silver,
 Where the moonlight turns to silver
 Hills and ruins that guard it well.

Some have seen the ghostly horseman
 In the shadow of the wall.
 Some declare with calm assurance that
 He tiptoes down each hall.
 Slipping through the broken portals,
 Seeking still his buried gold,
 To the patio he wanders--
 Often is the story told
 That two shadowy ghosts stand watching
 At Menchaca's secret door,
 Laughing with a ghostly laughter
 When he slips upon the floor;
 For, where fell the murdered builder, there
 Menchaca stumbles, falls.
 Never does he reach the passage
 Leading from the walls.
 But, when moonlight spills like silver,
 Always will he seek his silver,
 Till is found his goods and silver,
 Deep beneath the hills and walls.

--Gussie Osborne

HELL IN TEXAS

The devil, we're told, in hell was chained,
 And a thousand years he there remained;
 He never complained nor did he groan,
 But determined to start a hell of his own,
 Where he could torment the souls of men
 Without being chained in a prison pen.
 So he asked the Lord if he had on hand
 Anything left when he made the land.

The Lord said, "Yes, I had plenty on hand,
 But I left it down on the Rio Grande;
 The fact is, old boy, the stuff is so poor
 I don't think you could use it in hell anymore."
 But the devil went down to look at the truck
 And said if it came as a gift he was stuck;
 For after examining it carefully and well
 He concluded the place was too dry for hell.

So, in order to get it off his hands,
 The Lord promised the devil to water the lands;
 For he had some water, or rather some dregs,
 A regular cathartic that smelled like bad eggs.
 Hence the deal was closed and the deed was given,
 And the devil then said, "I have all that is needed
 To make a good hell," and hence he succeeded.

He began to put thorns in all of the trees,
 And mixed up the sand with millions of fleas;
 And scattered tarantulas along all the roads;
 Put thorns on the cactus and horns on the toads.
 He lengthened the horns of the Texas steers,
 And put an addition on the rabbit's ears;
 He put a little devil in the broncho steed,
 And poisoned the feet of the centipede.

The rattlesnake bites you, the scorpion stings,
 The mesquite delights you with buzzing wings;
 The sand-burrs prevail and so do the ants,
 And those who sit down need half-soles on their
 pants.

The devil then said that throughout the land
 He'd managed to keep up the devil's own brand,
 And all would be mavericks unless they bore
 The marks of scratches and bites and thorns by
 the score.

The heat in the summer is a hundred and ten,
 Too hot for the devil and too hot for men.
 The wild boar roams through the black
 chaparral,--
 It's a hell of a place he has for a hell.
 The red papper grows on the banks of the brook;
 The Mexicans use it in all that they cook.
 Just dine with a Greaser and then you will
 shout,
 "I've hell on the inside as well as the out!"

--Folk Ballad

FRONTIER MYSTERY

My uncle was a ranger
 In old Fort Griffin days,
 And there he saw a woman
 He could not help but praise.

Her dress was dark and splendid,
 Her hands were fair and long,
 Her eyes were soft and shining,
 Her voice was full of song.

You would not think to find her
 In any gambling den,
 But every night at poker
 She played with all the men.

And no man dared insult her,
 And no one knew her name;
 When she had won a fortune,
 She vanished like a flame.

Leaving in shoddy fabric
 A thread of gold and blue,--
 The only touch of glamour
 My uncle ever knew.

--Berta Hart Nance

COUNTY-FAIR

I got me dressed for going down
 To Teague, the County seat,
 With half my savings on my back
 And half upon my feet.

My father said, "Be careful, son."
 My mother said, "Be good."
 My sister said, "Bring me a ring
 The way a brother should."

The leaves were in the ditches
 And haze was in the ridge
 The morning I stepped through our fence
 And crossed the trestle-bridge.

On, chimney pots were smoking,
 And flags were in the air
 When I came heeling into Teague
 To see the County Fair.

I stopped a peddler-woman
 And bought a box of corn
 That had a small tin bird inside
 For blowing like a horn.

I guessed at pebbles in a jar
 And had my fortune told,
 And learned that I would meet a girl
 That day and find her cold.

The cards were right, for very soon
 I crowded through a swirl
 Of people near a platform
 To watch a dancing-girl.

And sure I lost my senses
 Right there upon the street
 From seeing how she tossed her hair
 And shook her little feet.

And, "Never will I take a wife
 To share my roof and bed
 Or spend my gold, unless it be
 This dancing-girl," I said,

But she--she looked me through and through
 When I had caught her glance
 And said--"I think the hicks have come
 To clutter up our dance."

And then, "Get on, my fellow,
 And see the cattle-shows,"
 She said, and snapped her finger-tips
 Just under-neath my nose.

I got me from her curling mouth
 And from her scornful eyes,
 And never stopped to ask if I
 Had won the guessing prize.

I cut the miles to home by half,
 Straight up the mountain-side,
 And, "Hope to God I never see
 That girl again," I lied.

My father let me in at dusk;
 My mother looked distraught;
 My sister lay all night and wept
 The ring I hadn't bought.

My father questioned me of mares;
 My mother spoke of lace;
 But I had not a word for them--
 I'd only seen a face.

They tell me now I am no good
 For sending to a Fair
 And do not know that only part
 Of me came back from there.

They do not know my hands are here,
 And here my heavy feet,
 But that my heart is miles away--
 In Teague, the County Seat.

--Fay M. Yanger

WITHIN THE ALAMO

He drew a straight line
 Across the dirt floor:
 Within, it was death-still--
 Without, was a roar

And a scream of the trumpets:
 Within, was a Word--
 And a line drawn clean
 By the sweep of a sword.

No help was coming, now--
 That hope was done
 No more the free air,
 No more the sun,

Bright on the blue leagues
 Of buffalo-clover.
 Travis drew a line
 And they all crossed over.

Travis had a wife at home,
 Travis was young;
 Travis had a little boy
 Whose tight arms clung,

But Travis saw a far light
 Shining before:
 Travis drew a sword-cut
 Across the dirt floor.

And now the old fort stands
 Placid and dim,
 Blinking and dreaming
 Of them and of him;

And now past the Plaza
 Other tides roar,
 Since Travis wrote "Valor"
 Across the sand floor,

And the guns they will rust,
 And the captains will go,
 And an end come at last
 To the wars that we know,

But as long as there travails
 A Spirit in man,
 In a war that was ancient
 Before Time began,

Here will the brave come--
 To read a high Word--
 Cut clean in the cust
 By the stroke of a sword.

--Karle Wilson Baker

TWO

Nan sat and sewed by candle-light
 When winter nights were long;
 Zeb whittled out a clipper-ship
 And sang a sailor song.

Nan patched and turned and mended late,
 So neat one scarce could tell;
 The sagging oarn-doors caught the wind
 With every rise and swell.

Nan waded shoe-mouth deep in snow,
 And turned the cattle in;
 Zeb whistled homeward after dark...
 The moon was high and thin.

Nan said, "We've meat to run us now
 Against the cold next fall."
 Zeb, nodding, heard or thought he heard
 A wedge of wild geese call.

Nan loved the warm red-glowing jams,
 The hearth-fire's cheery crack;
 Zeb loved the smell of camp fire smoke,
 And a wind against his back.

Nan, born of thrifty farmer fold,
 Was raised to make a wife;
 Zeb, gipsy-hearted, loved the road...
 And led a farmer's life.

At last Nan hummed a sailor song,
 And dusted clipper-ships;
 Zeb brushed the hearth...nor heard the tune
 Nan learned from his young lips.

--Udley Jones Wheeler

BALLAD OF CYNTHIA ANN PARKER

You have brought me back to my people,
 Or so you would have me believe,
 And you wonder why I am silent,
 And you wonder why I should grieve.

You say that I was a white child,
 A Paleface, born and bred;
 If my blood is the blood of the White man,
 My heart is the heart of the Red.

You have spoken a name that strangely
 And vaguely comes back to me,
 Like the faint perfume of a flower
 Or a long lost memory--

A name that haunts and mocks me
 Like the words of a half-heard song;
 I wish that I might remember,
 But the years have been too long.

You tell me I should be happy
 Here with my people once more,
 You would have me forget Nocona
 And the tall sons that I bore.

People? Who are my people?
 And what is this freedom to me?
 Why should you prate of freedom
 Who have always slaughtered the free!

How can I ever forget
 The tepee fires at night,
 The scent of the pines at evening,
 And dawn on the mountain height;

The endless leagues of flowers
 That the April winds unrolled,
 And the countless buffalo herds
 That the white man slaughtered for gold;

How can I ever forget
 The terror of that last ride,
 When I clung to my flying pony
 And my baby clung to my side;

When they wounded my brave Nocona,
 And he leaned him against a tree,
 Dying, but scorning the mercy
 That they proffered half-heartedly?

You have brought me back to my people,
 Or so you would have me believe,
 And you wonder why I am silent,
 And you wonder why I should grieve.

You say that I was a white child,
 A Paleface, born and bred,--
 If my blood is the blood of the "White man,
 My heart is the heart of the Red!

--Whitney Montgomery

HERITAGE

My father was a dreaming lad;
 My mother's sight was long.
 She gave me stubborn strength of will,
 My father gave me song.

To him she moved in every dream,
 To him her voice was spring...
 She saw his widespread, fertile fields,
 What harvests they would bring.

My mother sewed with sure, deft hands,
 On little garments neat.
 She saw the hems were strong to hold,--
 She visioned small, pink feet.

To him the cotton-bolls were foam,
 Sea-rocked by singing gales,
 She saw the weighty stalks, and said,
 "They won't miss sixty bales."

My father held me in his arms,
 And oh,--the things he said!
 My mother turned the covers back.
 "High time she was in bed."

They lost a little son...She said,
 "We've these. We must forget."
 He never saw a little lad
 But that his eyes were wet.

Her small, swift hands shaped skein on skein
 When winter nights were long.
 She gave me will, and subtle skill,
 But oh!--he gave me song!

--Udly Jones Wheeler

PLANTER'S CHAIN

Slowly ran the widow goes
Up and down the furrowed rows,

Corn-bags chafing her waist, her hips
As the kernels fall from her finger-tips:

"One for the buzzard--
One for the crow--
One to rot--and--
One to grow!"

Once she had dreams (but not of late)
Of another life, of a kinder fate:

Of quiet streets and foreign towns,
Of dancing tunes, and men, and gowns.

But all of her dreams were dreamed before
Tim Slade drew rein outside her door.

"One for the buzzard"--Tim was dead
With a bullet-hole through his reckless head:

Tim with his cheating ways and words--
Marked from the first for the wart-necked
birds:

Tim who had left her sorrowing days,
The farm, and a pair of sons to raise.

Lon was her first-born: "One for the crow!"
Where had he gone? She'd never know

For there was a price upon his head--
"A chip off the old block," people said.

Then "One to rot!" Her thoughts go back,
Like hunting-dogs on an easy track,

To the girl she'd been before she came
To love Tim Slade and bear his name;

And something as stinging and hot as sand
Slides down her cheek and strikes her hand,

And she sees the field through a shimmering
blur
For what has marriage meant to her,

But a heel of bread in a roofless hut,
Or a crawling course through a mouldy rut?

As if in answer, over the ditch
A boy comes riding a willow switch:

Her second-born of whom no one
Could say in truth "His father's son,"

For his chin is firm, and his mouth is grave,
And the dreams in his eyes are bright and brave.

And she, remembering farm-hand talk,
"You lose three seeds to get one stalk,"

Stands tall and proud and her pale cheeks glow
As she drops a kernel--"One to grow!"

Slowly Nan the widow moves
Up and down the furrowed grooves,

Peace in her heart and a smile on her lips
As the kernels fall from her finger-tips:

"One for the buzzard--
One for the crow--
One to rot--and--
One to grow!"

--Ray M. Yauger

THE DEPUTY

Leave him here at the canyon's head,
Comrades who love him,
He will be very happy, dead
With the redbuds above him.

He will feel very much at home
With the red earth to cover him
And the wild currant's sweet perfume
Breathing soft over him.

Leave him here with his riding done,
Here where we found him,
He will never be quite along
With the grass waving around him.

--Kenneth C. Kaufman

BORDER SONNETS

I

She stood beside the door and watched Juan go,
 And when he turned the gate, she forced a smile;
 With every step he took she felt a slow,
 Cold fear. How could she bear to wait the while
 Until he came again--the thing well done?
 Tequila smuggled in his little boat
 For gringos--how she hated every one!
 Today it brought her heart into her throat.

Her troubled thoughts were threaded into grief.
 All day she started at the slightest sound,--
 The brushing of a harmless wind-blown leaf
 Or when the drooping palm-fronds clawed the ground.
 At dusk she crept inside and bowed her head
 Above Juan's handiwork--a baby's bed.

II

She saw his fingers as they smoothed the wood;
 She felt the soft dust from the grooves he made...
 This morning he had promised to be good--
 This trip the last--she need not be afraid!
 The gnarled mesquite cast shadows near the door,
 A small owl trilled; one lonely star came out.
 He would be coming soon, to go no more...
 Why did she tremble so--why did she doubt?

She roused herself to light the darkening room
 With candles leaning in a broken cup;
 She made a fire to brighten up the gloom;
 The small flame cheered her as the smoke went up.
 And then she made tortillas, brown and thin,
 And cafe, as Juan liked it, black as sin!

III

The candles shortened and their lights grew dim;
 The pungent odor of the food had gone.
 She leaned against the open door to skim
 The starless night again and wish for dawn.
 Like men, the yucca stood against the black;
 Maguey plants squatted solemnly and still;
 But when she called, they could not answer back,
 Nor could they know her fear nor feel her chill.

A voice from somewhere called her--then grew loud.
 Perhaps a traveler had lost his way.
 She'd answer, give him food, Juan would be proud
 To give a wanderer a place to stay...
 And then the time would not seem very long,
 Till Juan came with a whistle or a song.

IV

Dawn came. She felt a breeze across her face,
 But could not rouse herself. A numbness bound
 her hands and feet, and left its drowsy trace
 Across her brain. She heard no stirring sound;
 The legged box stood as the night before,
 Tortillas there in stacks, the two cups clean...
 Why was she lying here beside the door?
 What were the words she'd heard, the things she'd seen?

Slowly her memory gave her back the night,
 The clump of trees, the messenger, the word!
 The man had thought so little of the fright
 Of raids and shots....Perhaps he thought she'd heard.
 But, oh, this thing--the last the man had said,
 Madre de Dios!...now her Juan was dead!

--Clara Hood Kugel

SPIRIT OF PLACE

Although we roamed our woods in youthful
 daring,
 And Gibson Woods and Duncan Woods as well;
 We faltered at the edge of Lindsey Botton;
 It was a region held in evil spell.

But sometimes safer paths became prosaic;
 Clifford would say: Now we will go down there!
 We would consent in spite of the tingling spine-creeps
 To test our courage on the thorn of fear.

In Lindsey Bottom's ever-depening shadows,
 Grapevines assumed a giant-reptilian guise
 With scattered toadstools damply white and swollen
 For their enormous and malignant eyes.

Low bushes had a way of moving branches
 In sudden gusts of empty eeriness;
 And wings would flutter furtive hints of danger
 Too dire for any bird throat to express.

Down, gloomy mazes fallen leaves would rustle
 In stealthy menace; brambles would enmesh
 Our hurried, shallow-breathing bodies, clutching
 A hasty sacrifice of cloth and flesh.

Although we might have entered bravely talking
 Of happy projects or the games we knew,
 As timorous bare feet upon the leaf-mold
 Shrank from the chill of never-drying dew,

That chill would spread, and hush our very heartbeats;
 We would walk faster--then begin to run--
 And oh, the sweet release from dark enchantment,
 When safe across, we felt the morning sun.

--Grace Ross

THE BOLL WEEVIL

Oh, have you heard de latest,
 De latest all yore own
 All about de Boll Weevil
 What caused me to lose mah home?
 To lose mah home,--To lose mah home.

First time I saw de Boll Weevil
 He was setten on de Squah;
 Next time I saw dat Weevil
 He was settin' everywhere
 Jes' a-looking 'foh a home,--lookin' fah
 a home.

Fahmah say to de Weevil
 "What make youre head so red?"
 Weevil say to de fahmah,
 "It's a wondah ah an't dead.
 Lookin' foh a home, lookin' foh a home."

Negro say to de Weevil,
 "Ah'll throw you in de hot sand."
 Weevil say to de Negro,
 "Ah'll stand it like a man,
 Ah'll have a home--Ah'll have a home."

Says de captain to de mistress,
 "What do you think of dat?
 Dis Boll Weevil done make a nest
 Inside mah Sunday Hat;
 He'll have a home--He'll have a home."

If you wanta kill de Boll Weevil
 You better be in time.
 Use a little sugar
 And lots o' turpentine,
 And he'll be dead--an' he'll be dead.

--Folk Ballad

DEEP WELLS AND DREAM CITIES

I

Allie was a tall lad
 Born where brave men oled.
 Allie was a Texas boy,
 Of the prairies born and bred.

When he was a youngster,
 Less than three years old or so,
 Allie's father died with Travis
 At the blood-scarred Alamo.

And when Allie had grown older,
 Older in events than years,
 He cleared his eyes one day of childhood.
 Allie dried his mother's tears,

Took the ax and plowshare from her,
 Bent his back above the soil,
 Bent his spirit, too, for child still,
 Allie learned the drag of toil.

Plowing in the brass-bright noonday,
 Filing lime rocks for a fence,
 Digging gnarled old mesquite roots,
 He found labor's recompense

In the dream his pride was building:
 Labor never could be lost,
 Where was virgin soil for tilling,
 Tilling mattered, not the cost.

Allie, still a stripling, plowing,
 Lifting anxious eyes for rain,
 Saw fair cities rise in splendor
 On the blood-cought, priceless plain.

And knew not his hands were bleeding,
 That his back was bent and lame,
 Saw the prairie, wild and tameless,
 By his efforts growing tame,

Minded not the dirt and hardship,
 Minded not his youthless youth,
 Lost his dream something in building--
 In the losing, made it truth.

II

Allie built a larger cabin,
 Took a prairie girl to wife,
 Got three tall sons by his manhood,
 And exulted, giving life.

Allie reared his sons for Texas,
 Taught them God and Truth and Toil,
 Saw the dreams he had begotten
 Slowly rising from the soil,

Loved new Texas as he saw her,
 Gave no quarter---asked for none,
 Fought, and digged deep wells for water
 To defy the searing sun,

Loved the red heat and the norther,
 Listened to the mockingbird,
 Though he never paused from working,
 Allie saw, and Allie heard.

Allie died, his work unfinished,
 Dreams unbuilded in his breast.
 And his friends from distant townships
 Came, and wept, and prayed him rest.

When they asked his wife what writing
 Should be set above his head,
 "Lord," his widow wept, "poor Allie
 Never done a thing!" she said.

Allie died, and yet is living
 In the land he brought to birth,
 Though his flesh has long since crumbled,
 In the sun-baked Texas earth.

In his deep wells water glitters,
 And the grain that Allie sowed,
 Through unnumbered sons and grandsons,
 On the Texas plain still grows.

Allie's house and Allie's fences
 Long have tumbled into dust,
 Allie's ax and ancient plowshare
 Long have even ceased to rust.

Allie's sons are dead and vanished.
 But his son's sons look for rain
 In fair cities built in splendor
 On the blood-bought, priceless plain.

Allie's dreams have come to fruiting
 Thrice removed from Allie's time--
 Countless unremembered Allies
 Built fair Texas in their minds.

Countless unremembered Allies
 Fought and strove and bled and passed,
 Built an empire by their dreaming,
 Stone on stone, now done at last.

Finished? No, for yet in Texas,
 Sprawled beneath that brassy sun,
 There is need, sore need, for dreamers,
 Need for toilers, work undone.

And the prairie norther chants it,
 And the Texas mockers sing,
 "Lord, send us men like Allie,
 Who never done a thing!"

--Marie Fairbanks

FIDDLER'S ISLAND

A Ballad of the San Bernard River

Oh, listen tonight, at the moon's white death,
To a cry that is high and thin;
Above the whimper of wind and wave,
Threads the sound of a violin.

Where the river drinks deep of a cool, green tide
From the salty lip of the sea,
Forsaken and lonely the island broods,
And the fiddler still wails his plea.

For 'twas to this island, once long ago,
That young Robin brought home his bride,
Sweet Ellen, with hair like a dusky wing,
And eyes like a shallow tide.

Now, Robin was born to the lonely sea,
To the wind and the sea gulls crying;
Forever etched on his valiant heart
Was the sound of the sea's sad sighing.

But Ellen's love was for sober earth,
For a flower beneath her hand,
And the wind and the gulls and the bruising sea
Were things she could not understand.

For the grey moss coiled like a ghostly fog
And it drifted from branch to bole,
Till she felt its fingers were ever wound
Like a phantom about her soul.

"Oh, Robin," she cried, "'tis a lonely place,
And 'tis terror that haunts me here!"
And her voice climbed up like a wind-wracked wave,
Till it broke on a crag of fear.

Then Robin would play, with his fiddle and bow,
As he wooed her from her despair,
But the music was twisted by wind and wave,
And was drowned in her cold white stare.

For the breakers would bare their long white fangs,
And her listening face would blanch,
And she felt the clutch of the writhing moss,
As it shuddered from branch to branch.

She would wander alone on the curving shore,
 Where the waves cast their spiraled shells,
 And she leaned to hear on the restless wind,
 The sound of the hidden bells,

So faintly, at first, that she held her breath.
 As she gathered the silver sound,
 When they whispered across the long white sand
 Where the cold sea-hammers pound.

But their music swelled, till her aching fear
 Grew still at the hidden wonder,
 And she trembled not at the clamoring wind,
 Nor paled at the sea's wild thunder.

"I will come," she cried, to the cruel sea,
 To the beating wind "Be still!"
 "For the bells are calling the heart of me,
 And they shall have their will."

Then the waves were greedy about her feet,
 And her hair blew about her face,
 But the bells were beating against her brain,
 And she leaned to the chill embrace.

With kelp in her hair, they found her at last,
 Thrust high by the sagging tide;
 As cold as the sea shells beneath her,
 Young Robin brought home his fair bride.

Oh, bitter the sorrow that withered his heart,
 And the hours were heavy and slow,
 And ever he grieved for the bride he loved,
 As he played with his fiddle and bow.

Oh, sweet was the sound of the lost refrain
 That rode the wild wind in the night,
 And the ones who listened would turn away,
 And their faces were ashen with fright.

For 'twas said by the wary that often at night,
 When the moon wove a golden snare,
 Young Ellen came back to the lonely shore,
 And walked, with her sea-wet hair.

Though Robin now sleeps by his Ellen's side,
 And Ellen dreams sweet by her lover,
 And the grey moss drifting upon the wind,
 Has made them a kindly cover,

The music still wavers through wind and fog,
 And it whispers across the sand,
 And the staid folk shiver to hear the tune
 Not made by a mortal hand.

--Lurline Mallard Bowman

BALLAD OF BILL STANDIFER

Bill Standifer was a good cowhand
 As ever herded steers,
 Though he was only seventeen
 And scrawny for his years.

Lampasas was his native home,
 But he hankered for a change,
 So he went riding farther west
 To find a broader range.

"Now, Bill," the ranch boss said to him,
 "I'm leaving it to you
 To ride the southwest line, and see
 That no stray herds get through."

Two men came riding down the trail
 With a bunch of steers one day.
 "You'll have to turn 'em back," said Bill,
 "An' go some other way."

"Now, whose blame kid are you to tell
 John Mahan what to do?
 I'll take my black snake whip and flog
 The daylights out of you!"

"Then what you waitin' on," smiled Bill,
 With his hand close to his gun,
 But a voice behind him spoke and said,
 "Just take it easy, son,

And put your hands up toward the sky--
 I'll keep him covered, John,
 And you can give him what he needs
 Get down and lay it on."

Bill Standifer turned round to look:
 A rifle in his eye,
 And he knew that it was up to him
 To take the whip or die.

The rawhide bit into his flesh
 And cut his shirt in strips;
 The red whelps rose upon his back
 And the blood ran down his hips.

He spoke but once--through gritting teeth
 "I've got just this to say:
 You'd better kill me John, Mahan,
 Or there'll come another day,"

He rode back to the ranch house,
 Says, "Boss, I want my pay;
 I got to go and kill a man,
 An' I'm leavin' right away."

"Forget it, kid," the ranch boss laughed,
 "And get back on the line."
 "You wouldn't talk that way," said Bill,
 "If your back hurt like mine."

He found his man on Pony Creek
 And looked him in the eye:
 "John Mahan, we have met again
 An' one of us must die."

The rustler wheeled and made his draw
 In manner most expert,
 But a bullet broke his shooting arm
 And his gun fell in the dirt.

And then he spoke to Standifer
 In pleading voice, "Now, son,
 I know that you won't shoot a man
 That does not have a gun."

"It wouldn't be good etiket
 In bravery, I'll agree
 But you didn't ask no favors
 When you laid the whip on me."

John Mahan wheeled his big roan horse
 And like a flash was gone;
 Bill Standifer put spurs to his,
 And the race of death was on.

Two hundred yards, three hundred yards--
 The dust rose up like smoke--
 Five hundred yards, six hundred yards,
 And then a pistol spoke.

The first shot got the flyin' roan,
 The next shot got the man,
 And they went down together,
 The horse and John Mahan.

And Bill said to himself, as he mopped
 The dust and sweat from his brow,
 "I've done what I came here to do,
 An' my back feels better now!"

--Whitney Montgomery

THE LAW WEST OF THE PECOS

Judge Roy Bean of Vinegarroon
 Held high court in his own saloon.
 Fer a killin' or thievin' or other sech fracas,
 Bean was the law out west of the Pecos.
 Set on a keg an' allowed no foolin'.
 Closed ever' case with "That's my rulin'!"
 A gun butt thump an' a judgy snort
 Announced to the boys he was openin' court;
 And every once in a while or less,
 He'd thump with his gun for a short recess,
 Step to the bar like a spry ol' lynx
 An' call all present to buy some drinks.
 Juryman, witness, thirsty or dry,
 Stepped right up fer their ol' red-eye.

Once on a jury a man called Hanks
 Set where he wuz an' says, "No, thanks!"
 "Now by gobs!" wuz Judge Bean's snort,
 "I fine yuh ten fer contempt of court!"

Hanks he hemmed an' Hanks he hawed,
 But finally out of his pants he drewed
 A bill fer twenty, an' paid his fine.

"Ten bucks change," he says, "is mine."
"Change?" roars the law of the Pecos Range.
"This here co'rt don't make no change!"
Judge Dean smiled his sixgun smile:
"I raise yuh ten an' take your pile!
An' now, by gobs, without no foolin',
Wet up your whistles, fer that's my rulin'!"

Oh, out in the West when the range wuz raw,
West of the Pecos law was law!

--S. Omar Barker

Authors

Walter R. Adams, b. Texas, 1897, lives on a farm near Ireland, Texas. Author: Verse, "The Lead Lie Down," "Bachelor's Poppy."

Mary Hunt Affleck, b. Kentucky, 1847, was one of the most popular earlier writers of Texas. Author: "Gates Ajar and Other Poems" and "A Mother's Question." Resided in Brenham, Texas

Frances Alexander, b. Blanco, Texas, is professor of English in the Texas College of Arts and Industries, Kingsville.

Arden Anthony is a Texas poet. Her poem "Dirt Farmer" was published in the Kaleidograph Anthology (1938).

Mary K. Armstrong, Marshall, Texas, is Director of Publicity for Marshall College.

Stanley E. Babb, b. Bristol, England, 1899, is literary editor of the "Galveston News." Author: Verse, "The Death of a Buccaneer."

Georgia C. Bader, b. Bellville, Texas, has had poems published in Braithwaite's anthology and Greer and Barns' "New Voices of the Southwest." Resides in Bellville.

Karle Wilson Baker, b. Arkansas, 1878, is professor of English in Stephen F. Austin College, Nacagdoches, Texas. In "Who's Who" and "Stevenson's Home Book of Modern Verse." Author: Verse, "Blue Smoke," "Burning Bush," "Dreamers on Horseback."

S. Omar Barker, b. New Mexico, 1894, is a rancher, teacher, journalist and poet, living near Beulah, New Mexico. Author: Verse, "Vientos de las Sierras," "Winds of the Morning," and "Buckaroo Ballads."

Leola Christi Barnes, b. Texas, lives in Santa Anna, Texas. Author: Verse, "Crimson Lawnings," "Purple Petals," "Silver Century."

Marie Barton, b. Paris, Texas, teacher of Latin and English in Paris High School. Writer of short stories and verse.

Merill Bishop, b. New York City, is Director of English and Libraries in San Antonio Junior Schools. Author: Verse, "Chromatropes," "Sonnets in a Hospital."

George D. Bond, b. 1903, Hillsboro, Texas, has served as Southern Methodist University, and on the editorial staff of "Southwest Review" and Eastern Magazines. Resides in Dallas.

Iva M. Blount, b. Texas, is teacher of English in the Edgar Allan Poe Junior School, San Antonio. Author: Verse, Anthology, "High Roads of Texas Verse."

Lurline Mallard Bowman is a musician and poet whose home is in Bay City, Texas.

Evantha Caldwell, b. Texas, has had two of her negro stories published in O'Brien's Year Book. Writer of philosophic and descriptive verse. Resides in San Antonio.

Peggy Caldwell, b. Hedley, Texas, 1909, is a teacher in Lakeview, Texas. Resides in Hedley.

Dorothy Callaway (1897-1939) b. Austin, served on the staff of the "San Antonio Express." Resided in San Antonio. Author: "Lantern and Lyre."

Ralph Cheyney, b. Philadelphia, is the son of the eminent historian, Edward Potts Cheyney. Has poems published in over one hundred anthologies. Author: Two books of verse and co-author with his wife, Lucia of five other volumes. Died, San Antonio. 1941.

James Courtney Challis, b. Kansas, was a government clerk at Fort Sam Houston. Author: Verse, "Indian Summer," "My Literary House." Died, 1933, San Antonio.

William Lawrence Chittenden (Larry) b. New Jersey, 1862, bought the Chittenden Ranch near Anson, Texas in 1887. Non wide recognition for his breezy western verse. Author: Verse, "Ranch Verses," now in its sixteenth edition, and "Bermuda Verses."

William Russell Clark, b. Texas, 1900, founded "The Buccaneer" and is former editor and publisher of the "Memphis Democrat." Author: Verse, "Logwood and Wild Laurel," "A Stained Glass Window." Resides in Memphis, Texas.

Maude E. Cole, b. Texas, is Librarian of the Carnegie Library, Abilene, Texas. Author: Verse, "Clay Bound."

Edwardine Crenshaw Couch, b. Arkansas, 1894, is a member of the law firm of Couch and Couch, Bonham, Texas.

Grace Noll Crowell, b. Iowa, 1877, probably the best nationally known poet in Texas, is in "Who's Who" and has poems in Stevenson's "Home Book of Verse." Author: Verse, "Silver in the Sun," "Flame in the Wind," "Songs of Courage," and "Splendor Ahead."

Olive Tilford Dargan, b. Kentucky, is one of the outstanding poets and novelists of the South. Won \$500. prize for best book of poems by a Southern Author (1916). Publishes in "Scribners," "Harpers," "Century," and "Atlantic Monthly." Author: Prose, "Highland Annals," "Call Home the Heart," "A Stone Came Rolling;" Verse, "The Pathflower," "Lute and Furrow," and "The Cycle's Rim."

Lois Virginia Davidge, b. Texas, is teacher of English in Laredo High School. Author: Verse, "Manana."

Frank Desprez, an unknown poet probably of French extraction, is the author of "Lasca," a romantic ballad of the Southwest which has been a favorite of all poetry lovers for the past fifty years.

Glenn Ward Dresbach, b. Illinois, 1889, lived in El Paso a number of years. Is in "Who's Who" and has had poems re-published in Monroe's "The New Poetry," Larkham's "The Book of Poetry," Stevenson's "Home Book of Modern Verse." Resided in Lanark, Illinois.

Marie Fairbanks (Whitehead) b. San Antonio, 1919, won the Texan Prize in Texas Poetry Society Contest while a student in Thomas Jefferson High School, San Antonio.

Mary S. Fitzgerald, b. Texas, 1875, writes feature articles and poetry. Author: Verse, "An Etching" and the "May of Beauty." Lives in Tyler.

Nora Barnhardt Fermier resides in College Station, Texas. In 1924 she won the Texan prize in the verse contest of The Texas Poetry Society.

Jan Isabelle Fortune, b. Texas, 1892, is author of fifty two historical radio programs. Co-author of "Cavalcade," Texas Centennial Drama, numerous short stories and three volumes of verse, one of which, "Black Poppies," is in its fifth edition. Resides in Dallas.

Ruth Garrison Frances, b. Belton, Texas, is a lecturer and writer for leading poetry magazines and trade journals, Resides in Beaumont.

Ollivia Byrd Friend, b. Texas, is a member of the San Angelo Poetry Society and The Poetry Society of Texas. Resides in San Angelo.

Grace F. Guthrie, b. Missouri, was editor of the "Hereford Brand," for many years. A gifted poet, who has won many prizes. Lives in Kansas City, Missouri.

Lucille Donaldson Goodlett, b. Mississippi, 1894, lives on "Chanticleer Farms," Egypt, Texas. Author: Verse, "Walk God's Chillun;" play: "Long Los' Chile."

Frank Goodwyn, b. Alice, 1911, was reared on the Norias Ranch, a part of the vast King Estate. Author: Verse, "Voice

of Free Men," "Behind the Scenes;" prose: Folk Lore of the King Ranch Mexicans.

Hilton Ross Greer, b. Texas, 1879, has been on the editorial staff of the Dallas Journal for twenty years. President of the Poetry Society of Texas (1922-42) Author: Verse, "Sungleams and Gossamers," "The Spider and Other Poems," "A Prairie Prayer," "Ten and Twenty Aprils;" Verse Collections: "Voices of the Southwest" and "New Voices of the Southwest."

Marie Grimes, o. Dallas, has written verse since 1925 and won the Old South Prize of the Texas Poetry Society in 1930. Lives in Dallas.

Lyra Haisley, b. Indiana, 1905, is a member of the Southwestern Poetry Society and The Poetry Society of Texas. Resides in Corpus Christi.

Jeannie Pendleton Hall, b. Virginia, has had her poetry republished in five anthologies. Her home is in Fort Worth.

Laura V. Hamner, pioneer of the Texas Panhandle, is superintendent of schools in Potter County and lives in Amarillo.

Hazel Harper Harris (Mrs. John L. Bradner), b. Mississippi, a former teacher of San Antonio, won the book, publication award of the Poetry Society of Texas, 1931 with her "Wings of the Morning," "Resides in Chicago.

Clyde Walton Hill (1883-1933), b. Austin, was an instructor in the North Dallas High School. Author: Verse, "Shining Trails,"

Marvin Luter Hill, b. Kentucky, 1888, has been writing stories and poetry since 1900. Lives in El Paso.

Boyce House is a newspaper man of Fort Worth and conducts a weekly radio program on "Texas" over the Texas Quality Network.

Margaret Belle Houston, b. Texas, is the grand-daughter of General Sam Houston. Widely known writer of verse, stories, and novels. Author: Verse, "Prairie Flowers," "The Singing Heart," "Lanterns in the Dusk," Biograph in "Who's Who in America." Lives in New York City.

Ruth Humphreys, who lives in Mocona, Texas is a successful contributor to "Kaleidograph," "Lyric," "Lantern" and The Poetry Society of Texas' "Year Books."

Martha Lavinia Hunter, b. Virginia, 1870, is a writer of feature articles, book reviews, short stories and verse. Biograph in "Who's Who among North American Writers." Author: Verse, "Far Places." Resides in Dallas.

Siddie Joe Johnson, b. Dallas, is children's librarian in the Carnegie Public Library, Dallas, Unquestionably one of the finest poets of the younger Texas group. Author: "Agarita Berry."

Kenneth C. Kaufman, b. Kansas, 1887, is a member of the Department of English, University of Oklahoma. Resides in Norman, Oklahoma.

John Knox, b. New Mexico, 1905, has published verse in many anthologies and periodicals. Author: "Through a Glass Darkly." Home is in Abilene.

Therese Lindsey, b. Texas, 1870, was one of the founders of the Poetry Society of Texas, and since 1922 has been donor of the Old South Prize. Author: Verse, "Blue Smoke," "The Cardinal Flower." Home is in Tyler.

Elizabeth Ann Little, a native Texan, is a young poet of promise, who lives in San Angelo.

Lilith Lorraine, (Mrs. Cleveland Wright) b. Corpus Christi, 1894, is President of the National Avalon Poetry Shrine and lives in San Antonio. Author: Verse, "Banners of Victory" and "Beyond Bewilderment."

Amy Lowell (1874-1925) b. Brookline Massachusetts, was a distinguished poet and author and leader of a group of

modern writers who experimented in free verse forms.

Nora Hefley Mahon, b. Cameron, Texas, 1882, has won verse prizes in the Federation of Women's Club and other state contests. Lives in Eastland.

Edna Coe Majors, b. Texas, 1884, is Poetry Chairman of Sixth District, Texas Federation of Women's Clubs. Author: Verse, "Broken Union;" play, "The Nesters." Resides in Colorado, Texas.

Lora Cheaney Manguson, a native Texan. While a student at Southern Methodist University wrote "The Dallad of Jean Lafitte which has been reprinted in "The Southwest in Literature" and "Prose and Poetry for Enjoyment."

J. Park Passey, b. North Carolina, is a former Texas school superintendent and has written extensively in the fields of verse, drama, and fiction. Resides in Dallas.

Virginia Lee McConnell, b. St. Louis, 1897, lives in Houston and is the author of three books of verse: "Rimes Reasonable," "Whispering Dust," and "Flower Fashions."

Violet McDougal, b. Tennessee, 1897, co-author with her sister, Mary McDougal Axelson of a book of verse: "Wandering Fires." Resides Sapulpa, Oklahoma.

Kate Randle Menefee, b. Gonzales, Texas, had poems reprinted in such anthologies as "Braithwaite's," "Grub Street Book of Verse," and "New Voices of the Southwest." Died in San Antonio, 1937.

Patrick D. Moreland, b. North Carolina, 1893, is a Methodist minister. His "Arrow Unspent" won the book publication award of the Poetry Society of Texas in 1931 and "Slumbers at Noon," in 1934. Resides in Austin.

Paul Morgan, b. Lometa, Texas, 1897, has been college professor of English, school principal and superintendent. Served as principal of Westover School, San Marcos. Author: Prose, "Literary Trends as Indicated in "Texas Newspapers," 1836-1846; Verse, "Texas Ballads."

Vaida Stewart Montgomery, b. Childress, 1898, has been co-publisher of "Kaleidograph" since 1929. Author: Verse, "Locoed and Other Poems," "Century with Texas Poets and Poetry."

Whitney Montgomery, b. Texas, 1877, has published over five hundred poems. Editor of "Kaleidograph" and of Kaleidograph Press. Biograph in "Who's Who in America" and "North American Authors." Author: Verse, "Corn Silks and Cotton Blossoms," "Brown Fields and Bright Lights," "Hounds in the Hills."

William Dyer Moore, a native Texas, is professor of Modern Languages at Texas State College for Women, Denton. Writer of verse and historical plays.

Berta Hart Lance, b. Albany, Texas, 1883 is one of the outstanding poets of Texas. "Cattle" which won the Texan Prize offered by the Poetry Society of Texas, 1931, has been pronounced by critics to be "the best poem ever written on a Texas theme." Resides in Arizona.

Augusta Maunheim has contributed verse to farm journals, and poetry magazines, particularly Kaleidograph. Lives in Cuero, Texas.

Gussie Osborne (1877-1936) was a clerk in the Medical Department, Fort Sam Houston, 1918-1933. Resided in San Antonio.

Annabel Parks, b. Dallas County is a writer of short stories and verse. Author: Verse, "Big Texas." Resides in Lancaster, Texas.

Lucie Gill Price, b. Louisiana, has won many prizes the Poetry Society Alabama, the Poetry Society of Texas and various magazines. Resides in Mont Belview, Texas.

Nancy Ritchie Ransome, b. Virginia, writes poetry, special articles, verse jokes, and fiction. Author: Verse, "Texas Wild Flower Legends" and "The Bucking Burro." Lives in Dallas.

Dorothy B. Robbins, b. Texas, 1873, is a feature writer, reporter and poet. Author: Verse, "Apricot Gold." Lives in Tyler.

Lexie Lean Robertson, a native Texan, won first place in the Book Publication Contest of the Poetry Society of Texas (1931) with her verse collection, "I Keep a Rainbow." Previous collection: "Red Heels." Lives in Rising Star, Texas.

Ollie L. Roediger, b. Texas, 1902, is a professional newspaper woman and lives in Wichita Falls. Writes short stories, features, and verse.

Dr. Grace Ross, b. Tyler, has contributed poems to more than six anthologies and the better poetry magazines. Lives in Fort Worth.

Clara Hood Rugel, b. Texas, is a professional writer of radio plays, short stories, essays and verses. Resides in Houston.

Major William Brush Ruggles, b. Austin 1891, was a professional sports and editorial writer for the Dallas News before his entry into the Armed Service in 1941. Home is in Dallas.

L. Case Russell, a well known author of screen plays, has had three hundred plays produced. Was with United Artists at one time. Divides her time between California and her husband's ranch in Arizona.

Sunshine Dickinson Ryman, b. Texas, 1887, won the Old South Prize offered by the Poetry Society of Texas in 1932. Home is in Houston.

Belle Hunt Shortridge (1808-1893) b. Texas, was one of the popular young writers of her time. Author: Verse, "Lone Star Lights;" Novels, "Held in Trust" and "Circumstance."

Almeda Griffin Shurbet has published verse in the "Buccaneer," "Dallas News," Poetry Society of Texas "Year Book" and elsewhere. Resides in Dallas.

John P. Sjolander (1851-1904) b. Sweden, was known as "Dean of Texas Poets." Came to Texas 1871. Prose and verse have appeared in many leading periodicals. Author: Verse, "Salt of the Earth and Sea." Resided in Cedar Bayou, Texas.

Dr. Virginia Spates, b. West Virginia, came to Texas in 1901 and was the first osteopathic physician in the state. Poems have appeared in leading magazines and newspapers all over the United States. Author: Verse, "Wings Against the Wind," "Enchanted Windows," and "Dust from the Heels of Pegasus." Died in Sherman, 1940.

Cherie Foreman Spencer, a former Texan, won the Texan Prize (1926) and the Old South Prize (1928) offered by the Poetry Society of Texas. Residing in Monticello, Arkansas.

Goldie Capers Smith, b. Dallas, is a poet and journalist who has made wide contribution to the better magazines and periodicals of the country. Author: Prose, "The Creative Arts in Texas;" Verse, "Sword of Laughter."

Rebecca W. Smith, b. Kentucky, 1894 is professor of English in Texas Christian University, Fort Worth. Her editorial and writing activities are varied and extensive. Co-editor of "The Southwest in Literature" and editor of the Book Page of the Texas Outlook.

Ruth McCauley Thorne, b. Raynor, Texas, is a poet and painter, residing in San Angelo, where she is an active member of the San Angelo Poetry Society.

Lucia Trent (Mrs. Ralph Cheyney) b. in Virginia, is the daughter of Dr. W. P. Trent, distinguished scholar and author of Columbia University. Mrs. Cheyney is on the staff of several poetry magazines, among them Verse Craft and Unity. Organizer of the Western Poets' Congress in California. Resides in San Antonio.

Charline Underwood, winner of the Quatrain Prize of Kaleidograph, May, 1938, is a Texas poet, musician, and composer.

Hallie King Van Reekum, formerly in the offices of Southern Methodist University, has published verse in the

"Torch Bearer," the Texas Poetry Society "Year Books" and elsewhere. Lives in Dallas.

William Allan Ward, b. Corsicana, 1891, is author of two hundred published sport stories and eight hundred published poems. Editor of Dallas Journal, Oak Cliff edition. Resides in Oak Cliff.

Katherine Hymas Williams, b. in San Antonio, lives on property granted to her ancestors by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. Was a regular contributor to Christian Monitor for five years. Lives on E. Locust St. San Antonio.

Fay M. Yauger, b. 1902, Wichita Falls, has won annual prizes in contests conducted by the Poetry Society of Texas, The Poetry Society of America and Kaleidograph Magazine. Resides in Wichita Falls.

Stark Young, b. Mississippi, 1881, taught for several years in the University of Texas, has achieved national fame as a play wright, novelist, literary critic, essayist, and poet. Until recently editor of the "New Republic" Author: Verse, "The Blind Man at the Window;" novel, "So Red the Rose."

Jake Zeitlin, b. Fort Worth, is a book publisher in California, and is a specialist in fine printing and format. Represented in two national anthologies of verse. Author: Verse, "For Whispers and Chants." Lives in Los Angeles.

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