

Classic Poetry Series

Madison Julius Cawein
- poems -

Publication Date:

2012

Publisher:

Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Madison Julius Cawein(1865-1914)

Madison Cawein (23 March 1865 – 8 December 1914) was a poet from Louisville, Kentucky, whose poem "Waste Land" has been linked with T. S. Eliot's later *The Waste Land*.

Cawein's father made patent medicines from herbs. Cawein thus became acquainted with and developed a love for local nature as a child. He worked in a Cincinnati pool hall as an assistant cashier for six years, saving his pay so he could return home to write. His output was thirty-six books and 1,500 poems. He was known as the "Keats of Kentucky."

In 1912 Cawein was forced to sell his Old Louisville home, St James Court (a two-and-a-half story brick house built in 1901, which he had purchased in 1907), as well as some of his library, after losing money in the 1912 stock market crash. In 1914 the Authors Club of New York City placed him on their relief list. He died later that year and was buried in Cave Hill Cemetery.

The link between his work and Eliot's was pointed out by Canadian academic Robert Ian Scott in *The Times Literary Supplement* in 1995. The following year Bevis Hillier drew more comparisons in *The Spectator* (London) with other poems by Cawein; he compared Cawein's lines "...come and go/Around its ancient portico" with Eliot's "...come and go/talking of Michelangelo."

Cawein's "Waste Land" appeared in the January 1913 issue of Chicago magazine *Poetry* (which also contained an article by Ezra Pound on London poets).

Cawein's poetry allied his love of nature with a devotion to earlier English and European literature, mythology, and classical allusion. This certainly encompassed much of T. S. Eliot's own interest, but whereas Eliot was also seeking a modern language and form, Cawein strove to maintain a traditional approach. Although he gained an international reputation, he has been eclipsed as the genre of poetry in which he worked became increasingly outmoded.

A Baby

Why speak of Rajah rubies,
And roses of the South?
I know a sweeter crimson
A baby's mouth.

Why speak of Sultan sapphires
And violet seas and skies?
I know a lovelier azure
A baby's eyes.

Go seek the wide world over!
Search every land and mart!
You 'll never find a pearl like this
A baby's heart.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Ballad Of Sweethearts

Summer may come, in sun-blondé splendor,
To reap the harvest that Springtime sows;
And Fall lead in her old defender,
Winter, all huddled up in snows:
Ever a-south the love-wind blows
Into my heart, like a vane asway
From face to face of the girls it knows
But who is the fairest it's hard to say.

If Carrie smile or Maud look tender,
Straight in my bosom the gladness glows;
But scarce at their side am I all surrender
When Gertrude sings where the garden grows:
And my heart is a bloom, like the red rose shows
For her hand to gather and toss away,
Or wear on her breast, as her fancy goes
But who is the fairest it's hard to say.

Let Laura pass, as a sapling slender,
Her cheek a berry, her mouth a rose,-
Or Blanche or Helen,-to each I render
The worship due to the charms she shows:
But Mary's a poem when these are prose;
Here at her feet my life I lay;
All of devotion to her it owes
But who is the fairest it's hard to say.

How can my heart of my hand dispose?
When Ruth and Clara, and Kate and May,
In form and feature no flaw disclose
But who is the fairest it's hard to say.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Belgian Christmas

The 'happy year' of 1914
AN hour from dawn:
The snow sweeps on
As it swept with sleet last night:
The Earth around
Breathes never a sound,
Wrapped in its shroud of white.
A waked cock crows
Under the snows;
Then silence.— After while
The sky grows blue,
And a star looks through
With a kind o' bitter smile.
A whining dog;
An axe on a log,
And a muffled voice that calls:
A cow's long low;
Then footsteps slow
Stamping into the stalls.
A bed of straw
Where the wind blows raw
Through cracks of the stable door:
A child's small cry,
A voice nearby,
That says, 'One mouth the more.'
A different note
In a man's rough throat
As he turns at an entering tread —
Satyrs! see!
'My woman — she
Was brought last night to bed!'
A cry of 'Halt!'—
'Ach! ich bin kalt!'
'A spy!'—'No.'—'That is clear!
There's a good shake-down
I' the jail in town —
For her!' —And then, 'My orders here.'
A shot, sharp-rolled
As the clouds unfold:

A scream; and a cry forlorn...
Clothed red with fire,
Like the Heart's Desire,
Look down the Christmas Morn.
The babe with light
Is haloed bright,
And it is Christmas Day:
A cry of woe;
Then footsteps slow,
And the wild guns, far away.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Bit Of Coast

One tree, storm-twisted, like an evil hag,
The sea-wind in its hair, beside a path
Waves frantic arms, as if in wild-witch wrath
At all the world. Gigantic, grey as slag,
Great boulders shoulder through the hills, or crag
The coast with danger, monster-like, that lifts
Huge granite, round which wheel the gulls and swifts,
And at whose base the rotting sea-weeds drag.
Inward the hills are wooded; valley-cleft;
Tangled with berries; vistaed dark with pines;
At whose far end, as 'twere within a frame,
Some trail of water that the ocean left
Gleams like a painting where one white sail shines,
Lit with the sunset's poppy-coloured flame.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Boy's Heart

It's out and away at break of day,
To frolic and run in the sun-sweet hay:
It's up and out with a laugh and shout
Let the old world know that a boy's about.

It's ho for the creek that the minnows streak,
That the sunbeams dapple, the cattle seek;
For a fishing-pole and a swimming-hole,
Where a boy can loaf and chat with his soul.

It's oh to lie and look at the sky
Through the roof of the leaves that's built so high:
Where all day long the birds make song,
And everything 's right and nothing is wrong.

It's hey to win where the breeze blows thin,
And watch the twinkle of feather and fin:
To lie all day and dream away
The long, long hours as a boy's heart may.

It's oh to talk with the trees and walk
With the winds that whisper to flower and stalk:
And it's oh to look in the open book
Of your own boy-dreams in some leafy nook.

Away from the noise of the town, and toys,
To dream the dreams that are dreamed by boys:
To run in the heat, with sun-tanned feet,
To the music of youth in your heart's young beat.

To splash and wade in the light and shade
Of the league-long ripples the sunbeams braid:
In boyhood's wise to see with eyes
Of fancy hued as the butterflies.

To walk for hours and learn the flowers,
And things that haunt the woods and bowers:
To climb to a nest on a tree's top crest,
Where a bird, like your heart, is singing its best.

To feel the rain on your face again,
Like the thirsty throats that the flowers strain:
To hear the call of the waterfall,
Like the voice of youth, a wonder-thrall.

And it's oh for me at last to see
The rainbow's end by the hillside tree:
On the wet hillside where the wild ferns hide,
Like a boy's bright soul to see it glide.

Then to laugh and run through shower and sun
In the irised hues that are arched and spun:
And, the rainbow's friend, to find and spend
The bag of gold at the rainbow's end.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Broken Rainbow On The Skies Of May

A Broken rainbow on the skies of May,
Touching the dripping roses and low clouds,
And in wet clouds its scattered glories lost:
So in the sorrow of her soul the ghost
Of one great love, of iridescent ray,
Spanning the roses dim of memory,
Against the tumult of life's rushing crowds
A broken rainbow on the skies of May.
A flashing humming-bird among the flowers,
Deep-coloured blooms; its slender tongue and bill
Sucking the syrups and the calyxed myrrhs,
Till, being full of sweets, away it whirrs:
Such was his love that won her heart's rich bowers
To give to him their all, their honied showers,
The bloom from which he drank his body's fill
A flashing humming-bird among the flowers.
A moon, moth-white, that through long mists of fleece
Moves amber-girt into a bulk of black,
And, lost to vision, rims the black with froth:
A love that swept its moon, like some great moth,
Across the heaven of her soul's young peace;
And, smoothly passing, in the clouds did cease
Of time, through which its burning light comes back
A moon, moth-white, that moves through mists of fleece.
A bolt of living thunder downward hurled,
Momentary blazing from the piled-up storm,
That instants out the mountains and the ocean,
The towering crag, then blots the sight's commotion:
Love, love that swiftly coming bared the world,
The deeps of life, 'round which fate's clouds are curled,
And, ceasing, left all night and black alarm
A bolt of living thunder downward hurled.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Cameo

Why speak of Giamschid rubies
Whence rosy starlight drips?
I know a richer crimson,
The ruby of her lips.

Why speak of pearls of Oman
That shells of ocean sheathe?
I know a purer nacre,
The white pearls of her teeth.

Why tell me of the sapphires
That Kings and Khalifs prize?
I know a lovelier azure,
The sapphires of her eyes.

Go search the far Earth over,
Go search the farthest sea,
You will not find a cameo
Like her God carved for me.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Cavalier's Toast

Some drink to Friendship, some to Love,
Through whom the world is fair, perdie!
But I to one these others prove,
Who leaps 'mid lions for a glove,
Or dies to set another free
I drink to Loyalty.

II.

No dagger his, no cloak and mask,
Free-faced he stands so all may see;
Let Friendship set him any task,
Or Love reward he does not ask,
The deed is done whate'er it be
So here's to Loyalty.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Coign Of The Forest

The hills hang woods around, where green, below
Dark, breezy boughs of beech-trees, mats the moss,
Crisp with the brittle hulls of last year's nuts;
The water hums one bar there; and a glow
Of gold lies steady where the trailers toss
Red, bugled blossoms and a rock abuts;
In spots the wild-phlox and oxalis grow
Where beech-roots bulge the loam, protrude across
The grass-grown road and roll it into ruts.

And where the sumach brakes grow dusk and dense,
Among the rocks, great yellow violets,
Blue-bells and wind-flowers bloom; the agaric
In dampness crowds; a Fungus, thick, intense
With gold and crimson and wax-white, that sets
The May-apples along the terraced creek
At bold defiance. Where the old rail-fence
Divides the hollow, there the bee-bird whets
His bill, and there the elder hedge is thick.

No one can miss it; for two cat-birds nest,
Calling all morning, in the trumpet-vine;
And there at noon the pewee sits and floats
A woodland welcome; and his very best
At eve the red-bird sings, as if to sign
The record of its loveliness with notes.
At night the moon stoops over it to rest,
And unreluctant stars. Where waters shine
There runs a whisper as of wind-swept oats.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Dream Shape

With moon-white hearts that held a gleam
I gathered wild-flowers in a dream,
And shaped a woman, whose sweet blood
Was odour of the wildwood bud.

From dew, the starlight arrowed through,
I wrought a woman's eyes of blue;
The lids that on her eyeballs lay,
Were rose-pale petals of the May.

Out of a rosebud's veins I drew
The fragrant crimson beating through
The languid lips of her, whose kiss
Was as a poppy's drowsiness.

Out of the moonlight and the air
I wrought the glory of her hair,
That o'er her eyes' blue heaven lay
Like some gold cloud o'er dawn of day.

I took the music of the breeze
And water, whispering in the trees,
And shaped the soul that breathed below
A woman's blossom breasts of snow.

A shadow's shadow in the glass
Of sleep, my spirit saw her pass:
And thinking of it now, meseems
We only live within our dreams.

For in that time she was to me
More real than our reality;
More real than Earth, more real than I
The unreal things that pass and die.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Dreamer Of Dreams

He lived beyond men, and so stood
Admitted to the brotherhood
Of beauty:-dreams, with which he trod
Companioned like some sylvan god.
And oft men wondered, when his thought
Made all their knowledge seem as naught,
If he, like Uther's mystic son,
Had not been born for Avalon.

When wandering mid the whispering trees,
His soul communed with every breeze;
Heard voices calling from the glades,
Bloom-words of the Leimoniaeds;
Or Dryads of the ash and oak,
Who syllabled his name and spoke
With him of presences and powers
That glimpsed in sunbeams, gloomed in showers.

By every violet-hallowed brook,
Where every bramble-matted nook
Rippled and laughed with water sounds,
He walked like one on sainted grounds,
Fearing intrusion on the spell
That kept some fountain-spirit's well,
Or woodland genius, sitting where
Red, racy berries kissed his hair.

Once when the wind, far o'er the hill,
Had fall'n and left the wildwood still
For Dawn's dim feet to trail across,-
Beneath the gnarled boughs, on the moss,
The air around him golden-ripe
With daybreak,-there, with oaten pipe,
His eyes beheld the wood-god, Pan,
Goat-bearded, horned; half brute, half man;
Who, shaggy-haunched, a savage rhyme
Blew in his reed to rudest time;
And swollen-jowled, with rolling eye-
Beneath the slowly silvering sky,

Whose rose streaked through the forest's roof-
Danced, while beneath his boisterous hoof
The branch was snapped, and, interfused
Between gnarled roots, the moss was bruised.

And often when he wandered through
Old forests at the fall of dew-
A new Endymion, who sought
A beauty higher than all thought-
Some night, men said, most surely he
Would favored be of deity:
That in the holy solitude
Her sudden presence, long-pursued,
Unto his gaze would stand confessed:
The awful moonlight of her breast
Come, high with majesty, and hold
His heart's blood till his heart grew cold,
Unpulsed, unsinewed, all undone,
And snatch his soul to Avalon.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Fallen Beech

Nevermore at doorways that are barken
Shall the madcap wind knock and the moonlight;
Nor the circle which thou once didst darken,
Shine with footsteps of the neighbouring moonlight,
Visitors for whom thou oft didst hearken.

Nevermore, gallooned with cloudy laces,
Shall the morning, like a fair freebooter,
Make thy leaves his richest treasure-places;
Nor the sunset, like a royal suitor,
Clothe thy limbs with his imperial graces.

And no more, between the savage wonder
Of the sunset and the moon's up-coming,
Shall the storm, with boisterous hoof-beats, under
Thy dark roof dance, Faun-like, to the humming
Of the Pan-pipes of the rain and thunder.

Oft the Satyr-spirit, beauty-drunken,
Of the Spring called; and the music measure
Of thy sap made answer; and thy sunken
Veins grew vehement with youth, whose pressure
Swelled thy gnarly muscles, winter-shrunken.

And the germs, deep down in darkness rooted,
Bubbled green from all thy million oilets,
Where the spirits, rain-and-sunbeam-suited,
Of the April made their whispering toilets,
Or within thy stately shadow footed.

Oft the hours of blonde Summer tinkled
At the windows of thy twigs, and found thee
Bird-blithe; or, with shapely bodies, twinkled
Lissom feet of naked flowers around thee,
Where thy mats of moss lay sunbeam-sprinkled.

And the Autumn with his gypsy-coated
Troop of days beneath thy branches rested,
Swarthy-faced and dark of eye; and throated

Songs of roaming; or with red hand tested
Every nut-bur that above him floated.

Then the Winter, barren-browed, but rich in
Shaggy followers of frost and freezing,
Made the floor of thy broad boughs his kitchen,
Trapper-like, to camp in; grimly easing
Limbs snow-furred and moccasined with lichen.

Now, alas! no more do these invest thee
With the dignity of whilom gladness!
They unto whose hearts thou once confessed thee
Of thy dreams now know thee not! and sadness
Sits beside thee where, forgot, dost rest thee.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Flower Of The Fields

Bee-Bitten in the orchard hung
The peach; or, fallen in the weeds,
Lay rotting, where still sucked and sung
The gray bee, boring to its seed's
Pink pulp and honey blackly stung.

The orchard-path, which led around
The garden, with its heat one twinge
Of dinning locusts, picket-bound
And ragged, brought me where one hinge
Held up the gate that scraped the ground.

All seemed the same: the martin-box
Sun-warped with pigmy balconies
Still stood, with all its twittering flocks,
Perched on its pole above the peas
And silvery-seeded onion-stocks.

The clove-pink and the rose; the clump
Of coppery sunflowers, with the heat
Sick to the heart: the garden stump,
Red with geranium-pots, arid sweet
With moss and ferns, this side the pump.

I rested, with one hesitant hand
Upon the gate. The lonesome day,
Droning with insects, made the land
One dry stagnation. Soaked with hay
And scents of weeds the hot wind fanned.

I breathed the sultry scents, my eyes
Parched as my lips. And yet I felt
My limbs were ice. As one who flies
To some wild woe. How sleepy smelt
The hay-sweet heat that soaked the skies!

Noon nodded; dreamier, lonelier
For one long, plaintive, forest-side
Bird-quaver. And I knew me near

Some heartbreak anguish.. . She had died.
I felt it, and no need to hear!

I passed the quince and pear-tree; where,
All up the porch, a grape-vine trails
How strange that fruit, whatever air
Or earth it grows in, never fails
To find its native flavour there!

And she was as a flower, too,
That grows its proper bloom and scent
No matter what the soil: she, who,
Born better than her place, still lent
Grace to the lowliness she knew.. .

They met me at the porch, and were
Sad-eyed with weeping. Then the room
Shut out the country's heat and purr,
And left light stricken into gloom
So love and I might look on her.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Forest Child

There is a place I search for still,
Sequestered as the world of dreams,
A bushy hollow, and a hill
That whispers with descending streams,
Cool, careless waters, wandering down,
Like Innocence who runs to town,
Leaving the wildwood and its dreams,
And prattling like the forest streams.

But still in dreams I meet again
The child who bound me, heart and hand,
And led me with a wildflower chain
Far from our world, to Faeryland:
Who made me see and made me know
The lovely Land of Long-Ago,
Leading me with her little hand
Into the world of Wonderland.

The years have passed: how far away
The day when there I met the child,
The little maid, who was a fay,
Whose eyes were dark and undefiled
And crystal as a woodland well,
That holds within its depths a spell,
Enchantments, featured like a child,
A dream, a poetry undefiled.

Around my heart she wrapped her hair,
And bound my soul with lips and eyes,
And led me to a cavern, where
Grey Legend dwelt in kingly guise,
Her kinsman, dreamier than the moon,
Who called her Fancy, read her rune,
And bade her with paternal eyes
Divest herself of her disguise.

And still I walk with her in dreams,
Though many years have passed since then,
And that high hill and its wild streams

Are lost as is that faery glen.
And as the years go swiftly by
I find it harder, when I try,
To meet with her, who led me then
Into the wildness of that glen.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Forest Flute

I Heard a reed among the hills,
A woodland reed of music where,
Like madcap children, ran the rills,
Boisterous, with wildly flowing hair.

I knew it for a pipe the Spring
Tuned to the rapture in her heart,
That in the egg should shape the wing,
And in the seed the wildflower start.

And I I followed where it blew,
And found a valley, dim and green,
A wild spot, like a dropp of dew,
Hung glimmeringly two hills between.

I heard the flute, a bird-like note,
That made the place a magic well,
On which enchantment seemed to float,
A spirit in a rainbow shell.

I knew what danced there with its flute,
Unseen, a part of soul and mind:
I saw the imprint of its foot,
In many a flower of orchis-kind.

I knew it of an ancient race,
Some myth the Greeks had known of old.
Could I have spoken it face to face
Of what lost dreams I might have told!

Madison Julius Cawein

A Forest Idyl

Beneath an old beech-tree
They sat together,
Fair as a flower was she
Of summer weather.
They spoke of life and love,
While, through the boughs above,
The sunlight, like a dove,
Dropped many a feather.

II.

And there the violet,
The bluet near it,
Made blurs of azure wet
As if some spirit,
Or woodland dream, had gone
Sprinkling the earth with dawn,
When only Fay and Faun
Could see or hear it.

III.

She with her young, sweet face
And eyes gray-beaming,
Made of that forest place
A spot for dreaming:
A spot for Oreads
To smooth their nut-brown braids,
For Dryads of the glades
To dance in, gleaming.

IV.

So dim the place, so blest,
One had not wondered
Had Dian's moonéd breast
The deep leaves Sundered,
And there on them awhile
The goddess deigned to smile,

While down some forest aisle.
The far hunt thundered.

V.

I deem that hour perchance
Was but a mirror
To show them Earth's romance
And draw them nearer:
A mirror where, meseems,
All that this Earth-life dreams,
All loveliness that gleams,
Their souls saw clearer.

VI.

Beneath an old beech-tree
They dreamed of blisses;
Fair as a flower was she
That summer kisses:
They spoke of dreams and days,
Of love that goes and stays,
Of all for which life prays,
Ah me! and misses.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Ghost And A Dream

Rain will fall on the fading flowers,
Winds will blow through the dripping tree,
When Fall leads in her tattered Hours
With Death to keep them company.
All night long in the weeping weather,
All night long in the garden grey,
A ghost and a dream will talk together
And sad are the things they will have to say:
Old sad things of the bough that's broken;
Heartbreak things of the leaf that's dead;
Old sad things no tongue hath spoken;
Sorrowful things no man hath said.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Ghost Of Yesterday

THERE is a house beside a way,
Where dwells a ghost of Yesterday:
The old face of a beauty, faded,
Looks from its garden: and the shaded
Long walks of locust-trees, that seem
Forevermore to sigh and dream,
Keep whispering low a word that's true,
Of shapes that haunt its avenue,
Clad as in days of belle and beau,
Who come and go
Around its ancient portico.
At first, in stock and beaver-hat,
With flitting of the moth and bat,
An old man, leaning on a cane,
Comes slowly down the locust lane;
Looks at the house; then, groping, goes
Into the garden where the rose
Still keeps sweet tryst with moth and moon;
And, humming to himself a tune,
—'Lorena' or 'Ben Bolt' we'll say,—
Waits, bent and gray,
For some fair ghost of Yesterday.
The Yesterday that holds his all —
More real to him than is the wall
Of mossy stone near which he stands,
Still reaching out for her his hands —
For her, the girl, who waits him there,
A lace-gowned phantom, dark of hair,
Whose loveliness still keeps those walks,
And with whose Memory he talks;
Upon his heart her happy head,—
So it is said,—
The girl, now half a century dead.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Last Word

OH, for some cup of consummating might,
Filled with life's kind conclusion, lost in night!
A wine of darkness, that with death shall cure
This sickness called existence! —Oh to find
Surcease of sorrow! quiet for the mind,
An end of thought in something dark and sure!
Mandrake and hellebore, or poison pure! —
Some drug of death, wherein there are no dreams! —
No more, no more, with patience, to endure
The wrongs of life, the hate of men, it seems;
Or wealth's authority, tyranny of time,
And lamentations and the boasts of man!
To hear no more the wild complaints of toil,
And struggling merit, that, unknown, must starve:
To see no more life's disregard for Art!
Oh God! to know no longer anything!
Nor good, nor evil, or what either means!
Nor hear the changing tides of customs roll
On the dark shores of Time! No more to hear
The stream of Life that furies on the shoals
Of hard necessity! No more to see
The unavailing battle waged of Need
Against adversity! — Merely to lie, at last,
Pulseless and still, at peace beneath the sod!
To think and dream no more! no more to hope!
At rest at last! at last at peace and rest,
Clasped by some kind tree's gnarled arm of root
Bearing me upward in its large embrace
To gentler things and fairer — clouds and winds,
And stars and sun and moon! To undergo
The change the great trees know when Spring comes in
With shoutings and rejoicings of the rain,
To swiftly rise an atom in a host,
The myriad army of the leaves; and stand
A handbreadth nearer Heaven and what is God!
To pulse in sap that beats unfevered in
The life we call inanimate — the heart
Of some great tree. And so, unconsciously,
As sleeps a child, clasped in its mother's arm,

Be taken back, in amplitudes of grace,
To Nature's heart, and so be lost in her.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Legend Of The Lily

Pale as a star that shines through rain
Her face was seen at the window-pane,
Her sad, frail face that watched in vain.

The face of a girl whose brow was wan,
To whom the kind sun spoke at dawn,
And a star and the moon when the day was gone.

And oft and often the sun had said
'O fair, white face, O sweet, fair head,
Come talk with me of the love that's dead.'

And she would sit in the sun awhile,
Down in the garth by the old stone-dial,
Where never again would he make her smile.

And often the first bright star o'erhead
Had whispered, 'Sweet, where the rose blooms red,
Come look with me for the love that's dead.'

And she would wait with the star she knew,
Where the fountain splashed and the roses blew,
Where never again would he come to woo.

And oft the moon, when she lay in bed,
Had sighed, 'Dear heart, in the orchardstead,
Come, dream with me of the love that's dead.'

And she would stand in the moon, the dim,
Where the fruit made heavy the apple limb,
Where never again would she dream with him.

So summer passed and the autumn came;
And the wind-torn boughs were touched with flame;
But her life and her sorrow remained the same.

Or, if she changed, as it comes about
A life may change through trouble and doubt,
As a candle flickers and then goes out,

'T was only to grow more quiet and wan,
Sadly waiting at dusk and at dawn
For the coming of love forever gone.

And so, one night, when the star looked in,
It kissed her face that was white and thin,
And murmured, 'Come! thou free of sin!'

And when the moon, on another night,
Beheld her lying still and white,
It sighed, 'T is well! now all is right.'

And when one morning the sun arose,
And they bore her bier down the garden-close,
It touched her, saying, 'At last, repose.'

And they laid her down, so young and fair,
Where the grass was withered, the bough was bare,
All wrapped in the light of her golden hair....

So autumn passed and the winter went;
And spring, like a blue-eyed penitent,
Came, telling her beads of blossom and scent.

And, lo! to the grave of the beautiful
The strong sun cried, 'Why art thou dull?
Awake! awake! Forget thy skull!'

And the evening star and the moon above
Called out, 'O dust, now speak thereof!
Proclaim thyself! Arise, O love!'

And the skull and the dust in the darkness heard.
Each icy germ in its cerements stirred,
As Lazarus moved at the Lord's loud word.

And a flower arose on the mound of green,
White as the robe of the Nazarene;
To testify of the life unseen.

And I paused by the grave; then went my way:

And it seemed that I heard the lily say
'Here was a miracle wrought to-day.'

Madison Julius Cawein

A Light In The Window

Rain and wind and candlelight
And let us pray a prayer to-night:
For every soul, since life is brief,
Little of trouble and less of grief.
And set a light at the windowpane,
To guide Love home through the night and rain.
Rain and wind and candlelight
And what shall we pray again to-night?
For every life, whose way is dim,
The grace of God and trust in Him.
A word, a song, till the tears be dried,
And Faith and Hope sit down beside.
Rain and wind and candlelight
And one last prayer to pray to-night:
For every heart in the dark and rain
To know its prayer is not in vain:
A door flung wide, and a face aglow
Love come back from the Long-Ago.
Then let the rain and the wind without
Threaten their worst and rave and shout:
For who will care, though the night is black
Love to his own has wandered back.
Has wandered back through the rain and night,
Led home again by her candle's light.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Long, Long Way

It's a long, long way to the country, where
I wade and splash in the creek;
And a long, long way to the Ferncreek Fair,
The Fair where I was last week:
It's a long, long way to the end of the world,
Where the sun blows out his beams;
But the way is short, in your warm bed curled,
To the old, old Land of Dreams.

II.

It's a long, long way to go up stairs
When you're down in the yard below;
And a long, long way where no boy cares
To ever want to go:
It's a long, long way to the world's far end,
Where the stars sit down with God;
But the way is short, so I comprehend,
To the wonderful Land of Nod.

III.

It's a long, long way when you have to be dressed,
When you'd very much rather play;
And a long, long way, let it be confessed,
To leave where you'd rather stay:
It's a long, long way to the end of the Earth,
Where the night rolls dark and deep;
But the way is short, in your cozy berth,
To the far, far Land of Sleep.

IV.

It's a short, short way when you go to school,
But a long, long way back home;
And my teacher says you can find a fool
No matter where you roam:
It's a long, long way, so my father says,
Till some folks see a jest;

But the longest way of all the ways
Is the way to the Land of Rest.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Lullaby

In her wimple of wind and her slippers of sleep
The twilight comes like a little goose-girl,
Herding her owls with many'tu-whoos,'
Her little brown owls in the woodland deep,
Where dimly she walks in her whispering shoes,
And gown of glimmering pearl.

Sleep, sleep, little one, sleep;
This is the road to Rockaby Town.
Rockaby, lullaby, where dreams are cheap;
Here you can buy any dream for a crown.

Sleep, sleep, little one, sleep;
The cradle you lie in is soft and is deep,
The wagon that takes you to Rockaby Town.
Now you go up, sweet, now you go down,
Rockaby, lullaby, now you go down.

II.

And after the twilight comes midnight, who wears
A mantle of purple so old, so old!
Who stables the lily-white moon, it is said,
In a wonderful chamber with violet stairs,
Up which you can see her come, silent of tread,
On hoofs of pale silver and gold.

Dream, dream, little one, dream;
This is the way to Lullaby Land.
Lullaby, rockaby, where, white as cream,
Sugar-plum bowers dropp sweets in your hand.
Dream, dream, little one, dream;

The cradle you lie in is tight at each seam,
The boat that goes sailing to Lullaby Land.
Over the sea, sweet, over the sand,
Lullaby, rockaby, over the sand.

III.

The twilight and midnight are lovers, you know,
And each to the other is true, is true!
And there on the moon through the heavens they ride,
With the little brown owls all huddled arow,
Through meadows of heaven where, every side,
Blossom the stars and the dew.

Rest, rest, little one, rest;
Rockaby Town is in Lullaby Isle.
Rockaby, lullaby, set like a nest
Deep in the heart of a song and a smile.

Rest, rest, little one, rest;
The cradle you lie in is warm as my breast,
The white bird that bears you to Lullaby Isle.
Out of the East, sweet, into the West,
Rockaby, lullaby, into the West.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Maid Who Died Old

Frail, shrunken face, so pinched and worn,
That life has carved with care and doubt!
So weary waiting, night and morn,
For that which never came about!
Pale lamp, so utterly forlorn,
In which God's light at last is out.

Gray hair, that lies so thin and prim
On either side the sunken brows!
And soldered eyes, so deep and dim,
No word of man could now arouse!
And hollow hands, so virgin slim,
Forever clasped in silent vows!

Poor breasts! that God designed for love,
For baby lips to kiss and press;
That never felt, yet dreamed thereof,
The human touch, the child caress-
That lie like shriveled blooms above
The heart's long-perished happiness.

O withered body, Nature gave
For purposes of death and birth,
That never knew, and could but crave
Those things perhaps that make life worth,-
Rest now, alas! within the grave,
Sad shell that served no end on Earth.

Madison Julius Cawein

A March Voluntary (Wind And Cloud)

Winds that cavern heaven and the clouds
And canyon with cerulean blue,
Great rifts down which the stormy sunlight crowds
Like some bright seraph, who,
Mailed in intensity of silver mail,
Flashes his splendor over hill and vale,
Now tramp, tremendous, the loud forest through:
Or now, like mighty runners in a race,
That swing, long pace to pace,
Sweep 'round the hills, fresh as, at dawn's first start,
They swept, dew-dripping, from
The crystal-crimson ruby of her heart,
Shouting the dim world dumb.
And with their passage the gray and green
Of the earth 's washed clean;
And the cleansing breath of their might is wings
And warm aroma, we know as Spring's,
And sap and strength to her bourgeonings.

II.

My brow I bare
To the cool, clean air,
That blows from the crests of the clouds that roll,
Pearl-piled and berged as floes of Northern Seas,
Banked gray and thunder-low
Big in the heaven's peace;
Clouds, borne from nowhere that we know,
With nowhere for their goal;
With here and there a silvery glow
Of sunlight chasming deeps of sombre snow,
Great gulfs that overflow
With sky, a sapphire-blue,
Or opal, sapphire-kissed,
Wide-welled and deep and swiftly rifting through
Stratas of streaming mist;
Each opening like a pool,
Serene, cerule,
Set 'round with crag-like clouds 'mid which its eye gleams cool.

III.

What blue is bluer than the bluebird's blue!
'T is as if heaven itself sat on its wings;
As if the sky in miniature it bore
The fields and forests through,
Bringing the very heaven to our door;
The daybreak of its back soft-wedded to
The sunset-auburn of its throat that sings.
The dithyrambics of the wind and rain
Strive to, but cannot, drown its strain:
Again, and yet again
I hear it where the maples tassel red,
And blossoms of the crab round out o'erhead,
And catkins make the willow-brake
A gossamer blur around the lake
That lately was a stream,
A little stream locked in its icy dream.

IV.

Invisible crystals of aerial ring,
Against the wind I hear the bluebird fling
Its notes; and where the oak's mauve leaves uncurl
I catch the skyey glitter of its wing;
Its wing that lures me, like some magic charm,
Far in the woods
And shadowy solitudes:
And where the purple hills stretch under purple and pearl
Of clouds that sweep and swirl,
Its music seems to take material form;
A form that beckons with cerulean arm
And bids me see and follow,
Where, in the violet hollow,
There at the wood's far turn,
On starry moss and fern,
She shimmers, glimmering like a rainbowed shower,
The Spirit of Spring,
Diaphanous-limbed, who stands
With honeysuckle hands
Sowing the earth with many a firstling flower,

Footed with fragrance of their blossoming,
And clad in heaven as is the bluebird's wing.

V.

The tumult and the booming of the trees,
Shaken with shoutings of the winds of March
No mightier music have I heard than these,
The rocking and the rushing of the trees,
The organ-thunder of the forest's arch.
And in the wind their columned trunks become,
Each one, a mighty pendulum,
Swayed to and fro as if in time
To some vast song, some roaring rhyme,
Wind-shouted from sonorous hill to hill
The woods are never still:
The dead leaves frenzy by,
Innumerable and frantic as the dance
That whirled its madness once beneath the sky
In ancient Greece, like withered Corybants:
And I am caught and carried with their rush,
Their countless panic borne away,
A brother to the wind, through the deep gray
Of the old beech-wood, where the wild Marchday
Sits dreaming, filling all the boisterous hush
With murmurous laughter and swift smiles of sun;
Conspiring in its heart and plotting how
To load with leaves and blossoms every bough,
And whispering to itself, 'Now Spring's begun!
And soon her flowers shall golden through these leaves!
Away, ye sightless things and sere!
Make room for that which shall appear!
The glory and the gladness of the year;
The loveliness my eye alone perceives,
Still hidden there beneath the covering leaves,
My song shall waken! flowers, that this floor
Of whispering woodland soon shall carpet o'er
For my sweet sisters' feet to tread upon,
Months kinder than myself, the stern and strong,
Tempestuous-loving one,
Whose soul is full of wild, tumultuous song;
And whose rough hand now thrusts itself among

The dead leaves; groping for the flowers that lie
Huddled beneath, each like a sleep-closed eye:
Gold adder's-tongue and pink
Oxalis; snow-pale bloodroot blooms;
May-apple hoods, that parasol the brink,
Screening their moons, of the slim woodland stream:
And the wild iris; trillium, white as stars
And bluebells, dream on dream:
With harsh hand groping in the glooms,
I grasp their slenderness and shake
Their lovely eyes awake,
Dispelling from their souls the sleep that mars;
With heart-disturbing jars
Clasping their forms, and with rude finger-tips,
Through the dark rain that drips
Lifting them shrinking to my stormy lips,

VI.

'Already spicewood and the sassafras,
Like fragrant flames, begin
To tuft their boughs with topaz, ere they spin
Their beryl canopies a glimmering mass,
Mist-blurred, above the deepening grass.
Already where the old beech stands
Clutching the lean soil as it were with hands
Taloned and twisted, on its trunk a knot,
A huge excrescence, a great fungous clot,
Like some enormous and distorting wart,
My eyes can see how, blot on beautiful blot
Of blue, the violets blur through.
The musky and the loamy rot
Of leaf-pierced leaves; and, heaven in their hue,
The little bluets, crew on azure crew,
Prepare their myriads for invasion too.

VII.

'And in my soul I see how, soon, shall rise,
Still hidden to men's eyes,
Dim as the wind that 'round them treads,
Hosts of spring-beauties, streaked with rosy reds,

And pale anemones, whose airy heads,
As to some fairy rhyme,
All day shall nod in delicate time:
And now, even now, white peal on peal
Of pearly bells, that in bare boughs conceal
Themselves, like snowy music, chime on chime,
The huckleberries to my gaze reveal
Clusters, that soon shall toss
Above this green-starred moss,
That, like an emerald fire, gleams across
This forest-side, and from its moist deeps lifts
Slim, wire-like stems of seed;
Or, lichen-colored, glows with many a bead
Of cup-like blossoms: carpets where, I read,
When through the night's dark rifts
The moonlight's glimpsing splendor sifts,
The immaterial forms
With moonbeam-beckoning arms,
Of Fable and Romance,
Myths that are born of whispers of the wind
And foam of falling waters, music-twinning,
Shall lead the legendary dance;
The dance that never stops,
Of Earth's wild beauty on the green hill-tops.'

VIII.

The youth, the beauty and disdain
Of birth, death does not know,
Compel my heart with longing like to pain
When the spring breezes blow,
The fragrance and the heat
Of their soft breath, whose musk makes sweet
Each woodland way, each wild retreat,
Seem saying in my ear, 'Hark, and behold!
Before a week be gone
This barren woodside and this leafless wold
A million flowers shall invade
With argent and azure, pearl and gold,
Like rainbow fragments scattered of the dawn,
Here making bright, here wan
Each foot of earth, each glen and glimmering glade,

Each rood of windy wood,
Where late gaunt Winter stood,
Shaggy with snow and howling at the sky;
Where even now the Springtime seems afraid
To whisper of the beauty she designs,
The flowery campaign that she now outlines
Within her soul; her heart's conspiracy
To take the world with loveliness; defy
And then o'erwhelm the Death that Winter throned
Amid the trees, with love that she hath owned
Since God informed her of His very breath,
Giving her right triumphant over Death.
And, irresistible,
Her heart's deep ecstasy shall swell,
Taking the form of flower, leaf, and blade,
Invading every dell,
And sweeping, surge on surge,
Around the world, like some exultant raid,
Even to the heaven's verge.
Soon shall her legions storm
Death's ramparts, planting Life's fair standard there,
The banner which her beauty hath in care,
Beauty, that shall eventuate
With all the pomp and pageant and the state,
That are apart of power, and that wait
On majesty, to which it, too, is heir.'

IX.

Already purplish pink and green
The bloodroot's buds and leaves are seen
Clumped in dim cirques; one from the other
Hardly distinguished in the shadowy smother
Of last year's leaves blown brown between.
And, piercing through the layers of dead leaves,
The searching eye perceives
The dog's-tooth violet, pointed needle-keen,
Lifting its beak of mottled green;
While near it heaves
The May-apple its umbrous spike, a ball,
Like to a round, green bean,
That folds its blossom, topping its tight-closed parasol:

The clustered bluebell near
Hollows its azure ear,
Low leaning to the earth as if to hear
The sound of its own growing and perfume
Flowing into its bloom:
And softly there
The twin-leaf's stems prepare
Pale tapers of transparent white,
As if to light
The Spirit of Beauty through the wood's green night.

X.

Why does Nature love the number five?
Five-whorled leaves and five-tipped flowers?
Haply the bee that sucks i' the rose,
Laboring aye to store its hive,
And humming away the long noon hours,
Haply it knows as it comes and goes:
Or haply the butterfly,
Or moth of pansy-dye,
Flitting from bloom to bloom
In the forest's violet gloom,
It knows why:
Or the irised fly; to whom
Each bud, as it glitters near,
Lends eager and ardent ear.
And also tell
Why Nature loves so well
To prank her flowers in gold and blue.
Haply the dew,
That lies so close to them the whole night through,
Hugged to each honeyed heart,
Perhaps the dew the secret could impart:
Or haply now the bluebird there that bears,
Glad, unawares,
God's sapphire on its wings,
The lapis-lazuli
O' the clean, clear sky,
The heav'n of which he sings,
Haply he, too, could tell me why:
Or the maple there that swings,

To the wind's soft sigh,
Its winglets, crystal red,
A rainy ruby twinkling overhead:
Or haply now the wind, that breathes of rain
Amid the rosy boughs, it could explain:
And even now, in words of mystery,
That haunt the heart of me,
Low-whispered, dim and bland,
Tells me, but tells in vain,
And strives to make me see and understand,
Delaying where
The feldspar fire of the violet breaks,
And the starred myrtle aches
With heavenly blue; and the frail windflower shakes
Its trembling tresses in the opal air.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Mayapple Flower

What magic through your snowy crystal gleams!
Your hollow spar, Spring brims with fragrancly;
That, like the cup of Comus, drugs with dreams
This woodland place, so drowsed with mystery.
What miracle evolved you from the mold?

Dreamed you, as 't were, into reality
Out of the Winter's death and night and cold?
Are you a sign, a message, that the Spring
Out of her soul unto the eye reveals?
A symbol something, telling many a thing
Of beauty she within her breast conceals?
The word significant, that conquers Death;
That through eternity with Nature deals,
As did the Christ, Jesus of Nazareth.

Or, of the rapture of the Earth a part,
Are you a thought that crystallized from dew
Into a flower? Nature, on her heart,
Bewildered with the hope from whence you grew
Your loveliness, wears as an evidence
Of immortality; a hint, a clue
To that which still evades our mortal sense.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Midsummer Day

The locust gyres; the heat intensifies'
The rain-crow croaks from hot-leafed tree to tree:
The butterfly, a flame-fleck, aimlessly
Droops down the air and knows not where it flies.
Beside the stream, whose bed in places
The small green heron flaps; the minnows flee:
And mid the blackberry-lilies, wasp and bee
Drowse where the cattle pant with half-closed eyes.
The Summer Day, like some tired labourer,
Lays down her burden here and sinks to rest,
The tan of toil upon her face and hands:
She dreams, and lo, the heavens over her
Unfold her dream: Along the boundless West
Rolls gold the harvest of the sunset's lands.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Niello

I

It is not early spring and yet
Of bloodroot blooms along the stream,
And blotted banks of violet,
My heart will dream.

Is it because the windflower apes
The beauty that was once her brow,
That the white memory of it shapes
The April now?

Because the wild-rose wears the blush
That once made sweet her maidenhood,
Its thought makes June of barren bush
And empty wood?

And then I think how young she died-
Straight, barren Death stalks down the trees,
The hard-eyed Hours by his side,
That kill and freeze.

II

When orchards are in bloom again
My heart will bound, my blood will beat,
To hear the redbird so repeat,
On boughs of rosy stain,
His blithe, loud song,-like some far strain
From out the past,-among the bloom,-
(Where bee and wasp and hornet boom)-
Fresh, redolent of rain.

When orchards are in bloom once more,
Invasions of lost dreams will draw
My feet, like some insistent law,
Through blossoms to her door:
In dreams I'll ask her, as before,
To let me help her at the well;

And fill her pail; and long to tell
My love as once of yore.

I shall not speak until we quit
The farm-gate, leading to the lane
And orchard, all in bloom again,
Mid which the bluebirds sit
And sing; and through whose blossoms flit
The catbirds crying while they fly:
Then tenderly I'll speak, and try
To tell her all of it.

And in my dream again she'll place
Her hand in mine, as oft before,-
When orchards are in bloom once more,-
With all her young-girl grace:
And we shall tarry till a trace
Of sunset dyes the heav'ns; and then-
We'll part; and, parting, I again
Shall bend and kiss her face.

And homeward, singing, I shall go
Along the cricket-chirring ways,
While sunset, one long crimson blaze
Of orchards, lingers low:
And my dead youth again I'll know,
And all her love, when spring is here-
Whose memory holds me many a year,
Whose love still haunts me so!

III

I would not die when Springtime lifts
The white world to her maiden mouth,
And heaps its cradle with gay gifts,
Breeze-blown from out the singing South:
Too full of life and loves that cling;
Too heedless of all mortal woe,
The young, unsympathetic Spring,
That Death should never know.

I would not die when Summer shakes

Her daisied locks below her hips,
And naked as a star that takes
A cloud, into the silence slips:
Too rich is Summer; poor in needs;
In egotism of loveliness
Her pomp goes by, and never heeds
One life the more or less.

But I would die when Autumn goes,
The dark rain dripping from her hair,
Through forests where the wild wind blows
Death and the red wreck everywhere:
Sweet as love's last farewells and tears
To fall asleep when skies are gray,
In the old autumn of my years,
Like a dead leaf borne far away.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Night In June

White as a lily moulded of Earth's milk
That eve the moon bloomed in a hyacinth sky;
Soft in the gleaming glens the wind went by,
Faint as a phantom clothed in unseen silk:
Bright as a naiad's leap, from shine to shade
The runnel twinkled through the shaken brier;
Above the hills one long cloud, pulsed with fire,
Flashed like a great enchantment-welded blade.
And when the western sky seemed some weird land,
And night a witching spell at whose command
One sloping star fell green from heav'n; and deep
The warm rose opened for the moth to sleep;
Then she, consenting, laid her hands in his,
And lifted up her lips for their first kiss.

II.

There where they part, the porch's steps are strewn
With wind-blown petals of the purple vine;
Athwart the porch the shadow of a pine
Cleaves the white moonlight; and like some calm rune
Heaven says to Earth, shines the majestic moon;
And now a meteor draws a lilac line
Across the welkin, as if God would sign
The perfect poem of this night of June.
The wood-wind stirs the flowering chestnut-tree,
Whose curving blossoms strew the glimmering grass
Like crescents that wind-wrinkled waters glass;
And, like a moonstone in a frill of flame,
The dewdropp trembles on the peony,
As in a lover's heart his sweetheart's name.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Poet's Epitaph

LIFE was unkind to him;
All things went wrong:
Fortune assigned to him
Merely a song.
Ever a mystery
Here to his heart;
In his life's history
Love played no part.
Carve on the granite,
There at the end,
Where all may scan it,
Death was his friend.
Giving him all he missed
Here upon Earth—
Love and the call he missed
All that was worth.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Pool Among The Rocks

I know a pool, whose crystalline repose
Sleeps under walls of granite, whence the pine
Leans looking at its image, line for line
Repeated with the sumach and wild-rose
That redden on the rocks; where, at day's close,
The sunset dreams, and lights incarnadine
Dark waters and the place seems brimmed with wine,
A giant cup that splendour overflows.
Night, in her livery of stars and moon,
Stoops to its mirror, gazing steadily;
And, saddened by her beauty, drops one tear,
A falling star; while round it sighs the rune
Of winds, conspirators that sweep from sea,
Whispering of things that fill the heart with fear.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Prayer For Old Age

These are the things which I would ask of Time:
When I am old,
Never to feel in soul doubt's spiritual rime;
The heart grow cold
With self; but in me that which warms my time.

II.

Never to feel the drouth, the dearth that kills,
Before one dies,
Of mind, full-flowering on thought's fertile hills;
But, in my skies,
The falcon, Fancy, that no season kills.

III.

Never to see the shadow at my door,
Nor fear its fall;
But wait serenely, whether rich or poor,
Nor care at all,
So Love sits with me at my open door.

IV.

Never to have a dream I dreamed destroyed:
And towards the last
Live o'er again all that I have enjoyed,
The happy Past,
Through these, the dreams, no time has yet destroyed.

V.

Never to lose my love for lowly things;
To feel the need
For simple beauty still: each bird that sings,
Each flower and weed
That looks its message of unguessed-at things.

VI.

Never to lose my faith in Nature, God:
But still to find
Worship in trees; religion in each sod;
And in the wind
Sermons that breathe the universal God.

VII.

Never to age in mind; much less in heart;
But keep them young
With song, glad song, that still shall have its part,
Sung or unsung,
Within the inmost temple of my heart.

VIII.

That I may lose not all my trust in men!
And, through it, grow
Nearer to Heaven and God: and softly then
Meet Death and know
He has no terrors for my soul. Amen.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Road Song

It's-Oh, for the hills, where the wind's some one
With a vagabond foot that follows!
And a cheer-up hand that he claps upon
Your arm with the hearty words, 'Come on!
We'll soon be out of the hollows,
My heart!
We'll soon be out of the hollows.'

It's-Oh, for the songs, where the hope's some one
With a renegade foot that doubles!
And a jolly lilt that he flings to the sun
As he turns with the friendly laugh, 'Come on!
We'll soon be out of the troubles,
My heart!
We'll soon be out of the troubles!'

Madison Julius Cawein

A Sleet-Storm In May

On southern winds shot through with amber light,
Breathing soft balm and clothed in cloudy white,
The lily-fingered Spring came o'er the hills,
Waking the crocus and the daffodils.
O'er the cold Earth she breathed a tender sigh
The maples sang and flung their banners high,
Their crimson-tasselled pennons, and the elm
Bound his dark brows with a green-crested helm.
Beneath the musky rot of Autumn's leaves,
Under the forest's myriad naked eaves,
Life woke and rose in gold and green and blue,
Robed in the starlight of the twinkling dew.
With timid tread adown the barren wood
Spring held her way, when, lo! before her stood
White-mantled Winter wagging his white head,
Stormy his brow and stormily he said:
'The God of Terror, and the King of Storm,
Must I remind thee how my iron arm
Raised my red standards 'mid these conquered bowers,
Turning their green to crimson? Thou, with flowers,
Thou wouldst supplant me! nay! usurp my throne!
Audacious one!' And at her breast he tossed
A bitter javelin of ice and frost;
And left her lying on th' unfeeling mould.
The fragile blossoms, gathered in the fold
Of her warm bosom, fell in desolate rows
About her beauty, and, like fragrant snows,
Covered her lovely hands and beautiful feet,
Or on her lips lay like last kisses sweet
That died there. Lilacs, musky of the May,
And bluer violets and snowdrops lay
Entombed in crystal, icy dim and fair,
Like teardrops scattered in her heavenly hair.
Alas! sad heart, break not beneath the pain!
Time changeth all; the Beautiful wakes again.
We should not question such; a higher power
Knows best what bud is ripest or what flower,
And silently plucks it at the fittest hour.

A Song For All Day

A rollicking song for the morn, my boy,
A rollicking song for the morn:
It's up and out with a laugh and shout,
While the bright sun circles the world about,
And the dew is on the corn, my boy,
The dew is on the corn.
Barefoot, brown, with trousers torn,
It's up and out with the morn.

A jolly good song for the noon, my boy,
A jolly good song for the noon:
It's out and away where the wild woods sway,
And the wind and the birds have a holiday,
And whistle an oldtime tune, my boy,
And whistle an oldtime tune.
Healthy, happy, a heart of June,
It's out in the woods at noon.

A wonderful song for the eve, my boy,
A wonderful song for the eve:
The sunset's bars and a trail of stars,
And the falls of the creek a mine of spars,
Or a weft of crystal weave, my boy,
A weft of crystal weave.
Hungry, tired, with nothing to grieve,
It's home again at eve.

A lullaby song for the night, my boy,
A lullaby song for the night:
When crickets cry and owlets fly,
And the house-hound bays the moon on high,
And the window-lamp shines bright, my boy,
The window-lamp shines bright.
A drowsy kiss and a bed snow-white,
And a lullaby-song for the night.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Song For Labor

Oh, the morning meads, the dewy meads,
Where he ploughs and harrows and sows the seeds,
Singing a song of manly deeds,
In the blossoming springtime weather;
The heart in his bosom as high as the word
Said to the sky by the mating bird,
While the beat of an answering heart is heard,
His heart and love's together.

II.

Oh, the noonday heights, the sunny heights,
Where he stoops to the harvest his keen scythe smites,
Singing a song of the work that requites,
In the ripening summer weather;
The soul in his body as light as the sigh
Of the little cloud-breeze that cools the sky,
While he hears an answering soul reply,
His soul and love's together.

III.

Oh, the evening vales, the twilight vales,
Where he labors and sweats to the thud of flails,
Singing a song of the toil that avails,
In the fruitful autumn weather;
In heart and in soul as free from fears
As the first white star in the sky that clears,
While the music of life and of love he hears,
Of life and of love together.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Song For Yule

Sing, Hey, when the time rolls round this way,
And the bells peal out, 'Tis Christmas Day;
The world is better then by half,
For joy, for joy;
In a little while you will see it laugh
For a song's to sing and a glass to quaff,
My boy, my boy.
So here's to the man who never says nay!
Sing, Hey, a song of Christmas-Day!

II

Sing, Ho, when roofs are white with snow,
And homes are hung with mistletoe;
Old Earth is not half bad, I wis-
What cheer! what cheer!
How it ever seemed sad the wonder is
With a gift to give and a girl to kiss,
My dear, my dear.
So here's to the girl who never says no!
Sing, Ho, a song of the mistletoe!

III

No thing in the world to the heart seems wrong
When the soul of a man walks out with song;
Wherever they go, glad hand in hand,
And glove in glove,
The round of the land is rainbow-spanned,
And the meaning of life they understand
Is love, is love.
Let the heart be open, the soul be strong,
And life will be glad as a Christmas song.

A Song Of Cheer

Be of good cheer, and have no fear
Of Fortune or Tomorrow:
To Hope's low whisper lend an ear
And turn away from Sorrow.

Time out of mind the soul is blind
To things God sends as blessings:
And Fortune often proves unkind
Merely in foolish guessings.

Within the soul we bear the whole
Of Hell and also Heaven;
And 'twixt the two is set the goal
Of dreams our lives have driven.

What counts above all deeds is Love,
And Friendship, that, remember,
In heart-beats keeps Life's record of
Its April and December.

To every one come rain and sun,
And calm and stormy weather:
What helps is not what Life has done,
But Life and Love together.

Of sun and rain and joy and pain
The web of Life is woven;
And ever through it runs the skein
Of Hope, with strand uncloven.

Now high in air it glitters fair;
Now dims beyond divining;
But still the thread winds golden there,
Although no longer shining.

Be of good cheer and have no fear
Of any care or sorrow;
The clouds at last will disappear,
And the sun will shine tomorrow.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Song Of The Snow

Roaring winds that rocked the crow,
High in his eyrie,
All night long, and to and fro
Swung the cedar and drove the snow
Out of the North, have ceased to blow,
And dawn breaks fiery.
Sing, Ho, a song of the winter dawn,
When the air is still and the clouds are gone,
And the snow lies deep on hill and lawn,
And the old clock ticks, 'Tis time! 't is time!
And the household rises with many a yawn
Sing, Ho, a song of the winter dawn!
Sing Ho!

II.

Deep in the East a ruddy glow
Broadens and brightens,
Glints through the icicles, row on row,
Flames on the panes of the farmhouse low,
And over the miles of drifted snow
Silently whitens.
Sing, Ho, a song of the winter sky,
When the last star closes its icy eye,
And deep in the road the snow-drifts lie,
And the old clock ticks, 'T is late! 't is late!
And the flame on the hearth leaps red, leaps high
Sing, Ho, a song of the winter sky!
Sing Ho!

III.

Into the heav'n the sun comes slow,
All red and frowsy;
Out of the shed the muffled low
Of the cattle comes; and the rooster's crow
Sounds strangely distant beneath the snow
And dull and drowsy.
Sing, Ho, a song of the winter morn,

When the snow makes ghostly the wayside thorn,
And hills of pearl are the shocks of corn,
And the old clock ticks, Tick-tock, tick-tock;
And the goodman bustles about the barn
Sing, Ho, a song of the winter morn!
Sing Ho!

IV.

Now to their tasks the farmhands go,
Cheerily, cheerily:
The maid with her pail, her cheeks aglow;
And, blowing his fist, the man with his hoe
To trample a path through the crunching snow,
Merrily, merrily.
Sing, Ho, a song of the winter day,
When ermine-capped are the stacks of hay,
And the wood-smoke pillars the air with gray,
And the old clock ticks, To work! lo work!
And the goodwife sings as she churns away
Sing, Ho, a song of the winter day!
Sing Ho!

Madison Julius Cawein

A Street Of Ghosts

The drowsy day, with half-closed eyes,
Dreams in this quaint forgotten street,
That, like some old-world wreckage, lies,
Left by the sea's receding beat,
Far from the city's restless feet.

Abandoned pavements, that the trees'
Huge roots have wrecked, whose flagstones feel
No more the sweep of draperies;
And sunken curbs, whereon no wheel
Grinds, nor the gallant's spur-bound heel.

Old houses, walled with rotting brick,
Thick-creepered, dormered, weather-vaned,
Like withered faces, sad and sick,
Stare from each side, all broken paned,
With battered doors the rain has stained.

And though the day be white with heat,
Their ancient yards are dim and cold;
Where now the toad makes its retreat,
'Mid flower-pots green-caked with mold,
And naught but noisome weeds unfold.

The slow gray slug and snail have trailed
Their slimy silver up and down
The beds where once the moss-rose veiled
Rich beauty; and the mushroom brown
Swells where the lily tossed its crown.

The shadowy scents, that haunt and flit
Along the walks, beneath the boughs,
Seem ghosts of sweethearts here who sit,
Or wander 'round each empty house,
Wrapped in the silence of dead vows.

And, haply, when the evening droops
Her amber eyelids in the west,
Here one might hear the swish of hoops,

Or catch the glint of hat or vest,
As two dim lovers past him pressed.

And, instant as some star's slant flame,
That scores the swarthy cheek of night,
Perhaps behold Colonial dame
And gentleman in stately white
Go glimmering down the pale moonlight.

In powder, patch, and furbelow,
Cocked-hat and sword; and every one,
Tory and whig of long ago,
As real as in the days long done,
The courtly days of Washington.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Summer Day

White clouds, like thistledown at fault,
That drift through heaven's azure vault.
The sun beams down; the weedy ground
Vibrates with many an insect sound.
Blackberry-lilies in the noon
Lean to the creek with eyes a-swoon,
Where, in a shallow, silver gleams
Of minnows and a heron dreams
An old road, clouding pale the heat
Behind a slow hoof's muffled beat:
And there, hill-gazing at the skies,
A pond, within whose languor lies
A twinkle, like an eye that smiles
In thought; that with a dream beguiles
The day: a dream of clouds that drift,
And arms the willow trees uplift,
Protectingly, as if to hide
The wildbird on its nest that cried.
Now mists that mass the sunset-dyes
Build an Arabia in the skies,
Through which the sun in pomp retires,
Torched to his room with saffron fires;
And 'thwart his palace door is laid
A crescent sign, a moony blade,
Then glittering in a cloud is sheathed;
And, dripping crimson, fire-wreathed,
A magic scimeter of flame
Is slowly drawn before the same.
The door of Day is closed; its bar
Put up, one bright and golden star;
While, crowding all the corridors
Of Dusk, the shadows, blackamoors
Of darkness, glide; and zephyrs sweep
Mist-gowns of musk through halls of Sleep
Dim odalisques of Night, who wait
Upon their lord who lies in state.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Tried Friend, A True Friend

A friend for you and a friend for me,
A friend to understand;
To cheer the way and help the day
With heart as well as hand:
With heart as well as hand, my dear,
And share the things we 've planned
A tried friend, a true friend,
A friend to understand!
A friend for you and a friend for me,
A friend to hear our call,
When, wrong or right, we wage the fight
With backs against the wall!
With backs against the wall, my dear,
When hope is like to fall
A tried friend, a true friend,
A friend to hear our call!
A friend for you and a friend for me,
To share with us that day
When our ship comes back and naught we lack
Of all for which men pray!
Of all for which men pray, my dear,
That long has gone astray
A tried friend, a true friend,
To share with us that day!
Oh, side by side, on roads untried,
Two souls may better speed
Than one who goes the road he knows
With none to give him heed!
With none to give him heed, my dear,
And help when there is need
A tried friend, a true friend,
A friend, a friend indeed!

Madison Julius Cawein

A Twilight Moth

Dusk is thy dawn; when Eve puts on its state
Of gold and purple in the marbled west,
Thou comest forth like some embodied trait,
Or dim conceit, a lily bud confessed;
Or of a rose the visible wish; that, white,
Goes softly messengering through the night,
Whom each expectant flower makes its guest.

All day the primroses have thought of thee,
Their golden heads close-haremed from the heat;
All day the mystic moonflowers silkenly
Veiled snowy faces,-that no bee might greet,
Or butterfly that, weighed with pollen, passed;-
Keeping Sultana charms for thee, at last,
Their lord, who comest to salute each sweet.

Cool-throated flowers that avoid the day's
Too fervid kisses; every bud that drinks
The tipsy dew and to the starlight plays
Nocturnes of fragrance, thy wing'd shadow links
In bonds of secret brotherhood and faith;
O bearer of their order's shibboleth,
Like some pale symbol fluttering o'er these pinks.

What dost them whisper in the balsam's ear
That sets it blushing, or the hollyhock's,-
A syllabled silence that no man may hear,-
As dreamily upon its stem it rocks?
What spell dost bear from listening plant to plant,
Like some white witch, some ghostly ministrant,
Some specter of some perished flower of phlox?

O voyager of that universe which lies
Between the four walls of this garden fair,-
Whose constellations are the fireflies
That wheel their instant courses everywhere,-
Mid faery firmaments wherein one sees
Mimic Booetes and the Pleiades,
Thou steerest like some faery ship of air.

Gnome-wrought of moonbeam-fluff and gossamer,
Silent as scent, perhaps thou chariotest
Mab or King Oberon; or, haply, her
His queen, Titania, on some midnight quest.-
Oh for the herb, the magic euphrasy,
That should unmask thee to mine eyes, ah me!
And all that world at which my soul hath guessed!

Madison Julius Cawein

A Twilight Moth II

All day the primroses have thought of thee,
Their golden heads close-haremed from the heat;
All day the mystic moonflowers silkenly
Veiled snowy faces, that no bee might greet
Or butterfly that, weighed with pollen, passed;
Keeping Sultana-charms for thee, at last,
Their lord, who comest to salute each sweet.

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Too fervid kisses; every bud that drinks
The tipsy dew and to the starlight plays
Nocturns of fragrance, thy wing'd shadow links
In bonds of secret brotherhood and faith;
O bearer of their order's shibboleth,
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That wheel their instant courses everywhere'
'Mid fairy firmaments wherein one sees
Mimic Boötes and the Pleiades,
Thou steerest like some fairy ship-of-air.

Gnome-wrought of moonbeam fluff and gossamer,
Silent as scent, perhaps thou chariotest
Mab or King Oberon; or, haply, her
His queen, Titania, on some midnight quest.
Oh for the herb, the magic euphrasy,
That should unmask thee to mine eyes, ah me!
And all that world at which my soul hath guessed!

Madison Julius Cawein

A Voice On The Wind

I

She walks with the wind on the windy height
When the rocks are loud and the waves are white,
And all night long she calls through the night,
'O my children, come home!'
Her bleak gown, torn as a tattered cloud,
Tosses around her like a shroud,
While over the deep her voice rings loud,-
'O my children, come home, come home!
O my children, come home!'

II

Who is she who wanders alone,
When the wind drives sheer and the rain is blown?
Who walks all night and makes her moan,
'O my children, come home!'
Whose face is raised to the blinding gale;
Whose hair blows black and whose eyes are pale,
While over the world goes by her wail,-
'O my children, come home, come home!
O my children, come home!'

III

She walks with the wind in the windy wood;
The dark rain drips from her hair and hood,
And her cry sobs by, like a ghost pursued,
'O my children, come home!'
Where the trees loom gaunt and the rocks stretch drear,
The owl and the fox crouch back with fear,
As wild through the wood her voice they hear,-
'O my children, come home, come home!
O my children, come home!'

IV

Who is she who shudders by

When the boughs blow bare and the dead leaves fly?
Who walks all night with her wailing cry,
'O my children, come home!'
Who, strange of look, and wild of tongue,
With wan feet wounded and hands wild-wrung,
Sweeps on and on with her cry, far-flung,-
'O my children, come home, come home!
O my children, come home!'

V

'Tis the Spirit of Autumn, no man sees,
The mother of Death and of Mysteries,
Who cries on the wind all night to these,
'O my children, come home!'
The Spirit of Autumn, pierced with pain,
Calling her children home again,
Death and Dreams, through ruin and rain,-
'O my children, come home, come home!
O my children, come home!'

Madison Julius Cawein

A Wet Day

Dark, drear, and drizzly, with vapor grizzly,
The day goes dully unto its close;
Its wet robe smutches each thing it touches,
Its fingers sully and wreck the rose.

Around the railing and garden-paling
The dripping lily hangs low its head:
A brood-mare whinnies; and hens and guineas
Droop, damp and chilly, beneath the shed.

In splashing mire about the byre
The cattle huddle, the farmhand plods;
While to some neighbor's a wagon labors
Through pool and puddle and clay that clods.

The day, unsplendid, at last is ended,
Is dead and buried, and night is come;
Night, blind and footless, and foul and fruitless,
With weeping wearied and sorrow dumb.

Ah, God! for thunder! for winds to sunder
The clouds and o'er us smite rushing bars!
And through wild masses of storm, that passes,
Roll calm the chorus of moon and stars.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Wild Iris

That day we wandered 'mid the hills,—so lone
Clouds are not lonelier,—the forest lay
In emerald darkness 'round us. Many a stone
And gnarly root, gray-mossed, made wild our way:
And many a bird the glimmering light along
Showered the golden bubbles of its song.
Then in the valley, where the brook went by,
Silvering the ledges that it rippled from,
An isolated slip of fallen sky,
Epitomizing heaven in its sum,
An iris bloomed—blue, as if, flower-disguised,
The gaze of Spring had there materialized.
I have forgotten many things since then
Much beauty and much happiness and grief;
And toiled and dreamed among my fellow-men,
Rejoicing in the knowledge life is brief.
'T is winter now,' so says each barren bough;
And face and hair proclaim 't is winter now.
I would forget the gladness of that spring!
I would forget that day when she and I,
Between the bird-song and the blossoming,
Went hand in hand beneath the soft spring sky!
Much is forgotten, yea— and yet, and yet,
The things we would we never can forget.
Nor I how May then minted treasuries
Of crowfoot gold; and molded out of light
The sorrel's cups, whose elfin chalices
Of limpid spar were streaked with rosy white.
Nor all the stars of twinkling spiderwort,
And mandrake moons with which her brows were girt.
But most of all, yea, it were well for me,
Me and my heart, that I forget that flower,
The wild blue iris, azure fleur-de-lis,
That she and I together found that hour.
Its recollection can but emphasize
The pain of loss, remindful of her eyes.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Woodland Grave

White moons may come, white moons may go-
She sleeps where early blossoms blow;
Knows nothing of the leafy June,
That leans above her night and noon,
Crowned now with sunbeam, now with moon,
Watching her roses grow.

The downy moth at twilight comes
And flutters round their honeyed blooms:
Long, lazy clouds, like ivory,
That isle the blue lagoons of sky,
Redden to molten gold and dye
With flame the pine-deep glooms.

Dew, dripping from wet fern and leaf;
The wind, that shakes the violet's sheaf;
The slender sound of water lone,
That makes a harp-string of some stone,
And now a wood bird's glimmering moan,
Seem whisperings there of grief.

Her garden, where the lilacs grew,
Where, on old walls, old roses blew,
Head-heavy with their mellow musk,
Where, when the beetle's drone was husk,
She lingered in the dying dusk,
No more shall know that knew.

Her orchard,-where the Spring and she
Stood listening to each bird and bee,-
That, from its fragrant firmament,
Snowed blossoms on her as she went,
(A blossom with their blossoms blent)
No more her face shall see.

White moons may come, white moons may go-
She sleeps where early blossoms blow:
Around her headstone many a seed
Shall sow itself; and brier and weed

Shall grow to hide it from men's heed,
And none will care or know.

Madison Julius Cawein

A Yellow Rose

The old gate clicks, and down the walk,
Between clove-pink and hollyhock,
Still young of face though gray of lock,
Among her garden's flowers she goes
At evening's close,
Deep in her hair a yellow rose.

The old house shows one gable-peak
Above its trees; and sage and leek
Blend with the rose their scents: the creek,
Leaf-hidden, past the garden flows,
That on it snows
Pale petals of the yellow rose.

The crickets pipe in dewy damp;
And everywhere the fireflies' lamps
Flame like the lights of Faery camps;
While, overhead, the soft sky shows
One star that glows,
As, in gray hair, a yellow rose.

There is one spot she seeks for, where
The roses make a fragrant lair,
A spot where once he kissed her hair,
And told his love, as each one knows,
Each flower that blows,
And pledged it with a yellow rose.

The years have turned her dark hair gray
Since that glad day: and still, they say,
She keeps the tryst as on that day;
And through the garden softly goes,
At evening's close,
Wearing for him that yellow rose.

Madison Julius Cawein

A.D. Nineteen Hundred

War and Disaster, Famine and Pestilence,
Vaunt-couriers of the Century that comes,
Behold them shaking their tremendous plumes
Above the world! where all the air grows dense
With rumors of destruction and a sense,
Cadaverous, of corpses and of tombs
Predestined; while, like monsters in the glooms,
Bristling with battle, shadowy and immense,
The Nations rise in wild apocalypse.
Where now the boast Earth makes of civilization?
Its brag of Christianity? In vain
We seek to see them in the dread eclipse
Of hell and horror, all the devastation
Of Death triumphant on his hills of slain.

Madison Julius Cawein

Abandoned

The hornets build in plaster-dropping rooms,
And on its mossy porch the lizard lies;
Around its chimneys slow the swallow flies,
And on its roof the locusts snow their blooms.
Like some sad thought that broods here, old perfumes
Haunt its dim stairs; the cautious zephyr tries
Each gusty door, like some dead hand, then sighs
With ghostly lips among the attic glooms.
And now a heron, now a kingfisher,
Flits in the willows where the ruffle seems
At each faint fall to hesitate to leap,
Fluttering the silence with a little stir.
Here Summer seems a placid face asleep,
And the near world a figment of her dreams.

Madison Julius Cawein

Accomplishment

Hold to the rapture: let it work
Inward till founts of being fill,
And all is clear that once was murk,
And Beauty's self rise, mirrored still,
Before the mind, that shall devise
New forms of earth to realize.

Let it possess the heart and soul,
And through the two evolve the one,
And so achieve th' immortal goal
Of something great that man has done:
Pouring his thought, his dream intense,
Into the molds of permanence.

Within the compass of extremes
Science and Art their worlds have set,
Wherein the soul fulfills its dreams,
And evermore, without a let,
Swift, eagle-like, free, unconfined,
Soars to new altitudes of mind.

Madison Julius Cawein

Achievement

He held himself splendidly forward
Both early and late;
The aim of his purpose was starward,
To master his fate:
So he wrought and he toiled and he waited,
Till he rose o'er the hordes that he hated,
And stood on the heights, as was fated,
Made one of the great.

Then lo! on the top of the mountain,
With walls that were wide,
A city! from which, as a fountain,
Rose voices that cried:
'He comes! Let us forth now to meet him!
Both mummer and priest let us greet him!
In the city he built let us seat him
On the throne of his pride!'

Then out of the city he builded,
Of shadows it seems,
From gates that his fancy had gilded
With thought's brightest gleams,
Strange mimes and chimeras came trooping,
With moping and mowing and stooping
And he saw, with a heart that was drooping,
That these were his dreams.

He entered; and, lo! as he entered
They murmured his name;
And led him where, burningly centred,
An altar of flame
Made lurid a temple, erected
Of self, where a form he detected
The love that his life had rejected
And this was his fame.

Madison Julius Cawein

Adventurers

Seemingly over the hill-tops,
Possibly under the hills,
A tireless wing that never drops,
And a song that never stills.

Epics heard on the stars' lips?
Lyrics read in the dew?
To sing the song at our finger-tips,
And live the world anew!

Cavaliers of the Cortés kind,
Bold and stern and strong,
And, oh, for a fine and muscular mind
To sing a new-world's song!

Sailing seas of the silver morn,
Winds of the balm and spice,
To put the old-world art to scorn
At the price of any price!

Danger, death, but the hope high!
God's, if the propose fail!
Into the deeds of a vaster sky
Sailing a dauntless sail.

Madison Julius Cawein

Adversity

A barren field o'ergrown with thorn and weed
It stays for him who waits for help from God:
Only the soul that makes a plough of Need
Shall know what blossoms underneath its sod.

Madison Julius Cawein

After A Night Of Rain

The rain made ruin of the rose and frayed
The lily into tatters: now the Morn
Looks from the hopeless East with eyes forlorn,
As from her attic looks a dull-eyed maid.
The coreopsis drips; the sunflowers fade;
The garden reeks with rain: beneath the thorn
The toadstools crowd their rims where, dim of horn,
The slow snail slimes the grasses gaunt and greyed.
Like some pale nun, in penitential weeds,
Weary with weeping, telling sad her beads,
Her rosary of pods of hollyhocks,
September comes, heavy of heart and head,
While in her path the draggled four-o'-clocks
Droop all their flowers, saying, 'Summer's dead.'

Madison Julius Cawein

After Autumn Rain

The hillside smokes
With trailing mist around the rosy oaks;
While sunset builds
A gorgeous Asia in the west she gilds.
Auroral streaks
Sword through the heavens' Himalayan peaks:
In which, behold,
Burn mines of Indian ruby and of gold.
A moment and
A shadow stalks between it and the land.
A mist, a breath,
A premonition, with the face of death,
Turning to frost
The air it breathes, like some invisible ghost.
Then, wild of hair,
Demons seem streaming to their fiery lair:
A chasm, the same
That splits the clouds' face with a leer of flame.
The wind comes up
And fills the hollow land as wine a cup.
Around and round
It skips the dead leaves o'er the forest's ground.
A myriad fays
And imps seem dancing down the withered ways.
And far and near
It makes of every bush a whisperer;
Telling dark tales
Of things that happened in the ghostly vales:
Of things the fox
Barks at and sees among the haunted rocks:
At which the owl
Hoots, and the wolf-hound cringes with a growl.
Now on the road
It walks like feet too weary for their load.
Shuffling the leaves,
With stormy sighs, onward it plods and heaves;
Till in the hills
Among the red death there itself it kills.
And with its death

Earth, so its seems, draws in a mighty breath.
And, like a clown
Who wanders lost upon a haunted down,
Turns towards the east,
Fearful of coming goblin or of beast,
And sees a light,
The jack-o'-lantern moon, glow into sight..

Madison Julius Cawein

After Long Grief

There is a place hung o'er of summer boughs
And dreamy skies wherein the gray hawk sleeps;
Where water flows, within whose lazy deeps,
Like silvery prisms where the sunbeams drowse,
The minnows twinkle; where the bells of cows
Tinkle the stillness; and the bobwhite keeps
Calling from meadows where the reaper reaps,
And children's laughter haunts an oldtime house:
A place where life wears ever an honest smell
Of hay and honey, sun and elder-bloom,-
Like some sweet, simple girl,-within her hair;
Where, with our love for comrade, we may dwell
Far from the city's strife, whose cares consume.-
Oh, take my hand and let me lead you there.

Madison Julius Cawein

After Storm

Great clouds of sullen seal and gold
Bar bleak the tawny west,
From which all day the-thunder rolled,
And storm streamed, crest on crest.

Now silvery in its deeps of bronze
The new moon fills its sphere;
And point by point the darkness dons
Its pale stars there and here.

But still behind the moon and stars,
The peace of heaven, remains
Suspicion of the wrath that wars,
That Nature now restrains.

As, lined 'neath tiger eyelids, glare
The wild-beast eyes that sleep,
So smoulders in its sunset lair
The rage that rent the deep.

Madison Julius Cawein

After The Rain

Behold the blossom-bosomed Day again,
With all the star-white Hours in her train,
Laughs out of pearl-lights through a golden ray,
That, leaning on the woodland wildness, blends
A sprinkled amber with the showers that lay
Their oblong emeralds on the leafy ends.
Behold her bend with maiden-braided brows
Above the wildflower, sidewise with its strain
Of dewy happiness, to kiss again
Each drop to death; or, under rainy boughs,
With fingers, fragrant as the woodland rain,
Gather the sparkles from the sycamore,
To set within each core
Of crimson roses girdling her hips,
Where each bud dreams and drips.

Smoothing her blue-black hair,-where many a tusk
Of iris flashes,-like the falchions' sheen
Of Faery 'round blue banners of its Queen,-
Is it a Naiad singing in the dusk,
That haunts the spring, where all the moss is musk
With footsteps of the flowers on the banks?
Or just a wild-bird voluble with thanks?

Balm for each blade of grass: the Hours prepare
A festival each weed's invited to.
Each bee is drunken with the honied air:
And all the air is eloquent with blue.
The wet hay glitters, and the harvester
Tinkles his scythe,-as twinkling as the dew,-
That shall not spare
Blossom or brier in its sweeping path;
And, ere it cut one swath,
Rings them they die, and tells them to prepare.

What is the spice that haunts each glen and glade?
A Dryad's lips, who slumbers in the shade?
A Faun, who lets the heavy ivy-wreath
Slip to his thigh as, reaching up, he pulls

The chestnut blossoms in whole bosomfuls?
A sylvan Spirit, whose sweet mouth doth breathe
Her viewless presence near us, unafraid?
Or troops of ghosts of blooms, that whitely wade
The brook? whose wisdom knows no other song
Than that the bird sings where it builds beneath
The wild-rose and sits singing all day long.

Oh, let me sit with silence for a space,
A little while forgetting that fierce part
Of man that struggles in the toiling mart;
Where God can look into my heart's own heart
From unsoiled heights made amiable with grace;
And where the sermons that the old oaks keep
Can steal into me.-And what better then
Than, turning to the moss a quiet face,
To fall asleep? a little while to sleep
And dream of wiser worlds and wiser men.

Madison Julius Cawein

Afterword

What vague traditions do the golden eves,
What legends do the dawns
Inscribe in fire on Heaven's azure leaves,
The red sun colophons?

What ancient stories do the waters verse?
What tales of war and love
Do winds within the Earth's vast house rehearse,
God's stars stand guard above?

Would I could know them as they are expressed
In hue and melody!
And say, in words, the beauties they suggest,
Language their mystery!

And in one song magnificently rise,
The music of the spheres,
That more than marble should immortalize
My name in after years.

Madison Julius Cawein

Allurement

Across the world she sends me word,
From gardens fair as Falerina's,
Now by a blossom, now a bird,
To come to her, who long has lured
With magic sweeter than Alcina's.

I know not what her word may mean,
I know not what may mean the voices
She sends as messengers serene,
That through the silvery silence lean,
To tell me where her heart rejoices.

But I must go! I must away!
Must take the path that is appointed!
God grant I find her realm some day!
Where, by her love, as by a ray,
My soul shall be anointed.

Madison Julius Cawein

Along The Ohio

Athwart a sky of brass long welts of gold;
A path of gold the wide Ohio lies;
Beneath the sunset, billowing manifold,
The dark-blue hilltops rise.

And westward dips the crescent of the moon
Through great cloud-feathers, flushed with rosy ray,
That close around the crystal of her lune
The redbird wings of Day.

A little skiff slips o'er the burnished stream;
A fiery wake, that broadens far behind,
Follows in ripples; and the paddles gleam
Against the evening wind.

Was it the boat, the solitude and hush,
That with dead Indians peopled all the glooms?
That made each bank, meseemed, and every bush
Start into eagle-plumes?

That made me seem to hear the breaking brush,
And as the deer's great antlers swelled in view,
To hear the arrow twang from cane and rush,
That dipped to the canoe?

To see the glimmering wigwams by the waves?
And, wildly clad, around the camp-fires' glow,
The Shawnee chieftains with their painted braves,
Each grasping his war-bow?

But now the vision like the sunset fades,
The ribs of golden clouds have oozed their light;
And from the west, like sombre sachem shades,
Gallop the shades of night.

The broad Ohio glitters to the stars;
And many murmurs whisper in its woods
Is it the sorrow of dead warriors
For their lost solitudes?

The moon goes down; and like another moon
The crescent of the river twinkles there,
Unchanged as when the eyes of Daniel Boone
Beheld it flowing fair.

Madison Julius Cawein

Along The Stream

Where the violet shadows brood
Under cottonwoods and beeches,
Through whose leaves the restless reaches
Of the river glance, I've stood,
While the red-bird and the thrush
Set to song the morning hush.

There, when woodland hills encroach
On the shadowy winding waters,
And the bluets, April's daughters,
At the darling Spring's approach,
Star their myriads through the trees,
All the land is one with peace.

Under some imposing cliff,
That, with bush and tree and boulder,
Thrusts a gray, gigantic shoulder
O'er the stream, I've oared a skiff,
While great clouds of berg-white hue
Lounged along the noonday blue.

There, when harvest heights impend
Over shores of rippling summer,
And to greet the fair new-comer,
June, the wildrose thickets bend
In a million blossoms dressed
All the land is one with rest.

On some rock, where gaunt the oak
Reddens and the sombre cedar
Darkens, like a sachem leader,
I have lain and watched the smoke
Of the steamboat, far away,
Trailed athwart the dying day.

There, when margin waves reflect
Autumn colors, gay and sober,
And the Indian-girl, October,
Wampum-like in berries decked,

Sits beside the leaf-strewn streams,
All the land is one with dreams.

Through the bottoms where, out-tossed
By the wind's wild hands, ashiver
Lean the willows o'er the river,
I have walked in sleet and frost,
While beneath the cold round moon,
Frozen, gleamed the long lagoon.

There, when leafless woods uplift
Spectral arms the storm-blasts splinter,
And the hoary trapper, Winter,
Builds his camp of ice and drift,
With his snow-pelts furred and shod,
All the land is one with God.

Madison Julius Cawein

Amadis And Oriana

From 'Beltenebros at Miraflores'

O sunset, from the springs of stars
Draw down thy cataracts of gold;
And belt their streams with burning bars
Of ruby on which flame is rolled:
Drench dingles with laburnum light;
Drown every vale in violet blaze:
Rain rose-light down; and, poppy-bright,
Die downward o'er the hills of haze,
And bring at last the stars of night!

The stars and moon! that silver world,
Which, like a spirit, faces west,
Her foam-white feet with light empearled,
Bearing white flame within her breast:
Earth's sister sphere of fire and snow,
Who shows to Earth her heart's pale heat,
And bids her mark its pulses glow,
And hear their crystal currents beat
With beauty, lighting all below.

O cricket, with thy elfin pipe,
That tinkles in the grass and grain;
And dove-pale buds, that, dropping, stripe
The glen's blue night, and smell of rain;
O nightingale, that so dost wail
On yonder blossoming branch of snow,
Thrill, fill the wild deer-haunted dale,
Where Oriana, walking slow,
Comes, thro' the moonlight, dreamy pale.

She comes to meet me!-Earth and air
Grow radiant with another light.
In her dark eyes and her dark hair
Are all the stars and all the night:
She comes! I clasp her!-and it is
As if no grief had ever been.-
In all the world for us who kiss

There are no other women or men
But Oriana and Amadis.

Madison Julius Cawein

An Abandoned Quarry

The barberry burns, the rose-hip crimsons warm,
And haw and sumach hedge the hill with fire,
Down which the road winds, worn of hoof and tire,
Only the blueberry-picker plods now from the farm.
Here once the quarry-driver, brown of arm,
Wielded the whip when, deep in mud and mire,
The axle strained, and earned his daily hire,
Labouring bareheaded in both sun and storm.
Wild-cherry now and blackberry and bay
Usurp the place: the wild-rose, undisturbed,
Riots, where once the workman earned his wage,
Whose old hands rest now, like this granite grey,
These rocks, whose stubborn will whilom he curbed,
Hard as the toil that was his heritage.

Madison Julius Cawein

An Anemone

'Teach me the wisdom of thy beauty, pray,
That, being thus wise, I may aspire to see
What beauty is, whence, why, and in what way
Immortal, yet how mortal utterly:
For, shrinking loveliness, thy brow of day
Pleads plaintive as a prayer, anemone.

'Teach me wood-wisdom, I am petulant:
Thou hast the wildness of a Dryad's eyes,
The shyness of an Oread's, wild plant:-
Behold the bashful goddess where she lies
Distinctly delicate!- inhabitant
Ambrosial-earthed, star-cousin of the skies.

'Teach me thy wisdom, for, thro' knowing, yet,
When I have drunk dull Lethe till each vein
Thuds full oblivion, I shall not forget;-
For beauty known is beauty; to sustain
Glad memories with life, while mad regret
And sorrow perish, being Lethe slain.'

'Teach thee my beauty being beautiful
And beauty wise?- My slight perfections, whole
As world, as man, in their creation full
As old a Power's cogitation roll.
Teach thee?- Presumption! thought is young and dull-
Question thy God what God is, soul what soul.'

Madison Julius Cawein

An Episode

There was a man rode into town one day,
Barefooted, hatless, and without a coat.
It was the dead of winter. Round his throat
Were marks of violence: bits and wisps of hay
Bristled his beard and hair. From far away
We saw him coming: desolate and remote
And wild his gaze, that of no man took note,
Or seeming note; and nothing would he say.
But when he'd had a drink, then drunk some more,
He told us he had sold tobacco; see?
And all was lost. At that he caught his breath.
Last night a knock came at his cabin-door.
His son, who answered, was shot dead. And he
Was caught and chok'd and almost beat to death.

II.

They said he'd sold tobacco; and he knew
They ought to kill him, burn his house and barn,
And would unless he gave them (this with scorn)
The money he'd received. What could he do?
He had a little money, it was true,
Hid in an old pot underneath the corn
There in the crib, he told them. 'Twas a yarn
To get away. They were a desperate crew.
They set to work upon the crib; and he
Got loose and on a horse and took to flight:
They shot at him. Whatever might occur
He did not care now; they had burned, you see,
His home: for miles its glare lit up the night.
His wife and daughters? God knows where they were.

Madison Julius Cawein

An Idyll

He was a boy, sun-burned and brown,
And she a girl from a neighboring town:
Dark were her eyes and dark her hair,
And her cheeks as red as the ripe peach there:
Dainty and sweet, with a far-away
Look in her eyes like the skies of May.
And it came to pass one afternoon
She walked in the fields; and the month was June:
In the hay-heaped fields and the meadowland
With trees and hills on either hand.
And the lad, who worked on her father's farm,
Had laid him down all tired and warm.
He had been toiling day after day
Mowing and raking and hilling the hay.
And now at last, with his work well done,
He slept by a stack away from the sun.
And she, who came with her young head full
Of thoughts that never are learned in school,
Young dreams and fancies no girl knows of
Unless she is far on the road to love,
When she saw him there, where he lay and slept,
A little nearer she cautiously stepped:
Then stood, big-eyed, and looked around,
As if afraid of the one she'd found;
Of him she knew not, who seemed to take
Her heart in a hold she could not break.
He looked so tired and young and hot,
That an impulse swept her, she scarce knew what:
Primitive, wild, that would not wait,
That cried in her blood, 'There lies your mate!'
And all was still, save the cricket's shrill,
And the breeze that blew from the wooded hill.
And so she stood with a foot back-drawn,
Like a Nymph that comes on a sleeping Faun:
Then stooped and kissed him, and turned and fled,
Sobbing, her heart of itself adread.
But he who lay in the hay slept on,
And never knew what had come and gone:
The love that had bent to his life and kissed

That something, called fate, which each has missed.

Madison Julius Cawein

An Incident

Here is a tale for men and women teachers:
There was a girl who'd ceased to be a maiden;
Who walked by night with heart like Lilith's laden;
A child of sin anathemaed of preachers.
She had been lovely once; but dye and scarlet,
On hair and face, had ravaged all her beauty;
Only her eyes still did her girl-soul duty,
Showing the hell that hounded her poor harlot!
One day a fisherman from out the river
Fished her pale body, (like a branch of willow,
Or golden weed) self-murdered, drowned and broken:
The sight of it had made a strong man shiver;
And on her poor breast, as upon a pillow,
A picture smiled, a baby's, like some token

Madison Julius Cawein

An Ode - In Commemoration Of The Founding, Of The Massachusetts Bay Colony In The Year 1623.

They who maintained their rights,
Through storm and stress,
And walked in all the ways
That God made known,
Led by no wandering lights,
And by no guess,
Through dark and desolate days
Of trial and moan:
Here let their monument
Rise, like a word
In rock commemorative
Of our Land's youth;
Of ways the Puritan went,
With soul love-spurred
To suffer, die, and live
For faith and truth.
Here they the corner-stone
Of Freedom laid;
Here in their hearts' distress
They lit the lights
Of Liberty alone;
Here, with God's aid,
Conquered the wilderness,
Secured their rights.
Not men, but giants, they,
Who wrought with toil
And sweat of brawn and brain
Their freehold here;
Who, with their blood, each day
Hallowed the soil,
And left it without stain
And without fear.

II.

Yea; here, from men like these,
Our country had its stanch beginning;

Hence sprang she with the ocean breeze
And pine scent in her hair;
Deep in her eyes the winning,
The far-off winning of the unmeasured West;
And in her heart the care,
The young unrest,
Of all that she must dare,
Ere as a mighty Nation she should stand
Towering from sea to sea,
From land to moantained land,
One with the imperishable beauty of the stars
In absolute destiny;
Part of that cosmic law, no shadow mars,
To which all freedom runs,
That wheels the circles of the worlds and suns
Along their courses through the vasty night,
Irrevocable and eternal as is Light.

III.

What people has to-day
Such faith as launched and sped,
With psalm and prayer, the Mayflower on its way?
Such faith as led
The Dorchester fishers to this sea-washed point,
This granite headland of Cape Ann?
Where first they made their bed,
Salt-blown and wet with brine,
In cold and hunger, where the storm-wrenched pine
Clung to the rock with desperate footing. They,
With hearts courageous whom hope did anoint,
Despite their tar and tan,
Worn of the wind and spray,
Seem more to me than man,
With their unconquerable spirits. Mountains may
Succumb to men like these, to wills like theirs,
The Puritan's tenacity to do;
The stubbornness of genius; holding to
Their purpose to the end,
No New-World hardship could deflect or bend;
That never doubted in their worst despairs,
But steadily on their way

Held to the last, trusting in God, who filled
Their souls with fire of faith that helped them build
A country, greater than had ever thrilled
Man's wildest dreams, or entered in
His highest hopes. 'Twas thins that helped them win
In spite of danger and distress,
Through darkness and the din
Of winds and waves, unto a wilderness,
Savage, unbounded, pathless as the sea,
That said, 'Behold me! I am free!'
Giving itself to them for greater things
Than filled their souls with dim imaginings.

IV.

Let History record their stalwart names,
And catalogue their fortitude, whence grew,
Swiftly as running flames,
Cities and civilization:
How from a meeting-house and school,
A few log-huddled cabins, Freedom drew
Her rude beginnings. Every pioneer station,
Each settlemeat, though primitive of tool,
Had in it then the making of a Nation;
Had in it then the roofing of the plains
With tragic; and the piercing through and through
Of forests with the iron veins
Of industry.
Would I could make you see
How these, laboriously,
These founders of New England, every hour
Faced danger, death, and misery,
Conquering the wilderness;
With supernatural power
Changing its features; all its savage glower
Of wild barbarity, fierce hate, duress,
To something human, something that could bless
Mankind with peace and lift its heart's elation;
Something at last that stood
For universal brotherhood,
Astonishing the world, a mighty Nation,
Hewn from the solitude.

Iron of purpose as of faith and daring,
And of indomitable will,
With axe and hymn-book still I see them faring,
The Saxon Spirit of Conquest at their side
With sword and flintlock; still I see them stride,
As to some Roundhead rhyme,
Adown the aisles of Time.

V.

Can praise be simply said of such as these?
Such men as Standish, Winthrop, Endicott?
Such souls as Roger Conant and John White?
Rugged and great as trees,
The oaks of that New World with which their lot
Was cast forever, proudly to remain.
That world in which each name still stands, a light
To beacon the Ship of State through stormy seas.
Can praise be simply said
Of him, the younger Vane,
Puritan and patriot,
Whose dedicated head
Was laid upon the block
In thy name, Liberty!
Can praise be simply said of such as he!
Needs must the soul unlock
All gates of eloquence to sing of these.
Such periods,
Such epic melodies,
As holds the utterance of the earlier gods,
The lords of song, one needs
To sing the praise of these!
No feeble music, tinklings frail of glass;
No penny trumpetings; twitterings of brass,
The moment's effort, shak'n from pigmy bells,
Ephemeral drops from small Pierian wells,
With which the Age relieves a barren hour.
But such large music, such melodious power,
As have our cataracts,
Pouring the iron facts,
The giant acts
Of these: such song as have our rock-ridged deep

And mountain steeps,
When winds, like clanging eagles, sweep the storm
On tossing wood and farm:
Such eloquence as in the torrent leaps,
Where the hoarse canyon sleeps,
Holding the heart with its terrific charm,
Carrying its roaring message to the town,
To voice their high achievement and renown.

VI.

Long, long ago, beneath heaven's stormy slope,
In deeds of faith and hope,
Our fathers laid Freedom's foundations here,
And raised, invisible, vast,
Embodying naught of doubt or fear,
A monument whose greatness shall outlast
The future, as the past,
Of all the Old World's dynasties and kings.
A symbol of all things
That we would speak, but cannot say in words,
Of those who first began our Nation here,
Behold, we now would rear!
A different monument! a thought, that girds
Itself with granite; dream made visible
In rock and bronze to tell
To all the Future what here once befell;
Here where, unknown to them,
A tree took root; a tree of wondrous stem;
The tree of high ideals, which has grown,
And has not withered since its seed was sown,
Was planted here by them in this new soil,
Who watered it with tears and blood and toil:
An heritage we mean to hold,
Keeping it stanch and beautiful as of old.
For never a State,
Or People, yet was great
Without its great ideals; branch and root
Of the deep tree of life where bud and blow
The dreams, the thoughts, that grow
To deeds, the glowing fruit.

VII.

The morn, that breaks its heart of gold
Above the purple hills;
The eve, that spills
Its nautilus splendor where the sea is rolled;
The night, that leads the vast procession in
Of stars and dreams,
The beauty that shall never die or pass:
The winds, that spin
Of rain the misty mantles of the grass,
And thunder-raiment of the mountain-streams;
The sunbeams, needling with gold the dusk
Green cowls of ancient woods;
The shadows, thridding, veiled with musk,
The moon-pathed solitudes,
Call to my Fancy, saying, 'Follow! follow!'
Till, following, I see,
Fair as a cascade in a rainbowed hollow,
A dream, a shape, take form,
Clad on with every charm,
The vision of that Ideality,
Which lured the pioneer in wood and hill,
And beckoned him from earth and sky;
The dream that cannot die,
Their children's children did fulfill,
In stone and iron and wood,
Out of the solitude,
And by a forthright act
Create a mighty fact
A Nation, now that stands
Clad on with hope and beauty, strength and song,
Eternal, young, and strong,
Planting her heel on Wrong,
Her starry banner in triumphant hands....
Within her face the rose
Of Alleghany dawns;
Limbed with Alaskan snows,
Floridian starlight in her eyes,
Eyes stern as steel yet tender as a fawn's,
And in her hair
The rapture of her river; and the dare,

As perishless as truth,
That o'er the crags of her Sierras flies,
Urging the eagle ardor through her veins,
Behold her where,
Around her radiant youth,
The spirits of the cataracts and plains,
The genii of the floods and forests, meet,
In rainbow mists circling her brow and feet:
The forces vast that sit
In session round her; powers paraclete,
That guard her presence; awful forms and fair,
Making secure her place;
Guiding her surely as the worlds through space
Do laws sidereal; edicts, thunder-lit,
Of skyed eternity, in splendor borne
On planetary wings of night and morn.

VIII.

Behold her! this is she!
Beautiful as morning on the summer sea,
Yet terrible as is the elemental gold
That cleaves the tempest and in angles clings
About its cloudy temples. Manifold
The dreams of daring in her fearless gaze,
Fixed on the future's days;
And round her brow, a strand of astral beads,
Her soul's resplendent deeds;
And at her front one star,
Refulgent hope,
Like that on morning's slope,
Beaconing the world afar.
From her high place she sees
Her long procession of accomplished acts,
Cloud-wing'd refulgences
Of thoughts in steel and stone, of marble dreams,
Lift up tremendous battlements,
Sun-blinding, built of facts;
While in her soul she seems,
Listening, to hear, as from innumerable tents,
Æonian thunder, wonder, and applause
Of all the heroic ages that are gone;

Feeling secure
That, as her Past, her Future shall endure,
As did her Cause
When redly broke the dawn
Of fierce rebellion, and, beneath its star,
The firmaments of war
Poured down infernal rain,
And North and South lay bleeding 'mid their slain.
And now, no less, shall her Cause still prevail,
More so in peace than war,
Through the thrilled wire and electric rail,
Carrying her message far;
Shaping her dream
Within the brain of steam,
That, with a myriad hands,
Labors unceasingly, and knits her lands
In firmer union; joining plain and stream
With steel; and binding shore to shore
With bands of iron; nerves and arteries,
Along whose adamant forever pour
Her concrete thoughts, her tireless energies.

Madison Julius Cawein

Annisquam

Old days, old ways, old homes beside the sea;
Old gardens with old-fashioned flowers aflame,
Poppy, petunia, and many a name
Of many a flower of fragrant pedigree.
Old hills that glow with blue- and barberry,
And rocks and pines that stand on guard, the same,
Immutable, as when the Pilgrim came,
And here laid firm foundations of the Free.
The sunlight makes the dim dunes hills of snow,
And every vessel's sail a twinkling wing
Glancing the violet ocean far away:
The world is full of color and of glow;
A mighty canvas whereon God doth fling
The flawless picture of a perfect day.

Madison Julius Cawein

Announcement

The night is loud with reeds of rain
Rejoicing at my window-pane,
And murmuring, 'Spring comes again!'

I hear the wind take up their song
And on the sky's vibrating gong
Beat out and roar it all night long.

Then waters, where they pour their might
In foam, halloo it down the night,
From vale to vale and height to height.

And I thank God that down the deep
She comes, her ancient tryst to keep
With Earth again who wakes from sleep:

From death and sleep, that held her fast
So long, pale cerements round her cast,
Her penitential raiment vast.

Now, Lazarus-like, within her grave
She stirs, who hears the words that save,
The Christ-like words of wind and wave.

And, hearing, bids her soul prepare
The germs of blossoms in her there
To make her body sweet and fair;

To meet in manifest audience
The eyes of Spring, and reverence,
With beauty, God in soul and sense.

Madison Julius Cawein

Anthem Of Dawn

Then up the orient heights to the zenith, that balanced the crescent,
Up and far up and over,-the heaven grew erubescant,
Vibrant with rose and with ruby from the hands of the harpist Dawn,
Smiting symphonic fire on the firmament's barbiton:
And the East was a priest who adored with offerings of gold and of gems,
And a wonderful carpet unrolled for the inaccessible hems
Of the glistening robes of her limbs; that, lily and amethyst,
Swept glorying on and on through temples of cloud and mist.

II

Then out of the splendor and richness, that burned like a magic stone,
The torrent suffusion that deepened and dazzled and broadened and shone,
The pomp and the pageant of color, triumphal procession of glare,
The sun, like a king in armor, breathing splendor from feet to hair,
Stood forth with majesty girdled, as a hero who towers afar
Where the bannered gates are bristling hells and the walls are roaring war:
And broad on the back of the world, like a Cherubin's fiery blade,
The effulgent gaze of his aspect fell in glittering accolade.

III

Then billowing blue, like an ocean, rolled from the shores of morn to even:
And the stars, like rafts, went down: and the moon, like a ghost-ship, driven,
A feather of foam, from port to port of the cloud-built isles that dotted,
With pearl and cameo, bays of the day, her canvas webbed and rotted,
Lay lost in the gulf of heaven: while over her mixed and melted
The beautiful children of Morn, whose bodies are opal-belted;
The beautiful daughters of Dawn, who, over and under, and after
The rivered radiance, wrestled; and rainbowed heaven with laughter
Of halcyon sapphire.-O Dawn! thou visible mirth,

Madison Julius Cawein

Apocalypse

Before I found her I had found
Within my heart, as in a brook,
Reflections of her: now a sound
Of imaged beauty; now a look.

So when I found her, gazing in
Those Bibles of her eyes, above
All earth, I read no word of sin;
Their holy chapters all were love.

I read them through. I read and saw
The soul impatient of the sod-
Her soul, that through her eyes did draw
Mine-to the higher love of God.

Madison Julius Cawein

Apportionment

How often in our search for joy below
Hoping for happiness we chance on woe.

Madison Julius Cawein

Aprilian

Come with me where April twilights
Wigwam blue the April hills;
Where the shadows and the high lights
Swarm the woods that Springtime fills.
Tents where dwell the tribes of beauty,
Tasseled scouts whose camp-fires glow
Over leagues of wild-flower booty
Rescued from the camps of snow.

II.

A thousand windflowers blowing!
They print the ways with palest pearl,
As if with raiment flowing
Here passed some glimmering girl.
A thousand bluets breaking!
They take the heart with glad surprise,
As if some wild girl waking
Looked at you with bewildered eyes.
A thousand buds and flowers,
A thousand birds and bees:
What spirit haunts the bowers!
What dream that no one sees!

III.

Her kirtle is white as the wild-plum bloom,
Her girdle is pink as the crab;
Her face is sweet as a wood perfume
Or haw that the sunbeams stab.
Her boddice is green as the beetle's wing
That jewels the light o' the sun;
And the earth and the air around her sing
Wherever her mad feet run.
Her beautiful feet, that bloom and bud
And print with blossoms each place.
Oh, let us follow them into the wood
And gaze on her, face to face.

Argonauts

With argosies of dawn he sails,
And triremes of the dusk,
The Seas of Song, whereon the gales
Are myths that trail wild musk.

He hears the hail of Siren bands
From headlands sunset-kissed;
The Lotus-eaters wave pale hands
Within a land of mist.

For many a league he hears the roar
Of the Symplegades;
And through the far foam of its shore
The Isle of Sappho sees.

All day he looks, with hazy lids,
At gods who cleave the deep;
All night he hears the Nereids
Sing their wild hearts asleep.

When heaven thunders overhead,
And hell upheaves the Vast,
Dim faces of the ocean's dead
Gaze at him from each mast.

He but repeats the oracle
That bade him first set sail;
And cheers his soul with, 'All is well!
Go on! I will not fail.'

Behold! he sails no earthly bark
And on no earthly sea,
Who down the years into the dark,-
Divine of destiny,-

Holds to his purpose,-ships of Greece,-
Ideal-steered afar,
For whom awaits the Golden Fleece,
The fame that is his star.

Madison Julius Cawein

Assumption

I

A mile of moonlight and the whispering wood:
A mile of shadow and the odorous lane:
One large, white star above the solitude,
Like one sweet wish: and, laughter after pain,
Wild-roses wistful in a web of rain.

II

No star, no rose, to lesson him and lead;
No woodsman compass of the skies and rocks,-
Tattooed of stars and lichens,-doth love need
To guide him where, among the hollyhocks,
A blur of moonlight, gleam his sweetheart's locks.

III

We name it beauty-that permitted part,
The love-elected apotheosis
Of Nature, which the god within the heart,
Just touching, makes immortal, but by this-
A star, a rose, the memory of a kiss.

Madison Julius Cawein

At Midnight

At midnight in the trysting wood
I wandered by the waterside,
When, soft as mist, before me stood
My sweetheart who had died.

But so unchanged was she, meseemed
That I had only dreamed her dead;
Glad in her eyes the love-light gleamed;
Her lips were warm and red.

What though the stars shone shadowy through
Her form as by my side she went,
And by her feet no dropp of dew
Was stirred, no blade was bent!

What though through her white loveliness
The wildflower dimmed, the moonlight paled,
Real to my touch she was; no less
Than when the earth prevailed.

She took my hand. My heart beat wild.
She kissed my mouth. I bowed my head.
Then gazing in my eyes, she smiled:
'When did'st thou die?' she said.

Madison Julius Cawein

At Moonrise

Pale faces looked up at me, up from the earth, like flowers;
Pale hands reached down to me, out of the air, like stars,
As over the hills, robed on with the twilight, the Hours,
The Day's last Hours, departed, and Dusk put up her bars.

Pale fingers beckoned me on; pale fingers, like starlit mist;
Dim voices called to me, dim as the wind's dim rune,
As up from the night, like a nymph from the amethyst
Of her waters, as silver as foam, rose the round, white breast of the moon.

And I followed the pearly waving and beckon of hands,
The luring glitter and dancing glimmer of feet,
And the sibilant whisper of silence, that summoned to lands
Remoter than legend or faery, where Myth and Tradition meet.

And I came to a place where the shadow of ancient Night
Brooded o'er ruins, far wilder than castles of dreams;
Fantastic, a mansion of phantoms, where, wandering white,
I met with a shadowy presence whose voice I had followed, it seems.

And the ivy waved in the wind, and the moonlight laid,
Like a ghostly benediction, a finger wan
On the face of the one from whose eyes the darkness rayed
The face of the one I had known in the years long gone.

And she looked in my face, and kissed me on brow and on cheek,
Murmured my name, and wistfully smiled in my eyes,
And the tears welled up in my heart, that was wild and weak,
And my bosom seemed bursting with yearning, and my soul with sighs.

And there 'mid the ruins we sat.. . Oh, strange were the words that she said!
Distant and dim and strange; and hollow the looks that she gave:
And I knew her then for a joy, a joy that was dead,
A hope, a beautiful hope, that my youth had laid in its grave.

Madison Julius Cawein

At Sunset

Into the sunset's turquoise marge
The moon dips, like a pearly barge
Enchantment sails through magic seas
To faeryland Hesperides,
Over the hills and away.

Into the fields, in ghost-gray gown,
The young-eyed Dusk comes slowly down;
Her apron filled with stars she stands,
And one or two slip from her hands
Over the hills and away.

Above the wood's black caldron bends
The witch-faced Night and, muttering, blends
The dew and heat, whose bubbles make
The mist and musk that haunt the brake
Over the hills and away.

Oh, come with me, and let us go
Beyond the sunset lying low;
Beyond the twilight and the night,
Into Love's kingdom of long light,
Over the hills and away.

Madison Julius Cawein

At The End Of The Road

THIS is the truth as I see it, my dear,
Out in the wind and the rain:
They who have nothing have little to fear,—
Nothing to lose or to gain.
Here by the road at the end o' the year,
Let us sit down and drink o' our beer,
Happy-Go-Lucky and her cavalier,
Out in the wind and the rain.
Now we are old, oh isn't it fine
Out in the wind and the rain?
Now we have nothing why snivel and whine? —
What would it bring us again? —
When I was young I took you like wine,
Held you and kissed you and thought you divine —
Happy-Go-Lucky, the habit's still mine,
Out in the wind and the rain.
Oh, my old Heart, what a life we have led,
Out in the wind and the rain!
How we have drunken and how we have fed!
Nothing to lose or to gain! —
Cover the fire now; get we to bed.
Long was the journey and far has it led:
Come, let us sleep, lass, sleep like the dead,
Out in the wind and the rain.

Madison Julius Cawein

At The Lane's End

No more to strip the roses from
The rose-boughs of her porch's place!
I dreamed last night that I was home
Beside a rose her face.

I must have smiled in sleep who knows?
The rose aroma filled the lane;
I saw her white hand's lifted rose
That called me home again.

And yet when I awoke so wan,
An old face wet with icy tears!
Somehow, it seems, sleep had misdrawn
A love gone thirty years.

II.

The clouds roll up and the clouds roll down
Over the roofs of the little town;
Out in the hills where the pike winds by
Fields of clover and bottoms of rye,
You will hear no sound but the barking cough
Of the striped chipmunk where the lane leads off;
You will hear no bird but the sapsuckers
Far off in the forest, that seems to purr,
As the warm wind fondles its top, grown hot,
Like the docile back of an ocelot:
You will see no thing but the shine and shade
Of briars that climb and of weeds that wade
The glittering creeks of the light, that fills
The dusty road and the red-keel hills
And all day long in the pennyroy'l
The grasshoppers at their anvils toil;
Thick click of their tireless hammers thrum,
And the wheezy belts of their bellows hum;
Tinkers who solder the silence and heat
To make the loneliness more complete.
Around old rails where the blackberries
Are reddening ripe, and the bumble-bees

Are a drowsy rustle of Summer's skirts,
And the bob-white's wing is the fan she flirts.
Under the hill, through the iron weeds,
And ox-eyed daisies and milkweeds, leads
The path forgotten of all but one.
Where elder bushes are sick with sun,
And wild raspberries branch big blue veins
O'er the face of the rock, where the old spring rains
Its sparkling splinters of molten spar
On the gravel bed where the tadpoles are,
You will find the pales of the fallen fence,
And the tangled orchard and vineyard, dense
With the weedy neglect of thirty years.
The garden there, where the soft sky clears
Like an old sweet face that has dried its tears;
The garden plot where the cabbage grew
And the pompous pumpkin; and beans that blew
Balloons of white by the melon patch;
Maize; and tomatoes that seemed to catch
Oblong amber and agate balls
Thrown from the sun in the frosty falls:
Long rows of currants and gooseberries,
And the balsam-gourd with its honey-bees.
And here was a nook for the princess-plumes,
The snap-dragons and the poppy-blooms,
Mother's sweet-williams and pansy flowers,
And the morning-glories' bewildered bowers,
Tipping their cornucopias up
For the humming-birds that came to sup.
And over it all was the Sabbath peace
Of the land whose lap was the love of these;
And the old log-house where my innocence died,
With my boyhood buried side by side.
Shall a man with a face as withered and gray
As the wasp-nest stowed in a loft away,
Where the hornets haunt and the mortar drops
From the loosened logs of the clap-board tops;
Whom vice has aged as the rotting rooms
The rain where memories haunt the glooms;
A hitch in his joints like the rheum that gnats
In the rasping hinge of the door that jars;
A harsh, cracked throat like the old stone flue

Where the swallows build the summer through;
Shall a man, I say, with the spider sins
That the long years spin in the outs and ins
Of his soul returning to see once more
His boyhood's home, where his life was poor
With toil and tears and their fretfulness,
But rich with health and the hopes that bless
The unsoiled wealth of a vigorous youth;
Shall he not take comfort and know the truth
In its threadbare raiment of falsehood? Yea!
In his crumbled past he shall kneel and pray,
Like a pilgrim come to the shrine again
Of the homely saints that shall soothe his pain,
And arise and depart made clean from stain!

III.

Years of care can not erase
Visions of the hills and trees
Closing in the dam and race;
Not the mile-long memories
Of the mill-stream's lovely place.

How the sunsets used to stain
Mirror of the water lying

Under eaves made dark with rain!
Where the red-bird, westward flying,
Lit to try one song again.

Dingles, hills, and woods, and springs,
Where we came in calm and storm,
Swinging in the grape-vine swings,
Wading where the rocks were warm,
With our fishing-nets and strings.

Here the road plunged down the hill,
Under ash and chinquapin,
Where the grasshoppers would drill
Ears of silence with their din,
To the willow-girdled mill.

There the path beyond the ford
Takes the woodside, just below
Shallows that the lilies sword,
Where the scarlet blossoms blow
Of the trumpet-vine and gourd.

Summer winds, that sink with heat,
On the pelted waters winnow
Moony petals that repeat
Crescents, where the startled minnow
Beats a glittering retreat.

Summer winds that bear the scent
Of the iron-weed and mint,
Weary with sweet freight and spent,
On the deeper pools imprint
Stumbling steps in many a dent.

Summer winds, that split the husk
Of the peach and nectarine,
Trail along the amber dusk
Hazy skirts of gray and green,
Spilling balms of dew and musk.

Where with balls of bursting juice
Summer sees the red wild-plum
Strew the gravel; ripened loose,
Autumn hears the pawpaw drum
Plumpness on the rocks that bruise:

There we found the water-beech,
One forgotten August noon,
With a hornet-nest in reach,
Like a fairyland balloon,
Full of bustling fairy speech.

Some invasion sure it was;
For we heard the captains scold;
Waspish cavalry a-buzz,
Troopers uniformed in gold,
Sable-slashed, to charge on us.

Could I find the sedgy angle,
Where the dragon-flies would turn
Slender flittings into spangle
On the sunlight? or would burn
Where the berries made a tangle

Sparkling green and brassy blue;
Rendezvousing, by the stream,
Bands of elf-banditti, who,
Brigands of the bloom and beam,
Drunken were with honey-dew.

Could I find the pond that lay
Where vermilion blossoms showered
Fragrance down the daisied way?
That the sassafras embowered
With the spice of early May?

Could I find it did I seek
The old mill? Its weather-beaten
Wheel and gable by the creek?
With its warping roof; worm-eaten,
Dusty rafters worn and weak.

Where old shadows haunt old places,
Loft and hopper, stair and bin;
Ghostly with the dust that laces
Webs that usher phantoms in,
Wistful with remembered faces.

While the frogs' grave litanies
Drowse in far-off antiphone,
Supplicating, till the eyes
Of dead friendships, long alone
In the dusky corners, rise.

Moonrays or the splintered slip
Of a star? within the darkling
Twilight, where the fire-flies dip
As if Night a myriad sparkling
Jewels from her hands let slip:

While again some farm-boy crosses,
With a corn-sack for the meal,
O'er the creek, through ferns and mosses
Sprinkled by the old mill-wheel,
Where the water drips and tosses.

Madison Julius Cawein

At The Sign Of The Skull

It's 'Gallop and go!' and 'Slow, now, slow!'
With every man in this life below
But the things of this world are a fleeting show.

The postchaise Time that all must take
Is old with clay and dust;
Two horses strain its rusty brake
Named Pleasure and Disgust.

Our baggage totters on its roof,
Of Vanity and Care,
As Hope, the postboy, spurs each hoof,
Or heavy-eyed Despair.

And now a comrade with us rides,
Love, haply, or Remorse;
And that dim traveler besides,
Gaunt Memory on a horse.

And be we king or be we kern
Who ride the roads of Sin,
No matter how the roads may turn
They lead us to that Inn.

Unto that Inn within that land
Of silence and of gloom,
Whose ghastly landlord takes our hand
And leads us to our room.

It's 'Gallop and go!' and 'Slow, now, slow!'
With every man in this life below
But the things of this world are a fleeting show.

Madison Julius Cawein

Attainment

ON the Heights of Great Endeavour,—
Where Attainment looms forever,—
Toiling upward, ceasing never,
Climb the fateful Centuries:
Up the difficult, dark places,
Joy and anguish in their faces,
On they strive, the living races,
And the dead, that no one sees.

Shape by shape, with brow uplifted,
One by one, where night is rifted,
Pass the victors, many gifted,
Where the heaven opens wide:
While below them, fallen or seated,
Mummy-like, or shadow-sheeted,
Stretch the lines of the defeated,—
Scattered on the mountainside.

And each victor, passing wanly,
Gazes on that Presence lonely,
With unmoving eyes where only
Grow the dreams for which men die:
Grow the dreams, the far, ethereal,
That on earth assume material
Attributes, and, vast, imperial,
Rear their battlements on high.

Kingdoms, marble-templed, towered,
Where the Arts, the many-dowered,—
That for centuries have flowered,
Trampled under War's wild heel,—
Lift immortal heads and golden,
Blossoms of the times called olden,
Soul-alluring, earth-withholden,
Universal in appeal.

As they enter,—high and lowly,—
On the hush these words fall slowly:—
'Ye who kept your purpose holy,

Never dreamed your cause was vain,
Look!—Behold, through time abating,
How the long, sad days of waiting,
Striving, starving, hoping, hating,
Helped your spirit to attain.

'For to all who dream, aspire,
Marry effort to desire,
On the cosmic heights, in fire
Beaconing, my form appears:—
I am marvel, I am morning!
Beauty in man's heart and warning!—
On my face none looks with scorning,
And no soul attains who fears.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Attributes

I Saw the daughters of the Dawn come dancing o'er the hills;
The winds of Morn danced with them, oh, and all the sylphs of air:
I saw their ribboned roses blow, their gowns, of daffodils,
As over eyes of sapphire tossed the wild gold of their hair.

I saw the summer of their feet imprint the earth with dew,
And all the wildflowers open eyes in joy and wonderment:
I saw the sunlight of their hands waved at each bird that flew,
And all the birds, as with one voice, to their wild love gave vent.

'And, oh I' I said, 'how fair you are I how fair! how very fair!
Oh, leap, my heart; and laugh, my heart! as laughs and leaps the Dawn!
Mount with the lark and sing with him and cast away your care!
For love and life are come again and night and sorrow gone!'

I saw the acolytes of Eve, the mystic sons of Night,
Come pacing through the ancient wood in hoods of hodden-grey;
Their sombre cloaks were pinned with stars, and each one bore a light,
A moony lanthorn, and a staff to help him on his way.

I heard their mantles rustle by, their sandals' whispering, sweep,
And saw the wildflowers bow their heads and close their lovely eyes:
I saw their shadows pass and pass, and with them Dreams and Sleep,
Like children with their father, went, in dim and ghostly guise.

'And, oh!' I said, 'how sad you are! how sad! how wondrous sad!
Oh, hush, my heart! be still, my heart! and, like the dark, be dumb!
Be as the wild-rose there that dreams the perfect hour it had,
And cares not if the day be past and death and darkness come.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Aubade

Awake! the dawn is on the hills!
Behold, at her cool throat a rose,
Blue-eyed and beautiful she goes,
Leaving her steps in daffodils.-
Awake! arise! and let me see
Thine eyes, whose deeps epitomize
All dawns that were or are to be,
O love, all Heaven in thine eyes!-
Awake! arise! come down to me!

Behold! the dawn is up: behold!
How all the birds around her float,
Wild rills of music, note on note,
Spilling the air with mellow gold.-
Arise! awake! and, drawing near,
Let me but hear thee and rejoice!
Thou, who keep'st captive, sweet and clear,
All song, O love, within thy voice!
Arise! awake! and let me hear!

See, where she comes, with limbs of day,
The dawn! with wild-rose hands and feet,
Within whose veins the sunbeams beat,
And laughters meet of wind and ray.
Arise! come down! and, heart to heart,
Love, let me clasp in thee all these-
The sunbeam, of which thou art part,
And all the rapture of the breeze!-
Arise! come down! loved that thou art!

Madison Julius Cawein

August

Clad on with glowing beauty and the peace,
Benign, of calm maturity, she stands
Among her meadows and her orchard-lands,
And on her mellowing gardens and her trees,
Out of the ripe abundance of her hands
Bestows increase
And fruitfulness, as, wrapped in sunny ease,
Blue-eyed and blonde she goes
Upon her bosom Summer's richest rose.

II.

And he who follows where her footsteps lead,
By hill and rock, by forest-side and stream,
Shall glimpse the glory of her visible dream,
In flower and fruit, in rounded nut and seed:
She, in whose path the very shadows gleam;
Whose humblest weed
Seems lovelier than June's loveliest flower, indeed,
And sweeter to the smell
Than April's self within a rainy dell.

III.

Hers is a sumptuous simplicity
Within the fair Republic of her flowers,
Where you may see her standing hours on hours,
Breast-deep in gold, soft-holding up a bee
To her hushed ear; or sitting under bowers
Of greenery,
A butterfly a-tilt upon her knee;
Or lounging on her hip,
Dancing a cricket on her finger-tip.

IV.

Ay, let me breathe hot scents that tell of you;
The hoary catnip and the meadow-mint,
On which the honour of your touch doth print

Itself as odour. Let me drink the hue
Of iron-weed and mist-flow'r here that hint,
With purple and blue,
The rapture that your presence doth imbue
Their inmost essence with,
Immortal though as transient as a myth.

V.

Yea, let me feed on sounds that still assure
Me where you hide: the brooks', whose happy din
Tells where, the deep retired woods within,
Disrobed, you bathe; the birds', whose drowsy lure
Tells where you slumber, your warm nestling chin
Soft on the pure,
Pink cushion of your palm.. . What better cure
For care and memory's ache
Than to behold you so, and watch you wake!

Madison Julius Cawein

Authorities

The unpretentious flowers of the woods,
That rise in bright and banded brotherhoods,
Waving us welcome, and with kisses sweet
Laying their lives down underneath our feet,
Lesson my soul more than the tomes of man,
Packed with the lore of ages, ever can,
In love and truth, hope and humility,
And such unselfishness as to the bee,
Lifting permissive petals dripping nard,
Yields every sweet up, asking no reward.

The many flowers of wood and field and stream,
Filling our hearts with wonder and with dream,
That know no ceremony, yet that are
Attended of such reverence as that star
That punctual point of flame, which, to our eyes,
Leads on the vast procession of the skies,
Sidereal silver, glittering in the west
Compels, assertive of heaven's loveliest.

Where may one find suggestion simpler set
Than in the radius of a violet?
Or more authentic loveliness than glows
In the small compass of a single rose?
Or more of spiritual thought than perfumes from
The absolute purity of a lily-bloom?

Madison Julius Cawein

Autumn At Annisquam

The bitter-sweet and red-haw in her hands,
And in her hair pale berries of the bay,
She haunts the coves and every Cape Ann way,
The Indian, Autumn, wandered from her bands.
Beside the sea, upon a rock, she stands,
And looks across the foam, and straight the grey
Takes on a sunset tone, and all the day
Murmurs with music of forgotten lands.
Now in the woods, knee-deep among the ferns,
She walks and smiles and listens to the pines,
The sweetheart pines, that kiss and kiss again,
Whispering their love: and now she frowns and turns
And in the west the fog in ragged lines
Rears the wild wigwams of the tribes of rain.

Madison Julius Cawein

Autumn Etchings

Morning

Her rain-kissed face is fresh as rain,
Is cool and fresh as a rain-wet leaf;
She glimmers at my window-pane,
And all my grief
Becomes a feeble rushlight, seen no more
When the gold of her gown sweeps in my door.

II.

Forenoon

Great blurs of woodland waved with wind;
Gray paths, down which October came,
That now November's blasts have thinned
And flecked with fiercer flame,
Are her delight. She loves to lie
Regarding with a gray-blue eye
The far-off hills that hold the sky:
And I I lie and gaze with her
Beyond the autumn woods and ways
Into the hope of coming days,
The spring that nothing shall deter,
That puts my soul in unison
With what's to do and what is done.

III.

Noon

Wild grapes that purple through
Leaves that are golden;
Brush-fires that pillar blue
Woods, that, enfolden
Deep in the haze of dreams,
In resignation
Give themselves up, it seems,
To divination:

Woods, that, ablaze with oak,
That the crow flew in,
Gaze through the brushwood smoke
On their own ruin,
And on the countenance of Death who stalks
Amid their miles,
While to himself he talks
And smiles:
Where, in their midst, Noon sits and holds
Communion with their grays and golds,
Transforming with her rays their golds and grays,
And in my heart the memories of dead days.

IV.

Afternoon

Wrought-iron hues of blood and bronze,
Like some wild dawn's,
Make fierce each leafy spire
Of blackberry brier,
Where, through their thorny fire,
She goes, the Afternoon, from wood to wood,
From crest to oak-crowned crest
Of the high hill-lands, where the Morning stood
With rosy-ribboned breast.
Along the hills she takes the tangled path
Unto the quiet close of day,
Musing on what a lovely death she hath
The unearthly golden beryl far away
Banding the gradual west,
Seen through cathedral columns of the pines
And minster naves of woodlands arched with vines;
The golden couch, spread of the setting sun,
For her to lie, and me to gaze, upon.

V.

Evening

The winds awake,
And, whispering, shake

The aster-flower whose doom is sealed;
The sumach-bloom
Bows down its plume;
And, blossom-Bayard of the field,
The chicory stout
To the winds' wild rout
Lifts up its ragged shield.
Low in the west the Evening shows
A ridge of rose;
And, stepping Earthward from the hills,
Where'er she goes
The cricket wakes, and all the silence spills
With reed-like music shaken from the weeds:
She takes my hand
And leads
Softly my soul into the Fairyland,
The wonder-world of gold and chrysolite,
She builds there at the haunted edge of night.

VI.

Night

Autumn woods the winds tramp down
Sowing acorns left and right,
Where, in rainy raiment, Night
Tiptoes, rustling wild her gown
Dripping in the moon's pale light,
In the moonlight wan that hurries
Trailing now a robe of cloud
Now of glimmer, ghostly browed,
Through the leaves whose wildness skurries,
And whose tatters swirl and swarm
Round her in her stormy starkness;
She who takes my heart that leaps,
That exults, and onward sweeps,
Like a red leaf in the darkness
And the tumult of the storm.

Madison Julius Cawein

Autumn Sorrow

Ah me! too soon the autumn comes
Among these purple-plaintive hills!
Too soon among the forest gums
Premonitory flame she spills,
Bleak, melancholy flame that kills.

Her white fogs veil the morn, that rims
With wet the moonflower's elfin moons;
And, like exhausted starlight, dims
The last slim lily-disk; and swoons
With scents of hazy afternoons.

Her gray mists haunt the sunset skies,
And build the west's cadaverous fires,
Where Sorrow sits with lonely eyes,
And hands that wake an ancient lyre,
Beside the ghost of dead Desire.

Madison Julius Cawein

Autumn Wild-Flowers

Like colored lanterns swung in Elfin towers,
Wild morning-glories light the tangled ways,
And, like the rosy rockets of the Fays,
Burns the sloped crimson of the cardinal-flowers.

Madison Julius Cawein

Avalon

I Dreamed my soul went wandering in
An island dim with mystery;
An island that, because of sin,
No mortal eye shall ever see.

And while I walked, one came, unseen,
And gazed into my eyes: ah me!
Her presence was a rose between
The wind and me, blown dreamily.

The lily, that lifts up its dome,
A tabernacle for the bee,
A faery chapel fair as foam,
Had not her absolute purity.

The bird, that hymns the falling leaf,
That breaks its heart in melody,
Says to the soul no raptured grief
Such as her presence said to me.

That moment when I felt her eyes,
Their starry transport, instantly
I felt the indomitable skies,
With all their worlds, were less to me.

And when her hand lay in my own,
Far intimations flashed through me
Of all the loves the world has known
And given to immortality.

A look, a touch and she was gone:
And somewhere near, but shadowy,
A voice said, 'This is Avalon,
And she, they soul's old tragedy.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Bad Luck

Once a rabbit crossed my road
When I went to see my aunt;
And another time a toad
Hopped right in my way. You can't
Kill toads, for that makes it rain,
And would spoil your day again.

But the rabbit if I could
I'd have killed him. For one day
Once a boy he told me, 'Should
A wild rabbit cross your way,
Look out for bad luck that is,
If your fingers ain't cross-criss.'

But if I had shot him dead
I'd not been unlucky; no;
And not fallen out of bed
That same night; or stumped my toe
Playing 'I Spy'; nor the string
Broken when I went to swing.

Talk about bad luck! I guess
That old rabbit brought it. Well;
Maudie had on her new dress,
And I pushed her, and she fell
In a creek-hole, where you're bound
To get wet so Maudie found.

I I pulled her out that is,
Buddie helped me. Bud's a boy
Who was fishing there. And Liz,
Maud's old nurse, she took my toy,
My toy-whip, and she was mad
Whipped my legs and called me bad.

Then she said Maud might have drowned;
And the creek was full of'dumb
Pollywogs and snakes '; a sound
Whipping just might help me some:

Maybe Maud would catch a cold
And my mother should be told.

No, sir. I don't want to see
Any rabbits anyways
Cross my road. Why, gemenie!
(That's a swear-word Maudie says)
If I saw one only one,
I would turn and run and run.

Madison Julius Cawein

Ballad Of Low-Lie-Down

John-a-Dreams and Harum-Scarum
Came a-riding into town:
At the Sign o' the Jug-and-Jorum
There they met with Low-lie-down.

Brave in shoes of Romany leather,
Bodice blue and gypsy gown,
And a cap of fur and feather,
In the inn sat Low-lie-down.

Harum-Scarum kissed her lightly;
Smiled into her eyes of brown:
Clasped her waist and held her tightly,
Laughing, 'Love me, Low-lie-down!'

Then with many an oath and swagger,
As a man of great renown,
On the board he clapped his dagger,
Called for sack and sat him down.

So a while they laughed together;
Then he rose and with a frown
Sighed, 'While still 'tis pheasant weather,
I must leave thee, Low-lie-down.'

So away rode Harum-Scarum;
With a song rode out of town;
At the Sign o' the Jug-and-Jorum
Weeping tarried Low-lie-down.

Then this John-a-dreams, in tatters,
In his pocket ne'er a crown,
Touched her, saying, 'Wench, what matters!
Dry your eyes and, come, sit down.

'Here's my hand: we'll roam together,
Far away from thorp and town.
Here's my heart, - for any weather, -
And my dreams, too, Low-lie-down.

'Some men call me dreamer, poet:
Some men call me fool and clown -
What I am but you shall know it,
Only you, sweet Low-lie-down.'

For a little while she pondered:
Smiled: then said, 'Let care go drown!'
Up and kissed him. . . . Forth they wandered,
John-a-dreams and Low-lie-down.

Madison Julius Cawein

Bare Boughs

O heart,-that beat the bird's blithe blood,
The blithe bird's strain, and understood
The song it sang to leaf and bud,-
What dost thou in the wood?

O soul,-that kept the brook's glad flow,
The glad brook's word to sun and moon,-
What dost thou here where song lies low,
And dead the dreams of June?

Where once was heard a voice of song,
The hautboys of the mad winds sing;
Where once a music flowed along,
The rain's wild bugle's ring.

The weedy water frets and ails,
And moans in many a sunless fall;
And, o'er the melancholy, trails
The black crow's eldritch call.

Unhappy brook! O withered wood!
O days, whom Death makes comrades of!
Where are the birds that thrilled the blood
When Life struck hands with Love?

A song, one soared against the blue;
A song, one silvered in the leaves;
A song, one blew where orchards grew
Gold-applied to the eaves.

The birds are flown; the flowers, dead;
And sky and earth are bleak and gray:
Where Joy once went, all light of tread,
Grief haunts the leaf-wild way.

Madison Julius Cawein

Be Glad

Be glad, just for to-day!
O heart, be glad!
Cast all your cares away!
Doff all that 's sad!
Put of your garments gray
Be glad to-day!
Be merry while you-can;
For life is short
It seemeth but a span
Before we part.
Let each maid take her man,
And dance while dance she can:
Life's but a little span
Be merry while you can.

Madison Julius Cawein

Beautiful-Bosomed, O Night

I

Beautiful-bosomed, O Night, in thy noon
Move with majesty onward! soaring, as lightly
As a singer may soar the notes of an exquisite tune,
The stars and the moon
Through the clerestories high of the heaven, the firmament's halls:
Under whose sapphirine walls,
June, hesperian June,
Robed in divinity wanders. Daily and nightly
The turquoise touch of her robe, that the violets star,
The silvery fall of her feet, that lilies are,
Fill the land with languorous light and perfume.-
Is it the melody mute of burgeoning leaf and of bloom?
The music of Nature, that silently shapes in the gloom
Immaterial hosts
Of spirits that have the flowers and leaves in their keep,
Whom I hear, whom I hear?
With their sighs of silver and pearl?
Invisible ghosts,-
Each sigh a shadowy girl,-

Who whisper in leaves and glimmer in blossoms and hover
In color and fragrance and loveliness, breathed from the deep
World-soul of the mother,
Nature; who over and over,-
Both sweetheart and lover,-
Goes singing her songs from one sweet month to the other.

II

Lo! 'tis her songs that appear, appear,
In forest and field, on hill-land and lea,
As visible harmony,
Materialized melody,
Crystallized beauty, that out of the atmosphere
Utters itself, in wonder and mystery,
Peopling with glimmering essence the hyaline far and the near....

III

Behold how it sprouts from the grass and blossoms from flower and tree!
In waves of diaphanous moonlight and mist,
In fugue upon fugue of gold and of amethyst,
Around me, above me it spirals; now slower, now faster,
Like symphonies born of the thought of a musical master.-
O music of Earth! O God, who the music inspired!
Let me breathe of the life of thy breath!
And so be fulfilled and attired
In resurrection, triumphant o'er time and o'er death!

Madison Julius Cawein

Beauty

High as a star, yet lowly as a flower,
Unknown she takes her unassuming place
At Earth's proud masquerade-the appointed hour
Strikes, and, behold, the marvel of her face.

Madison Julius Cawein

Beauty And Art

The gods are dead; but still for me
Lives on in wildwood brook and tree
Each myth, each old divinity.

For me still laughs among the rocks
The Naiad; and the Dryad's locks
Drop perfume on the wildflower flocks.

The Satyr's hoof still prints the loam;
And, whiter than the wind-blown foam,
The Oread haunts her mountain home.

To him, whose mind is fain to dwell
With loveliness no time can quell,
All things are real, imperishable.

To him-whatever facts may say-
Who sees the soul beneath the clay,
Is proof of a diviner day.

The very stars and flowers preach
A gospel old as God, and teach
Philosophy a child may reach;

That cannot die; that shall not cease;
That lives through idealities
Of Beauty, ev'n as Rome and Greece.

That lifts the soul above the clod,
And, working out some period
Of art, is part and proof of God.

Madison Julius Cawein

Beech Blooms

The wild oxalis
Among the valleys
Lifts up its chalice
Of pink and pearl;
And, balsam-breathing,
From out their sheathing,
The myriad wreathing
Green leaves uncurl.

The whole world brightens
With spring, that lightens
The foot that frightens
The building thrush;
Where water tosses
On ferns and mosses
The squirrel crosses
The beechen hush.

And vision on vision,
Like ships elysian
On some white mission,
Sails cloud on cloud;
With scents of clover
The winds brim over,
And in the cover
The stream is loud.

'Twixt bloom that blanches
The orchard branches
Old farms and ranches
Gleam in the gloam;
'Mid blossoms blowing,
Through fields for sowing,
The cows come lowing,
The cows come home.

Where ways are narrow,
A vesper-sparrow
Flits like an arrow

Of living rhyme;
The red sun poises,
And farmyard noises
Mix with glad voices
Of milking-time.

When dusk disposes
Of all its roses,
And darkness closes,
And work is done,
A moon's white feather
In starry weather
And two together
Whose hearts are one.

Madison Julius Cawein

Beetle And Moth

There's a bug at night that goes
Drowsily down the garden ways;
Lumberingly above the rose,
And above the jasmine sprays;
Bumping, bungling, buzzing by,
Falling finally, to crawl
Underneath the rose and lie
Near its fairest bud. That's all.
And I ask my father why
This old bug goes by that way:
This is what he has to say:
'That's old Parson Beetle, sonny;
He's in love with some rich flower;
After her and all her honey
And he'll have them in an hour.
He is awkward, but, I say,
With the flowers he has a way;
And, I tell you, he's a power;
Never fails to get his flower:
He's a great old Beetle, sonny.'

II.

Then again, when it is wet,
And we sit around the lamp,
On the screen, near which it's set,
Comes a fluttering, dim and damp,
Of white, woolly wings; and I
Go to see what's there and find
Something like a butterfly,
Beating at the window-blind.
And I ask my father why
This strange creature does that way:
This is what he has to say:
'Lady Moth that; she's the fashion:
Fall's in love with all bright things:
She has a consuming passion
For this light: will singe her wings.
Once it was a star, you know,

That she loved. I told you so!
Take her up. What lovely rings
On her scorched and dainty wings!
It's a pity, but the fashion.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Before The Rain

BEFORE the rain, low in the obscure east,
Weak and morose the moon hung, sickly gray;
Around its disc the storm mists, cracked and creased,
Wove an enormous web, wherein it lay
Like some white spider hungry for its prey.
Vindictive looked the scowling firmament,
In which each star, that flashed a dagger ray,
Seemed filled with malice of some dark intent.
The marsh-frog croaked; and underneath the stone
The peevish cricket raised a creaking cry.

Within the world these sounds were heard alone,
Save when the ruffian wind swept from the sky,
Making each tree like some sad spirit sigh;
Or shook the clumsy beetle from its weed,
That, in the drowsy darkness, bungling by,
Sharded the silence with its feverish speed.

Slowly the tempest gathered. Hours passed
Before was heard the thunder's sullen drum
Rumbling night's hollow; and the Earth at last,
Restless with waiting,-like a woman, dumb
With doubting of the love that should have clomb
Her casement hours ago,--avowed again,
'Mid protestations, joy that he had come.
And all night long I heard the Heavens explain.

Madison Julius Cawein

Before The Temple

All desolate she sate her down
Upon the marble of the temple's stair.
You would have thought her, with her eyes of brown,
Flushed cheeks and hazel hair,
A dryad dreaming there.

II.

A priest of Bacchus passed, nor stopped
To chide her; deeming her whose chiton hid
But half her bosom, and whose girdle dropped
Some grief-drowned Bassarid,
The god of wine had chid.

III.

With wreaths of woodland cyclamen
For Dian's shrine, a shepherdess drew near,
All her young thoughts on vestal beauty, when
She dare not look for fear
Behold the goddess here!

IV.

Fierce lights on shields of bossy brass
And helms of gold, next from the hills deploy
Tall youths of Argos. And she sees him pass,
Flushed with heroic joy,
On towards the siege of Troy.

Madison Julius Cawein

Below The Sunset's Range Of Rose

Below the sunset's range of rose,
Below the heaven's deepening blue,
Down woodways where the balsam blows,
And milkweed tufts hang, gray with dew,
A Jersey heifer stops and lows-
The cows come home by one, by two.

There is no star yet: but the smell
Of hay and pennyroyal mix
With herb aromas of the dell,
Where the root-hidden cricket clicks:
Among the ironweeds a bell
Clangs near the rail-fenced clover-ricks.

She waits upon the slope beside
The windlass'd well the plum trees shade,
The well curb that the goose-plums hide;
Her light hand on the bucket laid,
Unbonneted she waits, glad-eyed,
Her gown as simple as her braid.

She sees fawn-colored backs among
The sumacs now; a tossing horn
Its clashing bell of copper rung:
Long shadows lean upon the corn,
And slow the day dies, scarlet stung,
The cloud in it a rosy thorn.

Below the pleasant moon, that tips
The tree tops of the hillside, fly
The flitting bats; the twilight slips,
In firefly spangles, twinkling by,
Through which
he
comes: Their happy lips
Meet-and one star leaps in the sky.

He takes her bucket, and they speak
Of married hopes while in the grass

The plum drops glowing as her cheek;
The patient cows look back or pass:
And in the west one golden streak
Burns as if God gazed through a glass.

Madison Julius Cawein

Bertrand De Born

The burden of the sometime years,
That once my soul did overweigh,
Falls from me, with its griefs and fears,
When gazing in thine eyes of gray;
Wherein, behold, like some bright ray
Of dawn, thy heart's fond love appears,
To cheer my life upon its way.

Thine eyes! the daybreak of my heart!
That give me strength to do and dare;
Whose beauty is a radiant part
Of all my songs; the music there;
The morning, that makes dim each care,
And glorifies my mind's dull mart,
And helps my soul to do and dare.

God, when He made thy fresh fair face,
And thy young body, took the morn
And made thee like a rose, whose race
Is not of Earth; without a thorn,
And dewed thee with the joy that's born
Of love, wherein hope hath its place
Like to the star that heralds morn.

I go my way through town and thorp:
In court and hall and castle bower
I tune my lute and strike my harp:
And often from some twilight tower
A lady drops to me a flower,
That bids me scale the moat's steep scarp,
And climb to love within her bower.

I heed them not, but go my ways:
What is their passion unto me!
My songs are only in thy praise;
Thy face alone it is I see,
That fills my heart with melody
My sweet aubade! that makes my days
All music, singing here in me!

One time a foul knight in his towers
Sneered thus: 'God's blood! why weary us
With this one woman all our hours!
Sing of our wenches! amorous
Yolande and Ysoarde here! Not thus
Shalt sing, but of our paramours!

What is thy Lady unto us!
And then I flung my lute aside;
And from its baldric flew my sword;
And down the hall 't was but a stride;
And in his brute face and its word
My gauntlet; and around the board
The battle, till all wild-beast-eyed
He lay and at his throat my sword.

Thou dost remember in Provence
The vile thing that I slew; and how
With my good jongleurs and my lance
Kept back his horde! The memory now
Makes fierce my blood and hot my brow
With rage. Ah, what a madman dance
We led them, and escaped somehow!

Oft times, when, in the tournament,
I see thee sitting yet uncrowned;
And bugles blow and spears are bent,
And shields and falchions clash around,
And steeds go crashing to the ground;
And thou dost smile on me, 'though spent
With war, again my soul is crowned:

And I am fire to strike and slay;
Before my face there comes a mist
Of blood; and like a flame I play
Through the loud lists; all who resist
Go down like corn; until thy wrist,
Kneeling, I kiss; the wreath they lay
Of beauty on thy head's gold mist.

And then I seize my lute and sing

Some chanson or some wild aubade
Full of thy beauty and the swing
Of swords and love which I have had
Of thee, until, with music mad,
The lists reel with thy name and ring
The echoed words of my aubade.

I am thy knight and troubadour,
Bertrand de Born, whom naught shall part
From thee: who art my life's high lure,
And wild bird of my wilder heart
And all its music: yea, who art
My soul's sweet sickness and its cure,
From which, God grant! it ne'er shall part.

Madison Julius Cawein

Black Vesper's Pageants

The day, all fierce with carmine, turns
An Indian face towards Earth and dies;
The west, like some gaunt vase, inurns
Its ashes under smouldering skies,
Athwart whose bowl one red cloud streams,
Strange as a shape some Aztec dreams.

Now shadows mass above the world,
And night comes on with wind and rain;
The mulberry-colored leaves are hurled
Like frantic hands against the pane.
And through the forests, bending low,
Night stalks like some gigantic woe.

In hollows where the thistle shakes
A hoar bloom like a witch's-light,
From weed and flower the rain-wind rakes
Dead sweetness as a wildman might,
From out the leaves, the woods among,
Dig some dead woman, fair and young.

Now let me walk the woodland ways,
Alone! except for thoughts, that are
Akin to such wild nights and days;
A portion of the storm that far
Fills Heaven and Earth tumultuously,
And my own soul with ecstasy.

Madison Julius Cawein

Boyhood

O Days that hold us; and years that mold us!
And dreams and mem'ries no time destroys!
Where lie the islands, the morning islands,
And where the highlands we knew when boys?

Oh, tell us, whether the happy heather
Still purples ways we used to roam;
And mid its roses, its oldtime roses,
The place reposes we knew as home.

Oh, could we find him, that boy, and bind him,
The boy we were that never grew,
By whom we're haunted, our hearts are haunted,
What else were wanted by me and you?

Again to see it! Again to knee it!
The pond we waded, the brook we swum;
That held more pleasures, more priceless pleasures,
Than all the treasures to which we come.

Again to follow through wood and hollow
A cowbell's tinkle, a bird's wild call,
To where they yellow, the daisies yellow,
And lights lie mellow at evenfall.

To be the leaders of oaks and cedars,
The giant hosts of worlds at war;
Or princes airy, proud princes airy,
Of Lands of Faery that lie afar.

Through scents of yarrow, where paths are narrow,
To foot the way we only know,
That leads to places, old orchard places,
And garden spaces of Long Ago.

To climb rail fences, when dusk commences,
With young Adventure, tanned hand in hand;
And lead by starlight, by dewy starlight,
To one farm's far light a campaign planned.

Where she, our princess, mid blossoming quinces,
The first dear girl for whom we cared,
And got a rating, her father's rating,
Stands sweetly waiting, brown-eyed, brown-haired.

Or, in the morning, without a warning,
With health for luggage and love for spur,
To make invasion, divine invasion,
As suits occasion, of worlds for her.

With her, as eager, again beleaguer
The forest's fortress of leaf and log;
And pierce its vastness, its gloomy vastness,
And storm its fastness with stick and dog.

And from its shadows' rich Eldorados
The untold gold of blossoms bring:
And, as in story, in song and story,
Beard Wildness hoary, like some old king.

Or lead lost legions through unknown regions,
The pirate kings of isles unfound:
On haystacks golden, our galleons golden,
Sail oceans olden of meadow ground.

And from those caitiffs, the hideous natives,
Invisible tribes that swarm the wood,
To rescue Molly, or Peg, or Polly,
With her dear dolly as pirates should.

O tanned and freckled and sunbeam-speckled!
O barefoot joy that romped the years!
O reckless rapture! O long-lost rapture!
Beyond the capture of all our tears!

Madison Julius Cawein

Broken Music

There it lies broken, as a shard,
What breathed sweet music yesterday;
The source, all mute, has passed away
With its masked meanings still unmarred.
But melody will never cease!
Above the vast cerulean sea
Of heaven, created harmony
Rings and re-echoes its release!
So, this dumb instrument that lies
All powerless, [with spirit flown,
Beyond the veil of the Unknown
To chant its love-hymned litanies,]
Though it may thrill us here no more
With cadenced strain, in other spheres
Will rise above the vanquished years
And breathe its music as before!

Madison Julius Cawein

Bryan's Station

We tightened stirrup; buckled rein;
Looked to our saddle-girths again;
Shook hands all round; then mounted.
The gate swung wide: we said, 'Good-bye.'
No time for talk had Bell and I.
One cried, 'God speed!' another, 'Fly!'
As out we rode to do or die,
And every minute counted.
The trail, the buffaloes had worn,
Stretched broad before us through the corn
And cane with which it blended.
We knew for miles around the gate
Hid Indian guile and Tory hate.
There was no time to hesitate.
We galloped on. We spurred like Fate,
As morn broke red and splendid.
No rifle cracked. No arrow whirred.
Above us piped a forest bird,
Then two and three together.
We 'd reached the woods. And still no shout
Of all the wild Wyandotte rout
And Shawanese had yet rung out:
But now and then an Indian scout
Flashed here and there a feather.
We rode expecting death each stride
From fallen tree or thicket side,
Where, snake-like, they could huddle:
And well we knew that renegade,
The blood-stained Girty, only stayed
His hate awhile before he played
His hand: that Fiend, who had betrayed
The pioneers of Ruddle.
And when an arrow grazed my hair
I was not startled; did not care;
But rode with rifle ready.
A whoop rang out beyond a ford
Then spawned the wood a yelling horde
Of devils, armed with tomahawk
And gun. I raised my flintlock's stock

And let 'em have it steady.
Tom followed me. And for a mile
We matched our strength with redskin guile:
And often I have wondered
How we escaped. I lost my gun:
And Tom, whose girth had come undone,
Rode saddleless. . . . The summer sun
Was high when into Lexington,
With flying manes we thundered.
Too late. For Todd at break of day
Had left for Hoy's; decoyed, they say,
By some reported story
Of new disaster. Bryan's needs
Cried 'On!' Although we had done deeds,
We must do more, whatever speeds.
We had no time to rest our steeds,
Whose panting flanks were gory.
Again the trail; rough; often barred
By rocks and trees. Oh, it was hard
To keep our souls from sinking:
But thoughts of those we 'd left behind
Gave strength to muscle and to mind
To help us on on, through the blind
Deep woods, where often we would find
Our hearts of loved ones thinking.
The hot stockade. No water left.
The night attack. All hope bereft
The powder-grimed defender.
The warwhoop and the groan of pain.
All night the slanting arrow-rain
Of fire-brands from the corn and cane:
The fierce defense, but all in vain:
And then, at last, surrender.
But not for Bryan's! No! Too well
Must they remember what befell
At Ruddle's and take warning. . . .
And like two madmen, dust and sweat,
We rode with faces forward set,
And came to Boone's. The sun was yet
An hour from noon. . . . We had not let
Our horses rest since morning.
Here Ellis heard our news: his men

Around him, back we turned again,
And like a band of lions
That leap some lioness to aid,
Of death and torture unafraid,
We charged the Indian ambuscade
And through a storm of bullets made
Our entrance into Bryan's.
And that is all I have to tell.
No more the Huron's hideous yell
Whoops to assault and slaughter.
Perhaps to us some praise is due:
But we are men, accustomed to
Face danger, which is nothing new.
The women did far more for you,
Risking their lives for water.

Madison Julius Cawein

Bubbles

As I went through the wood, the wood,
Through fern and pimpernel,
A water fell, a water stood,
Twinkling within a dell,
And Naiad fancies, gleaming, hung
Like bubbles there the moss among.

And as I sat beside the fall
And watched a rainbow beam,
There rose a dream, a spirit tall,
Out of the woodland stream:
Bright, prised bubbles in her hair,
She rose and smiled upon me there.

But as I gazed at her and gazed,
Dim bubbles grew her eyes;
And frail of dyes her body raised,
And 'vanished in the skies:
And with the spirit went my dream
A rainbow bubble of the stream.

Madison Julius Cawein

By The Annisquam

A Far bell tinkles in the hollow,
And heart and soul are fain to follow:
Gone is the rose and gone the swallow:
Autumn is here.

The wild geese draw at dusk their harrow
Above the 'Squam the ebb leaves narrow:
The sea-winds chill you to the marrow:
Sad goes the year.

Among the woods the crows are calling:
The acorns and the leaves are falling:
At sea the fishing-boats are trawling:
Autumn is here.

The jay among the rocks is screaming,
And every way with crimson streaming:
Far up the shore the foam is creaming:
Sleep fills the Year.

The chipmunk on the stones is barking;
The red leaf every path is marking,
Where hills lean to the ocean harking:
Autumn is here.

The fields are starry with the aster,
Where Beauty dreams and dim Disaster
Draws near through mists that gather faster:
Farewell, sweet Year.

Beside the coves driftwood is burning,
And far at sea white sails are turning:
Each day seems filled with deeper yearning:
Autumn is here.

'Good-bye! good-bye!' the Summer's saying:
'Brief was my day as songs of Maying:
The time is come for psalms and praying:
Good-bye, sweet Year.'

Brown bend the ferns by rock and boulder;
The shore seems greyer; ocean older:
The days are misty; nights are colder:
Autumn is here.

The cricket in the grass is crying,
And sad winds in the old woods sighing;
They seem to say, 'Sweet Summer's dying:
Weep for the Year.

'She's wreathed her hair with bay and berry,
And o'er dark pools, the wild-fowl ferry,
Leans dreaming 'neath the wilding cherry:
Autumn is here.

'Good-bye! good-bye to Summer's gladness:
To all her beauty, mirth and madness:
Come sit with us and dream in sadness:
So ends the Year.'

Madison Julius Cawein

By The Summer Sea

Sunlight and shrill cicada and the low,
Slow, sleepy kissing of the sea and shore,
And rumor of the wind. The morning wore
A sullen face of fog that lifted slow,
Letting her eyes gleam through of grayest glow;
Wearing a look like that which once she wore
When, Gloucesterward from Dogtown there, they bore
Some old witchwife with many a gibe and blow.
But now the day has put off every care,
And sits at peace beside the smiling sea,
Dreaming bright dreams with lazy-lidded eyes:
One is a castle, precipiced in air,
And one a golden galleons can it be
'Tis but the cloudworld of the sunset skies?

Madison Julius Cawein

Can Such Things Be?

Meseemed that while she played, while lightly yet
Her fingers fell, as roses bloom by bloom,
I listened dead within a mighty room
Of some old palace where great casements let
Gaunt moonlight in, that glimpsed a parapet
Of statued marble: in the arrased gloom
Majestic pictures towered, dim as doom,
The dreams of Titian and of Tintoret.
And then, it seemed, along a corridor,
A mile of oak, a stricken footstep came,
Hurrying, yet slow ... I thought long centuries
Passed ere she entered she, I loved of yore,
For whom I died, who wildly wailed my name
And bent and kissed me on the mouth and eyes.

Madison Julius Cawein

Carpe Diem

Blow high, blow low!
No longer borrow
Care of tomorrow:
Take joy of life, and let care go!

Madison Julius Cawein

Catkins

Misty are the far-off hills
And misty are the near;
Purple hazes dimly lie
Veiling hill and field and sky,
Marshes where the hylas cry,
Like a myriad bills
Piping, 'Spring is here!'

II.

A redbird flits,
Then sings and sits
And calls to his mate,
'She is late! she is late!
How long, how long must the woodland wait
For its emerald plumes
And its jewelled blooms?
She is late! she is late!'

III.

Along the stream,
A cloudy gleam,
The pussy-willows, tufted white,
Make of each tree a mighty light;
Pearl and silver and glimmering gray
They tassel the boughs of the willow way;
And as they swing they seem to say,
With mouths of bloom
And warm perfume:

IV.

'Awake! awake!
For young Spring's sake,
O little brown bees in hive and brake!
Awake! awake!
For sweet Spring's sake,
O butterflies whose wild wings ache

With colors rare
As flowers wear!
And hither, hither,
Before we wither!
Oh, come to us,
All amorous
With honey for your mouths to buss.

V.

'Hearken! hearken!
Last night we heard
A wondrous word:
When dusk did darken
The rain and the wind sat in these boughs,
As in a great and shadowy house.
At first we deemed
We only dreamed,
And then it seemed
We heard them whisper of things to be,
The wind and the rain in the willow tree,
A sweet, delicious conspiracy,
To take the world with witchery:
They talked of the fairy brotherhoods
Of blooms and blossoms and leaves and buds,
That ambushed under the winter mold
And under the bark of the forest old:
And they took our breath
With the shibboleth,
The secret word that casts off death,
That word of life no man may guess;
That wondrous word
Which we then heard,
That bids life rise
Beneath the skies;
Rise up and fill
Far wood and hill
With myriad hosts of loveliness,
Invading beauty that love shall bless.

VI.

'Then in our ears,
Our woolly ears,
Our little ears of willow bloom,
Like wild perfume
We seemed to hear dim woodland cheers
Of hosts of flowers
That soon would run
Through fields and bowers,
And to the sun
Lift high their banners of blue and gold,
And storm the ways of the woodland old.

VII.

'Awake! awake!
For young Spring's sake,
O hylas sleeping in marsh and lake!
Tune up your pipes and play, play, play!
Tune, tune your reeds in ooze and clay,
And pipe and sing
Till everything
Knows, gladly knows,
Sowing the rose,
The lily and rose,
With her breast blown bare
And the wind in her hair,
And the birds around her everywhere,
The Spring, the Spring.
The young witch Spring,
With lilt and laughter, and rain and ray,
Comes swiftly, wildly up this way.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Caverns

Aisles and abysses; leagues no man explores,
Of rock that labyrinths and night that drips;
Where everlasting silence broods, with lips
Of adamant, o'er earthquake-built floors.
Where forms, such as the Demon-World adores,
Laborious water carves; whence echo slips
Wild-tongued o'er pools where petrification strips
Her breasts of crystal from which crystal pours.
Here where primordial fear, the Gorgon, sits
Staring all life to stone in ghastly mirth,
I seem to tread, with awe no tongue can tell,
Beneath vast domes, by torrent-tortured pits,
'Mid wrecks terrific of the ruined Earth,
An ancient causeway of forgotten Hell.

Madison Julius Cawein

Certain Truths About Certain Things

And the boy that lives next door
Said to me one day, There's more
In those rhymes of Mother Goose
And those tales, I don't care whose,
Arabian Nights or Grimm's, or, well,
Any one's, than, I've no doubt,
You or I can ever tell,
Or can ever know about.

II.

Why, there is a land, you know,
Where the world is so-and-so:
Where old Hick-a-Hack-a-more
Kicks the king right out his door
And sits on his throne and kills
Blackbirds as they fly from pies,
Pots them on the windowsills
I ain't telling you no lies.

III.

For I met an old man once
And he was n't any dunce
Who just told me he had been
To that land and he had seen
All those people: even met
Handy Spandy in a shop;
And old Doctor Foster, wet,
Mad enough to make you hop.

IV.

And he said that Miller, he
Who once lived on River Dee,
Told him that he was a wreck,
Mind and body, knee and neck,
Haunted by the memory of
That old flea whose bones he crackt

On the millstones. It was tough!
And it killed him; it's a fact.

V.

And he'd met that fellow, too,
Of St. Ives and all his crew,
Wives and sacks and cats; and he
Said it was a sight to see:
Wives a-scolding and the cats
Fighting in the sacks; the kits
Scratching like so many rats,
Yowling, too, to give you fits.

VI.

And he said that Old King Cole
Was a fraud upon the whole:
Never had a fiddler
That could fiddle anywhere
By the side of him; and joked
While he drank the vilest brew
From a cracked old bowl; and smoked
Worse tobacco; smiling, too.

VII.

And he said he knows of one
Oldtime town, all over-run
With old beggars, that at dark
Loosen dogs that bark and bark
Till the people, gone to bed,
Throw out anything they've got
Just to keep the peace. He said,
'Ought n't they to all be shot?'

VIII.

And he said that that old man
Clothed in leather was a ban
On the whole community:
He was simply miserly,

Filthy, too: economized
Clothes and washing that way: and
This man simply loathed, despised
Him, his grin, and leather-band.

IX.

Cinderella, too: why, she
Was a slomp; just naturally
Would n't work; and had big feet
Could have seen them 'cross the street.
Did n't marry a Prince at all,
But the ashman. Never at Court
Or a ball! She had her gall
To put that in her report!

X.

Blue Beard was a much wronged man.
Think it was a well-laid plan
For his wife, her brothers there,
Just to kill him and to share
All his gold and silver. Then
Great Claus, too, was much abused.
Think that old Hans Andersen
Might have known it. He was used.

XI.

Little Two Eyes ate her goat;
Was a glutton. If you'll note
All she did was eat and eat,
Thought of only bread and meat,
While her sisters, I've heard since,
Scrubbed and labored day and night;
But, it's true, she married a Prince
Fell in love with her appetite.

XII.

Jack the Giant-Killer; well!
He's the worst, the sorriest sell.

This man met him, and he said
He was just a bully; bled
Folks by blackmail. Every one
Was afraid of him. But he,
This old man, once saw him run
From a boy not big as me.

XIII.

Rudest girls he ever saw
Were Bo Peep and Marjory Daw;
Always careless in their dress,
Given over to idleness.
Bobby Shafto and Boy Blue,
Worst boys in the world: the one,
Fishing when he ought not to;
The other sleeping in the sun.

XIV.

Lots of other things he said
That, somehow, got out my head:
Something 'bout that girl contrary
Never had a garden! Mary;
And Miss Muffet that big spider
Never did sit down beside her;
And that Curly Locks the deuce!
Never had a curl.... A few
Things he told of Mother Goose,
And I know they all are true.

Madison Julius Cawein

Chant Before Battle

EVER since man was man a Fiend has stood
Outside his House of Good,—
War, with his terrible toys, that win men's hearts
To follow murderous arts.
His spurs, death-won, are but of little use,
Except as old refuse
Of Life; to hang and testify with rust
Of deeds, long one with dust.
A rotting fungus on a log, a tree,
A toiling worm, or bee,
Serves God's high purpose here on Earth to build
More than War's maimed and killed.
The Hebetude of asses, following still
Some Emperor's will to kill,
Is that of men who give their lives — for what? —
The privilege to be shot!
Grant men more vision, Lord! to read thy words,
That are not guns and swords,
But trees and flowers, lovely forms of Earth,
And all fair things of worth.
So he may rise above the brute and snake,
And of his reason make
A world befitting, as thou hast designed,
His greater soul and mind!
So he may rid himself of worm and beast,
And sit with Love at feast,
And make him worthy to be named thy son,
As He, thy Holy One! Amen.

Madison Julius Cawein

Child And Father

A LITTLE child, one night, awoke and cried,
'Oh, help me, father! there is something wild
Before me! help me!' Hurrying to his side
I answered, 'I am here. You dreamed, my child.'
'A dream? —' he questioned. 'Oh, I could not see!
It was so dark! — Take me into your bed!'—
And I, who loved him, held him soothingly,
And smiling on his terror, comforted.
He nestled in my arms. I held him fast;
And spoke to him and calmed his childish fears,
Until he smiled again, asleep at last,
Upon his lashes still a trace of tears....
How like a child the world! who, in this night
Of strife, beholds strange monsters threatening;
And with black fear, having so little light,
Cries to its Father, God, for comforting.
And well for it, if, answering the call,
The Father hear and soothe its dread asleep! —
How many though, whom thoughts and dreams appall,
Must lie awake and in the darkness weep.

Madison Julius Cawein

Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve is here at last.
And I'm happy as can be.
Going to have a Christmas-tree,
And more toys than any past
Christmas saw or ever had,
So my mother says, for me.
And I'm glad, am just as glad
As a little boy can be.
Christmas Eve is here at last.
Christmas Eve is here at last.

And I'm going to-bed to-night
Early; when it's candlelight:
Christmas Day can't come too fast.
I'll not go to-sleep, I think,
But be wide awake when, right
Here, Old Santa, with a wink,
Down the chimney comes to-night.
Christmas Eve is here at last.
Christmas Eve is here at last.

And the dining-room and hall,
Parlor too, I guess, and wall,
All are hung with holly; massed
With old mistletoe. A smell
Sniffs of cedar over all.
Every minute goes the bell;
Parcels pack and pile the hall.
Christmas Eve is here at last.
Christmas Eve is here at last.

And it has begun to snow.
Oh! I'm so excited! oh!
Windows rattle and the blast
Shakes and mutters at the door.
But that's not the wind I know;
I have heard him there before
Santa Claus all furred with snow.
Christmas Eve is here at last.

Christmas Eve is here at last.

How the folks go hurrying by;
I can see the snowflakes fly
By my window; whirling past
Everywhere; and our front yard
'S covered white: and my! oh my!
Hear the bells that jingle hard!
Must be Santa sleighing by.
Christmas Eve is here at last.
Christmas Eve is here at last.

Tell you what I'm going to do,
Hang my stockings up yes, two!
My two stockings; for, I asked
Mother and she said I might.
Then I'll watch, and cry, 'That you,
Santa?' when he comes to-night
'Hello, Santa! Howdy do!
Christmas Eve is here at last.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Clouds Of The Autumn Night

Clouds of the autumn night,
Under the hunter's moon,
Ghostly and windy white,
Whither, like leaves wild strewn,
Take ye your stormy flight?

Out of the west, where dusk,
From her rich windowsill,
Leaned with a wand of tusk,
Witch-like, and wood and hill
Phantomed with mist and musk.

Into the east, where morn
Sleeps in a shadowy close,
Shut with a gate of horn,
'Round which the dreams she knows
Flutter with rose and thorn.

Blow from the west, oh, blow,
Clouds that the tempest steers!
And with your rain and snow
Bear of my heart the tears,
And of my soul the woe.

Into the east then pass,
Clouds that the night winds sweep!
And on her grave's sear grass,
There where she lies asleep.
There let them fall, alas!

Madison Julius Cawein

Communicants

Who knows the things they dream, alas!
Or feel, who lie beneath the ground?
Perhaps the flowers, the leaves, and grass
That close them round.

In spring the violets may spell
The moods of them we know not of;
Or lilies sweetly syllable
Their thoughts of love.

Haply, in summer, dew and scent
Of all they feel may be a part;
Each red rose be the testament
Of some rich heart.

The winds of fall be utterance,
Perhaps, of saddest things they say;
Wild leaves may word some dead romance
In some dim way.

In winter all their sleep profound
Through frost may speak to grass and stream;
The snow may be the silent sound
Of all they dream.

Madison Julius Cawein

Compensation

Yea, whom He loves the Lord God chasteneth
With disappointments, so that this side death,
Through suffering and failure, they know Hell
To make them worthy in that Heaven to dwell
Of Love's attainment, where they come to be
Parts of its beauty and divinity.

Madison Julius Cawein

Comradery

With eyes hand-arched he looks into
The morning's face; then turns away
With truant feet, all wet with dew,
Out for a holiday.

The hill brook sings; incessant stars,
Foam-fashioned, on its restless breast;
And where he wades its water-bars
Its song is happiest.

A comrade of the chinquapin,
He looks into its knotty eyes
And sees its heart; and, deep within,
Its soul that makes him wise.

The wood-thrush knows and follows him,
Who whistles up the birds and bees;
And round him all the perfumes swim
Of woodland loam and trees.

Where'er he pass the silvery springs'
Foam-people sing the flowers awake;
And sappy lips of bark-clad things
Laugh ripe each berried brake.

His touch is a companionship;
His word an old authority:
He comes, a lyric on his lip,
The woodboy-Poesy.

Madison Julius Cawein

Conscience

Within the soul are throned two powers,
One, Love; one, Hate. Begot of these,
And veiled between, a presence towers,
The shadowy keeper of the keys.

With wild command or calm persuasion
This one may argue, that compel;
Vain are concealment and evasion
For each he opens heaven and hell.

Madison Julius Cawein

Consecration

This is the place where visions come to dance,
Dreams of the trees and flowers, glimmeringly;
Where the white moon and the pale stars can see,
Sitting with Legend and with dim Romance.
This is the place where all the silvery clans
Of Music meet: music of bird and bee;
Music of falling water; melody
Mated with magic, with her golden lance.
This is the place made holy by Love's feet,
And dedicate to wonder and to dreams,
The ministers of Beauty. 'Twas with these
Love filled the place, making all splendours meet
And all despairs, as once in woods and streams
Of Ida and the gold Hesperides.

II.

Here is the place where Loveliness keeps house,
Between the river and the wooded hills,
Within a valley where the Springtime spills
Her firstling wind-flowers under blossoming boughs:
Where Summer sits braiding her warm, white brows
With bramble-roses; and where Autumn fills
Her lap with asters; and old Winter frills
With crimson haw and hip his snowy blouse.
Here you may meet with Beauty. Here she sits;
Gazing upon the moon; or, all the day,
Tuning a wood-thrush flute, remote, unseen:
Or when the storm is out 'tis she who flits
From rock to rock, a form of flying spray,
Shouting, beneath the leaves' tumultuous green.

III.

The road winds upward under whispering trees
Through grass and clover where the dewdropp winks;
And at the hill's green crest abruptly sinks
Into a valley boisterous with bees
And brooks and birds. Its beauty seems to seize

And take one's breath with rapture, joy that drinks
The soul's cup dry while dreamily it links
Present and past with mortal memories.
Or so it seems to us who, heart to heart,
Come back the old way through the dusk and dew
With all our old dreams with us, blossom-deep
With love: old dreams, this vale has made a part
Of its unchanging self, the dreams come true,
That consecrate it and still guard and keep.

IV.

Keep it, O dim recorders of grey years,
And memories of bygone happiness!
This vale among the hills where Love's distress
And rapture walked, beautiful with smiles and tears.
Guard it for Love's sake, and for what endears
Its every tree and flower: each fond caress,
Each look of Love with which he once did bless
The paths he wandered, filled with hopes and fears
Guard it for that sure day when, far apart,
Life's ways have led us; and with Memory
One shall sit down here where two sat with Love:
Keep it for that time; keep it, like my heart,
Haunted for ever by that ecstasy
And by those words its bowers still whisper of.

Madison Julius Cawein

Content

When I behold how some pursue
Fame, that is Care's embodiment
Or fortune, whose false face looks true,
An humble home with sweet content
Is all I ask for me and you.

An humble home, where pigeons coo,
Whose path leads under breezy lines
Of frosty-berried cedars to
A gate, one mass of trumpet-vines,
Is all I ask for me and you.

A garden, which all summer through,
The roses old make redolent,
And morning-glories, gay of hue,
And tansy, with its homely scent,
Is all I ask for me and you.

An orchard, that the pippins strew,
From whose bruised gold the juices spring;
A vineyard, where the grapes hang blue,
Wine-big and ripe for vintaging,
Is all I ask for me and you.

A lane that leads to some far view
Of forest or of fallow-land,
Bloomed o'er with rose and meadow-rue,
Each with a bee in its hot hand,
Is all I ask for me and you.

At morn, a pathway deep with dew,
And birds to vary time and tune;
At eve, a sunset avenue,
And whippoorwills that haunt the moon,
Is all I ask for me and you.

Dear heart, with wants so small and few,
And faith, that's better far than gold,
A lowly friend, a child or two,

To care for us when we are old,
Is all I ask for me and you.

Madison Julius Cawein

Corncob Jones

An Oldham-County Weather Philosopher.

'Who is Corncob Jones?' you say.
Beateningest man and talkingest:
Talk and talk th' enduring day,
Never even stop to rest,
Keep on talking that a-way,
Talk you dead, or do his best.

We were there in that old barn,
Loafing 'round and swapping lies:
There was Wiseheart, talking corn,
Me and Raider boosting ryes,
When old Corncob sprung a yarn
Just to give us a surprise.

'Why,' says he, 'the twelvth of May
'Bout ten year ago, why I
Rickollects it to the day,
By statistics hit wuz dry,
But hit must have rained, I say,
'Cause well, I remember why.

'Fer that night it 'gin to blow
And to rain, an' rained a week;
When hit stopped hit 'gun to show
Here an' there a clearin' streak,
Then set in to sleet an' snow
Blamededst weather! simply freak!

'An' the fruit wuz killt; the corn,
Gin'ral, an' the gardin truck.
That 's experience, an' no yarn.
You can't put hit down to luck,
But to Natur', whar we larn
Common sense, we do, by Huck!

'Why, as I have said to-fore,'
(Here he aimed a streak of brown
At a hornet on the floor,

Got him too)'you put hit down
To experience, nothin' more,
Whut they call hit there in town.

'Natur' jest rubs in the thing
Jest won't let a man ferget;
Keeps hit up spring arter spring
Why? Jest 'cause, now you' kin bet,
Blamed blackberries bloom, by Jing!
They jest need the cold an' wet.

'Every time the twelvth o' May
Cums around, hit 's bound to rain,
Almost to the very day,
Then hit turns an' snows again.
That 's experience, I say,
Whut we gets here, in the main.'

'Talkin' 'bout experience
It don't help so much,' I said;
'Not as much as common sense.'
Here old Corncob shook his head,
Spat and said, 'Well that depen's
On whut common sense is, Ned.'

Then old Wiseheart says, says he,
'Common sense is somethin' more.
Common sense comes nat'rally.
Nothin' helps hit, that I 'm shore;
But hit helps the one, you see,
That 't was borned with, rich er poor.'

Then says Corncob, 'Talkin' now
Of experience. That wuz what
We wuz talkin' 'bout. Somehow
You got stalded missed the spot,
Barbwired both yerself an' plough.
An' ye have n't proved a jot.

'You can' t git along, you know,
'Thout experience. Whar 'd we be,
If we missed hit? Helps me so

I kin reckon, actually,
When hit 's goin' to rain er snow,
Er turn hot er cold;' says he.

'Jest by thinkin' back, by Jack!
Hit 's not whut the weather is,
But whut hit wuz oncet, long back
In the times whut's gone. Gee whiz!
No man needs an almanack
If he only notices.

'Weather? Why, sirs, summer er fall
We kin lay hit by the heels.
Hit cums easy, natural,
Jest like settin' down ter meals.
Jest take notice, that is all.
Do n't rely on how hit feels.

'That 's experience. Larn to know
Whut is whut, an' then take heed.
So it cums we reap an' sow
Jest accordin' as we 've seed
How 't wuz done long years ago,
An' so profit; that's my creed.'

Blamededst man you ever met,
This old Corncob. Had a way
Of convincing you, you bet,
By just facts, as you might say;
Tell you when 'twas dry or wet,
And what 't would be to the day.

Madison Julius Cawein

Creole Serenade

Under mossy oak and pine
Whispering falls the fountained stream;
In its pool the lilies shine
Silvery, each a moonlight gleam.

Roses bloom and roses die
In the warm rose-scented dark,
Where the firefly, like an eye,
Winks and glows, a golden spark.

Amber-belted through the night
Swings the alabaster moon,
Like a big magnolia white
On the fragrant heart of June.

With a broken syrinx there,
With bignonia overgrown,
Is it Pan in hoof and hair,
Or his image carved from stone?

See! her casement's jessamines part,
And, with starry blossoms blent,
Like the moon she leans O heart,
'Tis another firmament.

Madison Julius Cawein

Dawn In The Alleghanies

The waters leap,
The waters roar;
And on the shore
One sycamore
Stands, towering hoar.

The mountains heap
Gaunt pines and crags
That hoar-frost shags;
And, pierced with snags,
Like horns of stags,
The water lags,
The water drags,
Where trees, like hags,
Lean from the steep.

The mist begins
To swirl; then spins
'Mid outs and ins
Of heights; and thins
Where the torrent dins;
And lost in sweep
Of its whiteness deep
The valleys sleep.

Now morning strikes
On wild rampikes
Of forest spikes,
And, down dim dykes
Of dawn, like sheep,
Scatters the mists,
And amethysts
With light, that twists,
And rifts that run
Azure with sun,
Wild-whirled and spun,
The foggy dun
O' the heavens deep.

Look! how they keep
Majestic ward,
Gigantic guard!
And gaze, rock-browed,
Through mist and cloud!
Eternal, vast,
As ages past!
And seem to speak,
With peak on peak,
Of God! and see
Eternity!

Madison Julius Cawein

Days And Days

The days that clothed white limbs with heat,
And rocked the red rose on their breast,
Have passed with amber-sandaled feet
Into the ruby-gated west.

These were the days that filled the heart
With overflowing riches of
Life, in whose soul no dream shall start
But hath its origin in love.

Now come the days gray-huddled in
The haze; whose foggy footsteps drip;
Who pin beneath a gypsy chin
The frosty marigold and hip.

The days, whose forms fall shadowy
Athwart the heart: whose misty breath
Shapes saddest sweets of memory
Out of the bitterness of death.

Madison Julius Cawein

Days Come And Go

Leaves fall and flowers fade,
Days come and go:
Now is sweet Summer laid
Low in her leafy glade,
Low like a fragrant maid,
Low, low, ah, low.

Tears fall and eyelids ache,
Hearts overflow:
Here for our dead love's sake
Let us our farewells make
Will he again awake?
Ah, no, no, no.

Winds sigh and skies are gray,
Days come and go:
Wild birds are flown away:
Where are the blooms of May?
Dead, dead, this many a day,
Under the snow.

Lips sigh and cheeks are pale,
Hearts overflow:
Will not some song or tale,
Kiss, or a flower frail,
With our dead love avail?
Ah, no, no, no.

Madison Julius Cawein

Dead Cities

Out of it all but this remains:
I was with one who crossed wide chains
Of the Cordilleras, whose peaks
Lock in the wilds of Yucatan,
Chiapas and Honduras. Weeks
And then a city that no man
Had ever seen; so dim and old,
No chronicle has ever told
The history of men who piled
Its temples and huge teocallis
Among mimosa-blooming valleys;
Or how its altars were defiled
With human blood; whose idols there
With eyes of stone still stand and stare.
So old the moon can only know
How old, since ancient forests grow
On mighty wall and pyramid.
Huge ceibas, whose trunks were scarred
With ages, and dense yuccas, hid
Fanes 'mid the cacti, scarlet-starred.
I looked upon its paven ways,
And saw it in its kingliest days;
When from the lordly palace one,
A victim, walked with prince and priest,
Who turned brown faces toward the east
In worship of the rising sun:
At night ten hundred temples' spires
On gold burnt everlasting fires.
Uxmal? Palenque? or Copan?
I know not. Only how no man
Had ever seen; and still my soul
Believes it vaster than the three.
Volcanic rock walled in the whole,
Lost in the woods as in some sea.
I only read its hieroglyphs,
Perused its monster monoliths
Of death, gigantic heads; and read
The pictured codex of its fate,
The perished Toltec; while in hate

Mad monkeys cursed me, as if dead
Priests of its past had taken form
To guard its ruined shrines from harm.

Madison Julius Cawein

Dead Man's Run

He rode adown the autumn wood,
A man dark-eyed and brown;
A mountain girl before him stood
Clad in a homespun gown.

'To ride this road is death for you!
My father waits you there;
My father and my brother, too,
You know the oath they swear.'

He holds her by one berry-brown wrist,
And by one berry-brown hand;
And he hath laughed at her and kissed
Her cheek the sun hath tanned.

'The feud is to the death, sweetheart;
But forward will I ride.'
'And if you ride to death, sweetheart,
My place is at your side.'

Low hath he laughed again and kissed
And helped her with his hand;
And they have ridd'n into the mist
That belts the autumn land.

And they had passed by Devil's Den,
And come to Dead Man's Run,
When in the brush rose up two men,
Each with a levelled gun.

'Down! down! my sister!' cries the one;
She gives the reins a twirl
The other shouts, 'He shot my son!
And now he steals my girl!'

The rifles crack: she will not wail:
He will not cease to ride:
But, oh! her face is pale, is pale,
And the red blood stains her side.

'Sit fast, sit fast by me, sweetheart!
The road is rough to ride!
The road is rough by gulch and bluff,
And her hair blows wild and wide.

'Sit fast, sit fast by me, sweetheart!
The bank is steep to ride!
The bank is steep for a strong man's leap,
And her eyes are staring wide.

'Sit fast, sit fast by me, sweetheart!
The Run is swift to ride!
The Run is swift with mountain drift,
And she sways from side to side.

Is it a wash of the yellow moss,
Or drift of the autumn's gold,
The mountain torrent foams across
For the dead pine's roots to hold?

Is it the bark of the sycamore,
Or peel of the white birch-tree,
The mountaineer on the other shore
Hath followed and still can see?

No mountain moss or leaves, dear heart!
No bark of birchen gray!
Young hair of gold and a face death-cold
The wild stream sweeps away.

Madison Julius Cawein

Death

THROUGH some strange sense of sight or touch
I find what all have found before,
The presence I have feared so much,
The unknown's immaterial door.

I seek not and it comes to me;
The do not know the thing I find:
The fillet of fatality
Drops from my brows that made me blind.

Point forward now or backward, light!
The way I take I may not choose:
Out of the night into the night,
And in the night no certain clews.

But on the future, dim and vast,
And dark with dust and sacrifice,
Death's towering ruin from the past
Makes black the land that round me lies.

Madison Julius Cawein

Death And The Fool

Here is a tale for any man or woman:

A fool sought Death; and braved him with his bauble
Among the graves. At last he heard a hobble,
And something passed him, monstrous, super-human.
And by a tomb, that reared a broken column,
He heard it stop. And then Gargantuan laughter
Shattered the hush. Deep silence followed after,
Filled with the stir of bones, cadaverous, solemn.
Then said the fool: 'Come! show thyself, old prancer!
I'll have a bout with thee. I, too, can clatter
My wand and motley. Come now! Death and Folly,
See who's the better man.' There was no answer;
Only his bauble broke; a serious matter
To the poor fool who died of melancholy.

Madison Julius Cawein

Deep In The Forest

I. SPRING ON THE HILLS

Ah, shall I follow, on the hills,
The Spring, as wild wings follow?
Where wild-plum trees make wan the hills,
Crabapple trees the hollow,
Haunts of the bee and swallow?

In redbud brakes and flowery
Acclivities of berry;
In dogwood dingles, showery
With white, where wrens make merry?
Or drifts of swarming cherry?

In valleys of wild strawberries,
And of the clumped May-apple;
Or cloudlike trees of haw-berries,
With which the south winds grapple,
That brook and byway dapple?

With eyes of far forgetfulness,-
Like some wild wood-thing's daughter,
Whose feet are beelike fretfulness,-
To see her run like water
Through boughs that slipped or caught her.

O Spring, to seek, yet find you not!
To search, yet never win you!
To glimpse, to touch, but bind you not!
To lose, and still continue,
All sweet evasion in you!

In pearly, peach-blush distances
You gleam; the woods are braided
Of myths; of dream-existences....
There, where the brook is shaded,
A sudden splendor faded.

O presence, like the primrose's,

Again I feel your power!
With rainy scents of dim roses,
Like some elusive flower,
Who led me for an hour!

II. MOSS AND FERN

Where rise the brakes of bramble there,
Wrapped with the trailing rose;
Through cane where waters ramble, there
Where deep the sword-grass grows,
Who knows?
Perhaps, unseen of eyes of man,
Hides Pan.

Perhaps the creek, whose pebbles make
A foothold for the mint,
May bear,-where soft its trebles make
Confession,-some vague hint,
(The print,
Goat-hoofed, of one who lightly ran,)
Of Pan.

Where, in the hollow of the hills
Ferns deepen to the knees,
What sounds are those above the hills,
And now among the trees?-
No breeze!-
The syrinx, haply, none may scan,
Of Pan.

In woods where waters break upon
The hush like some soft word;
Where sun-shot shadows shake upon
The moss, who has not heard-
No bird!-
The flute, as breezy as a fan,
Of Pan?

Far in, where mosses lay for us
Still carpets, cool and plush;
Where bloom and branch and ray for us

Sleep, waking with a rush-
The hush
But sounds the satyr hoof a span
Of Pan.

O woods,-whose thrushes sing to us,
Whose brooks dance sparkling heels;
Whose wild aromas cling to us,-
While here our wonder kneels,
Who steals
Upon us, brown as bark with tan,
But Pan?

III. THE THORN TREE

The night is sad with silver and the day is glad with gold,
And the woodland silence listens to a legend never old,
Of the Lady of the Fountain, whom the faery people know,
With her limbs of samite whiteness and her hair of golden glow,
Whom the boyish South Wind seeks for and the girlish-stepping Rain;
Whom the sleepy leaves still whisper men shall never see again:
She whose Vivien charms were mistress of the magic Merlin knew,
That could change the dew to glowworms and the glowworms into dew.
There's a thorn tree in the forest, and the faeries know the tree,
With its branches gnarled and wrinkled as a face with sorcery;
But the Maytime brings it clusters of a rainy fragrant white,
Like the bloom-bright brows of beauty or a hand of lifted light.
And all day the silence whispers to the sun-ray of the morn
How the bloom is lovely Vivien and how Merlin is the thorn:
How she won the dotting wizard with her naked loveliness
Till he told her daemon secrets that must make his magic less.

How she charmed him and enchanted in the thorn-tree's thorns to lie
Forever with his passion that should never dim or die:
And with wicked laughter looking on this thing which she had done,
Like a visible aroma lingered sparkling in the sun:
How she stooped to kiss the pathos of an elf-lock of his beard,
In a mockery of parting and mock pity of his weird:
But her magic had forgotten that 'who bends to give a kiss
Will but bring the curse upon them of the person whose it is':
So the silence tells the secret.-And at night the faeries see
How the tossing bloom is Vivien, who is struggling to be free,

In the thorny arms of Merlin, who forever is the tree.

IV. THE HAMADRYAD

She stood among the longest ferns
The valley held; and in her hand
One blossom, like the light that burns
Vermilion o'er a sunset land;
And round her hair a twisted band
Of pink-pierced mountain-laurel blooms:
And darker than dark pools, that stand

Below the star-communing glooms,
Her eyes beneath her hair's perfumes.

I saw the moonbeam sandals on
Her flowerlike feet, that seemed too chaste
To tread true gold: and, like the dawn
On splendid peaks that lord a waste
Of solitude lost gods have graced,
Her face: she stood there, faultless-hipped,
Bound as with cestused silver,-chased
With acorn-cup and crown, and tipped
With oak leaves,-whence her chiton slipped.

Limbs that the gods call loveliness!-
The grace and glory of all Greece
Wrought in one marble shape were less
Than her perfection!-'Mid the trees
I saw her-and time seemed to cease
For me.-And, lo! I lived my old
Greek life again of classic ease,
Barbarian as the myths that rolled
Me back into the Age of Gold.

Madison Julius Cawein

Deserted

THE old house leans upon a tree
Like some old man upon a staff:
The night wind in its ancient porch
Sounds like a hollow laugh.

The heaven is wrapped in flying clouds,
As grandeur cloaks itself in gray:
The starlight flitting in and out,
Glints like a lanthorn ray.

The dark is full of whispers. Now
A fox-hound howls: and through the night,
Like some old ghost from out its grave,
The moon comes, misty white.

Madison Julius Cawein

Dies Illa

How shall it be with them that day
When God demands of Earth His pay?
With them who make a god of clay
And gold and put all truth away.

Shall not they see the lightning-ray
Of wrath? and hear the trumpet-bray
Of black destruction? while dismay
O'erwhelms them and God's hosts delay?

Shall not they, clothed in rich array,
Pray God for mercy? and, a-sway,
Heap on their hearts the ashes gray
Of old repentance? Nay! oh, nay!

They shall not know till He shall lay
An earthquake hand upon their way;
And Doomsday, clad in Death's decay,
Sweep down, and they've no time to pray.

Madison Julius Cawein

Dilly Dally

There is a little girl I know
Who takes her time to come and go.
If you should ask her please to hurry,
She tries her best then to be slow:
She gives her parents lots of worry;
But she, she never worries no.
Her name is Dilly Dally;
But some folks call her 'Gallie.'
From head to feet
She's never neat,
But always shilly shally.

II.

When it is time for her to rise,
She won't get up, but lies and lies,
Her head beneath the cover:
Then down she comes with sleepy eyes,
When breakfast-time is over;
Uncombed, with shoes she never ties.
Her name is Dilly Dally;
But some folks call her 'Gallie.'
From head to feet
She's never neat,
But always shilly shally.

III.

When it is time to go to bed,
She plays around or hangs her head,
And mopes in some dark corner,
And cries and wishes she were dead:
No girl could be forlornier
When off to bed at last she's led.
Her name is Dilly Dally;
But some folks call her 'Gallie.'
From head to feet
She's never neat,
But always shilly shally.

Madison Julius Cawein

Dionysia

The day is dead; and in the west
The slender crescent of the moon
Diana's crystal-kindled crest
Sinks hillward in a silvery swoon.
What is the murmur in the dell?
The stealthy whisper and the drip?
A Dryad with her leaf-light trip?
Or Naiad o'er her fountain well?
Who, with white fingers for her comb,
Sleeks her blue hair, and from its curls
Showers slim minnows and pale pearls,
And hollow music of the foam.
What is it in the vistaed ways
That leans and springs, and stoops and sways?
The naked limbs of one who flees?
An Oread who hesitates
Before the Satyr form that waits,
Crouching to leap, that there she sees?
Or under boughs, reclining cool,
A Hamadryad, like a pool
Of moonlight, palely beautiful?
Or Limnad, with her liliated face,
More lovely than the misty lace
That haunts a star and gives it grace?
Or is it some Leimoniad,
In wildwood flowers dimly clad?
Oblong blossoms white as froth;
Or mottled like the tiger-moth;
Or brindled as the brows of death;
Wild of hue and wild of breath.
Here ethereal flame and milk
Blent with velvet and with silk;
Here an iridescent glow
Mixed with satin and with snow:
Pansy, poppy and the pale
Serpolet and galingale;
Mandrake and anemone,
Honey-reservoirs o' the bee;
Cistus and the cyclamen,

Cheeked like blushing Hebe this,
And the other white as is
Bubbled milk of Venus when
Cupid's baby mouth is pressed,
Rosy, to her rosy breast.
And, besides, all flowers that mate
With aroma, and in hue
Stars and rainbows duplicate
Here on earth for me and you.

Yea! at last mine eyes can see!
'Tis no shadow of the tree
Swaying softly there, but she!
Mænad, Bassarid, Bacchant,
What you will, who doth enchant
Night with sensuous nudity.
Lo! again I hear her pant
Breasting through the dewy glooms
Through the glow-worm gleams and glowers
Of the starlight;-wood-perfumes
Swoon around her and frail showers
Of the leaflet-tilted rain.
Lo, like love, she comes again,
Through the pale, voluptuous dusk,
Sweet of limb with breasts of musk.
With her lips, like blossoms, breathing
Honeyed pungence of her kiss,
And her auburn tresses wreathing
Like umbrageous helichrys,
There she stands, like fire and snow,
In the moon's ambrosial glow,
Both her shapely loins low-looped
With the balmy blossoms, drooped,
Of the deep amaracus.
Spiritual yet sensual,
Lo, she ever greets me thus
In my vision; white and tall,
Her delicious body there,
Raimented with amorous air,
To my mind expresses all
The allurements of the world.
And once more I seem to feel

On my soul, like frenzy, hurled
All the passionate past.-I reel,
Greek again in ancient Greece,
In the Pyrrhic revelries;
In the mad and Mænad dance
Onward dragged with violence;
Pan and old Silenus and
Faunus and a Bacchant band
Round me. Wild my wine-stained hand
O'er tumultuous hair is lifted;
While the flushed and Phallic orgies
Whirl around me; and the marges
Of the wood are torn and rifted
With lascivious laugh and shout.
And barbarian there again,
Shameless with the shameless rout,
Bacchus lusting in each vein,
With her pagan lips on mine,
Like a god made drunk with wine,
On I reel; and, in the revels,
Her loose hair, the dance dishevels,
Blows, and 'thwart my vision swims
All the splendor of her limbs....

So it seems. Yet woods are lonely.
And when I again awake,
I shall find their faces only
Moonbeams in the boughs that shake;
And their revels, but the rush
Of night-winds through bough and brush.
Yet my dreaming-is it more
Than mere dreaming? Is some door
Opened in my soul? a curtain
Raised? to let me see for certain
I have lived that life before?

Madison Julius Cawein

Dirge

WHAT shall her silence keep
Under the sun?
Here, where the willows weep
And waters run;
Here, where she lies asleep,
And all is done.

Lights, when the tree-top swings;
Scents that are sown;
Sounds of the wood-bird's wings;
And the bee's drone:
These be her comfortings
Under the stone.

What shall watch o'er her here
When day is fled?
Here, when the night is near
And skies are red;
Here, where she lieth dear
And young and dead.

Shadows, and winds that spill
Dew, and the tune
Of the wild whippoorwill,
And the white moon,—
These be the watchers still
Over her stone.

Madison Julius Cawein

Discovery

What is it now that I shall seek
Where woods dip downward, in the hills?-
A mossy nook, a ferny creek,
And May among the daffodils.

Or in the valley's vistaed glow,
Past rocks of terraced trumpet vines,
Shall I behold her coming slow,
Sweet May, among the columbines?

With redbud cheeks and bluet eyes,
Big eyes, the homes of happiness,
To meet me with the old surprise,
Her wild-rose hair all bonnetless.

Who waits for me, where, note for note,
The birds make glad the forest trees?-
A dogwood blossom at her throat,
My May among th' anemones.

As sweetheart breezes kiss the blooms,
And dews caress the moon's pale beams,
My soul shall drink her lips' perfumes,
And know the magic of her dreams.

Madison Julius Cawein

Disillusion

Those unrequited in their love who die
Have never drained life's chief illusion dry.

Madison Julius Cawein

Dithyrambics

Wrapped round of the night, as a monster is wrapped of the ocean,
Down, down through vast storeys of darkness, behold, in the tower
Of the heaven, the thunder! on stairways of cloudy commotion,
Colossal of tread, like a giant, from echoing hour to hour
Goes striding in rattling armor ...
The Nymph, at her billow-roofed dormer
Of foam; and the Sylvan-green-housed-at her window of leaves appears;
-As a listening woman, who hears
The approach of her lover, who comes to her arms in the night;
And, loosening the loops of her locks,
With eyes full of love and delight,
From the couch of her rest in ardor and haste arises.
The Nymph, as if breathed of the tempest, like fire surprises
The riotous bands of the rocks,
That face with a roar the shouting charge of the seas.
The Sylvan,-through troops of the trees,
Whose clamorous clans with gnarly bosoms keep hurling
Themselves on the guns of the wind,-goes wheeling and whirling.
The Nymph, of the waves' exultation upheld, her green tresses
Knotted with flowers of the hollow white foam, dives screaming;
Then bounds to the arms of the storm, who boisterously presses
Her hair and wild form to his breast that is panting and streaming.
The Sylvan,-hard-pressed by the wind, the Pan-footed air,
On the violent backs of the hills,
Like a flame that tosses and thrills
From peak to peak when the world of spirits is out,
Is borne, as her rapture wills,
With glittering gesture and shout:
Now here in the darkness, now there,
From the rain-like sweep of her hair,
Bewilderingly volleyed o'er eyes and o'er lips,
To the lambent swell of her limbs, her breasts and her hips,
She flashes her beautiful nakedness out in the glare
Of the tempest that bears her away,
That bears me away!
Away, over forest and foam, over tree and spray,
Far swifter than thought, far swifter than sound or than flame.
Over ocean and pine,
In arms of tumultuous shadow and shine ...

Though Sylvan and Nymph do not
Exist, and only what
Of terror and beauty I feel and I name
As parts of the storm, the awe and the rapture divine
That here in the tempest are mine,
The two are the same, the two are forever the same.

II

CALM

Beautiful-bosomed, O night, in thy noon
Move with majesty onward! bearing, as lightly
As a singer may bear the notes of an exquisite tune,
The stars and the moon
Through the clerestories high of the heaven, the firmament's halls;
Under whose sapphirine walls,
June, hesperian June,
Robed in divinity wanders. Daily and nightly
The turquoise touch of her robe, that the violets star,
The silvery fall of her feet, that lilies are,
Fill the land with languorous light and perfume.
Is it the melody mute of burgeoning leaf and of bloom?
The music of Nature, that silently shapes in the gloom
Immaterial hosts
Of spirits that have the flowers and leaves in their keep,
That I hear, that I hear?
Invisible ghosts,
Who whisper in leaves and glimmer in blossoms and hover
In color and fragrance and loveliness, breathed from the deep
World-soul of the mother,
Nature;-who, over and over,
Both sweetheart and lover,
Goes singing her songs from one sweet month to the other,
That appear, that appear?
In forest and field, on hill-land and lea,
As crystallized harmony,
Materialized melody,
An uttered essence peopling far and near
The hyaline atmosphere?...

Behold how it sprouts from the grass and blooms from flower and tree!
In waves of diaphanous moonlight and mist,
In fugue upon fugue of gold and of amethyst,
Around me, above me it spirals; now slower, now faster,
Like symphonies born of the thought of a musical master.
-O music of Earth! O God who the music inspired!
Let me breathe of the life of thy breath!
And so be fulfilled and attired
In resurrection, triumphant o'er time and o'er death!

Madison Julius Cawein

Dogtown

Far as the eye can see the land is grey,
And desolation sits among the stones
Looking on ruin who, from rocks like bones,
Stares with a dead face at the dying day.
Mounds, where the barberry and bay hold sway,
Show where homes rose once; where the village crones
Gossiped, and man, with many sighs and groans,
Laboured and loved and went its daily way.
Only the crow now, like a hag returned,
Croaks on the common that its hoarse voice mocks.
Meseems that here the sorrow of the earth
Has lost herself, and, with the past concerned,
Sits with the ghosts of dreams that haunt these rocks,
And old despairs to which man's soul gave birth.

Madison Julius Cawein

Dolce Far Niente

Over the bay as our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine,
Far to the East lay the ocean paling
Under the skies of Augustine.
There, in the boat as we sat together,
Soft in the glow of the turquoise weather,
Light as the foam or a seagull's feather,
Fair of form and of face serene,
Sweet at my side I felt you lean,
As over the bay our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine.

II

Over the bay as our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine,
Pine and palm, to the West, hung, trailing
Under the skies of Augustine.
Was it the wind that sighed above you?
Was it the wave that whispered of you?
Was it my soul that said 'I love you'?
Was it your heart that murmured between,
Answering, shy as a bird unseen?
As over the bay our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine.

III

Over the bay as our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine,
Gray and low flew the heron wailing
Under the skies of Augustine.
Naught was spoken. We watched the simple
Gulls wing past. Your hat's white wimple
Shadowed your eyes. And your lips, a-dimple,

Smiled and seemed from your soul to wean
An inner beauty, an added sheen,
As over the bay our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine.

IV

Over the bay as our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine,
Red on the marshes the day flared, failing
Under the skies of Augustine.
Was it your thought, or the transitory
Gold of the West, like a dreamy story,
Bright on your brow, that I read? the glory
And grace of love, like a rose-crowned queen
Pictured pensive in mind and mien?
As over the bay our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine.

V

Over the bay as our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine,
Wan on the waters the mist lay veiling
Under the skies of Augustine.
Was it the joy that begot the sorrow?
Joy that was filled with the dreams that borrow
Prescience sad of a far To-morrow,
There in the Now that was all too keen,
That shadowed the fate that might intervene?
As over the bay our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine.

VI

Over the bay as our boat went sailing

Under the skies of Augustine,
The marsh-hen cried and the tide was ailing
Under the skies of Augustine.
And so we parted. No vows were spoken.
No faith was plighted that might be broken.
But deep in our hearts each bore a token
Of life and of love and of all they mean,
Beautiful, thornless and ever green,
As over the bay our boat went sailing
Under the skies of Augustine.

Madison Julius Cawein

Don Quixote

On receiving a bottle of Sherry Wine of the same name
WHAT 'blushing Hippocrene' is here! what fire
Of the 'warm South' with magic of old Spain! —
Through which again I seem to view the train
Of all Cervantes' dreams, his heart's desire:
The melancholy Knight, in gaunt attire
Of steel rides by upon the windmill-plain
With Sancho Panza by his side again,
While, heard afar, a swineherd from a byre
Winds a hoarse horn.
And all at once I see
The glory of that soul who rode upon
Impossible quests,— following a deathless dream
Of righted wrongs, that never were to be,—
Like many another champion who has gone
Questing a cause that perished like a dream.

Madison Julius Cawein

Dough Face

Made a face of biscuit-dough,
Which our black cook gave me once;
And this girl named So-and-So
Said 't was funnier than a dunce.

And she took it; put it on
Like a false-face. Had it drawn
Over all her face. 'Ain't it,'
So she said, 'a perfect fit?'

She looked funny as a clown;
And I called her Dough Face; she
Laughed and said, 'Let's saunter down
Where the people, too, can see.

Maybe one will recognize,
In these features, nose and eyes,
Some long-lost belovéd child,
And for very joy go wild.'

It was getting dusk; and there
At the corner stood some girls;
When they saw us, I declare,
They just hollered, tossed their curls,

Ran away; and Dough Face fast
After them. And running past
Came some boys who, when they saw,
Shouted at her, 'Mardi Graw!'

And one said, 'That looks to me
Like that Girlie Good Enough.
Just as dough-faced, is n't she?
Get some dirt. Let's treat her rough.'

And they got soft mud to throw.
Then she cried, 'I'm So-and-So';
And the boys all shouted; for
You must know she's popular.

Then we had great times, we did:
First one boy he tried it on,
Then another; and he hid
In a house where folks were gone;

Stood there at a window where
People passing in the square
Saw him; and a nigger-man,
Scared to death, just yelled and ran.

Then another fellow clomb
A back-fence, and put the face
Over his. My! he looked rum.
Like a scarecrow in a place

Where he never ought to be.
And he rose up suddenly
By the window with a yell,
And the cook she shrieked and fell.

But the house-man, who was there
In the kitchen, was n't scared;
He just jumped up from his chair,
Banged the door wide; out he flared,

Caught that boy and cried 'police!'
Tore the dough-mask, piece by piece,
From his face: then So-and-So
Screamed at him, 'You let him go!'

On the hydrant was a hose;
Quick she took it; turned it on;
Streamed it in his mouth and nose:
In a moment we were gone,

Left him spluttering at our backs
Blind with water. We made tracks
Home. And So-and-So just crowed,
'End of Dough Face ep-i-sode.'

Dragon-Seed

Ye have ploughed the field like cattle,
Ye have sown the dragon-seed,
Are ye ready now for battle?
For fighters are what we need.

Have ye done with taking and giving?
The old gods, Give and Take?
Then into the ranks of the living,
And fight for the fighting's sake.

Let who will thrive by cunning,
And lies be another's cure;
But girdle your loins for running,
And the goal of Never Sure.

Enough of idle shirking!
Though you hate like death your part
There is nothing helps like working
When you work with all your heart.

For the world is fact, not fiction,
And its battle is not with words;
And what helps is not men's diction,
But the temper of their swords.

For what each does is measure
Of that he is, I say:
And not by the ranks of Leisure
Is the battle won to-day.

Madison Julius Cawein

Dream Road

I took the road again last night
On which my boyhood's hills look down;
The old road leading from the town,
The village there below the height,
Its cottage homes, all huddled brown,
Each with its blur of light.

The old road, full of ruts, that leads,
A winding streak of limestone-grey,
Over the hills and far away;
That's crowded here by arms of weeds
And elbows of railfence, asway
With flowers that no one heeds:

That's dungeoned here by rocks and trees
And maundered to by waters; there
Lifted into the free wild air
Of meadow-land serenities:
The old road, stretching far and fair
To where my tired heart sees.

That says, 'Come, take me for a mile;
And let me show you mysteries:
The things the yellow moon there sees,
And those few stars that 'round her smile:
Come, take me, now you are at ease,
And walk with me a while.'

And I I took it at its word:
And friendships, clothed in olden guise,
Walked with me; and, as I surmise,
Old dreams for twenty years unheard;
And love, who gazed into my eyes
As once when youth adored.

And voices, vocal silences;
And visions, that my youth had seen,
Slipped from each side, in silvery green,
And spoke to me in memories;

And recollections smiled between
My tear-wet face and trees.

Enchantment walked by field and farm,
And whispered me on either side;
And where the fallows broadened wide
Dim mystery waved a moon-white arm,
Or, from the woodland, moonbeam-eyed,
Beckoned a filmy form.

Spirits of wind and starlight wove
From fern to fern a drowsy dance;
Or o'er the wood-stream hung a-trance:
And from the leaves, that dreamed above,
The elfin-dew dropped many a lance
Of light and, glimmering, drove.

Star-arrows through the warmth and musk,
That sparkled on the moss and loam,
And shook from bells of wildflower foam
The bee-like music of the dusk,
And rimmed with spars the lily's dome
And morning-glory's tusk.

And, soft as cobwebs, I beheld
The moths, they say that fairies use
As coursers, come by ones and twos
From stables of the blossoms belled:
While busily, among the dews,
Where croaked the toad and swelled,

The nimble spider climbed his thread,
Or diagramed a dim design,
Or flung, above, a slender line
To launder dews on. Overhead
An insect drew its dagger fine
And stabbed the stillness dead.

And there! far at the lane's dark end,
A light showed, like a glow-worm lamp:
And through the darkness, summer-damp,
An old rose-garden seemed to send

Sweet word to me as of a camp
Of dreams around the bend.

And there a gate! whereat, mid deeps
Of honeysuckle dewiness,
She stood whose lips were mine to press
How long ago! for whom still leaps
My heart with longing and, no less,
With passion here that sleeps.

The smiling face of girlhood; eyes
Of wine-warm brown; and heavy hair,
Auburn as autumn in his lair,
Took me again with swift surprise,
As oft they took me, coming there
In days of bygone ties.

The cricket and the katydid
Pierced silence with their stinging sounds;
The firefly went its golden rounds,
Where, lifting slow one sleepy lid,
The baby rosebud dreamed; and mounds
Of lilies breathed half-hid.

The white moon waded through a cloud,
Like some pale woman through a pool:
And in the darkness, close and cool
I felt a form against me bowed,
Her breast to mine; and deep and full
Her maiden heart beat loud.

I never dreamed it was a trick
That fancy played me; memory
And moonlight.... Yet, it well may be
The old road, too, that night was quick
With dreams that were reality
To every stone and stick.

For instantly when, overhead,
The moon swam there! where soft had gleamed
That vision, now no creature seemed
Only a ruined house and shed.

Was it a dream the old road dreamed?
Or I of her long dead?

Madison Julius Cawein

Dreams

They mock the present and they haunt the past,
And in the future there is naught a gleam
With hope, the soul desires, that at last
The heart pursuing does not find a dream.

Madison Julius Cawein

Drouth

I

The hot sunflowers by the glaring pike
Lift shields of sultry brass; the teasel tops,
Pink-thorned, advance with bristling spike on spike
Against the furious sunlight. Field and copse
Are sick with summer: now, with breathless stops,
The locusts cymbal; now grasshoppers beat
Their castanets: and rolled in dust, a team,-
Like some mean life wrapped in its sorry dream,-
An empty wagon rattles through the heat.

II

Where now the blue wild iris? flowers whose mouths
Are moist and musky? Where the sweet-breathed mint,
That made the brook-bank herby? Where the South's
Wild morning-glories, rich in hues, that hint
At coming showers that the rainbows tint?
Where all the blossoms that the wildwood knows?
The frail oxalis hidden in its leaves;
The Indian-pipe, pale as a soul that grieves;
The freckled touch-me-not and forest rose.

III

Dead! dead! all dead beside the drouth-burnt brook,
Shrouded in moss or in the shriveled grass.
Where waved their bells, from which the wild-bee shook
The dewdrop once,-gaunt, in a nightmare mass,
The rank weeds crowd; through which the cattle pass,
Thirsty and lean, seeking some meager spring,
Closed in with thorns, on which stray bits of wool
The panting sheep have left, that sought the cool,
From morn till evening wearily wandering.

IV

No bird is heard; no throat to whistle awake

The sleepy hush; to let its music leak
Fresh, bubble-like, through bloom-roofs of the brake:
Only the green-gray heron, famine-weak,-
Searching the stale pools of the minnowless creek,-
Utters its call; and then the rain-crow, too,
False prophet now, croaks to the stagnant air;
While overhead,-still as if painted there,-
A buzzard hangs, black on the burning blue.

Madison Julius Cawein

Dusk

Corn-colored clouds upon a sky of gold,
And 'mid their sheaves,-where, like a daisy-bloom
Left by the reapers to the gathering gloom,
The star of twilight glows,-as Ruth, 'tis told,
Dreamed homesick 'mid the harvest fields of old,
The Dusk goes gleaning color and perfume
From Bible slopes of heaven, that illumine
Her pensive beauty deep in shadows stoled.
Hushed is the forest; and blue vale and hill
Are still, save for the brooklet, sleepily
Stumbling the stone with one foam-fluttering foot:
Save for the note of one far whippoorwill,
And in my heart
her
name,-like some sweet bee
Within a rose,-blowing a faery flute.

Madison Julius Cawein

Dusk In The Woods

Three miles of trees it is: and I
Came through the woods that waited, dumb,
For the cool summer dusk to come;
And lingered there to watch the sky
Up which the gradual splendor clomb.

A tree-toad quavered in a tree;
And then a sudden whippoorwill
Called overhead, so wildly shrill
The sleeping wood, it seemed to me,
Cried out and then again was still.

Then through dark boughs its stealthy flight
An owl took; and, at drowsy strife,
The cricket tuned its faery fife;
And like a ghost-flower, silent white,
The wood-moth glimmered into life.

And in the dead wood everywhere
The insects ticked, or bored below
The rotted bark; and, glow on glow,
The lambent fireflies here and there
Lit up their jack-o'-lantern show.

I heard a vesper-sparrow sing,
Withdrawn, it seemed, into the far
Slow sunset's tranquil cinnabar;
The crimson, softly smoldering
Behind the trees, with its one star.

A dog barked: and down ways that gleamed,
Through dew and clover, faint the noise
Of cowbells moved. And then a voice,
That sang a-milking, so it seemed,
Made glad my heart as some glad boy's.

And then the lane: and, full in view,
A farmhouse with its rose-grown gate,
And honeysuckle paths, await

For night, the moon, and love and you-
These are the things that made me late.

Madison Julius Cawein

Earth And Moon

I Saw the day like some great monarch die,
Gold-couched, behind the clouds' rich tapestries.
Then, purple-sandaled, clad in silences
Of sleep, through halls of skyey lazuli,
The twilight, like a mourning queen, trailed by,
Dim-paged of dreams and shadowy mysteries;
And now the night, the star-robed child of these,
In meditative loveliness draws nigh.
Earth, like to Romeo, deep in dew and scent,
Beneath Heaven's window, watching till a light,
Like some white blossom, in its square be set,
Lifts a faint face unto the firmament,
That, with the moon, grows gradually bright,
Bidding him climb and clasp his Juliet.

Madison Julius Cawein

Echo

Dweller in hollow places, hills and rocks,
Daughter of Silence and old Solitude,
Tip-toe she stands within her cave or wood,
Her only life the noises that she mocks.

Madison Julius Cawein

Eidolons

The white moth-mullein brushed its slim
Cool, faery flowers against his knee;
In places where the way lay dim
The branches, arching suddenly,
Made tomblike mystery for him.

The wild-rose and the elder, drenched
With rain, made pale a misty place,-
From which, as from a ghost, he blenched;
He walking with averted face,
And lips in desolation clenched.

For far within the forest,-where
Weird shadows stood like phantom men,
And where the ground-hog dug its lair,
The she-fox whelped and had her den,-
The thing kept calling, buried there.

One dead trunk, like a ruined tower,
Dark-green with toppling trailers, shoved
Its wild wreck o'er the bush; one bower
Looked like a dead man, capped and gloved,
The one who haunted him each hour.

Now at his side he heard it: thin
As echoes of a thought that speaks
To conscience. Listening with his chin
Upon his palm, against his cheeks
He felt the moon's white finger win.

And now the voice was still: and lo,
With eyes that stared on naught but night,
He saw?-what none on earth shall know!-
Was it the face that far from sight
Had lain here, buried long ago?

But men who found him,-thither led
By the wild fox,-within that place
Read in his stony eyes, 'tis said,

The thing he saw there, face to face,
The thing that left him staring dead.

Madison Julius Cawein

Elfin

When wildflower blue and wildflower white
The wildflowers lay their heads together,
And the moon-moth glimmers along the night,
And the wandering firefly flares its light,
And the full moon rises broad and bright,
Then, then it is elfin weather.

II.

And fern and flower on top of the hill
Are a fairy wood where the fairies camp;
And there, to the pipe of the cricket shrill,
And the owl's bassoon or the whippoorwill,
They whirl their wildest and trip their fill
By the light of the glowworm's lamp.

III.

And the green tree-toad and the katydid
Are the henchmen set to guard their dance;
At whose cry they creep 'neath the dewy lid
Of a violet's eye, or close lie hid
In a bluebell's ear, if a mortal 'mid
The moonlit woods should chance.

IV.

And the forest-fly with its gossamer wings,
And filmy body of rainbow dye,
Is the ouphen steed each elfin brings,
Whereon by the light of the stars he swings,
When the dance is done and the barn-cock sings,
And the dim dawn streaks the sky.

Madison Julius Cawein

Elusion

I

My soul goes out to her who says,
'Come, follow me and cast off care!'
Then tosses back her sun-bright hair,
And like a flower before me sways
Between the green leaves and my gaze:
This creature like a girl, who smiles
Into my eyes and softly lays
Her hand in mine and leads me miles,
Long miles of haunted forest ways.

II

Sometimes she seems a faint perfume,
A fragrance that a flower exhaled
And God gave form to; now, unveiled,
A sunbeam making gold the gloom
Of vines that roof some woodland room
Of boughs; and now the silvery sound
Of streams her presence doth assume-
Music, from which, in dreaming drowned,
A crystal shape she seems to bloom.

III

Sometimes she seems the light that lies
On foam of waters where the fern
Shimmers and drips; now, at some turn
Of woodland, bright against the skies,
She seems the rainbowed mist that flies;
And now the mossy fire that breaks
Beneath the feet in azure eyes
Of flowers; now the wind that shakes
Pale petals from the bough that sighs.

IV

Sometimes she lures me with a song;

Sometimes she guides me with a laugh;
Her white hand is a magic staff,
Her look a spell to lead me long:
Though she be weak and I be strong,
She needs but shake her happy hair,
But glance her eyes, and, right or wrong,
My soul must follow-anywhere
She wills-far from the world's loud throng.

V

Sometimes I think that she must be
No part of earth, but merely this-
The fair, elusive thing we miss
In Nature, that we dream we see
Yet never see: that goldenly
Beckons; that, limbed with rose and pearl,
The Greek made a divinity:-
A nymph, a god, a glimmering girl,
That haunts the forest's mystery.

Madison Julius Cawein

Enchantment

The deep seclusion of this forest path, -
O'er which the green boughs weave a canopy;
Along which bluet and anemone
Spread dim a carpet; where the Twilight hath
Her cool abode; and, sweet as aftermath,
Wood-fragrance roams, - has so enchanted me,
That yonder blossoming bramble seems to be
A Sylvan resting, rosy from her bath:
Has so enspelled me with tradition's dreams,
That every foam-white stream that, twinkling, flows,
And every bird that flutters wings of tan,
Or warbles hidden, to my fancy seems
A Naiad dancing to a Faun who blows
Wild woodland music on the pipes of Pan.

Madison Julius Cawein

Epilogue I

There is a world Life dreams of, long since lost:
Invisible save only to the heart:
That spreads its cloudy islands, without chart,
Above the Earth, 'mid oceans none has crossed:
Far Faerylands, that have become a part
Of mortal longings; that, through difficult art,
Man strives to realize to the uttermost.
Could we attain that Land of Faërie
Here in the flesh, what starry certitudes
Of loveliness were ours! what mastery
Of beauty and the dream that still eludes!
What clearer vision! Ours were then the key
To Mystery, that Nature jealously
Locks in her heart of hearts among the woods.

Madison Julius Cawein

Epilogue II

When dusk falls cool as a rained-on rose,
And a tawny tower the twilight shows,
With the crescent moon, the silver moon, the curved new moon in a space that
glows,
A turret window that grows a-light;
There is a path that my Fancy knows,
A glimmering, shimmering path of night,
That far as the Land of Faery goes.

II.

And I follow the path, as Fancy leads,
Over the mountains, into the meads,
Where the firefly cities, the glowworm cities, the fairy cities are strung like
beads,
Each city a twinkling star:
And I live a life of valorous deeds,
And march with the Fairy King to war,
And ride with his knights on milk-white steeds.

III.

Or it's there in the whirl of their life I sit,
Or dance in their houses with starlight lit,
Their blossom houses, their flower houses, their elfin houses, of fern-leaves knit,
With fronded spires and domes:
And there it is that my lost dreams flit,
And the ghost of my childhood, smiling, roams
With the fairy children so dear to it.

IV.

And it's there I hear that they all come true,
The fairy-stories, whatever they do
Elf and goblin, dear elf and goblin, loved elf and goblin and all the crew
Of witch and wizard and gnome and fay,
And prince and princess, that wander through
The storybooks we have put away,
The fairytales that we loved and knew.

V.

The face of Adventure lures you there,
And the eyes of Danger bid you dare,
While ever the bugles, the silver bugles, the far-off bugles of Elfland blare,
The fairy trumpets to battle blow;
And you feel their thrill in your heart and hair,
And you fain would follow and mount and go
And march with the Fairies anywhere.

VI.

And she she rides at your side again,
Your little sweetheart whose age is ten:
She is the princess, the fairy princess, the princess fair that you worshipped
when
You were a prince in a fairytale;
And you do great deeds as you did them then,
With your magic spear, and enchanted mail,
Braving the dragon in his den.

VII.

And you ask again, 'Oh, where shall we ride,
Now that the monster is slain, my bride?'
'Back to the cities, the firefly cities, the glowworm cities where we can hide,
The beautiful cities of Faeryland.
And the light of my eyes shall be your guide,
The light of my eyes and my snow-white hand
And there forever we two will abide.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Epiphany

There is nothing that eases my heart so much
As the wind that blows from the purple hills;
'Tis a hand of balsam whose healing touch
Unburdens my bosom of ills.

There is nothing that causes my soul to rejoice
Like the sunset flaming without a flaw:
'Tis a burning bush whence God's own voice
Addresses my spirit with awe.

There is nothing that hallows my mind, meseems,
Like the night with its moon and its stars above;
'Tis a mystical lily whose golden gleams
Fulfill my being with love.

There is nothing, no, nothing, we see and feel,
That speaks to our souls some beautiful thought,
That was not created to help us, and heal
Our lives that are overwrought.

Madison Julius Cawein

Evasion

Why do I love you, who have never given
My heart encouragement or any cause?
Is it because, as earth is held of heaven,
Your soul holds mine by some mysterious laws?
Perhaps, unseen of me, within your eyes
The answer lies, the answer lies.

II

From your sweet lips no word hath ever fallen
To tell my heart its love is not in vain-
The bee that woos the flow'r hath honey and pollen
To cheer him on and bring him back again:
But what have I, your other friends above,
To feed my love, to feed my love?

III

Still, still you are my dream and my desire;
Your love is an allurements and a dare
Set for attainment, like a shining spire,
Far, far above me in the starry air:
And gazing upward, 'gainst the hope of hope,
I breast the slope, I breast the slope.

Madison Julius Cawein

Evening On The Farm

From out the hills where twilight stands,
Above the shadowy pasture lands,
With strained and strident cry,
Beneath pale skies that sunset bands,
The bull-bats fly.

A cloud hangs over, strange of shape,
And, colored like the half-ripe grape,
Seems some uneven stain
On heaven's azure; thin as crape,
And blue as rain.

By ways, that sunset's sardonyx
O'erflares, and gates the farm-boy clicks,
Through which the cattle came,
The mullein-stalks seem giant wicks
Of downy flame.

From woods no glimmer enters in,
Above the streams that, wandering, win
To where the wood pool bids,
Those haunters of the dusk begin,-
The katydids.

Adown the dark the firefly marks
Its flight in gold and emerald sparks;
And, loosened from his chain,
The shaggy mastiff bounds and barks,
And barks again.

Each breeze brings scents of hill-heaped hay;
And now an owlet, far away,
Cries twice or thrice, 'T-o-o-w-h-o-o';
And cool dim moths of mottled gray
Flit through the dew.

The silence sounds its frog-bassoon,
Where, on the woodland creek's lagoon,-
Pale as a ghostly girl

Lost 'mid the trees,-looks down the moon
With face of pearl.

Within the shed where logs, late hewed,
Smell forest-sweet, and chips of wood
Make blurs of white and brown,
The brood-hen cuddles her warm brood
Of teetering down.

The clattering guineas in the tree
Din for a time; and quietly
The henhouse, near the fence,
Sleeps, save for some brief rivalry
Of cocks and hens.

A cowbell tinkles by the rails,
Where, streaming white in foaming pails,
Milk makes an uddery sound;
While overhead the black bat trails
Around and round.

The night is still. The slow cows chew
A drowsy cud. The bird that flew
And sang is in its nest.
It is the time of falling dew,
Of dreams and rest.

The beehives sleep; and round the walk,
The garden path, from stalk to stalk
The bungling beetle booms,
Where two soft shadows stand and talk
Among the blooms.

The stars are thick: the light is dead
That dyed the west: and Drowsyhead,
Tuning his cricket-pipe,
Nods, and some apple, round and red,
Drops over-ripe.

Now down the road, that shambles by,
A window, shining like an eye
Through climbing rose and gourd,

Shows Age and young Rusticity
Seated at board.

Madison Julius Cawein

Experience

Three memories hold us ever
With longing and with pain;
Three memories Time has never
Been able to restrain;
That in each life remain
A part of heart and brain.

The first 's of that which taught us
To follow, Beauty still;
Who to the Fountain brought us
Of ancient good and ill,
And bade us drink our fill
At Life's wild-running rill.

The second one, that 's driven
Of anguish and delight,
Holds that which showed us Heaven,
Through Love's triumphant might;
And, deep beneath its height,
Hell, sighing in the night.

The third none follows after:
Its form is veiled and dim;
Its eyes are tears and laughter,
That look beyond the rim
Of earth and point to Him,
Who rules the Seraphim.

Madison Julius Cawein

Failure I

There are some souls
Whose lot it is to set their hearts on goals
That adverse Fate controls.

While others win
With little labor through life's dust and din,
And lord-like enter in

Immortal gates;
And, of Success the high-born intimates,
Inherit Fame's estates. . .

Why is't the lot
Of merit oft to struggle and yet not
Attain? to toil for what?

Simply to know
The disappointment, the despair and woe
Of effort here below?

Ambitious still to reach
Those lofty peaks, which men aspiring preach,
For which their souls beseech:

Those heights that swell
Remote, removed, and unattainable,
Pinnacle on pinnacle:

Still yearning to attain
Their far repose, above life's stress and strain,
But all in vain, in vain! . . .

Why hath God put
Great longings in some souls and straightway shut
All doors of their clay hut?

The clay accurst
That holds achievement back; from which, immersed,
The spirit may not burst.

Were it, at least,
Not better to have sat at Circe's feast,
If afterwards a beast?

Than aye to bleed,
To strain and strive, to toil in thought and deed,
And nevermore succeed?

Madison Julius Cawein

Failure Ii

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If afterwards a beast?

Than aye to bleed,
To strain and strive, to toil in thought and deed,
And nevermore succeed?

Madison Julius Cawein

Fairies

There's a little fairy who
Peeps from every dropp of dew:
You can see him wink and shine
On the morning-glory vine,
Mischief in his eye of blue.
There's another fairy that
Rides upon the smallest gnat:
You can hear him tremolo
When the summer dusk falls slow,
Circling just above your hat.
And another one that sways
In the golden slanted rays
Of the sunlight where it floats:
Prosy people call them motes,
But they're fairies, father says.
But there's one that no one sees,
Only, maybe, moths and bees;
Who in lofts, where knot-holes are,
On the thin light of a star
Slides through crannied crevices.
You may hear him sigh and sing
Near a May-fly's captured wing
In a spider-web close by:
See him with a moonbeam pry
Moonflowers open where they swing.
Down the garden-ways he goes
On a beetle's back, and blows
Sullen music from a horn:
Or you'll hear him when 't is morn
Buzzing bee-like by a rose.
And it's he who, when 't is night,
Twinkles with a firefly light;
Shakes a katydid tambourine;
Or amid the mossy green
Rasps his cricket-fiddle tight.
He it is who heaves the dome
Of the mushroom through the loam,
Plumper than a baby's thumb:
Or who taps a tinder drum

In the dead wood's honeycomb.
He's that Robin Goodfellow,
Or that Puck who, long ago,
Used to marshlight-lead astray
People in old Shakespeare's day
That is, father told me so.
He's the one that, in the Fall,
Frisks the dead leaves round us all;
Herds them; drives them wildly past,
Dancing with them just as fast
As a boy can throw a ball.
Wonder what he looks like. Asked
Father once. He said he'd tasked
Mind and soul to find out, but
It was harder than a nut;
Just refused to be unmasked.
Though he thought, perhaps, he might
Find out some time, and delight
Telling me; but well he knew
He was like my questions, too,
Teasing and confusing quite.

Madison Julius Cawein

Feud

A Mile of lane, hedged high with iron-weeds
And dying daisies, white with sun, that leads
Downward into a wood; through which a stream
Steals like a shadow; over which is laid
A bridge of logs, worn deep by many a team,
Sunk in the tangled shade.

Far off a wood-dove lifts its lonely cry;
And in the sleepy silver of the sky
A gray hawk wheels scarce larger than a hand.
From point to point the road grows worse and worse,
Until that place is reached where all the land
Seems burdened with some curse.

A ragged fence of pickets, warped and sprung,
On which the fragments of a gate are hung,
Divides a hill, the fox and ground-hog haunt,
A wilderness of briars; o'er whose tops
A battered barn is seen, low-roofed and gaunt,
'Mid fields that know no crops.

Fields over which a path, o'erwhelmed with burs
And ragweeds, noisy with the grasshoppers,
Leads, lost, irresolute as paths the cows
Wear through the woods, unto a woodshed; then,
With wrecks of windows, to a huddled house,
Where men have murdered men.

A house, whose tottering chimney, clay and rock,
Is seamed and crannied; whose lame door and lock
Are bullet-bored; around which, there and here,
Are sinister stains. One dreads to look around.
The place seems thinking of that time of fear
And dares not breathe a sound.

Within is emptiness: the sunlight falls
On faded journals papering its walls;
On advertisement chromos, torn with time,
Around a hearth where wasps and spiders build.

The house is dead; meseems that night of crime
It, too, was shot and killed.

Madison Julius Cawein

Fiddledeedee And The Bumblebee

'T was Fiddledeedee who put to sea
With a rollicking buccaneer Bumblebee:
An acorn-cup was their hollow boat
A rakish craft was their acorn-boat
And their sail a butterfly's wing;
Their mast, a bit o' the stem of an oat,
A jaunty jib was this bit of an oat,
And their rudder a hornet's sting,
By jing!
Their rudder a hornet's sting.
In an acorn-cup they put to sea,
Did Fiddledeedee and the Bumblebee.
'We'll sail to the Isles of Tweedledumdee,'
Quoth Fiddledeedee to the Bumblebee:
So they steered past the Isles of Cream and Ice
Oh, cold were the Isles of Cream and Ice
And came to the Sea of Ginger Beer;
And there, by the City of Sugar and Spice
The sweet, sweet City of Sugar and Spice
Their acorn-boat upset, my dear,
I hear
Their acorn boat upset, my dear.
'Good-by to the Isles of Tweedledumdee,'
Said Fiddledeedee to the Bumblebee.

Madison Julius Cawein

Field And Forest Call

I

There is a field, that leans upon two hills,
Foamed o'er of flowers and twinkling with clear rills;
That in its girdle of wild acres bears
The anodyne of rest that cures all cares;
Wherein soft wind and sun and sound are blent
With fragrance-as in some old instrument
Sweet chords;-calm things, that Nature's magic spell
Distills from Heaven's azure crucible,
And pours on Earth to make the sick mind well.
There lies the path, they say-
Come away! come away!

II

There is a forest, lying 'twixt two streams,
Sung through of birds and haunted of dim dreams;
That in its league-long hand of trunk and leaf
Lifts a green wand that charms away all grief;
Wrought of quaint silence and the stealth of things,
Vague, whispering' touches, gleams and twitterings,
Dews and cool shadows-that the mystic soul
Of Nature permeates with suave control,
And waves o'er Earth to make the sad heart whole.
There lies the road, they say-
Come away! come away!

Madison Julius Cawein

Flight

THE SONG-BIRDS? are they flown away?
The song-birds of the summer-time,
That sang their souls into the day,
And set the laughing days to rhyme?—
No catbird scatters through the hush
The sparkling crystals of its song;
Within the woods no hermit-thrush
Trails an enchanted flute along,
A sweet assertion of the hush.

All day the crows fly cawing past;
The acorns drop; the forests scowl;
At night I hear the bitter blast
Hoot with the hooting of the owl.
The wild creeks freeze; the ways are strewn
With leaves that rot: beneath the tree
The bird, that set its toil to tune,
And made a home for melody,
Lies dead beneath the death-white moon.

Madison Julius Cawein

Floridian

The cactus and the aloe bloom
Beneath the window of your room;
Your window where, at evenfall,
Beneath the twilight's first pale star,
You linger, tall and spiritual,
And hearken my guitar.

It is the hour
When every flower
Is wooed by moth or bee
Would, would you were the flower, dear,
And I the moth to draw you near,
To draw you near to me,
My dear,
To draw you near to me.

II.

The jasmine and bignonia spill
Their balm around your windowsill;
The sill where, when magnolia-white,
In foliage mists, the moon hangs far,
You lean with bright deep eyes of night
And hearken my guitar.

It is the hour
When from each flower
The wind woos fragrances
Would, would you were the flower, love,
And I the wind to breathe above,
To breathe above and kiss,
My love,
To breathe above and kiss.

Madison Julius Cawein

For The Old

These are the things I pray Heaven send us still,
To blow the ashes of the years away,
Or keep aglow forever 'neath their gray
The fire that warms when Life's old house grows chill:
First Faith, that gazed into our youth's bright eyes;
Courage, that helped us onward, rain or sun;
Then Hope, who captained all our deeds well done;
And, last, the dream of Love that never dies.

Madison Julius Cawein

Forerunners

'T is n't long till Christmas now.
First thing that you'll know, it's here.
Nurse can tell it, don't know how,
By the smell o' th' atmosphere,
Shivery and never clear.
'T is n't long till Christmas now.
'T is n't long till Christmas now.

Boy next door, he says he knows
By the ice at morning; wow!
And the way the old wind blows,
And the way it snows and snows.
'T is n't long till Christmas now.
'T is n't long till Christmas now.

Cook, she knows it by her aches,
So she says, or, anyhow,
By the many cakes she bakes,
Fruit-cakes, nut- and pepper-cakes.
'T is n't long till Christmas now.
'Tis n't long till Christmas now.

And I know it, yes, I do,
By the rooms they won't allow
Me to go in; closets, too,
They keep locked I don't know who.
'Tis n't long till Christmas now.
'T is n't long till Christmas now.

Father says he knows it by
Money and his purse; and how
Much it takes for things, oh my!
Little boys come mighty high.
'Tis n't long till Christmas now.
'T is n't long till Christmas now.

Mother knows it, she declares,
By the sounds at night; the row
In the parlor, on the stairs

Santa carrying in his wares.
'T is n't long till Christmas now.

Madison Julius Cawein

Forest And Field

I

GREEN, watery jets of light let through
The rippling foliage drenched with dew;
And golden glimmers, warm and dim,
That in the vistaed distance swim;
Where, 'round the wood-spring's oozy urn,
The limp, loose fronds of forest fern
Trail like the tresses, green and wet,
A wood-nymph binds with violet.
O'er rocks that bulge and roots that knot
The emerald-amber mosses clot;
From matted walls of brier and brush
The eider nods its plumes of plush;
And, Argus-eyed with many a bloom,
The wild-rose breathes its wild perfume;
May-apples, ripening yellow, lean
With oblong fruit, a lemon-green,
Near Indian-turnips, long of stem,
That bear an acorn-oval gem,
As if some woodland Bacchus there,—
While braiding locks of hyacinth hair
With ivy-tod,—had idly tost
His thyrsus down and so had lost:
And blood-root, that from scarlet wombs
Puts forth, in spring, its milk-white blooms,
That then like starry footsteps shine
Of April under beech and pine;
At which the gnarled eyes of trees
Stare, big as Fauns' at Dryades,
That bend above a fountain's spar
As white and naked as a star.
The stagnant stream flows sleepily
Thick with its lily-pads; the bee,—
All honey-drunk, a Bassarid,—
Booms past the mottled toad, that, hid
In calamus-plants and blue-eyed grass,
Beside the water's pooling glass,
Silenus-like, eyes stolidly
The Mænad-glittering dragonfly.

And pennyroyal and peppermint
Pour dry-hot odours without stint
From fields and banks of many streams;
And in their scent one almost seems
To see Demeter pass, her breath
Sweet with her triumph over death.—
A haze of floating saffron; sound
Of shy, crisp creepings o'er the ground;
The dip and stir of twig and leaf;
Tempestuous gusts of spices brief
Borne over bosks of sassafras
By winds that foot it on the grass;
Sharp, sudden songs and whisperings,
That hint at untold hidden things—
Pan and Sylvanus who of old
Kept sacred each wild wood and wold.
A wily light beneath the trees
Quivers and dusks with every breeze—
A Hamadryad, haply, who,—
Culling her morning meal of dew
From frail, accustomed cups of flowers,—
Now sees some Satyr in the bowers,
Or hears his goat-hoof snapping press
Some brittle branch, and in distress
Shrinks back; her dark, dishevelled hair
Veiling her limbs one instant there.

II

Down precipices of the dawn
The rivers of the day are drawn,
The soundless torrents, free and far,
Of gold that deluge every star.
There is a sound of brooks and wings
That fills the woods with carollings;
And, dashed on moss and flow'r and fern,
And leaves, that quiver, breathe and burn,
Rose-radiance smites the solitudes,
The dew-drenched hills, the dripping woods,
That twitter as with canticles
Of shade and light; and wind, that smells
Of flowers, and buds, and boisterous bees,
Delirious honey, and wet trees.—

Through briers that trip them, one by one,
With swinging pails, that take the sun,
A troop of girls comes—berriers,
Whose bare feet glitter where they pass
Through dewdrop-trembling tufts of grass.
And, oh! their laughter and their cheers
Wake Echo 'mid her shrubby rocks
Who, answering, from her mountain mocks
With rapid fairy horns; as if
Each mossy vale and weedy cliff
Had its imperial Oberon,
Who, seeking his Titania, hid
In coverts caverned from the sun,
In kingly wrath had called and chid.
Cloud-feathers, oozing orange light,
Make rich the Indian locks of night;
Her dusky waist with sultry gold
Girdled and buckled fold on fold.
One star. A sound of bleating flocks.
Great shadows stretched along the rocks,
Like giant curses overthrown
By some Arthurian champion.
Soft-swimming sorceries of mist
That streak blue glens with amethyst.
And, tinkling in the clover dells,
The twilight sound of cattle-bells.
And where the marsh in reed and grass
Burns, angry as a shattered glass,
The flies make golden blurs, that shine
Like drops of amber-scattered wine
Spun high by reeling Bacchanals,
When Bacchus wreathes his curling hair
With vine-leaves, and from every lair
His worshippers around him calls.
They come, they come, a happy throng,
The berriers with gibe and song;
Their pails brimmed black to tin-bright eaves
With luscious fruit, kept cool with leaves
Of aromatic sassafras;
'Twixt which some sparkling berry slips,
Like laughter, from the purple mass,
Wine-swollen as Silenus' lips.

III

The tanned and tired noon climbs high
Up burning reaches of the sky;
Below the drowsy belts of pines
The rock-ledged river foams and shines;
And over rainless hill and dell
Is blown the harvest's sultry smell:
While, in the fields, one sees and hears
The brawny-throated harvesters,—
Their red brows beaded with the heat,—
By twos and threes among the wheat
Flash their hot scythes; behind them press
The binders—men and maids that sing
Like some mad troop of piping Pan;—
While all the hillsides swoon and ring
Such sounds of Ariel airiness
As haunted freckled Caliban.
'O ho! O ho! 'tis noon I say.
The roses blow.
Away, away, above the hay,
To the tune o' the bees the roses sway;
The love-songs that they hum all day,
So low! So low!
The roses' Minnesingers they.'
Up velvet lawns of lilac skies
The tawny moon begins to rise
Behind low, blue-black hills of trees,—
As rises up, in Siren seas,
To rock in purple deeps, hip-hid,
A virgin-bosomed Oceanid.—
Gaunt shadows crouch by tree and scaur,
Like shaggy Satyrs waiting for
The moonbeam Nymphs, the Dryads white,
That take with loveliness the night,
And glorify it with their love.
The sweet, far notes I hear, I hear,
Beyond dim pines and mellow ways,
The song of some fair harvester,
The lovely Limnad of the grove,
Whose singing charms me while it slays.
'O deep! O deep! the earth and air

Are sunk in sleep.
Adieu to care! Now everywhere
Is rest; and by the old oak there
The maiden with the nut-brown hair
Doth keep, doth keep
Tryst with her lover the young and fair.'

IV

Like Atalanta's spheres of gold,
Within the orchard, apples rolled
From sudden hands of boughs that lay
Their leaves, like palms, against the day;
And near them pears of rusty brown
Lay bruised; and peaches, pink with down,
And furry as the ears of Pan,
Or, like Diana's cheeks, a tan
Beneath which burnt a tender fire;
Or wan as Psyche's with desire.
And down the orchard vistas,—young,
A hickory basket by him swung,
A straw-hat, 'gainst the sloping sun
Drawn brim-broad o'er his face,—he strode;
As if he looked to find some one,
His eyes far-fixed beyond the road.
Before him, like a living burr,
Rattled the noisy grasshopper.
And where the cows' melodious bells
Trailed music up and down the dells,
Beside the spring, that o'er the ground
Went whimpering like a fretful hound,
He saw her waiting, fair and slim,
Her pail forgotten there, for him.
Yellow as sunset skies and pale
As fairy clouds that stay or sail
Through azure vaults of summer, blue
As summer heavens, the wildflowers grew;
And blossoms on which spurts of light
Fell laughing, like the lips one might
Feign for a Hebe, or a girl
Whose mouth is laughter-lit with pearl.
Long ferns, in murmuring masses heaped;
And mosses. moist, in beryl steeped

And musk aromas of the wood
And silence of the solitude:
And everything that near her blew
The spring had showered thick with dew.—
Across the rambling fence she leaned,
Her fresh, round arms all white and bare;
Her artless beauty, bonnet-screened,
Rich-coloured with its auburn hair.
A wood-thrush gurgled in a vine—
Ah! 'tis his step, 'tis he she hears;
The wild-rose smelt like some rare wine—
He comes, ah, yes! 'tis he who nears.
And her brown eyes and all her face
Said welcome. And with rustic grace
He leant beside her; and they had
Some talk with youthful laughter glad:
I know not what; I know but this
Its final period was a kiss.

Madison Julius Cawein

Fortune

Within the hollowed hand of God,
Blood-red they lie, the dice of fate,
That have no time nor period,
And know no early and no late.

Postpone you can not, nor advance
Success or failure that's to be;
All fortune, being born of chance,
Is bastard-child to destiny.

Bow down your head, or hold it high,
Consent, defy-no smallest part
Of this you change, although the die
Was fashioned from your living heart.

Madison Julius Cawein

Fortune II

Fortune may pass us by:
Follow her flying feet.
Love, all we ask, deny:
Never admit defeat.
Take heart again and try.
Never say die.

Madison Julius Cawein

Friends

Down through the woods, along the way
That fords the stream; by rock and tree,
Where in the bramble-bell the bee
Swings; and through twilights green and gray
The redbird flashes suddenly,
My thoughts went wandering to-day.

I found the fields where, row on row,
The blackberries hang dark with fruit;
Where, nesting at the elder's root,
The partridge whistles soft and low;
The fields, that billow to the foot
Of those old hills we used to know.

There lay the pond, all willow-bound,
On whose bright face, when noons were hot,
We marked the bubbles rise; some plot
To lure us in; while all around
Our heads,-like faery fancies,-shot
The dragonflies without a sound.

The pond, above which evening bent
To gaze upon her gypsy face;
Wherein the twinkling night would trace
A vague, inverted firmament;
In which the green frogs tuned their bass,
And firefly sparkles came and went.

The oldtime place we often ranged,
When we were playmates, you and I;
The oldtime fields, with boyhood's sky
Still blue above them!-Naught was changed:
Nothing.-Alas! then, tell me why
Should we be? whom the years estranged.

Madison Julius Cawein

Frogs At Night

I heard the toads and frogs last night
When snug in bed, and all was still;
I lay and listened there until
It seemed a church where one, with might,
Was preaching high and very shrill:
'The will of God!
The will of God!'

To which a voice, below the hill,
Basso-profundo'd deep, 'The will!'
'The will of God!
The will of God!'
'The will! The will!'

They croaked and chorused hoarse or shrill.
It made me sleepy; sleepier
Than any sermon ever heard:
And so I turned upon my ear
And went to-sleep and never stirred:
But in my sleep I seemed to hear:
'The word of God!
The word of God!'

Chanted and quavered, chirped and purred,
To which one deep voice croaked, 'The word!'
'The word of God!
The word of God!'
'The word! The word!'
And I slept on and never stirred.

Madison Julius Cawein

From Cove To Cove

The road leads up a hill through many a brake,
Blueberry and barberry, bay and sassafras,
By an abandoned quarry, where, like glass,
A round pool lies; an isolated lake,
A mirror for what presences, that make
Their wildwood toilets here! The road is grass
Gray-scarred with stone: great boulders, as we pass,
Slope burly shoulders towards us. Cedars shake
Wild balsam from their tresses; there and here
Clasping a glimpse of ocean and of shore
In arms of swaying green. Below, at last,
Beside the sea, with derrick and with pier,
By heaps of granite, noise of drill and bore,
A Cape Ann town, towering with many a mast.

Madison Julius Cawein

Frost

Magician he, who, autumn nights,
Down from the starry heavens whirls;
A harlequin in spangled tights,
Whose wand's touch carpets earth with pearls.

Through him each pane presents a scene,
A Lilliputian landscape, where
The world is white instead of green,
And trees and houses hang in air.

Where Elfins gambol and delight,
And haunt the jewelled bells of flowers;
Where upside-down we see the night
With many moons and starry showers.

And surely in his wand or hand
Is Midas magic, for, behold,
Some morn we wake and find the land,
Both field and forest, turned to gold.

Madison Julius Cawein

Frost In May

March set heel upon the flowers,
Trode and trampled them for hours:
But when April's bugles rang,
Up their starry legions sprang,
Radiant in the sun-shot showers.

April went her frolic ways,
Arm in arm with happy days:
Then from hills that rim the west,
Bare of head and bare of breast,
May, the maiden, showed her face.

Then, it seemed, again returned
March, the iron-heeled, who turned
From his northward path and caught
May about the waist, who fought
And his fierce advances spurned.

What her strength and her disdain
To the madness in his brain!
He must kiss her though he kill;
Then, when he had had his will,
Go his roaring way again.

Icy grew her finger-tips,
And the wild-rose of her lips
Paled with frost: then loud he laughed,
Left her, like a moonbeam-shaft,
Shattered, where the forest drips....

Mourn for her, O honey-bees!
Mourn, O buds upon the trees!
Birds and blossoms, mourn for May!
Mourn for her, then come away!
Leave her where her flowers freeze.

Leave her. Nothing more may save.
Leave her in her wildwood grave.
Nothing now will waken her,

Loved and lost, and lovelier
For the kiss that wild March gave.

Madison Julius Cawein

Gammer Gaffer - A Ballad Of Gloucester

One night when trees were tumbled down,
And wild winds shook at sea the sail,
Old Gammer Gaffer, lean and brown,
Chuckled and whistled on her nail;
Then seized her broom and, mounting it,
Flew up the chimney with her cat;
All Dogtown bayed to see her flit,
The screech-owl shrieked, and, lightning-lit,
About her head flew black the bat.

II.

Her crow-like body, humped and black,
Seemed part and portion of her broom;
The black cat, crouched upon her back,
Lit with its yellow eyes the gloom.
Towards Gloucester Town she took her flight,
And night grew wilder as she went;
The wind blew out the fisher's light,
And tore his sails in tatters white,
And strewed them through the firmament.

III.

Old shutters clapped and windows rapped,
And shingles shook as if in pain;
Her besom on each old door slapped
And flapped as, cloaked and conical-capped,
Whisked by old Gammer Gaffer's train.

IV.

To window-panes, where candle-light
Showed some good wife who sat alone,
She pressed her sharp face, skinny white,
And knocked with knuckled hands of bone:
Then croaked and mumbled, like the draught
That grumbles in the chimney-flue;
Or on the gables danced and laughed,

Her old cloak flapping as if daft,
While round her face her wild hair blew.

V.

Old gutters dripped and dead leaves skipped,
And wildly struck the village clock,
As off a shutter here she ripped,
Old Gammer! or like madness whipped
Around and 'round some weather-cock.

VI.

Then at one door she shook the latch,
And to a cranny set her chin
And croaked: 'Hey! here's an egg to hatch.
Eh? Goodie Brown, come, take it in.
I've news for ye! Good news! he! he!
Your old man he's gone down at sea.
There's something, eh? to hearten ye!
Hey! what man now shall wear his shoes?'

VII.

And, chuckling to herself, again
Around the house she rode her broom;
Then mounted to the weather-vane
And whirled and maundered to the gloom:
'Aye! weep, ye women! weep and wail!
'Twas I who wrought your good men's weird!
'Twas I who raised the Gloucester gale!
'Twas I who tattered shroud and sail,
And seized and drowned them, by my beard!'

VIII.

Old sign-boards squeaked and gables creaked.
And crazy gates closed with a bang,
As, parrot-beaked and lanthorn-cheeked,
Old Gammer round the belfry shrieked
And made its cracked old bell go clang

IX.

So round and round the old Cape Town
She whirled and whined as whines the wind;
Now this way blew her rag of gown,
Now that way, through the blackness blind.
And as she went she crowed and croaked.
And crooned some snatch of devil's verse,
While now and then her cat she stroked;
And, in a wink, all capped and cloaked,
Flew back to Dogtown with a curse.

Madison Julius Cawein

Garden Gossip

Thin, chisel-fine a cricket chipped
The crystal silence into sound;
And where the branches dreamed and dripped
A grasshopper its dagger stripped
And on the humming darkness ground.

A bat, against the gibbous moon,
Danced, implike, with its lone delight;
The glowworm scrawled a golden rune
Upon the dark; and, emerald-strewn,
The firefly hung with lamps the night.

The flowers said their beads in prayer,
Dew-syllables of sighed perfume;
Or talked of two, soft-standing there,
One like a gladiole, straight and fair,
And one like some rich poppy-bloom.

The mignonette and feverfew
Laid their pale brows together:-'See!'
One whispered: 'Did their step thrill through
Your roots?'-'Like rain.'-'I touched the two
And a new bud was born in me.'

One rose said to another:-'Whose
Is this dim music? song, that parts
My crimson petals like the dews?'
'My blossom trembles with sweet news-
It is the love of two young hearts.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Gargaphie

Succinctae sacra Dianae

'.-OVID

There the ragged sunlight lay
Tawny on thick ferns and gray
On dark waters: dimmer,
Lone and deep, the cypress grove
Bowered mystery and wove
Braided lights, like those that love
On the pearl plumes of a dove
Faint to gleam and glimmer.

II

There centennial pine and oak
Into stormy cadence broke:
Hollow rocks gloomed, slanting,
Echoing in dim arcade,
Looming with long moss, that made
Twilight streaks in tatters laid:
Where the wild hart, hunt-affrayed,
Plunged the water, panting.

III

Poppies of a sleepy gold
Mooned the gray-green darkness rolled
Down its vistas, making
Wisp-like blurs of flame. And pale
Stole the dim deer down the vale:
And the haunting nightingale
Throbbled unseen-the olden tale
All its wild heart breaking.

IV

There the hazy serpolet,
Dewy cistus, blooming wet,

Blushed on bank and boulder;
There the cyclamen, as wan
As first footsteps of the dawn,
Carpeted the spotted lawn:
Where the nude nymph, dripping drawn,
Basked a wildflower shoulder.

V

In the citrine shadows there
What tall presences and fair,
Godlike, stood!-or, gracious
As the rock-rose there that grew,
Delicate and dim as dew,
Stepped from boles of oaks, and drew
Faunlike forms to follow, who
Filled the forest spacious!-

VI

Guarding that Boeotian
Valley so no foot of man
Soiled its silence holy
With profaning tread-save one,
The Hyantian: Actaeon,
Who beheld, and might not shun
Pale Diana's wrath; undone
By his own mad folly.

VII

Lost it lies-that valley: sleeps
In serene enchantment; keeps
Beautiful its banished
Bowers that no man may see;
Fountains that her deity
Haunts, and every rock and tree
Where her hunt goes swinging free
As in ages vanished.

Madison Julius Cawein

Genius Loci

What wood-god, on this water's mossy curb,
Lost in reflections of earth's loveliness,
Did I, just now, unconsciously disturb?
I, who haphazard, wandering at a guess,
Came on this spot, wherein, with gold and flame
Of buds and blooms, the season writes its name.
Ah, me! could I have seen him ere alarm
Of my approach aroused him from his calm!
As he, part Hamadryad and, mayhap,
Part Faun, lay here; who left the shadow warm
As wildwood rose, and filled the air with balm
Of his sweet breath as with ethereal sap.

II

Does not the moss retain some vague impress,
Green dented in, of where he lay or trod?
Do not the flow'rs, so reticent, confess
With conscious looks the contact of a god?
Does not the very water garrulously
Boast the indulgence of a deity?
And, hark! in burly beech and sycamore
How all the birds proclaim it! and the leaves
Rejoice with clappings of their myriad hands!
And shall not I believe, too, and adore,
With such wide proof?-Yea, though my soul perceives
No evident presence, still it understands.

III

And for a while it moves me to lie down
Here on the spot his god-head sanctified:
Mayhap some dream he dreamed may lingert brown
And young as joy, around the forestside;
Some dream within whose heart lives no disdain

For such as I whose love is sweet and sane;
That may repeat, so none but I may hear
As one might tell a pearl-strung rosary
Some epic that the trees have learned to croon,
Some lyric whispered in the wild-flower's ear,
Whose murmurous lines are sung by bird and bee,
And all the insects of the night and noon.

IV

For, all around me, upon field and hill,
Enchantment lies as of mysterious flutes;
As if the music of a god's good-will
Had taken on material attributes
In blooms, like chords; and in the water-gleam,
That runs its silvery scales from stream to stream;
In sunbeam bars, up which the butterfly,
A golden note, vibrates then flutters on
Inaudible tunes, blown on the pipes of Pan,
That have assumed a visible entity,
And drugged the air with beauty so, a Faun,
Behold, I seem, and am no more a man.

Madison Julius Cawein

Geraldine, Geraldine

Geraldine, Geraldine,
Do you remember where
The willows used to screen
The water flowing fair?
The mill-stream's banks of green
Where first our love begun,
When you were seventeen,
And I was twenty-one?

Geraldine, Geraldine,
Do you remember how
From th' old bridge we would lean
The bridge that's broken now
To watch the minnows sheen,
And the ripples of the Run,
When you were seventeen,
And I was twenty-one?

Geraldine, Geraldine
Do you remember too
The old beech-tree, between
Whose roots the wild flowers grew?
Where oft we met at e'en,
When stars were few or none,
When you were seventeen,
And I was twenty-one?

Geraldine, Geraldine,
The bark has grown around
The names I cut therein,
And the truelove-knot that bound;
The love-knot, clear and clean,
I carved when our love begun,
When you were seventeen,
And I was twenty-one?

Geraldine, Geraldine,
The roof of the farmhouse gray
Is fallen and mossy green;

Its rafters rot away:
The old path scarce is seen
Where oft our feet would run,
When you were seventeen,
And I was twenty-one.

Geraldine, Geraldine,
Through each old tree and bough
The lone winds cry and keen
The place is haunted now,
With ghosts of what-has-been,
With dreams of love-long-done,
When you were seventeen,
And I was twenty-one.

Geraldine, Geraldine,
There, in your world of wealth,
There, where you move a queen,
Broken in heart and health,
Does there ever rise a scene
Of days, your soul would shun,
When you were seventeen,
And I was twenty-one?

Geraldine, Geraldine,
Here, 'mid the rose and rue,
Would God that your grave were green,
And I were lying too!
Here on the hill, I mean,
Where oft we laughed I' the sun,
When you were seventeen,
And I was twenty-one.

Madison Julius Cawein

Ghost Stories

When the hoot of the owl comes over the hill,
At twelve o'clock when the night is still,
And pale on the pools, where the creek-frogs croon,
Glimmering gray is the light o' the moon;
And under the willows, where waters lie,
The torch of the firefly wanders by;
They say that the miller walks here, walks here,
All covered with chaff, with his crooked staff,
And his horrible hobble and hideous laugh;
The old lame miller hung many a year:
When the hoot of the owl comes over the hill,
He walks alone by the rotting mill.

When the bark of the fox comes over the hill,
At twelve o'clock when the night is shrill,
And faint, on the ways where the crickets creep,
The starlight fails and the shadows sleep;
And under the willows, that toss and moan,
The glow-worm kindles its lanthorn lone;
They say that a woman floats dead, floats dead,
In a weedy space that the lilies lace,
A curse in her eyes and a smile on her face,
The miller's young wife with a gash in her head:
When the bark of the fox comes over the hill,
She floats alone by the rotting mill.

When the howl of the hound comes over the hill,
At twelve o'clock when the night is ill,
And the thunder mutters and forests sob,
And the fox-fire glows like the lamp of a Lob;
And under the willows, that gloom and glance,
The will-o'-the-wisps hold a devils' dance;
They say that that crime is re-acted again,
And each cranny and chink of the mill doth wink
With the light o' hell or the lightning's blink,
And a woman's shrieks come wild through the rain:
When the howl of the hound comes over the hill,
That murder returns to the rotting mill.

Ghosts

LOW, weed-climbed cliffs, o'er which at noon
The sea-mists swoon:
Wind-twisted pines, through which the crow
Goes winging slow:
Dim fields, the sower never sows,
Or reaps or mows:
And near the sea a ghostly house of stone
Where all is old and lone.
A garden, falling in decay,
Where statues gray
Peer, broken, out of tangled weed
And thorny seed:
Satyr and Nymph, that once made love
By walk and grove:
And, near a fountain, shattered, green with mold,
A sundial, lichen-old.
Like some sad life bereft,
To musing left,
The house stands: love and youth
Both gone, in sooth:
But still it sits and dreams:
And round it seems
Some memory of the past, still young and fair,
Haunting each crumbling stair.
And suddenly one dimly sees,
Come through the trees,
A woman, like a wild moss-rose:
A man, who goes
Softly: and by the dial
They kiss a while:
Then drowsily the mists blow round them, wan,
And they, like ghosts, are gone.

Madison Julius Cawein

Gipsies

There's a scent of pungent wood smoke in the chill October air,
And a jack-o'-lantern glare, a wild and dusky glare,
'Tis the brush that burns and smoulders in the woods and by the ways,
The old New England ways,
When Autumn plants her gipsy tents and camps with all her days,
Along the shore, among the hills, beside the sounding sea,
And fills the land with haze of dreams and fires of mystery.

II.

There's a sound of crickets crooning, and an owlet's quavering tune,
And a rim of frosty moon, a will-o'-wisp of moon,
And a camp-fire in a hollow of the ocean-haunted hills,
The old New England hills,
When Autumn keeps her tryst with Earth and cures his soul of ills:
And day and night he sits with her and hearkens to her dreams,
While, like a ghost, her camp-fire's smoke trails over woods and streams.

III.

A frantic rush of faded leaves; a whirl of wind and rain;
And she is gone again; has struck her tents again.
As Dawn comes up with cold grey eyes that chill to ice the land,
The old New England land,
Her tents are gone and she is gone and gone her gipsy band,
And but a patteran of leaves to point her wandering way,
And ashes of a fire she lit, it seems, but yesterday.

Madison Julius Cawein

Glamour

With fall on fall, from wood to wood,
The brook pours mossy music down
Or is it, in the solitude,
The murmur of a Faery town?

A town of Elfland filled with bells
And holiday of hurrying feet:
Or traffic now, whose small sound swells,
Now sinks from busy street to street.

Whose Folk I often recognize
In wingéd things that hover 'round,
Who to men's eyes assume disguise
When on some elfin errand bound.

The bee, that haunts the touchmenot,
Big-bodied, making braggart din
Is fairy brother to that sot,
Jack Falstaff of the Boar's Head Inn.

The dragonfly, whose wings of black
Are mantle for his garb of green,
Is Ancient to this other Jack,
Another Pistol, long and lean.

The butterfly, in royal tints,
Is Hal, mad Hal, in cloth of gold,
Who passes these, as once that Prince
Passed his companions boon of old.

Madison Julius Cawein

God's Green Book

Out, out in the open fields,
Where the great, green book of God,
The book that its wisdom yields
To each soul that is not a clod,
Lies wide for the world to read,
I would go; and in flower and weed,
That letter the lines of the grass,
Would read of a better creed
Than that which the town-world has.

II.

Too long in the city streets,
The alleys of grime and sin,
Have I heard the iron beats
Of the heart of toil; whose din
And the throb of whose wild unrest
Have stunned the song in my breast,
Have marred its music and slain
The bird that was once its guest,
And my soul would find it again.

III.

Out there where the great, green book,
Whose leaves are the grass and trees,
Lies open; where each may look,
May muse and read as he please;
The book, that is gilt with gleams,
Whose pages are ribboned with streams;
That says what our souls would say
Of beauty that 's wrought of dreams
And buds and blossoms of May.

Madison Julius Cawein

Gray November

Dull, dimly gleaming,
The dawn looks downward
Where, flowing townward,
The river, steaming
With mist, is hidden:
Each bush, that huddles
Beside the road, the rain has pooled with puddles,
Seems, in the fog, a hag or thing hag-ridden.

II.

Where leaves hang tattered
In forest tangles,
And woodway angles
Are acorn-scattered,
Coughing and yawning
The woodsman slouches,
Or stands as silent as the hound that crouches
Beside him, ghostly in the mist-drenched dawning.

III.

Through roses, rotting
Within the garden,
With blooms, that harden,
Of marigolds, knotting,
(Each one an ember
Dull, dead and dripping,)
Her brow, from which their faded wreath is slipping,
Mantled in frost and fog, comes in November.

Madison Julius Cawein

Gray Skies

It is not well
For me to dwell
On what upon that day befell,
On that dark day of fall befell;
When through the landscape, bowed and bent,
With Love and Death I slowly went,
And wild rain swept the firmament.

Ah, Love that sighed!
Ah, Joy that died!
And Heart that humbled all its pride;
In vain that humbled all its pride!
The roses ruin and rot away
Upon your grave where grasses sway,
And all is dim, and all is gray.

Madison Julius Cawein

Haec Olim Meminisse

FEBRILE perfumes as of faded roses
In the old house speak of love to-day,
Love long past; and where the soft day closes,
Down the west gleams, golden-red, a ray.
Pointing where departed splendor perished,
And the path that night shall walk, and hang,
On blue boughs of heaven, gold, long cherished —
Fruit Hesperian,— that the ancients sang.
And to him, who sits there dreaming, musing,
At the window in the twilight wan,
Like old scent of roses interfusing,
Comes a vision of a day that's gone.
And he sees Youth, walking brave but dimly
'Mid the roses, in the afterglow;
And beside him, like a star seen slimly,
Love, who used to meet him long-ago.
And again he seems to hear the flowers
Whispering faintly of what no one knows —
Of the dreams they dreamed there for long hours,
Youth and Love, between their hearts a rose.
Youth is dead; and Love, oh, where departed!
Like the last streak of the dying day,
Somewhere yonder, in a world uncharted,
Calling him, with memories, away.

Madison Julius Cawein

Halloween

All hushed of glee,
The last chill bee
Clings wearily
To the dying aster.

The leaves dropp faster:
And all around, red as disaster,
The forest crimsons with tree on tree.

A butterfly,
The last to die,
Wings heavily by,
Weighed down with torpor.

The air grows sharper;
And the wind in the trees, like some sad harper,
Sits and sorrows with sigh on sigh.

The far crows call;
The acorns fall;
And over all
The Autumn raises
Dun mists and hazes,
Through which her soul, it seemeth, gazes
On ghosts and dreams in carnival.

The end is near;
The dying Year
Leans low to hear
Her own heart breaking,
And Beauty taking
Her flight, and all my dreams forsaking
My soul, bowed down 'mid the sad and sere.

Madison Julius Cawein

Hallowmas

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Madison Julius Cawein

Happiness

There is a voice that calls to me; a voice that cries deep down;
That calls within my heart of hearts when Summer doffs her crown:
When Summer doffs her crown, my dear, and by the hills and streams
The spirit of September walks through gold and purple gleams:
It calls my heart beyond the mart, beyond the street and town,
To take again, in sun or rain, the oldtime trail of dreams.

Oh, it is long ago, my dear, a weary time since we
Trod back the way we used to know by wildwood rock and tree:
By mossy rock and tree, dear Heart, and sat below the hill,
And watched the wheel, the old mill-wheel, turn round on Babbit's mill:
Or in the brook, with line and hook, to dronings of the bee,
Waded or swam, above the dam, and drank of joy our fill

The ironweed is purple now; the blackeyed-Susans nod;
And by its banks, weighed down with wet, blooms bright the goldenrod:
Blooms bright the goldenrod, my dear, and in the mist of morn
The gray hawk soars and screams and soars above the dripping corn:
And by the pool, cerulean cool, the milkweed bursts its pod,
As through the air the wild fanfare rings of the hunter's horn.

The hunter's horn we heard, my dear, that echoed 'mid the rocks,
And cheered the hounds whose belling bay trailed far behind the fox:
Trailed far behind the fox, dear Heart, whose den we oft had seen,
A cave-like place within the woods wild-hid in trailing green:
Old Owlet's Roost, wherein we used to search, with tangled locks,
For buried gold, where, we were told, the bandit's lair had been.

O gladness of the long-gone years! O boyhood's days and dreams!
Again my soul would trace with you the oldtime Woods and streams:
The oldtime woods and streams, dear Heart, and seek again, I guess,
The buried gold, we sought of old, and find it none the less
Still in the ground, fast sealed and bound, among the glooms and gleams,
As long ago we left it so, the gold of Happiness.

Madison Julius Cawein

Happiness II

Around its mountain many footpaths wind,
But only one unto its top attains;
Not he who searches closest, takes most pains,
But he who seeks not, that one way may find.

Madison Julius Cawein

Happy-Go-Lucky

I can't get up with the chickens;
I can't get up at dark:
And what do I care for the early worm?
And what do I care for the lark?

I can't do this or that thing;
I can't do things like you;
And the thing that I do most frequent
Is the thing I never do.

I can't go where I would go,
Though I go from morn till eve;
But some place I go wherever I go
Whenever a place I leave.

For the law of the road is this law,
And the law is right and good:
Just go your ways and take no heed
Of how you get your food.

And the law of the road is this law,
And the law is one to keep:
It never matters, wherever you are,
So you have a place to sleep.

And the law of the road is this law,
And the law may it grow and grow!
Wherever you go and whatever you do
Let no one ever know.

Madison Julius Cawein

Haunters Of The Silence

There are haunters of the silence, ghosts that hold the heart and brain:
I have sat with them and hearkened; I have talked with them in vain:
I have shuddered from their coming, yet have run to meet them there,
And have cursed them and have blessed them and have loved them to despair.

At my door I see their shadows; in my walks I meet their ghosts;
Where I often hear them weeping or sweep by in withered hosts:
Perished dreams, gone like the roses, crumbling by like autumn leaves;
Phantoms of old joys departed, that the spirit eye perceives.

Oft at night they sit beside me, fix their eyes upon my face,
Demon eyes that burn and hold me, in whose deeps my heart can trace
All the past; and where a passion, as in Hell the ghosts go by,
Turns an anguished face toward me with a love that cannot die.

In the night-time, in the darkness, in the blackness of the storm,
Round my fireplace there they gather, flickering form on shadowy form:
In the daytime, in the noontide, in the golden sunset glow,
On the hilltops, in the forests, I have met them walking slow.

There are haunters of the silence, ghosts that hold the brain and heart:
In the mansion of my being they have placed a room apart:
There I hear their spectre raiment, see their shadows on the floor,
Where the raven, Sorrow, darkens Love's pale image o'er my door.

Madison Julius Cawein

Heart Of My Heart

Here where the season turns the land to gold,
Among the fields our feet have known of old,
When we were children who would laugh and run,
Glad little playmates of the wind and sun,
Before came toil and care and years went ill,
And one forgot and one remembered still;
Heart of my heart, among the old fields here,
Give me your hands and let me draw you near,
Heart of my heart.

Stars are not truer than your soul is true
What need I more of heaven than than you?
Flowers are not sweeter than your face is sweet
What need I more to make my world complete?
O woman nature, love that still endures,
What strength has ours that is not born of yours?
Heart of my heart, to you, whatever come,
To you the lead, whose love hath led me home.
Heart of my heart.

Madison Julius Cawein

Heat

Now is it as if Spring had never been,
And Winter but a memory and dream,
Here where the Summer stands, her lap of green
Heaped high with bloom and beam,

Among her blackberry-lilies, low that lean
To kiss her feet; or, freckle-browed, that stare
Upon the dragonfly which, slimly-seen,
Like a blue jewel flickering in her hair,
Sparkles above them there.

II.

Knee-deep among the tepid pools the cows
Chew a slow cud or switch a slower tail,
Half-sunk in sleep beneath the beechen boughs,
Where thin the wood-gnats ail.

From bloom to bloom the languid butterflies drowse;
The sleepy bees make hardly any sound;
The only things the sunrays can arouse,
It seems, are two black beetles rolling 'round
Upon the dusty ground.

III.

Within its channel glares the creek and shrinks,
Beneath whose rocks the furtive crawfish hides
In stagnant places, where the green frog blinks,
And water-spider glides.

Far hotter seems it for the bird that drinks,
The startled kingfisher that screams and flies;
Hotter and lonelier for the purple pinks
Of weeds that bloom, whose sultry perfumes rise
Stifling the swooning skies.

IV.

From ragweed fallows, rye fields, heaped with sheaves,
From blistering rocks, no moss or lichens crust,
And from the road, where every hoof-stroke heaves
A cloud of burning dust,

The hotness quivers, making limp the leaves,
That loll like tongues of panting hounds. The heat
Is a wan wimple that the Summer weaves,
A veil, in which she wraps, as in a sheet,
The shriveling corn and wheat.

V.

Furious, incessant in the weeds and briers
The sawing weed-bugs sing; and, heat-begot,
The grasshoppers, so many strident wires,
Staccato fiercely hot:

A lash of whirling sound that never tires,
The locust flails the noon, where harnessed Thirst,
Beside the road-spring, many a shod hoof mires,
Into the trough thrusts his hot head, immersed,
'Round which cool bubbles burst.

VI.

The sad, sweet voice of some wood-spirit who
Laments while watching a loved oak tree die,
From the deep forest comes the wood-dove's coo,
A long, lost, lonely cry.

Oh, for a breeze, a mighty wind to woo
The woods to stormy laughter; sow like grain
The world with freshness of invisible dew,
And pile above far, fevered hill and plain,
Vast bastions black with rain.

Madison Julius Cawein

Helen

Heaped in raven loops and masses
Over temples smooth and fair,
Have you marked it, as she passes,
Gleam and shadow mingled there,
Braided strands of midnight air,
Helen's hair?

Deep with dreams and starry mazes
Of the thought that in them lies,
Have you seen them, as she raises
Them in gladness or surprise,
Two gray gleams of daybreak skies,
Helen's eyes?

Moist with dew and honied wafers
Of a music sweet that slips,
Have you marked them, brimmed with laughter's
Song and sunshine to their tips,
Rose-buds whence the fragrance drips,
Helen's lips?

He who sees her needs must love her:
But, beware! avoid love's dart!
He who loves her must discover
Nature overlooked one part,
In this masterpiece of art
Helen's heart.

Madison Julius Cawein

Hepaticas

In the frail hepaticas,-
That the early Springtide tossed,
Sapphire-like, along the ways
Of the woodlands that she crossed,-
I behold, with other eyes,
Footprints of a dream that flies.

One who leads me; whom I seek:
In whose loveliness there is
All the glamour that the Greek
Knew as wind-borne Artemis.-
I am mortal. Woe is me!
Her sweet immortality!

Spirit, must I always fare,
Following thy averted looks?
Now thy white arm, now thy hair,
Glimpsed among the trees and brooks?
Thou who hauntest, whispering,
All the slopes and vales of Spring.

Cease to lure! or grant to me
All thy beauty! though it pain,
Slay with splendor utterly!
Flash revelation on my brain!
And one moment let me see
All thy immortality!

Madison Julius Cawein

Her Eyes And Mouth

There is no Paradise like that which lies
Deep in the heavens of her azure eyes:
There is no Eden here on Earth that glows
Like that which smiles rich in her mouth's red rose.

Madison Julius Cawein

Her Face

The gladness of our Southern spring; the grace
Of summer; and the dreaminess of fall
Are parts of her sweet nature. Such a face
Was Ruth's, methinks, divinely spiritual.

Madison Julius Cawein

Her Portrait

Were I an artist, Lydia, I
Would paint you as you merit,
Not as my eyes, but dreams, descry;
Not in the flesh, but spirit.

The canvas I would paint you on
Should be a bit of heaven;
My brush, a sunbeam; pigments, dawn
And night and starry even.

Your form and features to express,
Likewise your soul's chaste whiteness,
I'd take the primal essences
Of darkness and of brightness.

I'd take pure night to paint your hair;
Stars for your eyes; and morning
To paint your skin-the rosy air
That is your limbs' adorning.

To paint the love-bows of your lips,
I'd mix, for colors, kisses;
And for your breasts and finger-tips,
Sweet odors and soft blisses.

And to complete the picture well,
I'd temper all with woman,
Some tears, some laughter; heaven and hell,
To show you still are human.

Madison Julius Cawein

Her Prayer

She kneels with haggard eyes and hair
Unto the Christ upon the Cross:
Her gown is torn; her feet are bare.

What is this thing she begs of him,
The gentle Christ upon the Cross?
Her hands are clasped; her face is dim.

Is it forgiveness for her sin,
She asks of Christ upon the Cross?
And mercy for the soul within?

With anguished face, so sad and sweet,
She kneels to Christ upon the Cross:
Her arms embrace his nail-pierced feet.

Her tears run slowly down her face,
O piteous Christ upon the Cross!
And through her tears she sighs and says:

'The thing that I would crave of Thee,
O Christ upon the cruel Cross,
Is not a thing to comfort me.

'Thou, who hast taught us to forgive,
O tender Christ upon the Cross,
Help Thou my love for him to live.

'Oh, let the love that was my fall,
O loving Christ upon the Cross,
Still to my life be all in all.

'With love for him who loves no more,
O patient Christ upon the Cross,
Make Thou my punishment full sore.'

She kneels with haggard eyes and hair
Unto the Christ upon the Cross:
Her gown is torn; her feet are bare.

Madison Julius Cawein

Her Soul

To me not only does her soul suggest
Palms and the peace of tropic shore and wood,
But, oceded far beyond the golden West,
The Fortunate Islands of true Womanhood.

Madison Julius Cawein

Here Is The Place Where Loveliness Keeps House

Here is the place where Loveliness keeps house,
Between the river and the wooded hills,
Within a valley where the Springtime spills
Her firstling wind-flowers under blossoming boughs:
Where Summer sits braiding her warm, white brows
With bramble-roses; and where Autumn fills
Her lap with asters; and old Winter frills
With crimson haw and hip his snowy blouse.
Here you may meet with Beauty. Here she sits
Gazing upon the moon, or all the day
Tuning a wood-thrush flute, remote, unseen;
Or when the storm is out, 'tis she who flits
From rock to rock, a form of flying spray,
Shouting, beneath the leaves' tumultuous green.

Madison Julius Cawein

Hesperian - Proem

The path that winds by wood and stream
Is not the path for me to-day;
The path I take is one of dream,
That leads me down a twilight way.

By towns, where myths have only been;
By streams, no mortal foot hath crossed;
To gardens of hesperian sheen,
By halcyon seas for ever lost.

By forests, moonlight haunts alone,
(Diana with her silvery fawn;)
By fields, whereon the stars are sown,
(The wildflowers gathered of the Dawn.)

To orchards of eternal fruit,
That never mortal hand shall take;
Around whose central tree and root
Is coiled the never-sleeping Snake.

The Dragon, lost in listening, curled
Around the trunk whose fruit is gold:
The ancient wisdom of the world
Guarding the glory never old.

The one desire, that leads me now
Beyond endeavour still to try
And reach those peaks that overbrow
The islands of the sunset sky.

The purple crags, the rosy peaks
Of somewhere, nowhere; where you will;
But the one place where Beauty speaks
With the Greek rapture on her still.

Where still she joins with old Romance
And Myth and Legend pearl-white hands,
And leads the old immortal dance
Of Song in dim immortal lands.

Madison Julius Cawein

Hey, Little Boy

Hey, little boy, little boy, come to me!
Hey, little boy, little boy, Andy!
Hey, little boy, little boy, can it be
Your mouth is crumbed with candy?'
'What's that to you? what's that to me?
What's that to you, nurse Mandy?
It well may be why, certainly
My mouth is crumbed with candy.'

II.

'Hey, little boy, little boy, go away!
Hey, boy, on what you banking?
Hey, little boy, little boy, what you say?
You surely want a spanking!'
'Not now, to-morrow, or to-day!
For that you have my thanking:
Come, wash these signs of sweets away,
And I won't get a spanking.'

III.

'Hey, little boy, little boy, don't you hear?
Hey, little boy, stop your running!
Hey, boy, come here, and tell me, dear,
Why you're so sweet and cunning.'
'If I am sweet, if I am dear,
Now don't you go and tell, oh!
The sweet things that one eats, you hear?
They sweeten up a fellow.'

Madison Julius Cawein

High On A Hill

There is a place among the Cape Ann hills
That looks from fir-dark summits on the sea,
Whose surging sapphire changes constantly
Beneath deep heavens, Morning windowsills,
With golden calm, or sunset citadels
With storm, whose towers the winds' confederacy
And bandit thunder hold in rebel fee,
Swooping upon the ilsher's sail that swells.
A place, where Sorrow ceases to complain,
And life's old Cares put all their burdens by,
And Weariness forgets itself in rest.
Would that all life were like it; might obtain
Its pure repose, its outlook, strong and high,
That sees, beyond, far Islands of the Blest.

Madison Julius Cawein

Hilda Of The Hillside

Who is she, like the spring, who comes down
From the hills to the smoke-huddled town?
With her peach-petal face
And her wildflower grace,
Bringing sunshine and gladness to each sorry place?
Her cheeks are twin buds o' the brier,
Mixed fervors of snow and of fire;
Her lips are the red
Of a rose that is wed
To dew and aroma when dawn is o'erhead:
Her eyes are twin bits o' the skies,
Blue glimpses of Paradise;
The strands of her hair
Are sunlight and air
Herself is the argument that she is fair,
This girl with the dawn in her eyes.

II.

If Herrick had looked on her face
His lyrics had learned a new grace:
Her face is a book
Where each laugh and each look,
Each smile is a lyric, more sweet than a brook:
Her words they are birds that are heard
Singing low where the roses are stirred,
The buds of her lips,
Whence each of them slips
With music as soft as the fragrance that drips
From a dew-dreaming bloom;
With their sound and perfume
Making all my glad heart a love-haunted room.

III.

But she she knows nothing of love!
She she with the soul of a dove,
Who dwells on the hills,
Knowing naught of the ills

Of the vales, of the hearts that with passion she fills:
For whom all my soul
Is a harp from which roll
The songs that she hears not, the voice of my love,
This girl who goes singing above.

Madison Julius Cawein

Home

I dream again I 'm in the lane
That leads me home through night and rain;
Again the fence I see and, dense,
The garden, wet and sweet of sense;
Then mother's window, with its starry line
Of light, o'ergrown with rose and trumpetvine.

What was 't I heard? Her voice? A bird?
Singing? Or was 't the rain that stirred
The dripping leaves and draining eaves
Of shed and barn, one scarce perceives
Past garden-beds where oldtime flowers hang wet
Pale phlox and candytuft and mignonette.

The hour is late. I can not wait.
Quick. Let me hurry to the gate!
Upon the roof the rain is proof
Against my horse's galloping hoof;
And if the old gate, with its weight and chain,
Should creak, she 'll think it just the wind and rain.

Along I 'll steal, with cautious heel,
And at the lamplit window kneel:
And there she 'll sit and rock and knit,
While on her face the light will flit,
As I have seen her, many a night and day,
Dreaming of home that is so far away.

Upon the pane, dim, blurred with rain,
I 'll knock and call out, 'Home again!'
And at a stride fling warm and wide
The door and catch her to my side
Mother! as once I clasped her when a boy,
Sobbing my heart out on her breast for joy!

Madison Julius Cawein

Home Again

Far down the lane
A window pane
Gleams 'mid the trees through night and rain.
The weeds are dense
Through which a fence
Of pickets rambles, none sees whence,
Before a porch, all indistinct of line,
O'er-grown and matted with wistaria-vine.

No thing is heard,
No beast or bird,
Only the rain by which are stirred
The draining leaves,
And trickling eaves
Of crib and barn one scarce perceives;
And garden-beds where old-time flow'rs hang wet
The phlox, the candytuft, and mignonette.

The hour is late
At any rate
She has not heard him at the gate:
Upon the roof
The rain was proof
Against his horse's galloping hoof:
And when the old gate with its weight and chain
Creaked, she imagined 't was the wind and rain.

Along he steals
With cautious heels,
And by the lamplit window kneels:
And there she sits,
And rocks and knits
Within the shadowy light that flits
On face and hair, so sweetly sad and gray,
Dreaming of him she thinks is far away.

Upon his cheeks
Is it the streaks
Of rain, as now the old porch creaks

Beneath his stride?
Then, warm and wide,
The door flings and she's at his side
'Mother!' and he, back from the war, her boy,
Kisses her face all streaming wet with joy.

Madison Julius Cawein

Homespun

If heart be tired and soul be sad
As life goes on in homespun clad,
Drab, colorless, with much of care,
Not even a ribbon in her hair;
Heart-broken for the near and new,
And sick to do what others do,
And quit the road of toil and tears,
Doffing the burden of the years:
And if beside you one should rise,
Doubt, with a menace, in its eyes
What then?
Why, look Life in the face;
And there again you may retrace
The dream that once in youth you had
When life was full of hope and glad,
And knew no doubt, no dread, that trails
In darkness by, and sighs, 'All fails!'
And in its every look and breath
A shudder, old as night, that saith,
With something of finality,
'There is no immortality!'
Confusing faith who stands alone
Like a green tree midst woods of stone,
Who feels within itself a change
Through contact with the dark and strange.
'T were better with that Dream, you knew
In youth, to dream all dreams come true,
And follow Love, in homespun clad,
As once you did when but a lad;
And, with the trusting heart of youth,
Listened, and held them for the truth,
The wondertales Life told to you
Tales, that at last she will make true.

Madison Julius Cawein

Hoodoo

She mutters and stoops by the lone bayou
The little green leaves are hushed on the trees
An owl in an oak cries 'Who-oh-who,'
And a fox barks back where the moon slants through
The moss that sways to a sudden breeze...
Or That she sees,
Whose eyes are coals in the light o' the moon.
'Soon, oh, soon,' hear her croon,
' Woe, oh, woe to the octoroon!'

She mutters and kneels and her bosom is bare
The little green leaves are stirred on the trees
A black bat brushes her unkempt hair,
And the hiss of a snake glides 'round her there...
Or is it the voice of the ghostly breeze,
Or That she sees,
Whose mouth is flame in the light o' the moon?
'Soon, oh, soon,' hear her croon,
'Woe, oh, woe to the octoroon!'

She mutters and digs and buries it deep
The little green leaves are wild on the trees
And nearer and nearer the noises creep,
That gibber and maunder and whine and weep...
Or is it the wave and the weariless breeze,
Or That she sees,
Which hobbles away in the light o' the moon?
'Soon, oh, soon,' hear her croon,
'Woe, oh, woe to the octoroon!'

In the hut where the other girl sits with him
The little green leaves hang limp on the trees
All on a sudden the moon grows dim...
Is it the shadow of cloud or of limb,
Cast in the door by the moaning breeze?
Or That she sees,
Which limps and leers in the light o' the moon?
'Soon, oh, soon,' hear it croon,
'Woe, oh, woe to the octoroon!'

It has entered in at the open door
The little green leaves fall dead from the trees
And she in the cabin lies stark on the floor,
And she in the woods has her lover once more...
And is it the hoot of the dying breeze?
Or him who sees,
Who mocks and laughs in the light o' the moon:
'Soon, oh, soon,' hear him croon,
'Woe, oh, woe to the octoroon!'

Madison Julius Cawein

Hope

Within the world of every man's desire
Two things have power to lift the soul above:
The first is Work, who dons a mean attire;
The other, Love, whose raiment is of fire.
Their child is Hope, and we the heirs thereof.

Madison Julius Cawein

Hope On

Hope on, dear Heart, and you will see
The walls of worry fade and flee;
And sane of soul and sound of mind,
You 'll go your way of life and find
The paths, once barren, suddenly
In blossom; and from Arcady
The summer wind blow sweet and kind
Hope on, dear Heart.
Think what it 'd mean to you and me
This life if Hope should cease to be!
If Hope should die what doubts would blind!
What black despairs go unconfined!
What sorrows weight us utterly!
Hope on, dear Heart!

Madison Julius Cawein

Hylas

The cuckoo-sorrel paints with pink
The green page of the meadow-land
Around a pool where thrushes drink
As from a hollowed hand.

A hill, long-haired with leathered grass
Combed by the strong incessant wind,
Looks down upon the pool's pale glass
Like some old hag gone blind,
And on a forest grey of beech,
Reserved, mysterious, deep and wild,
That whispers to itself; its speech
Like some old man's turned child.

A forest, through which something speaks
Authoritative things to man,
A something that o'erawed the Greeks,
The universal Pan.

And through the forest falls a stream
Babbling of immemorial things
The myth, that haunts it like a dream,
The god, that in it sings.

And here it was, when I was young,
Across this meadow, sorrel-stained,
To this green place where willows wrung
Wild hands, and beech-trees strained
Their mighty strength with winds of spring,
That clutched and tore the wild-witch hair
Of yon gaunt hill, I heard them sing,
The hylas hidden there.

The slant gale played soft fugues of rain,
With interludes of sun between,
Where windflowers wove a twinkling chain
Through mosses grey and green.
From every coign of woodland peered
The starry eyes of Loveliness,
As reticently now she neared
Or stood in shy distress.

Then I remembered all the past
The ancient ships, the unknown seas;
And him, like some huge, knotted mast,
My master Herakles.
Again I saw the port, the wood
Of Cyzicus; the landing there;
The pool among the reeds; and, nude,
The nymphs with long green hair,
That swarmed to clasp me when I stooped
To that grey pool as clear as glass,
And round my body wrapped and looped
Their hair, like water-grass.

Hylas, the Argonaut, the lad
Beloved of Herakles, was I
Again with joy my heart grew sad,
Dreaming on days gone by.
Again I felt the drowning pain,
The kiss that slew me long ago;
The dripping arms drew down again,
And love cried all its woe.

The new world vanished! 'Twas the old.
Once more I knew the Mysian shore,
The haunted pool, the wood, the cold
Wild wind from sea and moor.
And then a voice went by; 'twas his,
The Demigod's who sought me: but
Cold mouths had closed mine with a kiss
And both mine eyes were shut....

And had the hylas ceased to sing?
Or what? For, lo! I stood again
Between the hill and wood; and Spring
Gazed at me through the rain.
And in her gaze I seemed to see
This was a dream she'd dreamed, not I;
A figment of a memory
That I had felt go by.

Hymn To Desire

Mother of visions, with lineaments dulcet as numbers
Breathed on the eyelids of love by music that slumbers,
Secretly, sweetly, O presence of fire and snow,
Thou comest mysterious,
In beauty imperious,
Clad on with dreams and the light of no world that we know.
Deep to my innermost soul am I shaken,
Helplessly shaken and tossed,
And of thy tyrannous yearnings so utterly taken,
My lips, unsatisfied, thirst;
Mine eyes are accurst
With longings for visions that far in the night are forsaken;
And mine ears, in listening lost,
Yearn, yearn for the note of a chord that will never awaken.

II

Like palpable music thou comest, like moonlight; and far,
Resonant bar upon bar,
The vibrating lyre
Of the spirit responds with melodious fire,
As thy fluttering fingers now grasp it and ardently shake,
With flame and with flake,
The chords of existence, the instrument star-sprung.
Whose frame is of clay, so wonderfully molded from mire.

III

Vested with vanquishment, come, O Desire, Desire!
Breathe in this harp of my soul the audible angel of love!
Make of my heart an Israfel burning above,
A lute for the music of God, that lips, which are mortal, but stammer!
Smite every rapturous wire
With golden delirium, rebellion and silvery clamor,
Crying-'Awake! awake!

Too long hast thou slumbered! too far from the regions of glamour,
With its mountains of magic, its fountains of Faëry, the spar-sprung,
Hast thou wandered away, O Heart!
Come, oh, come and partake
Of necromance banquets of beauty; and slake
Thy thirst in the waters of art,
That are drawn from the streams
Of love and of dreams.'

IV

'Come, oh, come!
No longer shall language be dumb!
Thy vision shall grasp
As one doth the glittering hasp
Of a dagger made splendid with gems and with gold
The wonder and richness of life, not anguish and hate of it merely.
And out of the stark
Eternity, awful and dark,
Immensity silent and cold,
Universe-shaking as trumpets, or thunderous metals
That cymbal; yet pensive and pearly
And soft as the rosy unfolding of petals,
Or crumbling aroma of blossoms that wither too early,
The majestic music of Death, where he plays
On the organ of eons and days.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Hymn To Spiritual Desire

I

Mother of visions, with lineaments dulcet as numbers
Breathed on the eyelids of Love by music that slumbers,
Secretly, sweetly, O presence of fire and snow,
Thou comest mysterious,
In beauty imperious,
Clad on with dreams and the light of no world that we know:
Deep to my innermost soul am I shaken,
Helplessly shaken and tossed,
And of thy tyrannous yearnings so utterly taken,
My lips, unsatisfied, thirst;
Mine eyes are accurst
With longings for visions that far in the night are forsaken;
And mine ears, in listening lost,
Yearn, waiting the note of a chord that will never awaken.

II

Like palpable music thou comest, like moonlight; and far,-
Resonant bar upon bar,-
The vibrating lyre
Of the spirit responds with melodious fire,
As thy fluttering fingers now grasp it and ardently shake,
With laughter and ache,
The chords of existence, the instrument star-sprung,
Whose frame is of clay, so wonderfully molded of mire.

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With golden delirium, rebellion and silvery clamor,
Crying-'Awake! awake!
Too long hast thou slumbered! too far from the regions of glamour
With its mountains of magic, its fountains of faery, the spar-sprung,

Hast thou wandered away, O Heart!'

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Of necromance banquets of Beauty; and slake
Thy thirst in the waters of Art,
That are drawn from the streams
Of love and of dreams.

IV

'Come, oh, come!
No longer shall language be dumb!
Thy vision shall grasp-
As one doth the glittering hasp
Of a sword made splendid with gems and with gold-
The wonder and richness of life, not anguish and hate of it merely.
And out of the stark
Eternity, awful and dark,
Immensity silent and cold,-
Universe-shaking as trumpets, or cymbaling metals,
Imperious; yet pensive and pearly
And soft as the rosy unfolding of petals,
Or crumbling aroma of blossoms that wither too early,-
The majestic music of God, where He plays
On the organ, eternal and vast, of eons and days.'

Madison Julius Cawein

In A Garden

The pink rose drops its petals on
The moonlit lawn, the moonlit lawn;
The moon, like some wide rose of white,
Drops down the summer night.
No rose there is
As sweet as this-
Thy mouth, that greets me with a kiss.

The lattice of thy casement twines
With jasmine vines, with jasmine vines;
The stars, like jasmine blossoms, lie
About the glimmering sky.
No jasmine tress
Can so caress
Like thy white arms' soft loveliness.

About thy door magnolia blooms
Make sweet the glooms, make sweet the glooms;
A moon-magnolia is the dusk
Closed in a dewy husk.
However much,
No bloom gives such
Soft fragrance as thy bosom's touch.

The flowers blooming now will pass,
And strew the grass, and strew the grass;
The night, like some frail flower, dawn
Will soon make gray and wan.
Still, still above,
The flower of
True love shall live forever, Love.

Madison Julius Cawein

In Ages Past

I Stood upon a height and listened to
The solemn psalmody of many pines,
And with the sound I seemed to see long lines
Of mountains rise, blue peak on cloudy blue,
And hear the roar of torrents hurling through
Riven ravines; or from the crags' gaunt spines
Pouring wild hair, where, as an eyeball shines,
A mountain pool shone, clear and cold of hue.
And then my soul remembered felt, how once,
In ages past, 't was here that I, a Faun,
Startled an Oread at her morning bath,
Who stood revealed; her beauty, like the sun's,
Veiled in her hair, heavy with dews of dawn,
Through which, like stars, burnt blue her eyes' bright wrath.

Madison Julius Cawein

In An Annisquam Garden

Old phantoms haunt it of the long ago;
Old ghosts of old-time lovers and of dreams:
Within the quiet sunlight there, meseems,
I see them walking where those lilies blow.
The hardy phlox sways to some garment's flow;
The salvia there with sudden scarlet streams,
Caught from some ribbon of some throat that gleams,
Petunia-fair, in flounce and furbelow.
I seem to hear their whispers in each wind
That wanders mid the flowers. There they stand!
Among the shadows of that apple-tree!
They are not dead, whom still it keeps in mind,
This garden, planted by some lovely hand
That keeps it fragrant with its memory.

Madison Julius Cawein

In Arcady

I remember, when a child,
How within the April wild
Once I walked with Mystery
In the groves of Arcady....
Through the boughs, before, behind,
Swept the mantle of the wind,
Thunderous and unconfined.

Overhead the curving moon
Pierced the twilight: a cocoon,
Golden, big with unborn wings-
Beauty, shaping spiritual things,
Vague, impatient of the night,
Eager for its heavenward flight
Out of darkness into light.

Here and there the oaks assumed
Satyr aspects; shadows gloomed,
Hiding, of a dryad look;
And the naiad-frantic brook,
Crying, fled the solitude,
Filled with terror of the wood,
Or some faun-thing that pursued.

In the dead leaves on the ground
Crept a movement; rose a sound:
Everywhere the silence ticked
As with hands of things that picked
At the loam, or in the dew,-
Elvish sounds that crept or flew,-
Beak-like, pushing surely through.

Down the forest, overhead,
Stammering a dead leaf fled,
Filled with elemental fear
Of some dark destruction near-
One, whose glowworm eyes I saw
Hag with flame the crooked haw,
Which the moon clutched like a claw.

Gradually beneath the tree
Grew a shape; a nudity:
Lithe and slender; silent as
Growth of tree or blade of grass;
Brown and silken as the bloom
Of the trillium in the gloom,
Visible as strange perfume.

For an instant there it stood,
Smiling on me in the wood:
And I saw its hair was green
As the leaf-sheath, gold of sheen:
And its eyes an azure wet,
From within which seemed to jet
Sapphire lights and violet.

Swiftly by I saw it glide;
And the dark was deified:
Wild before it everywhere
Gleamed the greenness of its hair;
And around it danced a light,
Soft, the sapphire of its sight,
Making witchcraft of the night.

On the branch above, the bird
Trilled to it a dreamy word:
In its bud the wild bee droned
Honeyed greeting, drowsy-toned:
And the brook forgot the gloom,
Hushed its heart, and, wrapped in bloom,
Breathed a welcome of perfume.

To its beauty bush and tree
Stretched sweet arms of ecstasy;
And the soul within the rock
Lichen-treasures did unlock
As upon it fell its eye;
And the earth, that felt it nigh,
Into wildflowers seemed to sigh....

Was it dryad? was it faun?

Wandered from the times long gone.
Was it sylvan? was it fay?-
Dim survivor of the day
When Religion peopled streams,
Woods and rocks with shapes like gleams,-
That invaded then my dreams?

Was it shadow? was it shape?
Or but fancy's wild escape?-
Of my own child's world the charm
That assumed material form?-
Of my soul the mystery,
That the spring revealed to me,
There in long-lost Arcady?

Madison Julius Cawein

In Autumn

Sunflowers wither and lilies die,
Poppies are pods of seeds;
The first red leaves on the pathway lie,
Like blood of a heart that bleeds.

Weary always will it be to-day,
Weary and wan and wet;
Dawn and noon will the clouds hang gray,
And the autumn wind will sigh and say,
'He comes not yet, not yet.
Weary always, always!'

II.

Hollyhocks bend all tattered and torn,
Marigolds all are gone;
The last pale rose lies all forlorn,
Like love that is trampled on.

Weary, ah me! to-night will be,
Weary and wild and hoar;
Rain and mist will blow from the sea,
And the wind will sob in the autumn tree,
'He comes no more, no more.
Weary, ah me! ah me!'

Madison Julius Cawein

In Black And Red

The hush of death is on the night. The corn,
That loves to whisper to the wind; the leaves,
That dance with it, are silent: one perceives
No motion mid the fields, as dry as horn.
What light is that? It cannot be the morn!
Yet in the east it seems its witchcraft weaves
A fiery rose. Look! how it grows! it heaves
And flames and tosses! 'Tis a burning barn!
And now the night is rent with shouts and shots.
Dark forms and faces hurry past. The gloom
Gallops with riders. Homes are less than straw
Before this madness: human lives, mere lots
Flung in and juggled from the cap of Doom,
Where Crime stamps yelling on the face of Law.

Madison Julius Cawein

In Clay

Here went a horse with heavy laboring stride
Along the woodland side;
Deep in the clay his iron hoof-marks show,
Patient and slow,
Where with his human burden yesterday
He passed this way.

Would that this wind that tramples 'round me here,
Among the sad and sere
Of winter-weary forests, were a steed,
Mighty indeed,
And tameless as the tempest of its pace,
Upon whom man might place.

The boundless burden of his mortal cares,
Life's griefs, despairs,
And ruined dreams that bow the spirit so!
And let him go
Bearing them far from the sad world, ah me!
Leaving it free.

As in that Age of Gold, of which men tell,
When Earth was glad and gods came here to dwell.

Madison Julius Cawein

In May

When you and I in the hills went Maying,
You and I in the bright May weather,
The birds, that sang on the boughs together,
There in the green of the woods, kept saying
All that my heart was saying low,
'I love you! love you!' soft and low,
And did you know?
When you and I in the hills went Maying.

II

There where the brook on its rocks went winking,
There by its banks where the May had led us,
Flowers, that bloomed in the woods and meadows,
Azure and gold at our feet, kept thinking
All that my soul was thinking there,
'I love you! love you!' softly there
And did you care?
There where the brook on its rocks went winking.

III

Whatever befalls through fate's compelling,
Should our paths unite or our pathways sever,
In the Mays to come I shall feel forever
The wildflowers thinking, the wild birds telling,
In words as soft as the falling dew,
The love that I keep here still for you,
Both deep and true,
Whatever befalls through fate's compelling.

Madison Julius Cawein

In May

I

When you and I in the hills went Maying,
You and I in the bright May weather,
The birds, that sang on the boughs together,
There in the green of the woods, kept saying
All that my heart was saying low,
'I love you! love you!' soft and low,-
And did you know?
When you and I in the hills went Maying.

II

There where the brook on its rocks went winking,
There by its banks where the May had led us,
Flowers, that bloomed in the woods and meadows,
Azure and gold at our feet, kept thinking
All that my soul was thinking there,
'I love you! love you!' softly there-
And did you care?
There where the brook on its rocks went winking.

III

Whatever befalls through fate's compelling,
Should our paths unite or our pathways sever,
In the Mays to come I shall feel forever
The wildflowers thinking, the wild birds telling,
In words as soft as the falling dew,
The love that I keep here still for you,
Both deep and true,
Whatever befalls through fate's compelling.

Madison Julius Cawein

In Pearl And Gold

WHEN pearl and gold, o'er deeps of musk,
The moon curves, silvering the dusk,—
As in a garden, dreaming,
A lily slips its dewy husk
A firefly in its gleaming,—
I of my garden am a guest;
My garden, that, in beauty dressed
Of simple shrubs and oldtime flowers,
Chats with me of the perished hours,
When she companioned me in life,
Living remote from care and strife.
It says to me: 'How sad and slow
The hours of daylight come and go,
Until the Night walks here again
With moon and starlight in her train,
And she and I with perfumed words
Of winds and waters, dreaming birds,
And flowers and crickets and the moon,
For hour on hour, in soul commune.—
And you, and you,
Sit here and listen in the dew
For her, the love, you used to know,
Who often walked here, long ago,
Long ago;
The young, sweet love you used to know
Long ago!
Whom oft I watched with violet eye,
Or eye of dew, as she passed by:
As she passed by.
And I reply, with half a sigh: —
'You knew her too as well as I,
That young sweet love of long-ago!
That young sweet love, who walked here slow.—
Oh, speak no more of the days gone by,
Dear days gone by,
Lest I lay me down on your heart and die!'

Madison Julius Cawein

In Solitary Places

The hurl and hurry of the winds of March,
That tore the ash and bowed the pine and larch,
Are past and done with: winds, that trampled through
The forests with enormous, scythe-like sweep,
And from the darkening deep,
The battlements of heaven, thunder-blue,
Rumbled the arch,
The rocking arch of all the booming oaks,
With stormy chariot-spokes;
Chariots from which wild bugle-blasts they blew,
Their warrior challenge.. . Now the wind flower sweet
Misses the fury of their ruining feet,
The trumpet-thunder of resistless flight,
Crashing and vast, obliterating light;
Sweeping the skeleton cohorts down
Of last year's leaves; and, overhead,
Hurrying the giant foliage of night,
Gaunt clouds that streamed with tempest. Now each crown
Of woods that stooped to clamor of their tread,
The frenzy of their passage, stoops no more,
Hearing no more their clarion-command,
Their chariot-hurl and the wild whip in hand.
No more, no more,
The forests rock and roar
And tumult with their shoutings.. . Hushed and still
Is the green-gleaming and the sunlit hill,
Along whose sides,
Flushing the dewy moss and rainy grass
Beneath the topaz-tinted sassafras,
As aromatic as some orient wine
The violet fire of the bluet glides,
The amaranthine flame
Glints of the bluebell; and the celandine,
Line upon lovely line,
Deliberate goldens into birth;
And, ruby and rose, the moccasin-flower hides:
Innumerable blooms, with which she writes her name,
April, upon the page,
The winter-withered parchment of old Earth,

Her fragrant autograph that gives it worth
And loveliness that takes away its age.

II.

Here where the woods are wet,
The blossoms of the dog's-tooth violet
Seem meteors in a miniature firmament
Of wildflowers, where, with rainy sound and scent
Of breeze and blossom, soft the April went:
Their tongue-like leaves of umber-mottled green,
So thickly seen,
Seem dropping words of gold,
The visible syllables of a magic old.
Beside them, near the wahoo-bush and haw,
Blooms the hepatica;
Its slender flowers upon swaying stems
Lifting pale, solitary blooms,
Starry, and twilight-colored, like frail gems,
That star the diadems
Of sylvan spirits, piercing pale the glooms;
Or like the wands, the torches of the fays,
That light lone, woodland ways
With slim, uncertain rays:
(The faery people, whom no eye may see,
Busy, so legend says,
With budding bough and leafing tree,
The blossom's heart o' honey and honey-sack o' the bee,
And all dim thoughts and dreams,
That take the form of flowers, as it seems,
And haunt the banks of greenwood streams,
Showing in every line and curve,
Commensurate with our love, and intimacy,
A smiling confidence or sweet reserve.)
There at that leafy turn
Of traileered rocks, rise fronds of hart's-tongue fern:
Fronds that my fancy names
Uncoiling flames
Of feathering emerald and gold,
That, kindled in the musky mould,
Now, stealthily as the morn, unfold
Their cool green fires that burn

Uneagerly, and spread around
An elfin light above the ground,
Like that green glow
A spirit, lamped with crystal, makes below
In dripping caves of labyrinthine moss.
And in the underwoods, around them, toss
The white-hearts with their penciled leaves,
That 'mid the shifting gleams and glooms,
The interchanging shine and shade,
Seem some vague garment made
By unseen hands that weave, that none perceives;
Pale hands that work invisible looms,
Now dropping shreds of light,
Now shadow-shreds, that interbraid
And form faint colors mixed with frail perfumes.
Or, are they fragments left in flight,
These flowers that scatter every glade
With windy, beckoning white,
And breezy blowing blue,
Of her wild gown that shone upon my sight,
A moment, in the woods I wandered through?
April's, whom still I follow,
Whom still my dreams pursue;
Who leads me on by many a tangled clue
Of loveliness, until, in some green hollow,
Born of her fragrance and her melody,
But lovelier than herself and happier, too,
Cradled in blossoms of the dogwood-tree,
My soul shall see
White as a sunbeam in the heart of day
The infant, May.

III.

Up, up, my Heart, and forth, where none perceives!
'T was this that that sweet lay meant
You heard in dreams.
Come, let us take rich payment,
For every care that grieves,
From Nature's prodigal purse.'T was this that May meant
By sending forth that wind which 'round our eaves
Whispered all night. Or was 't the Spirit who weaves,

From gold and glaucous green of early leaves,
Spring's radiant raiment?
Up, up, my Heart, and forth, where none perceives!
Come, let us forth, my Heart, where none divines!
Into far woodland places,
Where we may meet the fair, assembled races,
Beneath the guardian pines,
Of God's first flowers: poppy-celandines,
And wake-robins and bugled columbines,
With which her hair, her heavenly hair she twines,
And loops and laces.
Come let us forth, my Heart, where none divines!
Forth, forth, my Heart, and let us find our dreams,
There where they haunt each hollow!
Dreams, luring us with Oread feet to follow,
With flying feet of beams,
Fleeter and lighter than the soaring swallow:
Dreams, holding us with Dryad glooms and gleams;
With Naiad looks, far stiller than still streams,
That have beheld and still reflect, it seems,
The God Apollo.
Forth, forth, my Heart, and let us find our dreams!
Out, out my Heart! the world is white with spring.
Long have our dreams been pleaders:
Now let them be our firm but gentle leaders.
Come, let us forth and sing
Among the amber-emerald-tufted cedars,
And balm-o'-Gileads, cottonwoods, a-swing
Like giant censers, that from leaf-cusps fling
Balsams of gummy gold, bewildering
The winds their feeders.
Out, out, my Heart! the world is white with spring.
Up, up, my Heart, and all thy hope put on!
Array thyself in splendor!
Like some bright dragonfly, some May-fly slender,
The irised lamels don
Of thy new armor; and, where burns the centre,
Refulgent, of the widening rose of dawn,
Spread thy wild wings! and, ere the hour be gone,
Bright as a blast from some bold clarion,
Thy Dream-world enter!
Up, up, my heart, and all thy hope put on!

IV.

And then I heard it singing,
The wind that kissed my hair,
A song of wild expression,
A song that called in session
The wildflowers there up-springing,
The wildflowers lightly flinging
Their tresses to the air.
And first the bloodroot-blooms of March
In troops arose; each with its torch
Of hollow snow, within which, bright,
The calyx grottoed golden light.
Hepatica and bluet,
And gold corydalis.
Rose, swaying to the aria;
While phlox and dim dentaria
In rapture, ere they knew it,
Oped, nodding lightly to it,
Faint as a first star is.
And then a music, to the ear
Inaudible, I seemed to hear;
A symphony that seemed to rise
And speak in colors to the eyes.
I saw the Jacob's-Ladder
Ring violet peal on peal
Of perfume, azure-swinging;
The bluebell slimly ringing
Its purple chimes; and gladder,
Green note on note, the madder
Bells of the Solomon's-seal.
Now far away; now near; now lost,
I saw their fragrant music tossed,
Mixed dimly with white interludes
Of trilliums starring cool the woods.
Then choral, solitary,
I saw the celandine
Smite bright its golden cymbals;
The starwort shake its timbrels;
The whiteheart's horns of Faery,
With many a flourish airy,

Strike silvery into line.
And straight my soul they seemed to draw,
By chords of loveliness and awe,
Into a Faery World afar,
Where all man's dreams and longings are.

V.

Then the face of a spirit looked down at me
Out of the deeps of the opal morn:
Its eyes were blue as a sunlit sea,
And young with the joy of a star that has just been born:
And I seemed to hear, with my soul, the rose of its cool mouth say:
'Long I lay; long I lay,
Low on the Hills of the Break-of-Day,
Where ever the light is green and gray,
And the gleam of the moon is a silvery spray,
And the stars are glimmering bubbles:
Now from the Hills of the Break-of-Day.
I come, I come, on a rainbow ray,
To laugh and sparkle, to leap and play,
And blow from the face of the world away,
Like mists, its cares and troubles.'

VI.

And now that the dawn is everywhere
Let us take this road through this wild green place,
Where the rattlesnake-weed shows its yellow face,
And the lichens cover the rocks with lace:
Where tannin-touched is the wild free air,
Let us take this path through the oaks where thin
The low leaves whisper, 'The day is fair, '
And waters murmur, 'Come in, come in!
Where the wind of our foam can play with your hair
And blow away care.'
Berry blossoms that seem to flow
As the winds blow;
Blackberry blossoms swing and sway
To and fro
Along our way,
Like ocean spray on a breezy day,

Over the green of the grass as foam on the green of a bay
When the world is white and green with the white and the green of May.
And here the bluets blooming
Make little eyes at you;
O'er which the bees go booming,
Drunk with the honey-dew.
O slender Quaker-ladies,
O star-bright Quaker-ladies,
With eyes of heavenly blue,
With eyes of azure hue,
Who, where the mossy shade is,
Hold quiet Quaker-meeting,
Are these your serenaders?
Your gold-hipped serenaders,
Who, humming love-songs true,
And to your eyes repeating
Soft ballads, stop to woo?
Then change to ambuscaders,
To gold galloonéd raiders,
And rob the hearts of you,
The golden hearts of you.
And here the bells of the huckleberries toss, so it seems, in time,
Delicate, tenderly white, clumped by the wildwood way,
Swinging, it seems, inaudible peals of a dew clustered rhyme,
Visible music, dropped from the virginal lips of the May,
Crystally dropped, so it seems, blossoming bar upon bar,
Pendent, pensively pale, star upon hollowed star.

VII.

The dewberries are blooming now;
The days are long, the nights are short:
Each dogwood and each black-haw bough
Is bleached with bloom, and seems a part,
Reflected palely on her brow,
Of dreams that haunt the Year's young heart.
But this will pass; and instantly
The world forget the spring that was;
And underneath the wild-plum tree,
'Mid hornet hum and wild-bee's buzz,
Summer, in dreamy reverie,
Will sit, all warm and amorous.

Summer, with drowsy eyes and hair,
Who walks the orchard aisles between;
Whose hot touch tans the freckled pear,
And crimsons peach and nectarine;
And in the vineyard everywhere
Bubbles with blue the grape's ripe green.
Where now the briars blossoming are
Soon will the berries darkly glow;
Then summer pass: and, star on star,
Where now the grass is strewn below
With blossoms, soon, both near and far,
Will lie th' obliterating snow.
The star-flower, now that discs with gold
The woodland moss, the forest grass,
Already in a day is old,
Already doth its beauty pass;
Soon, undistinguished, with the mould
'T will mingle and will mix, alas!
The bluet, too, that spreads its skies,
Diminutive heavens, at our feet;
And crowfoot-bloom, that, with orb'd eyes
Of amber, now our eyes doth greet,
Shall fade and pass, and none surmise
How once they made the Maytime sweet.

VIII.

But still the crowfoot trails its gold
Along the edges of the oak wood old;
And still, where spreads the water, white are seen
The lilies islanded between
The pads 'round archipelagoes of green;
The jade-dark pads that pave
The water's wrinkled wave,
In which the warbler and the sparrow lave
Their fluttered breasts and wings;
Preening their backs, with many twitterings,
With necks the moisture streaks;
Then dipping deep their beaks,
To which some bead of liquid coolness clings,
As bending back their mellow throats
They let the freshness trickle into notes.

And now you hear
The red-capped woodpecker rap close and clear;
And now that acrobat,
The yellow-breasted chat,
Chuckles his grotesque music from
Some tree that he hath clomb.
And now, and now,
Upon a locust bough,
Hark how the honey-throated thrush
Scatters the forest's emerald hush
With notes of golden harmony,
Taking the woods with witchery
Or is 't some spirit none may see,
Hid in the top of yonder tree,
Who, in his house of leaves, of haunted green,
Keeps trying, silver-sweet, his sunbeam flute serene?

IX.

Again the spirit looked down at me
Out of the sunset's ruin of gold;
Its eyes were dark as a moonless sea,
And grave with the grief of a star that with sorrow is old:
And I seemed to hear, with my soul, the flame of its sad mouth sigh:
'Now good-by! now good-by!
Down to the Caves of the Night go I:
Where a shadowy couch of the purple sky,
That the moon- and the starlight curtain high,
Is spread for my joy and sorrow:
Down to the Caves of the Night go I,
Where side by side in mystery
With all the Yesterdays I'll lie;
And where, from my body, before I die,
Will be born the young To-morrow.'

X.

And now that the dusk draws down you see,
Tipped by the weight of a passing bee,
The milkwort's spike of blue,
Of lavender hue,
Nod like a goblin night-cap, slim, sedate,

That night shall tassel with the dew,
Beneath its canopy of flowering rue.
And now, as twilight's purple state
Deepens the oaks' dark vistas through,
The owlet's cry of 'Who, oh, who,
Who walks so late?'
Drifts like a challenge down to you.
Or there on the twig of the oak-tree tall,
The gray-green egg in the gray-green gall,
You, too, might hear if you, too, would try,
Might hear it open; all tinily
Split, and the little round worm and white,
That grows to a gnat in a summer night,
Uncurl in its nest as it dreams of flight:
In the heart of the weed that grows near by,
The little gray worm that becomes a fly,
A green wood-fly, a rainbowed fly,
You, too, might hear if you, too, would try,
As a leaf-bud pushes from forth a tree,
Minute of movement, steadily,
As it feels a yearning for wings begin,
Under the milk of its larval skin
The silent pressure of wings within.
The west grows ashen, the woods grow berylwan;
The redbird lifts its plaintive vesper-song,
Where faint a fox or rabbit steals along:
And in some vine-roofed hollow, far withdrawn,
The creek-frog sounds his deeply guttural gong,
As dusk comes on:
The water's gnarléd dwarf or gnome,
Seated upon his temple's oozy dome,
Calling the faithful unto prayer,
Muezzin-like, the worshippers of the moon,
The insect-folk of earth and air
That join him in his twilight tune.
Along the path where the lizard hides,
An instant shadow the spider glides,
The hairy spider that haunts the way,
Crouching black by its earth-bored hole,
An insect-ogre, that lairs with the mole,
Hungry, seeking its insect prey,
Fast to follow and swift to slay.

And over your hands and over your face
The cobweb brushes its phantom lace:
And now from many a stealthy place,
Woolly-winged and gossamer-gray,
The woodland moths come fluttering,
Marked and mottled with lichen hues,
Seal-soft umbers and downy blues,
Dark as the bark to which they cling.
Now in the hollow of a hill,
Like a glow-worm held in a giant hand,
Under the sunset's last red band,
And one star hued like a daffodil,
The windowed lamp of a cabin glows,
The charcoal-burner's, whose hut is poor,
But ever open; beside whose door
An oak grows gnarled and a pine stands slim.
Clean of heart and of feature grim,
Here he houses where no one knows,
His only neighbors the cawing crows
That make a roost of the pine's top limb;
His only friend the fiddle he bows
As he sits at his door in the eve's repose,
Making it chuckle and sing and speak,
Lovingly pressed to his swarthy cheek.
And over many a root, through ferns and weeds,
Past lonely places where the raccoon breeds,
By many a rock and water lying dim,
Roofed with the brier and the bramble-rose,
Under a star and the new-moon's rim,
Downward the wood-way leads to him,
Down where the lone lamp gleams and glows,
A pencil slim
Of marigold light'under leaf and limb.

XI.

Ere that small sisterhood of misty-stars,
The Pleiades, consents to grace the sky;
While yet through sunset's tiger-tawny bars
The evening-star shines downward like an eye,
A torch, Enchantment, in her topaz tower
Of twilight, kindles at the Day's last hour,

Listen, and you may hear, now low, now high,
A voice, a spirit, dreamier than a flower.
There is a fellowship so still and sweet,
A brotherhood, that speaks, unwordable,
In every tree, in every flower you meet,
The soul is fain to sit beneath its spell.
And heart-admitted to their presence there,
Those intimacies of the earth and air,
It shall hear words, too wonderful to tell,
Too deep to interpret, of unspoken prayer.
And you may see the things no eyes have seen,
And hear the things no ears have ever heard;
The Murmur of the Woods, in gray and green,
Will lean to you, its soul a whispered word;
Or by your side, in hushed and solemn wise,
The Silence sit; and, clothed in glimmering dyes
Of pearl and purple, herding bee and bird,
The Dusk steal by you with her shadowy eyes.
Then through the Ugliness that toils in night,
Uncouth, obscure, that hates the glare of day,
The things that pierce the earth and know no light,
And hide themselves in clamminess and clay,
The dumb, ungainly things, that make a home
Of mud and mire they hill and honeycomb,
Through these, perhaps, in some mysterious way,
Beauty may speak fairer than wind-blown foam.
Not as it speaks, an eagle message, drawn
From starry vastness of night's labyrinths:
Not uttering itself from out the dawn
In egret hues; nor from the cloud-built plinths
Of sunset's splendor, speaking burningly
Unto the spirit; nor all flowery
From cygnet-colored cymes of hyacinths,
But from the things that type humility.
From things despised: even from the crawfish there,
Hollowing its house of ooze a wet, vague sound
Of sleepy slime; or from the mole, whose lair,
Blind-tunnelled, corridors the earth around,
Beauty may draw her truths, as draws its wings
The butterfly from the dull worm that clings,
Cocoon and chrysalis; and from the ground
Address the soul through even senseless things.

For oft my soul hath heard the trees' huge roots
Fumble the darkness, clutching at the soil;
Hath heard the green beaks of th' imprisoned shoots
Peck at the boughs from which the leaves uncoil;
Hath heard the buried germ soft split its pod,
Groping its blind way up to light and God;
The mushroom, laboring with gnome-like toil,
Heave slow its white orb through the encircling sod.
The winds and waters, stars and streams and flowers,
The earth and rocks, each moss-tuft and each fern,
The very lichens speak. This world of ours
Is eloquent with things that bid us learn
To pierce appearances, and so to mark,
Within the stone and underneath the bark,
Heard through some inward sense, the dreams that turn
Outward to light and beauty from the dark.

XII.

I stood alone in a mountain place,
And it came to pass, as I gazed on space,
That I met with Mystery, face to face.
Within her eyes my wondering soul beheld
The eons past, the eons yet to come,
At cosmic labor; and the stars, that swelled,
Fiery or nebulous, from the darkness dumb,
In each appointed place and period,
I saw were words, whose hieroglyphic sum
Blazoned one word, the mystic name of God.
I walked alone 'mid the forest's maze,
And it came to pass, as I went my ways,
That I met with Beauty, face to face.
Within her eyes my worshipping spirit saw
The moments busy with the dreams whence spring
Earth's loveliness: and all fair things that awe
Man's soul with their perfection everything
That buds and bourgeons, blossoming above,
I saw were letters of enduring Law
That bloomed one word, the beautiful name of Love.

Madison Julius Cawein

In The Beech Woods

Amber and emerald, cairngorm and chrysoprase,
Stream through the autumn woods, scatter the beech-wood ways:
Ways where the wahoo-bush brightens with scarlet;
And where the aster-stalk lifts its last starlet.

Ways where the brier burns; poplars drop, one by one,
Leaves that seem beaten gold, each like a splash of sun:
'Round which the beeches rise, tree upon golden tree,
That, with each wind that blows, sound like a summer sea.

Ways where the papaw leans, great-leaved and beryl-green,
Like some grand forester one in Romance hath seen;
And like some Indian queen, sung of in story,
Flaming the gum-tree stands, crowned with its glory.

Ways where the bittersweet, cleaving its pods of gold,
Brightens the brake with flame, torches the dingle old:
And where the dogwood too crimsons with ruby seeds;
Spicewood and buckbush bend ruddy with rosy beads.

These are the woods of gold; forests our childhood knew,
Where the Enchanted dwelt, she with the eyes of blue;
She of the raven locks, and of the lovely looks,
She who oft gazed at us out of the Story Books.

And with that Prince again, striding his snowwhite steed,
To her deliverance through the gold wood we speed;
On through the wood of flame to the Dark Tower,
Where like a light she gleams high in her bower.

Madison Julius Cawein

In The Forest

One well might deem, among these miles of woods,
Such were the Forests of the Holy Grail,
Broceliand and Dean; where, clothed in mail,
The Knights of Arthur rode, and all the broods
Of legend laired. And, where no sound intrudes
Upon the ear, except the glimmering wail
Of some far bird; or, in some flowery swale,
A brook that murmurs to the solitudes,
Might think he hears the laugh of Vivien
Blent with the moan of Merlin, muttering bound
By his own magic to one stony spot;
And in the cloud, that looms above the glen,
In which the sun burns like the Table Round,
Might dream he sees the towers of Camelot.

Madison Julius Cawein

In The Forest Of Love

What sighed the Forest to the nest?
'So young, so old,
Love,
Help me to mold
This life I hold.'
What said the bird,
That harked and heard?
'Below, above,
Love, love is best.
Take heed, my Life, and quit thy quest.
The meaning of Love is rest.'
So spake the bird.
What cried the Nightwind to the trees?
'Thou dream of Earth,
Love,
Make me of worth
In death and birth!'
What said the wood
Stark-still that stood?
'Below, above,
Give me increase.
Take heed, my Heart! thy sighings cease.
The meaning of Love is peace.'
So spake the Wood.
What sobbed the Earth in deep and height?
'O Song of Songs,
Love,
Unloose my thongs,
And right my wrongs!'
What said the Clod,
That dreamed of God?
'Below, above,
Prisoner of Night,
Spirit, lift high thy taper-light!
The meaning of Love is might.'
So spake the Clod.

Madison Julius Cawein

In The Lane

When the hornet hangs in the hollyhock,
And the brown bee drones i' the rose;
And the west is a red-streaked four-o'clock,
And summer is near its close-
It's oh, for the gate and the locust lane,
And dusk and dew and home again!

When the katydid sings and the cricket cries,
And ghosts of the mists ascend;
And the evening star is a lamp i' the skies,
And summer is near its end-
It's oh, for the fence and the leafy lane,
And the twilight peace and the tryst again!

When the owlet hoots in the dogwood tree,
That leans to the rippling Run;
And the wind is a wildwood melody,
And summer is almost done-
It's oh, for the bridge and the bramble lane,
And the fragrant hush and her hands again!

When fields smell sweet with the dewy hay,
And woods are cool and wan,
And a path for dreams is the Milky Way,
And summer is nearly gone-
It's oh, for the rock and the woodland lane,
And the silence and stars and her lips again!

When the weight of the apples breaks down the boughs,
And muskmelons split with sweet;
And the moon is a light in Heaven's house,
And summer has spent its heat-
It's oh, for the lane, the trysting lane,
The deep-mooned night and her love again!

Madison Julius Cawein

In The Mountains

Land-Marks

The way is rock and rubbish to a road
That leads through woods of stunted oaks and thorns
Into a valley that no flower adorns,
One mass of blackened brier; overflowed
With desolation: whence their mighty load
Of lichened limbs, like two colossal horns,
Two dead trees lift: trees, that the foul earth scorns
To vine with poison, spotted like the toad.
Here, on gaunt boughs, unclean, red-beaked, and bald,
The buzzards settle; roost, since that fierce night
When, torched with pine-knots, grim and shadowy,
Judge Lynch held court here; and the dark, appalled,
Heard words of hollow justice; and the light
Saw, on these trees, dread fruit swing suddenly.

II.

The Ox-Team

An ox-team, its lean oxen, slow of tread,
Weighed with an old-time yoke, creaked heavily
Along the mountain road. Beside it, three
Walked with no word: A woman with bowed head,
A young girl, old before her youth had fled,
Hugging a sleeping baby; near her knee
A gaunt hound trotted. Any one could see
The wagon held their all, from box to bed.
Slowly they creaked into the mountain town
And asked their way. Their men had all been killed,
Father and brother, at some mountain ball,
This girl the cause: a man had shot them down,
The father of the infant. As God willed,
They sought another State, and that was all.

Madison Julius Cawein

In The Shadow Of The Beeches

In the shadow of the beeches,
Where the fragile wildflowers bloom;
Where the pensive silence pleaches
Green a roof of cool perfume,
Have you felt an awe imperious
As when, in a church, mysterious
Windows paint with God the gloom?

In the shadow of the beeches,
Where the rock-ledged waters flow;
Where the sun's slant splendor bleaches
Every wave to foaming snow,
Have you felt a music solemn
As when minster arch and column
Echo organ worship low?

In the shadow of the beeches,
Where the light and shade are blent;
Where the forest bird beseeches,
And the breeze is brimmed with scent,-
Is it joy or melancholy
That o'erwhelms us partly, wholly,
To our spirit's betterment?

In the shadow of the beeches
Lay me where no eye perceives;
Where,-like some great arm that reaches
Gently as a love that grieves,-
One gnarled root may clasp me kindly,
While the long years, working blindly,
Slowly change my dust to leaves.

Madison Julius Cawein

In The Storm

Over heaven clouds are drifted;
In the trees the wind-witch cries;
By her sieve the rain is sifted,
And the clouds at times are rifted
By her mad broom as she flies.
Love, there's lightning in the skies,
Swift, as, in your face uplifted,
Leaps the heart-thought to your eyes.
Little face, where I can trace
Dreams for which those eyes are pages,
Whose young magic here assuages
All the heart-storm and alarm.

II.

Now the thunder tramples slowly,
Like a king, down heaven's arc;
And the clouds, like armies wholly
Vanquished, break; and, white as moly,
Sweeps the queen moon on the dark.
Love, a bird wakes; is't the lark?
Sweet as in your bosom holy
Sings the heart that now I hark.
All my soul that song makes whole,
That young song I hear it singing,
Calm and peace for ever bringing
To my heart's storm and alarm.

Madison Julius Cawein

In The Wood

The waterfall, deep in the wood,
Talked drowsily with solitude,
A soft, insistent sound of foam,
That filled with sleep the forest's dome,
Where, like some dream of dusk, she stood
Accentuating solitude.

The crickets' tinkling chips of sound
Strewed dim the twilight-twinkling ground;
A whippoorwill began to cry,
And glimmering through the sober sky
A bat went on its drunken round,
Its shadow following on the ground.

Then from a bush, an elder-copse,
That spiced the dark with musky tops,
What seemed, at first, a shadow came
And took her hand and spoke her name,
And kissed her where, in starry drops,
The dew orbbed on the elder-tops.

The glaucous glow of fireflies
Flickered the dusk; and foxlike eyes
Peered from the shadows; and the hush
Murmured a word of wind and rush
Of fluttering waters, fragrant sighs,
And dreams unseen of mortal eyes.

The beetle flung its burr of sound
Against the hush and clung there, wound
In night's deep mane: then, in a tree,
A grig began deliberately
To file the stillness: all around
A wire of shrillness seemed unwound.

I looked for those two lovers there;
His ardent eyes, her passionate hair.
The moon looked down, slow-climbing wan
Heaven's slope of azure: they were gone:

But where they'd passed I heard the air
Sigh, faint with sweetness of her hair.

Madison Julius Cawein

Indian Summer

The dawn is a warp of fever,
The eve is a woof of fire;
And the month is a singing weaver
Weaving a red desire.

With stars Dawn dices with Even
For the rosy gold they heap
On the blue of the day's deep heaven,
On the black of the night's far deep.

It's 'Reins to the blood!' and 'Marry!'
The season's a prince who burns
With the teasing lusts that harry
His heart for a wench who spurns.

It's 'Crown us a beaker with sherry,
To drink to the doxy's heels;
A tankard of wine o' the berry,
To lips like a cloven peel's.

' 'S death! if a king be saddened,
Right so let a fool laugh lies:
But wine! when a king is gladdened,
And a woman's waist and her eyes.'

He hath shattered the loom of the weaver,
And left but a leaf that flits,
He hath seized heaven's gold, and a fever
Of mist and of frost is its.

He hath tippled the buxom beauty,
And gotten her hug and her kiss
The wide world's royal booty
To pile at her feet for this.

Madison Julius Cawein

Inspiration

All who have toiled for Art, who've won or lost,
Sat equal priests at her high Pentecost;
Only the chrism and sacrament of flame,
Anointing all, inspired not all the same.

Madison Julius Cawein

Intimations Of The Beautiful

I

The hills are full of prophecies
And ancient voices of the dead;
Of hidden shapes that no man sees,
Pale, visionary presences,
That speak the things no tongue hath said,
No mind hath thought, no eye hath read.

The streams are full of oracles,
And momentary whisperings;
An immaterial beauty swells
Its breezy silver o'er the shells
With wordless speech that sings and sings
The message of diviner things.

No indeterminable thought is theirs,
The stars', the sunsets' and the flowers';
Whose inexpressible speech declares
Th' immortal Beautiful, who shares
This mortal riddle which is ours,
Beyond the forward-flying hours.

II

It holds and beckons in the streams;
It lures and touches us in all
The flowers of the golden fall-
The mystic essence of our dreams:
A nymph blows bubbling music where
Faint water ripples down the rocks;
A faun goes dancing hoiden locks,
And piping a Pandean air,
Through trees the instant wind shakes bare.

Our dreams are never otherwise
Than real when they hold us so;
We in some future life shall know
Them parts of it and recognize

Them as ideal substance, whence
The actual is-(as flowers and trees,
From color sources no one sees,
Draw dyes, the substance of a sense)-
Material with intelligence.

III

What intimations made them wise,
The mournful pine, the pleasant beech?
What strange and esoteric speech?-
(Communicated from the skies
In runic whispers)-that invokes
The boles that sleep within the seeds,
And out of narrow darkness leads
The vast assemblies of the oaks.

Within his knowledge, what one reads
The poems written by the flowers?
The sermons, past all speech of ours,
Preached by the gospel of the weeds?-
O eloquence of coloring!
O thoughts of syllabled perfume!
O beauty uttered into bloom!
Teach me your language! let me sing!

IV

Along my mind flies suddenly
A wildwood thought that will not die;
That makes me brother to the bee,
And cousin to the butterfly:
A thought, such as gives perfume to
The blushes of the bramble-rose,
And, fixed in quivering crystal, glows
A captive in the prised dew.

It leads the feet no certain way;
No frequent path of human feet:
Its wild eyes follow me all day;
All day I hear its wild heart beat:
And in the night it sings and sighs

The songs the winds and waters love;
Its wild heart lying tranced above,
And tranced the wildness of its eyes.

V

Oh, joy, to walk the way that goes
Through woods of sweet-gum and of beech!
Where, like a ruby left in reach,
The berry of the dogwood glows:
Or where the bristling hillsides mass,
'Twixt belts of tawny sassafras,
Brown shocks of corn in wigwam rows!

Where, in the hazy morning, runs
The stony branch that pools and drips,
The red-haws and the wild-rose hips
Are strewn like pebbles; and the sun's
Own gold seems captured by the weeds;
To see, through scintillating seeds,
The hunters steal with glimmering guns!

Oh, joy, to go the path which lies
Through woodlands where the trees are tall!
Beneath the misty moon of fall,
Whose ghostly girdle prophesies
A morn wind-swept and gray with rain;
When, o'er the lonely, leaf-blown lane,
The night-hawk like a dead leaf flies!

To stand within the dewy ring
Where pale death smites the boneset blooms,
And everlasting's flowers, and plumes
Of mint, with aromatic wing!
And hear the creek,-whose sobbing seems
A wild-man murmuring in his dreams,-
And insect violins that sing.

Or where the dim persimmon tree
Rains on the path its frosty fruit,
And in the oak the owl doth hoot,
Beneath the moon and mist, to see

The outcast Year go,-Hagar-wise,-
With far-off, melancholy eyes,
And lips that sigh for sympathy.

VI

Towards evening, where the sweet-gum flung
Its thorny balls among the weeds,
And where the milkweed's sleepy seeds,-
A faery Feast of Lanterns,-swung;
The cricket tuned a plaintive lyre,
And o'er the hills the sunset hung
A purple parchment scrawled with fire.

From silver-blue to amethyst
The shadows deepened in the vale;
And belt by belt the pearly-pale
Aladdin fabric of the mist
Built up its exhalation far;
A jewel on an Afrit's wrist,
One star gemmed sunset's cinnabar.

Then night drew near, as when, alone,
The heart and soul grow intimate;
And on the hills the twilight sate
With shadows, whose wild robes were sown
With dreams and whispers;-dreams, that led
The heart once with love's monotone,
And memories of the living-dead.

VII

All night the rain-gusts shook the leaves
Around my window; and the blast
Rumbled the flickering flue, and fast
The storm streamed from the dripping eaves.
As if-'neath skies gone mad with fear-
The witches' Sabbath galloped past,
The forests leapt like startled deer.

All night I heard the sweeping sleet;
And when the morning came, as slow

As wan affliction, with the woe
Of all the world dragged at her feet,
No spear of purple shattered through
The dark gray of the east; no bow
Of gold shot arrows swift and blue.

But rain, that whipped the windows; filled
The spouts with rushings; and around
The garden stamped, and sowed the ground
With limbs and leaves; the wood-pool filled
With overgurgling.-Bleak and cold
The fields looked, where the footpath wound
Through teasel and bur-marigold.

Yet there's a kindness in such days
Of gloom, that doth console regret
With sympathy of tears, which wet
Old eyes that watch the back-log blaze.-
A kindness, alien to the deep
Glad blue of sunny days that let
No thought in of the lives that weep.

VIII

This dawn, through which the Autumn glowers,-
As might a face within our sleep,
With stone-gray eyes that weep and weep,
And wet brows bound with sodden flowers,-
Is sunset to some sister land;
A land of ruins and of palms;
Rich sunset, crimson with long calms,-
Whose burning belt low mountains bar,-
That sees some brown Rebecca stand
Beside a well the camel-band
Winds down to 'neath the evening star.

O sunset, sister to this dawn!
O dawn, whose face is turned away!
Who gazest not upon this day,
But back upon the day that's gone!
Enamored so of loveliness,
The retrospect of what thou wast,

Oh, to thyself the present trust!
And as thy past be beautiful
With hues, that never can grow less!
Waiting thy pleasure to express
New beauty lest the world grow dull.

IX

Down in the woods a sorcerer,
Out of rank rain and death, distills,-
Through chill alembics of the air,-
Aromas that brood everywhere
Among the whisper-haunted hills:
The bitter myrrh of dead leaves fills
Wet valleys (where the gaunt weeds bleach)
With rainy scents of wood-decay;-
As if a spirit all the day
Sat breathing softly 'neath the beech.

With other eyes I see her flit,
The wood-witch of the wild perfumes,
Among her elfin owls,-that sit,
A drowsy white, in crescent-lit
Dim glens of opalescent glooms:-
Where, for her magic, buds and blooms
Mysterious perfumes, while she stands,
A thornlike shadow, summoning
The sleepy odors, that take wing
Like bubbles from her dewy hands.

X

Among the woods they call to me-
The lights that haunt the wood and stream;
Voices of such white ecstasy
As moves with hushed lips through a dream:
They stand in auraed radiances,
Or flash with nimbused limbs across
Their golden shadows on the moss,
Or slip in silver through the trees.

What love can give the heart in me

More hope and exaltation than
The hand of light that tips the tree
And beckons far from marts of man?
That reaches foamy fingers through
The broken ripple, and replies
With sparkling speech of lips and eyes
To souls who seek and still pursue.

XI

Give me the streams, that counterfeit
The twilight of autumnal skies;
The shadowy, silent waters, lit
With fire like a woman's eyes!
Slow waters that, in autumn, glass
The scarlet-strewn and golden grass,
And drink the sunset's tawny dyes.

Give me the pools, that lie among
The centuried forests! give me those,
Deep, dim, and sad as darkness hung
Beneath the sunset's somber rose:
Still pools, in whose vague mirrors look-
Like ragged gypsies round a book
Of magic-trees in wild repose.

No quiet thing, or innocent,
Of water, earth, or air shall please
My soul now: but the violent
Between the sunset and the trees:
The fierce, the splendid, and intense,
That love matures in innocence,
Like mighty music, give me these!

XII

When thorn-tree copses still were bare
And black along the turbid brook;
When catkined willows blurred and shook
Great tawny tangles in the air;
In bottomlands, the first thaw makes
An oozy bog, beneath the trees,

Prophetic of the spring that wakes,
Sang the sonorous hylodes.

Now that wild winds have stripped the thorn,
And clogged with leaves the forest-creek;
Now that the woods look blown and bleak,
And webs are frosty white at morn;
At night beneath the spectral sky,
A far foreboding cry I hear—
The wild fowl calling as they fly?
Or wild voice of the dying Year?

XIII

And still my soul holds phantom tryst,
When chestnuts hiss among the coals,
Upon the Evening of All Souls,
When all the night is moon and mist,
And all the world is mystery;
I kiss dear lips that death hath kissed,
And gaze in eyes no man may see,
Filled with a love long lost to me.

I hear the night-wind's ghostly glove
Flutter the window: then the knob
Of some dark door turn, with a sob
As when love comes to gaze on love
Who lies pale-coffined in a room:
And then the iron gallop of
The storm, who rides outside; his plume
Sweeping the night with dread and gloom.

So fancy takes the mind, and paints
The darkness with eidolon light,
And writes the dead's romance in night
On the dim Evening of All Saints:
Unheard the hissing nuts; the clink
And fall of coals, whose shadow faints
Around the hearts that sit and think,
Borne far beyond the actual's brink.

XIV

I heard the wind, before the morn
Stretched gaunt, gray fingers 'thwart my pane,
Drive clouds down, a dark dragon-train;
Its iron visor closed, a horn
Of steel from out the north it wound.-
No morn like yesterday's! whose mouth,
A cool carnation, from the south
Breathed through a golden reed the sound
Of days that drop clear gold upon
Cerulean silver floors of dawn.

And all of yesterday is lost
And swallowed in to-day's wild light-
The birth deformed of day and night,
The illegitimate, who cost
Its mother secret tears and sighs;
Unlovely since unloved; and chilled
With sorrows and the shame that filled
Its parents' love; which was not wise
In passion as the day and night
That married yestermorn with light.

XV

Down through the dark, indignant trees,
On indistinguishable wings
Of storm, the wind of evening swings;
Before its insane anger flees
Distracted leaf and shattered bough:
There is a rushing as when seas
Of thunder beat an iron prow
On reefs of wrath and roaring wreck:
'Mid stormy leaves, a hurrying speck
Of flickering blackness, driven by,
A mad bat whirls along the sky.

Like some sad shadow, in the eve's
Deep melancholy-visible
As by some strange and twilight spell-
A gaunt girl stands among the leaves,
The night-wind in her dolorous dress:

Symbolic of the life that grieves,
Of toil that patience makes not less,
Her load of fagots fallen there.-
A wilder shadow sweeps the air,
And she is gone.... Was it the dumb
Eidolon of the month to come?

XVI

The song birds-are they flown away?
The song birds of the summer time,
That sang their souls into the day,
And set the laughing hours to rhyme.
No catbird scatters through the bush
The sparkling crystals of its song;
Within the woods no hermit-thrush
Thridding with vocal gold the hush.

All day the crows fly cawing past:
The acorns drop: the forests scowl:
At night I hear the bitter blast
Hoot with the hooting of the owl.
The wild creeks freeze: the ways are strewn
With leaves that clog: beneath the tree
The bird, that set its toil to tune,
And made a home for melody,
Lies dead beneath the snow-white moon.

Madison Julius Cawein

Jotunheim

Beyond the Northern Lights, in regions haunted
Of twilight, where the world is glacier planted,
And pale as Loki in his cavern when
The serpent's slaver burns him to the bones,
I saw the phantasms of gigantic men,
The prototypes of vastness, quarrying stones;
Great blocks of winter, glittering with the morn's
And evening's colors,-wild prismatic tones
Of boreal beauty.-Like the three gray Norns,
Silence and solitude and terror loomed
Around them where they labored. Walls arose,
Vast as the Andes when creation boomed
Insurgent fire; and through the rushing snows
Enormous battlements of tremendous ice,
Bastioned and turreted, I saw arise.

II

But who can sing the workmanship gigantic
That reared within its coruscating dome
The roaring fountain, hurling an Atlantic
Of streaming ice that flashed with flame and foam?
An opal spirit, various and many formed,-
In whose clear heart reverberant fire stormed,
Seemed its inhabitant; and through pale halls,
And deep diaphanous walls,
And corridors of whiteness.
Auroral colors swarmed,
As rosy-flickering stains,
Or lambent green, or gold, or crimson, warmed
The pulsing crystal of the spirit's veins
With ever-changing brightness.
And through the Arctic night there went a voice,
As if the ancient Earth cried out, 'Rejoice!
My heart is full of lightness!'

III

Here well might Thor, the god of war,
Harness the whirlwinds to his car,
While, mailed in storm, his iron arm
Heaves high his hammer's lava-form,
And red and black his beard streams back,
Like some fierce torrent scoriac,
Whose earthquake light glares through the night
Around some dark volcanic height;
And through the skies Valkyrian cries
Trumpet, as battleward he flies,
Death in his hair and havoc in his eyes.

IV

Still in my dreams I hear that fountain flowing;
Beyond all seeing and beyond all knowing;
Still in my dreams I see those wild walls glowing
With hues, Aurora-kissed;
And through huge halls fantastic phantoms going.
Vast shapes of snow and mist,
Sonerous clarions of the tempest blowing,
That trail dark banners by,
Cloudlike, underneath the sky
Of the caverned dome on high,
Carbuncle and amethyst.
Still I hear the ululation
Of their stormy exultation,
Multitudinous, and blending
In hoarse echoes, far, unending;
And, through halls of fog and frost,
Howling back, like madness lost
In the moonless mansion of
Its own demon-haunted love.

V

Still in my dreams I hear the mermaid singing;
The mermaid music at its portal ringing;
The mermaid song, that hinged with gold its door,
And, whispering evermore,
Hushed the ponderous hurl and roar
And vast æolian thunder
Of the chained tempests under
The frozen cataracts that were its floor.
And, blinding beautiful, I still behold
The mermaid there, combing her locks of gold,
While, at her feet, green as the Northern Seas,
Gambol her flocks of seals and walruses;
While, like a drift, her dog-a Polar bear-
Lies by her, glowering through his shaggy hair.

VI

O wondrous house, built by supernal hands
In vague and ultimate lands!
Thy architects were behemoth wind and cloud,
That, laboring loud,
Mountained thy world foundations and uplifted
Thy skyey bastions drifted
Of piled eternities of ice and snow;
Where storms, like ploughmen, go,
Ploughing the deeps with awful hurricane;
Where, spouting icy rain,
The huge whale wallows; and through furious hail
Th' explorer's tattered sail
Drives like the wing of some terrific bird,
Where wreck and famine herd.
Home of the red Auroras and the gods!
He who profanes thy perilous threshold,-where
The ancient centuries lair,
And, glacier-throned, thy monarch, Winter, nods,
Let him beware!
Lest, coming on that hoary presence there,
Whose pitiless hand,
Above that hungry land,

An iceberg wields as sceptre, and whose crown
The North Star is, set in a band of frost,
He, too, shall feel the bitterness of that frown,
And, turned to stone, forevermore be lost.

Madison Julius Cawein

Joy

What were this life without her?
Joy, whose young face is sweet
With dreams that flit about her,
And rapture wild of feet!

With hope, that knows no languor,
And love, that knows no sighs,
And mirth, like some rich anger,
High-sparkling in her eyes.

Come! bid adieu to Sorrow;
And arm in arm with Joy,
We 'll journey towards Tomorrow,
And let no Care decoy

Our souls from all clean Pleasures,
That take from Time's lean hand
The hour-glass he treasures,
And change to gold its sand.

Madison Julius Cawein

Joy Speaks

One with the Heaven above
Am I its bliss:
Part of its truth and love,
And what God is.
I heal the soul and mind:
I work their cures:
Not Grief, that rends Mankind,
But Joy endures.

Madison Julius Cawein

Joy's Magic

Joy's is the magic sweet,
That makes Youth's pulses beat,
Puts music in young feet,
The old heart hears, the sad heart hears, that 's near it:

And Joy's the pleasant pain,
That holds us, heart and brain,
When Old Age, sound and sane,
With memories nears, long memories nears the spirit.

Joy's is the witchery rare,
That on the face of Care
Puts smiles; and rapture where
Love holds her breath, her heart's wild breath, to still her:

And Joy it is that plays
On Time's old lute of days
As Life goes on her ways
With thoughts of Death, gray thoughts of Death, that chill her.

Madison Julius Cawein

July

Now 'tis the time when, tall,
The long blue torches of the bellflower gleam
Among the trees; and, by the wooded stream,
In many a fragrant ball,
Blooms of the button-bush fall.

Let us go forth and seek
Woods where the wild plums redden and the beech
Plumps its packed burs; and, swelling, just in reach,
The pawpaw, emerald sleek,
Ripens along the creek.

Now 'tis the time when ways
Of glimmering green flaunt white the misty plumes
Of the black-cohosh; and through bramble glooms,
A blur of orange rays,
The butterfly-blossoms blaze.

Let us go forth and hear
The spiral music that the locusts beat,
And that small spray of sound, so grassy sweet,
Dear to a country ear,
The cricket's summer cheer.

Now golden celandine
Is hairy hung with silvery sacks of seeds,
And bugled o'er with freckled gold, like beads,
Beneath the fox-grape vine,
The jewel-weed's blossoms shine.

Let us go forth and see
The dragon- and the butterfly, like gems,
Spangling the sunbeams; and the clover stems,
Weighed down by many a bee,
Nodding mellifluously.

Now morns are full of song;
The catbird and the redbird and the jay
Upon the hilltops rouse the rosy day,

Who, dewy, blithe, and strong,
Lures their wild wings along.

Now noons are full of dreams;
The clouds of heaven and the wandering breeze
Follow a vision; and the flowers and trees,
The hills and fields and streams,
Are lapped in mystic gleams.

The nights are full of love;
The stars and moon take up the golden tale
Of the sunk sun, and passionate and pale,
Mixing their fires above,
Grow eloquent thereof.

Such days are like a sigh
That beauty heaves from a full heart of bliss:
Such nights are like the sweetness of a kiss
On lips that half deny,
The warm lips of July.

Madison Julius Cawein

Katydids And The Moon

Summer evenings, when it's warm,
In the yard we sit and swing:
And it's better than a farm,
Watching how the fireflies swarm,
Listening to the crickets sing,
And the katydids that cry,
'Katy did n't! Katy did!'
In the trees and flowers hid.
So I ask my father, 'Why?
What's the thing she did n't do?'
For he told me that he knew:
'Katy did n't like to worry;
But she did so like to talk;
Gossip of herself and talk;
Katy did n't like to hurry;
But she did so like to walk;
Saunter by herself and walk.
How is that now for a story?'

II.

And one night when it was fine,
And the moon peeped through the trees;
And the scented jessamine vine
Swung its blossoms in the breeze,
Full of sleeping honeybees:
'That's Old Sister Moon,' he said.
'She's a perfect simpleton;
Scared to death of Old Man Sun:
All day long she hides her head.'
And I asked my father why,
And he made me this reply:
'Sister Moon's old eyes are weary;
Her old eyes are very weak;
Poor and old and worn and weak:
And the old Sun, with his cheery
Looks, just makes them leak and leak,
Like an old can leak and leak.
That's the reason why, my dearie.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Kentucky

You, who are met to remember
Kentucky and give her praise;
Who have warmed your hearts at the ember
Of her love for many days!

Be faithful to your mother,
However your ways may run,
And, holding one to the other,
Prove worthy to be her sons.

Worthy of her who brought you;
Worthy in dream and deed:
Worthy her love that taught you,
And holds your work in heed:

Your work she weighs and watches,
Giving it praise and blame,
As to her heart she catches,
Or sets aside in shame.

One with her heart's devotion,
One with her soul's firm will,
She holds to the oldtime notion
Of what is good, what ill:

And still in unspoiled beauty,
With all her pioneer pride,
She keeps to the path of duty,
And never turns aside.

She dons no new attire
Of modern modes and tricks,
And stands for something higher
Than merely politics:

For much the world must think on,
For dreams as well as deeds;
For men, like Clay and Lincoln,
And words the whole world reads.

Not for her manners gracious,
Nor works, nor courage of
Convictions, proud, audacious,
Does she compel our love,

But for her heart's one passion,
Old as democracy,
That holds to the ancient fashion
Of hospitality.

Madison Julius Cawein

Knight-Errant

Onward he gallops through enchanted gloom.
The spectres of the forest, dark and dim,
And shadows of vast death environ him
Onward he spurs victorious over doom.
Before his eyes that love's far fires illumine
Where courage sits, impregnable and grim
The form and features of her beauty swim,
Beckoning him on with looks that fears consume.
The thought of her distress, her lips to kiss,
Mails him with triple might; and so at last:
To Lust's huge keep he comes; its giant wall,
Wild-towering, frowning from the precipice;
And through its gate, borne like a bugle blast,
O'er night and hell he thunders to his all.

Madison Julius Cawein

Ku Klux

We have sent him seeds of the melon's core,
And nailed a warning upon his door:
By the Ku Klux laws we can do no more.

Down in the hollow, 'mid crib and stack,
The roof of his low-porched house looms black;
Not a line of light at the door-sill's crack.

Yet arm and mount! and mask and ride!
The hounds can sense though the fox may hide!
And for a word too much men oft have died.

The clouds blow heavy toward the moon.
The edge of the storm will reach it soon.
The kildee cries and the lonesome loon.

The clouds shall flush with a wilder glare
Than the lightning makes with its angled flare,
When the Ku Klux verdict is given there.

In the pause of the thunder rolling low,
A rifle's answer-who shall know
From the wind's fierce hurl and the rain's black blow?

Only the signature, written grim
At the end of the message brought to him-
A hempen rope and a twisted limb.

So arm and mount! and mask and ride!
The hounds can sense though the fox may hide!-
For a word too much men oft have died.

Madison Julius Cawein

Late November

Deep in her broom-sedge, burs and iron-weeds,
Her frost-slain asters and dead mallow-moons,
Where gray the wilding clematis balloons
The brake with puff-balls: where the slow stream leads
Her sombre steps: decked with the scarlet beads
Of hip and haw: through dolorous maroons
And desolate golds, she goes: the wailing tunes
Of all the winds about her like wild reeds.
The red wrought-iron hues that flush the green
Of blackberry briers, and the bronze that stains
The oak's sere leaves, are in her cheeks: the gray
Of forest pools, clocked thin with ice, is keen
In her cold eyes: and in her hair the rain's
Chill silver glimmers like a winter ray.

II.

Noon

Lost in the sleepy grays and drowsy browns
Of woodlands, smoky with the autumn haze,
Where dull the last leafed maples, smouldering, blaze
Like ghosts of wigwam fires, the Month uncrowns
Her frosty hair, and where the forest drowns
The road in shadows, in the rutted ways,
Filled full of freezing rain, her robe she lays
Of tattered gold, and seats herself and frowns.
And at her frown each wood and bushy hill
Darkens with prescience of approaching storm,
Her soul's familiar fiend, who, with wild broom
Of wind and rain, works her resistless will,
Sweeping the world, and driving with mad arm
The clouds, like leaves, through the tumultuous gloom.

III.

Evening

The shivering wind sits in the oaks, whose limbs,

Twisted and tortured, nevermore are still;
Grief and decay sit with it, they, whose chill
Autumnal touch makes hectic red the rims
Of all the oak leaves; desolating dims
The ageratum's blue that banks the rill,
And splits the milkweed's pod upon the hill,
And shakes it free of the last seed that swims.
Down goes the day despondent to its close:
And now the sunset's hands of copper build
A tower of brass, behind whose burning bars
The day, in fierce, barbarian repose,
Like some imprisoned Inca sits, hate-filled,
Crowned with the gold corymbus of the stars.

IV.

Night

There is a booming in the forest boughs:
Tremendous feet seem trampling through the trees:
The storm is at his wildman revelries,
And earth and heaven echo his carouse.
Night reels with tumult. And from out her house
Of cloud the moon looks, like a face one sees
In nightmare, hurrying with pale eyes that freeze,
Stooping above with white, malignant brows.
The isolated oak upon the hill,
That seemed, at sunset, in terrific lands
A Titan head black in a sea of blood,
Now seems a monster harp, whose wild strings thrill
To the vast fingering of innumerable hands,
The Spirits of Tempest and of Solitude.

Madison Julius Cawein

Late October Woods

Clumped in the shadow of the beech,
In whose brown top the crows are loud,
Where, every side, great briars reach
And cling like hands, the beechdrops crowd
The mossy cirque with neutral tints
Of gray; and deep, with berries bowed,
The buckbush reddens 'mid the mints.

O'erhead the forest scarcely stirs:
The wind is laid: the sky is blue:
Bush-clover, with its links of burs,
And some last blooms, few, pink of hue,
Makes wild the way- and everywhere
Slim, white-ribbed cones of fungi strew
The grass that's like a wildman's hair.

The jewel-weeds, whose pods bombard
The hush with fairy batteries
Of seeds, grow dense here; pattering hard
Their sacs explode, persuade the eyes
To search the heaven for show 'rs. One seems
To walk where old Enchantment plies
Her shuttle of lost days and dreams.

And, lo! yon rock of fern and flower,
That heaves its height from bramble deeps,
All on a sudden seems the tower
Wherein the Sleeping Beauty sleeps:
And that red vine, the fire-drake,
The flaming dragon, seems, that keeps
The world from her no man may wake.

Madison Julius Cawein

Laus Deo

IN her vast church of glimmering blue,
Gray-stoled from feet to chin,
Her dark locks beaded with the dew,
The nun-like dawn comes in:
At once the hills put on their spencers
Of purple, swinging streaming censers
Of mist before the God of Day
Who goes with pomp his way.
With sapphire draperies of light
Is hung the sombre pines;
Filling each valley, every height
With sacerdotal lines —
Shrines, where, like priests with worship vested,
The forests bow and, heavenly gestured,
Lift high the chalice of the sun,
Intoning, 'Night is done!'

Madison Julius Cawein

Lethe

There is a scent of roses and spilt wine
Between the moonlight and the laurel coppice;
The marble idol glimmers on its shrine,
White as a star, among a heaven of poppies.
Here all my life lies like a spilth of wine.
There is a mouth of music like a lute,
A nightingale that sigheth to one flower;
Between the falling flower and the fruit,
Where love hath died, the music of an hour.

II.

To sit alone with memory and a rose;
To dwell with shadows of whilom romances;
To make one hour of a year of woes
And walk on starlight, in ethereal trances,
With love's lost face fair as a moon-white rose,
To shape from music and the scent of buds
Love's spirit and its presence of sweet fire,
Between the heart's wild burning and the blood's,
Is part of life and of the soul's desire.

III.

There is a song to silence and the stars,
Between the forest and the temple's arches;
And down the stream of night, like nenuphars,
The tossing fires of the revellers' torches.
Here all my life waits lonely as the stars.
Shall not one hour of all those hours suffice
For resignation God hath given as dower?
Between the summons and the sacrifice
One hour of love, th' eternity of an hour?

IV.

The shrine is shattered and the bird is gone;
Dark is the house of music and of bridal;
The stars are stricken and the storm comes on;

Lost in a wreck of roses lies the idol,
Sad as the memory of a joy that's gone.
To dream of perished gladness and a kiss,
Waking the last chord of love's broken lyre,
Between remembering and forgetting, this
Is part of life and of the soul's desire.

Madison Julius Cawein

Life

Pessimist

There is never a thing we dream or do
But was dreamed and done in the ages gone;
Everything's old; there is nothing that's new,
And so it will be while the world goes on.

The thoughts we think have been thought before;
The deeds we do have long been done;
We pride ourselves on our love and lore
And both are as old as the moon and sun.

We strive and struggle and swink and sweat,
And the end for each is one and the same;
Time and the sun and the frost and wet
Will wear from its pillar the greatest name.

No answer comes for our prayer or curse,
No word replies though we shriek in air;
Ever the taciturn universe
Stretches unchanged for our curse or prayer.

With our mind's small light in the dark we crawl,
Glow-worm glimmers that creep about,
Till the Power that shaped us, over us all
Poises His foot and treads us out.

Unasked He fashions us out of clay,
A little water, a little dust,
And then in our holes He thrusts us away,
With never a word, to rot and rust.

'Tis a sorry play with a sorry plot,
This life of hate and of lust and pain,
Where we play our parts and are soon forgot,
And all that we do is done in vain.

II.

Optimist

There is never a dream but it shall come true,
And never a deed but was wrought by plan;
And life is filled with the strange and new,
And ever has been since the world began.

As mind develops and soul matures
These two shall parent Earth's mightier acts;
Love is a fact, and 'tis love endures
'Though the world make wreck of all other facts.

Through thought alone shall our Age obtain
Above all Ages gone before;
The tribes of sloth, of brawn, not brain,
Are the tribes that perish, are known no more.

Within ourselves is a voice of Awe,
And a hand that points to Balanced Scales;
The one is Love and the other Law,
And their presence alone it is avails.

For every shadow about our way
There is a glory of moon and sun;
But the hope within us hath more of ray
Than the light of the sun and moon in one.

Behind all being a purpose lies,
Undeviating as God hath willed;
And he alone it is who dies,
Who leaves that purpose unfulfilled.

Life is an epic the Master sings,
Whose theme is Man, and whose music, Soul,
Where each is a word in the Song of Things,
That shall roll on while the ages roll.

Madison Julius Cawein

Life's Seasons

When all the world was Mayday,
And all the skies were blue,
Young innocence made playday
Among the flowers and dew;
Then all of life was Mayday,
And clouds were none or few.

II

When all the world was Summer,
And morn shone overhead,
Love was the sweet newcomer
Who led youth forth to wed;
Then all of life was Summer,
And clouds were golden red.

III

When earth was all October,
And days were gray with mist,
On woodways, sad and sober,
Grave memory kept her tryst;
Then life was all October,
And clouds were twilight-kissed.

IV

Now all the world's December,
And night is all alarm,
Above the last dim ember
Grief bends to keep him warm;
Now all of life's December,
And clouds are driven storm.

Madison Julius Cawein

Light And Wind

Where, through the myriad leaves of forest trees,
The daylight falls, beryl and chrysoprase,
The glamour and the glimmer of its rays
Seem visible music, tangible melodies:
Light that is music; music that one sees-
Wagnerian music-where forever sways
The spirit of romance, and gods and fays
Take form, clad on with dreams and mysteries.
And now the wind's transmuting necromance
Touches the light and makes it fall and rise,
Vocal, a harp of multitudinous waves
That speaks as ocean speaks-an utterance
Of far-off whispers, mermaid-murmuring sighs-
Pelagian, vast, deep down in coral caves.

Madison Julius Cawein

Lilith's Lover

White art thou, O Lilith! as the foam that glimmers and quivers,
Glitters and clingingly silvers and snows from the balm
Of the beautiful breasts of the nymphs of the seas and rivers
That crystal and pearl by clusters of tropical palm,
Forests of tenebrous palm.
Once didst thou beckon and smile, O Lilith! as givers
Of heavenly gifts smile: and, lo! my heart no longer was calm.

II.

Cruel art thou, O Lilith! as spirits that battle
In tempest and night, in ultimate realms of the Earth;
Immaterial hosts, that shimmer and shout and rattle
Elemental armour and drive, with madness and mirth,
Down from the mountains, into the sea, like cattle,
Gaunt and glacial cattle,
Congealed thunder, the icebergs, gigantic of girth.

III.

Subtle art thou, O Lilith! as the sylphids that cover
Dawn with their forms of rose, and breeze it with breasts and cheeks;
Breasts that are blossoms, and cheeks
Pearls in the morning's creeks:
And wily art thou as the daemons of beauty that hover,
Raven of hair, in sunset, trailing its gold with streaks:
And what man, Lilith, beholding, would not yield himself thy lover?
Beautiful one, thy lover?
Die as I died, Lilith! for the love that no tongue speaks?...

IV.

Before us, behold, the long white thunder of ocean:
Around us the forest, a whispering world of trees:
Above us the glory and glitter, golden and silvery motion
Of infinite stars, O Lilith! and, arrowing out of these,
Down in my soul from these,
A sense of ancient despair, destruction, devotion,
Medusa of beauty, that slays; that is part of man's destinies.

V.

O kisses, again would I die! O kisses that slew me!
O beautiful body of sin, O sin that was mine!
O splendour and whiteness of wickedness! passion that drew me,
Golden of hair that drew me,
Draw me again with thine eyes, their azure divine!
Slay me again with caresses! and let it pierce through me,
All the poignant desire that made me eternally thine.

VI.

And the larvæ, the lamias, that cling to, encumber
And, bat-like, feed at the Ethiop breasts of Night,
Swarms, like bubbles that rise from the shadowy pools of night
Owl-eyed, hag-haired, her minions, awoke from their slumber,
And peering and whispering came, O Lilith the white!...
But thou, with thy beautiful hair, from their hideous number,
The night of their myriad number,
Covered me, dead at thy feet, and hid me from sight.

Madison Julius Cawein

Lincoln

Yea, this is he, whose name is synonym
Of all that's noble, though but lowly born;
Who took command upon a stormy morn
When few had hope. Although uncouth of limb,
Homely of face and gaunt, but never grim,
Beautiful he was with that which none may scorn.
With love of God and man and things forlorn,
And freedom mighty as the soul in him.
Large at the helm of State he leans and looms
With the grave, kindly look of those who die
Doing their duty. Staunch, unswervingly
Onward he steers beneath portentous glooms,
And overwhelming thunders of the sky,
Till, safe in port, he sees a people free.

II.

Safe from the storm; the harbour-lights of Peace
Before his eyes; the burden of dark fears
Cast from him like a cloak; and in his ears
The heart-beat music of a great release,
Captain and pilot, back upon the seas,
Whose wrath he'd weathered, back he looks with tears,
Seeing no shadow of the Death that nears,
Stealthy and sure, with sudden agonies.
So let him stand, brother to every man,
Ready for toil or battle; he who held
A Nation's destinies within his hand:
Type of our greatness; first American,
By whom the hearts of all men are compelled,
And with whose name Freedom unites our Land.

III.

He needs no praise of us, who wrought so well,
Who has the Master's praise; who at his post
Stood to the last. Yet, now, from coast to coast,
Let memory of him peal like some great bell.
Of him as woodsman, workman let it tell!

Of him as lawyer, statesman, without boast!
And for what qualities we love him most,
And recollections that no time can quell.
He needs no praise of us, yet let us praise,
Albeit his simple soul we may offend,
That liked not praise, being most diffident.
Still let us praise him, praise him in such ways
As his were, and in words, that shall transcend
Marble, and outlast any monument.

Madison Julius Cawein

Lines

Within the world of every man's desire
Three things have power to lift his soul above,
Through dreams, religion, and ecstatic fire,
The star-like shapes of Beauty, Truth, and Love.

I never hoped that, this side far-off Heaven,
These three,-whom all exalted souls pursue,
I e'er should see; until to me 't was given,
Lady, to meet the three, made one, in you.

Madison Julius Cawein

Little Bird

A Little bird sits in our cottonwood tree,
And perks his head and sings;
And this is the song he pipes to me
While he flirts his tail and wings:
'Hello! hello!
You jolly little fellow!
'Hello! hello! I say!
Do you hear me every morning
How I try to give you warning?
With my little song adorning
Every day, every day;
With my little song adorning every day.
I want to tell you this, sir:
You are sweeter than a kiss, sir,
You are fairer than a posy,
With your face so fresh and rosy;
Oh, I love to see you merry at your play,
Every day;
I love to see you laughing at your play.
Hello! hello!
You merry little fellow!'

II.

And I run to the tree where he sings and sits,
High up on the topmost limb;
And he cocks his eye and flirts and flits
While I reply to him:
'Hello! hello!
You cunning little fellow!
Hello! hello! I say!
You are complimenting early;
And your song is clear and pearly
As the dewdropp dripping nearly
From the spray, from the spray;
As the dewdropp dripping nearly from the spray.
Your singing is far sweeter
Than any rhyme or metre:
Oh, I love to hear you whistle,

Swinging lighter than a thistle,
And I hope you'll come and see me every day,
Every day;
I hope you'll come and see me every day.
Hello! hello!
You darling little fellow!'

Madison Julius Cawein

Little Boy Bad And Little Girl Rude

My nurse she tells me stories, too,
To make me good, she says; but I
She scares me so! I want to cry:
And if my father ever knew,
I guess he'd make things pretty hot,
And show her that she'd better not.

Last night I could n't sleep, because
She scared me with a story; yes,
Because I had been bad, I guess,
And said I hated Santa Claus
And everything: and then she told
This story that just made me cold:

I.

Little Boy Bad, a way he had
Of making his father and mother mad;
Until one day he ran away
To a wood where the cats of the witches stay.
And there he tarried awhile to play,
For a little while in the witches' way.

II.

When night drew nigh he heard a cry,
And in every bush he saw an eye.
Then, three by three, from every tree
Big coal-black cats came stealthily,
With great green eyes that seemed to be
As big as the moon in a graveyard tree.

III.

Upon the ground they ringed him round,
And glared at him without a sound;
And with the glare he felt his hair
Rise slowly, slowly in despair,
While hard he shook from feet to hair.

IV.

Then down the gloom, upon her broom,
An old hag-witch came shrieking, 'Room!'
Then snarled, 'Hold tight! You're mine to-night!'
And grabbed and whisked him out of sight.
And no one's seen him since that night.

V.

Little Girl Rude was never good,
And never did the thing she should.
And so one day she ran away
To a wood where the owls of the goblins stay:
And there for a while she stopped to play,
For a little while in the goblins' way.

VI.

When night drew near she seemed to hear
A noise of wings in the ivy sere;
Then a hooting cry went shuddering by;
And in every tree she saw an eye,
A great round eye in each tree near by.

VII.

Then, two by two, from the ivy flew
Gaunt ghost-gray owls with eyes steel-blue:
And, wing to wing, within a ring,
Around her they began to swing,
And made the woods with hootings ring.

VIII.

And, as the brood tu-whit-tu-whoed,
Oh, how she wished she had been good!
Her hair arose; from head to toes
Her marrow slowly, slowly froze,
While hard she shivered, teeth and toes.

IX.

And then she saw a hairy claw
Reach from beneath and clutch and draw,
Till in the ground her feet she found
While goblin laughter circled round.
And since that night she's not been found.

Madison Julius Cawein

Little Boy Sleepy

Little boy sleepy won't go to bed,
Though the Sand Man came an hour ago,
And sand all under his eyelids spread:
Though his eyes are heavy and heavy his head,
And his little tired feet seem made of lead,
And he nods and yawns as he drags them slow.

Little Boy Sleepy won't go to bed.
Little Boy Sleepy just has to play,
Though his toys are tired as he, I know:
His little toy-horse in its little toy-dray
Just seems to beg to be put away;
It has worked so hard all day, all day,
Hauling the toy-blocks to and fro.

Little Boy Sleepy just has to play.
Little Boy Sleepy won't be undressed;
'Just one more minute to play, my oh!'
His little lead soldier looks sodistressed,
And his paper rooster hangs down his crest,
And the little wool-dog just begs for rest,
And the Jack-in-the-Box looks worlds of woe.

Little Boy Sleepy won't be undressed.
Little Boy Sleepy lifts up his voice:
'I want to play with my toys some mo!
I am not sleepy! I want my toys!
My little toy-cat and my bears and boys,
And my little toy-train that makes a noise,
And the little tin-horn I blow and blow.'

Little Boy Sleepy lifts up his voice.
Little Boy Sleepy just sighs and sighs;
And then he mutters, 'It is n't so!
It is n't night! I must make some pies,
Some little mud pies!' and then his eyes
Just seem to close and down he lies
In his mother's arms who rocks him slow,

Little Boy Sleepy just sighs and sighs.

Madison Julius Cawein

Little Girlie Good Enough

Little Girlie Good Enough
Lives right there across the street;
Neater than a powder-puff,
Yes she is, and just as sweet:
Bows and ribbons on her hair,
And her frock just so. Declare,
Looks just like a doll, she does;
Best girl that there ever was.

Little Girlie Good Enough
Never answers people back.
Spick and span from shoe to cuff,
Brighter than a brand new tack.
Knows her lessons every day;
Never loiters on her way:
Teeth like two clean rows of pearls.
She's the very best of girls.

Little Girlie Good Enough
Never goes with shoes untied;
Never, never's rude or rough;
She's her parent's joy and pride
Never cries for candy, nor
For the things not good for her:
Hair is always combed and curled.
She's the best girl in the world.

Little Girlie Good Enough
Never gets her dresses soiled;
Never plays with mud or stuff;
And her face looks like it's oiled
It's so clean and shiny. She
Never's even out at knee;
Stockings perfect, always so.
She's the best girl that I know.

Little Girlie Good Enough
Wish I was as good as she!
Never flies into a huff,

Makes a scene like you or me
Only speaks when spoken to;
Never talks like me and you
When there's company to tea.
She's a good girl; yes sir-ee.

Little Girlie Good Enough
I don't like you, never could.
Think you're nothing but a muff,
And that you are far too good.
Never kissed a boy! oh my!
Never played the game Hi Spy,
Lost the Handkerchief, or such!
You're too good to even touch.

Little Girlie Good Enough,
Some one's going to do for you;
Going to treat you good and tough,
Spatter you from head to shoe;
Pull your hair and scratch your face,
Send you home in great disgrace;
Show you you're not up to snuff,
Little Girlie Good Enough.

Madison Julius Cawein

Little Messages Of Joy And Hope

Take Heart

Take heart again. Joy may be lost awhile.
It is not always Spring.
And even now from some far Summer Isle
Hither the birds may wing.

II.

Touchstones

Hearts, that have cheered us ever, night and day,
With words that helped us on the rugged way,
The hard, long road of life to whom is due
More than the heart can ever hope to pay
Are they not touchstones, soul-transmuting true
All thoughts to gold, refining thus the clay?

III.

Fortune

Fortune may pass us by:
Follow her flying feet.
Love, all we ask, deny:
Never admit defeat.
Take heart again and try.
Never say die.

IV

Be Glad

Be glad, just for to-day!
O heart, be glad!
Cast all your cares away!
Doff all that 's sad!
Put of your garments gray
Be glad to-day!

Be merry while you-can;
For life is short
It seemeth but a span
Before we part.
Let each maid take her man,
And dance while dance she can:
Life's but a little span
Be merry while you can.

V.

Carpe Diem

Blow high, blow low!
No longer borrow
Care of tomorrow:
Take joy of life, and let care go!

VI.

Joy Speaks

One with the Heaven above
Am I its bliss:
Part of its truth and love,
And what God is.
I heal the soul and mind:
I work their cures:
Not Grief, that rends Mankind,
But Joy endures.

VII.

For The Old

These are the things I pray Heaven send us still,
To blow the ashes of the years away,
Or keep aglow forever 'neath their gray
The fire that warms when Life's old house grows chill:
First Faith, that gazed into our youth's bright eyes;
Courage, that helped us onward, rain or sun;
Then Hope, who captained all our deeds well done;

And, last, the dream of Love that never dies.

Madison Julius Cawein

Lords Of The Visionary Eye

I CAME upon a pool that shone,
Clear, emerald-like, among the hills,
That seemed old wizards round a stone
Of magic that a vision thrills.
And as I leaned and looked, it seemed
Vague shadows gathered there and here —
A dream, perhaps the water dreamed
Of some wild past, some long-dead year...
A temple of a race unblessed
Rose huge within a hollow land,
Where, on an altar, bare of breast,
One lay, a man, bound foot and hand.
A priest, who served some hideous god,
Stood near him on the altar stair,
Clothed on with gold; and at his nod
A multitude seemed gathered there.
I saw a sword descend; and then
The priest before the altar turned;
He was not formed like mortal man,
But like a beast whose eyeballs burned.
Amorphous, strangely old, he glared
Above the victim he had slain,
Who lay with bleeding bosom bared,
From which dripped slow a crimson rain.
Then turned to me a face of stone
And mocked above the murdered dead,
That fixed its cold eyes on his own
And cursed him with a look of dread.
And then, it seemed, I knew the place,
And how this sacrifice befell:
I knew the god, the priest's wild face,
I knew the dead man — knew him well.
And as I stooped again to look,
I heard the dark hills sigh and laugh,
And in the pool the water shook
As if one stirred it with a staff.
And all was still again and clear:
The pool lay crystal as before,
Temple and priest were gone; the mere

Had closed again its magic door.
A face was there; it seemed to shine
As round it died the sunset's flame —
The victim's face?— or was it mine?—
They were to me the very same.
And yet, and yet — could this thing be? —
And in my soul I seemed to know,
At once, this was a memory
Of some past life, lived long ago.
Recorded by some secret sense,
In forms that we as dreams retain;
Some moment, as experience,
Projects in pictures on the brain.

Madison Julius Cawein

Love And A Day

In girandoles of gladioles
The day had kindled flame;
And Heaven a door of gold and pearl
Unclosed when Morning, like a girl,
A red rose twisted in a curl,
Down sapphire stairways came.

Said I to Love: 'What must I do?
What shall I do? what can I do?'
Said I to Love: 'What must I do?
All on a summer's morning.'
Said Love to me: 'Go woo, go woo.'
Said Love to me: 'Go woo.'

If she be milking, follow, O!
And in the clover hollow, O!
While through the dew the bells clang clear,
Just whisper it into her ear,
All on a summer's morning.'

II.

Of honey and heat and weed and wheat
The day had made perfume;
And Heaven a tower of turquoise raised,
Whence Noon, like some wan woman, gazed
A sunflower withering at her waist
Within a crystal room.

Said I to Love: 'What must I do?
What shall I do? what can I do?'
Said I to Love: 'What must I do,
All in the summer nooning?'
Said Love to me: 'Go woo, go woo.'
Said Love to me: 'Go woo.'

If she be 'mid the rakers, O!
Among the harvest acres, O!
While every breeze brings scents of hay,

Just hold her hand and not take 'nay,'
All in the summer nooning.'

III.

With song and sigh and cricket cry
The day had mingled rest;
And Heaven a casement opened wide
Of opal, whence, like some young bride,
The Twilight leaned, all starry-eyed,
A moonflower on her breast.

Said I to Love: 'What must I do?
What shall I do? what can I do?'
Said I to Love: 'What must I do,
All in the summer gloaming?'
Said Love to me: 'Go woo, go woo.'
Said Love to me: 'Go woo.'

Go meet her at the trysting, O!
And, 'spite of her resisting, O!
Beneath the stars and afterglow,
Just clasp her close and kiss her so,
All in the summer gloaming.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Love And Loss

Loss molds our lives in many ways,
And fills our souls with guesses;
Upon our hearts sad hands it lays
Like some grave priest that blesses.

Far better than the love we win,
That earthly passions leaven,
Is love we lose, that knows no sin,
That points the path to Heaven.

Love, whose soft shadow brightens Earth,
Through whom our dreams are nearest;
And loss, through whom we see the worth
Of all that we held dearest.

Not joy it is, but misery
That chastens us, and sorrow;
Perhaps to make us all that we
Expect beyond To-morrow.

Within that life where time and fate
Are not; that knows no seeming:
That world to which death keeps the gate
Where love and loss sit dreaming.

Madison Julius Cawein

Love And The Sea

Love one day, in childish anger,
Tired of his divinity,
Sick of rapture, sick of languor,
Threw his arrows in the sea.
Since then Ocean, like a woman,
Variable of nature seems:
Smiling; cruel; kind; inhuman;
Gloomed with grief and drowned in dreams.

Madison Julius Cawein

Love And The Wind

All were in league to capture Love
The rock, the stream, the tree;
The very Month was leader of
The whole conspiracy.

It led Love where wild waters met,
And tree hugged close to tree;
And where the dew and sunbeam let
Their lips meet rapturously.

And then it shouted, 'Here he is,
O wild Wind in the tree!
Come, clasp him now, and kiss and kiss!
And call the flowers to see!'

And there, on every side, the wood
Rushed out in flower and tree.
And that is how, I've understood,
The Springtime came to be.

Madison Julius Cawein

Love Despised

Can one resolve and hunt it from one's heart?
This love, this god and fiend, that makes a hell
Of many a life, in ways no tongue can tell,
No mind divine, nor any word impart.
Would not one think the slights that make hearts smart,
The ice of love's disdain, the wint'ry well
Of love's disfavor, love's own fire would quell?
Or school its nature, too, to its own art
Why will men cringe and cry forever here
For that which, once obtained, may prove a curse?
Why not remember that, however fair,
Decay is wed to Beauty? That each year
Takes somewhat from the riches of her purse,
Until at last her house of pride stands bare?

Madison Julius Cawein

Love In A Garden

Between the rose's and the canna's crimson,
Beneath her window in the night I stand;
The jeweled dew hangs little stars, in rims, on
The white moonflowers each a spirit hand
That points the path to mystic shadowland.

Awaken, sweet and fair!
And add to night try grace!
Suffer its loveliness to share
The white moon of thy face,
The darkness of thy hair.
Awaken, sweet and fair!

II.

A moth, like down, swings on th' althæa's pistil,
Ghost of a tone that haunts its bell's deep dome;
And in the August-lily's cone of crystal
A firefly blurs, the lantern of a gnome,
Green as a gem that gleams through hollow foam.

Approach! the moment flies!
Thou sweetheart of the South!
Come! mingle with night's mysteries
The red rose of thy mouth,
The starlight of thine eyes.
Approach! the moment flies!

III.

Dim through the dusk, like some unearthly presence,
Bubbles the Slumber-song of some wild bird;
And with it borne, faint on a breeze-sweet essence,
The rainy murmur of a fountain's heard
As if young lips had breathed a perfumed word.

How long, my love, my bliss!
How long must I await
With night, that all impatience is,

Thy greeting at the gate,
And at the gate thy kiss?
How long, my love, my bliss!

Madison Julius Cawein

Love, The Interpreter

Thou art the music that I hear in sleep,
The poetry that lures me on in dreams;
The magic, thou, that holds my thought with themes
Of young romance in revery's mystic keep.
The lily's aura, and the damask deep
That clothes the rose; the whispering soul that seems
To haunt the wind; the rainbow light that streams,
Like some wild spirit, 'thwart the cataract's leap
Are glimmerings of thee and thy loveliness,
Pervading all my world; interpreting
The marvel and the wonder these disclose:
For, lacking thee, to me were meaningless
Life, love and hope, the joy of every thing,
And all the beauty that the wide world knows.

Madison Julius Cawein

Love, The Song Of Songs

Over the roar of cities,
Over the hush of the hills,
Mounts ever a song that never stops,
A voice that never stills.

Epic-loud as the sea is,
Lyric-low as the dew,
It sings and sings a soul into things
And builds the world anew.

Dauntless, deathless, stern but kind,
Bold and free and strong,
It sweeps with mastery man's mind,
And rolls the world along.

From soul to soul it wings its words,
And, lo, the darkness flies;
And all who heed that song of songs
View Earth with other eyes.

New eyes, new thoughts, that shall go on
Seeing as Beauty sings,
Until the light of the farthest dawn
Shall fold its rainbow wings.

Madison Julius Cawein

Loveliness

How good it is, when overwrought,
To seek the woods and find a thought,
That to the soul's attentive sense
Delivers much in evidence
Of truths for which man long has sought
Truths, which no vulture years contrive
To rob the heart of, holding it
To all the glory infinite
Of beauty that shall aye survive.
Still shall it lure us. Year by year
Addressing now the spirit ear
With thoughts, and now the spirit eye
With visions that like gods go by,
Filling the mind with bliss and fear
In spite of modern man who mocks
The Loveliness of old, nor minds
The ancient myths, gone with the winds,
And dreams that people woods and rocks.

Madison Julius Cawein

Love's Calendar

The spring may come in her pomp and splendor,
And Summer follow with rain and rose,
Or Fall lead in that old offender,
Winter, close-huddled up in snows:
Ever a-South the Love-wind blows
Into the heart, like a vane a-sway
From face to face of the girls it knows
But which is the fairest it 's hard to say.

If Lydia smile or Maud look tender,
Straight in your bosom the gladness glows;
But scarce at her side are you all surrender,
When Gertrude sings where the garden grows:
And your heart is a-bloom mid the blossoming rows,
For her hand to gather and toss away,
Or wear on her breast, as her fancy goes,
But which is the fairest it 's hard to say.

Let Helen pass, as a sapling slender,
Her cheek a berry, her mouth a rose,
Or Blanche or Laura to each you render
The worship due to the charms she shows:
But Ruth's a poem when these are prose;
Low at her feet your life you lay;
All of devotion to her it owes,
But which is the fairest it 's hard to say.

How can a man of his heart dispose
When Bess and Clara, and Kate and May
In form and feature no flaw disclose,
And which is the fairest it 's hard to say.

Madison Julius Cawein

Low-Lie-Down

John-A-Dreams and Harum-Scarum
Came a-riding into town:
At the Sign o' the Jug-and-Jorum
There they met with Low-lie-down.

Brave in shoes of Romany leather,
Bodice blue and gipsy gown,
And a cap of fur and feather,
In the inn sat Low-lie-down.

Harum-Scarum kissed her lightly,
Smiled into her eyes of brown,
Clasped her waist and held her tightly,
Saying, 'Love me, Low-lie-down.'

Then with many an oath and swagger,
As a man of great renown,
On the board he clapped his dagger,
Called for sack and sat him down.

So a while they laughed together:
Then he rose and with a frown
Sighed, 'While still 't is pleasant weather
I must leave thee, Low-lie-down.'

So away rode Harum-Scarum,
With a song rode out of town;
At the sign o' the Jug-and-Jorum
Weeping tarried Low-lie-down.

Then this John-a-dreams, in tatters,
In his pocket ne'er a crown,
Touched her saying, 'Wench, what matters!
Dry your eyes and, come, sit down.

'Here's my hand: let's roam together,
Far away from thorp and town.
Here's my heart for any weather,
And my dreams, too, Low-lie-down.

'Some men call me dreamer, poet;
Some men call me fool and clown
What I am but you shall know it!
Come with me, sweet Low-lie-down.

For a little while she pondered.
Smiled and said, 'Let care go drown!
Rose and kissed him. Forth they wandered,
John-a-dreams and Low-lie-down.

Madison Julius Cawein

Loyalty

To Friendship drink, and then to Love,
And last to Loyalty!
The first of these were not enough
Without the last, through whom we prove
That Love is Love, and right enough
What Friendship's self may be.
So here 's to Loyalty!

A sword he wears, but never a mask,
So all the world may see.
Let Friendship set him any task,
Or Love no question doth he ask,
But draws his sword and does his task,
And never takes a fee.
So here's to loyalty!

Madison Julius Cawein

Lute Song

What will you send her,
What will you tell her,
That shall unbend her,
That shall compel her?

Love, that shall fold her
So naught can sever;
Truth, that shall hold her
Ever and ever.

What will you do then
So she 'll ne' er grieve you?
Knowing you true then
Never will leave you?

I 'll lay before here,
There in her bower,
Aye to adore her,
My heart like a flower.

Madison Julius Cawein

Lynchers

At the moon's down-going let it be
On the quarry hill with its one gnarled tree.

The red-rock road of the underbrush,
Where the woman came through the summer hush.

The sumac high and the elder thick,
Where we found the stone and the ragged stick.

The trampled road of the thicket, full
Of footprints down to the quarry pool.

The rocks that ooze with the hue of lead,
Where we found her lying stark and dead.

The scraggy wood; the negro hut,
With its doors and windows locked and shut.

A secret signal; a foot's rough tramp;
A knock at the door; a lifted lamp.

An oath; a scuffle; a ring of masks;
A voice that answers a voice that asks.

A group of shadows; the moon's red fleck;
A running noose and a man's bared neck.

A word, a curse, and a shape that swings;
The lonely night and a bat's black wings.

At the moon's down-going let it be
On the quarry hill with its one gnarled tree.

Madison Julius Cawein

March

This is the tomboy month of all the year,
March, who comes shouting o'er the winter hills,
Waking the world with laughter, as she wills,
Or wild halloos, a windflower in her ear.
She stops a moment by the half-thawed mere
And whistles to the wind, and straightway shrills
The hyla's song, and hoods of daffodils
Crowd golden round her, leaning their heads to hear.
Then through the woods, that drip with all their eaves,
Her mad hair blown about her, loud she goes
Singing and calling to the naked trees;
And straight the oilets of the little leaves
Open their eyes in wonder, rows on rows,
And the first bluebird bugles to the breeze.

Madison Julius Cawein

Mariana

The sunset-crimson poppies are departed,
Mariana!

The dusky-centred, sultry-smelling poppies,
The drowsy-hearted,
That burnt like flames along the garden coppice:
All heavy-headed,
The ruby-cupped and opium-brimming poppies,
That slumber wedded,
Mariana!

The sunset-crimson poppies are departed.
Oh, heavy, heavy are the hours that fall,
The lonesome hours of the lonely days!
No poppy strews oblivion by the wall,
Where lone the last pod sways,
Oblivion that was hers of old that happier made her days.
Oh, weary, weary is the sky o'er all,
The days that creep, the hours that crawl,
And weary all the ways
She leans her face against the old stone wall,
The lichened wall, the mildewed wall,
And dreams, the long, long days,
Of one who will not come again whatever may befall.

.

All night it blew. The rain streamed down
And drowned the world in misty wet.
At morning, 'round the sunflower's crown
A row of glimmering drops was set;
The candytuft, heat shrivelled brown,
And beds of drought-dried mignonette,
Were beat to earth: but wearier, oh,
The rain was than the sun's fierce glow
That in the garth had wrought such woe:
That killed the moss-rose ere it bloomed,
And scorched the double-hollyhocks;
And bred great, poisonous weeds that doomed
The snapdragon and standing-phlox;
'Mid which gaunt spiders wove and loomed
Their dusty webs 'twixt rows of box;
And rotted into sleepy ooze

The lilled moat, that, lined with yews,
Lay scummed with many sickly hues.
How oft she longed and prayed for rain!
To blot the hateful landscape out!
To hem her heart, so parched with pain,
With sounds of coolth and broken drought;
And cure with change her stagnant brain,
And soothe to sleep all care and doubt.
At last when many days had past
And she had ceased to care at last
The longed-for rain came, falling fast.
At night, as late she lay awake,
And thought of him who had not come,
She heard the gray wind, moaning, shake
Her lattice; then the steady drum
Of storm upon the leads.. . The ache
Within her heart, so burdensome,
Grew heavier with the moan of rain.
The house was still, save, at her pane
The wind cried; hushed, then cried again.
All night she lay awake and wept:
There was no other thing to do:
At dawn she rose and, silent, crept
Adown the stairs that led into
The dripping garth, the storm had swept
With ruin; where, of every hue,
The flowers lay rotting, stained with mould;
Where all was old, unkempt and old,
And ragged as a marigold.
She sat her down, where oft she sat,
Upon a bench of marble, where,
In lines she oft would marvel at,
A Love was carved. She did not dare
Look on it then, remembering that
Here in past time he kissed her hair,
And murmured vows while, soft above,
The full moon lit the forth thereof,
The slowly crumbling form of Love.
She could but weep, remembering hours
Like these. Then in the drizzling rain.,
That weighed with wet the dying flowers,
She sought the old stone dial again;

The dial, among the moss-rose bowers,
Where often she had read, in vain,
Of time and change, and love and loss,
Rude-lettered and o'ergrown with moss,
That slow the gnomon moved across.
Remembering this she turned away,
The rain and tears upon her face.
There was no thing to do or say.
She stood a while, a little space,
And watched the rain bead, round and gray,
Upon the cobweb's tattered lace,
And tag the toadstool's spongy brim
With points of mist; and, orbing, dim
With fog the sunflower's ruined rim.
With fog, through which the moon at night
Would glimmer like a spectre sail;
Or, sullenly, a blur of light,
Like some huge glow-worm dimly trail;
'Neath which she 'd hear, wrapped deep in white,
The far sea moaning on its shale:
While in the garden, pacing slow,
And listening to its surge and flow,
She'd seem to hear her own heart's woe.
Now as the fog crept in from sea,
A great, white darkness, like a pall,
The yews and huddled shrubbery,
That dripped along the weedy wall,
Turned phantoms; and as shadowy
She too seemed, wandering 'mid it all
A phantom, pale and sad and strange,
And hopeless; doomed for aye to range
About the melancholy grange.

.

The pansies too are dead, the violet-varied,
Mariana!
The raven-dyed and fire-fretted pansies,
To memory married;
That from the grass, like forms in old romances,
Raised fairy faces:
All dead they lie, the violet-velvet pansies,
In many places,
Mariana!

The pansies too are dead, the violet-varied.
Oh, hateful, hateful are the hours that pass,
The lonely hours of the lonesome nights!
No pansy scatters heartsease through the grass,
That autumn sorrow blights,
The heartsease that was hers of old that happier made her nights.
Oh, barren, barren is her life, alas!
Its youth and beauty, all it has,
And barren all delights
She lays her face against the withered grass,
The sodden grass, the autumn grass,
And thinks, the long, long nights,
Of one who will not come again whatever comes to pass.

Madison Julius Cawein

Mariners

A beardless crew we launched our little boat;
Laughed at its lightness; joyed to see it float,
Veer in the wind, and, with the freshening gale,
Bend o'er the foaming prow the swollen sail.

No fears were ours within that stanch-built barque;
No fears were ours 'though all the west was dark,
And overhead were unknown stars; the ring
Of ocean sailless and no bird a-wing:

Yet there was light; radiance that dimmed the stars
Dancing like bubbles in Night's sapphire jars.

We knew not what: only adown the skies
A shape that led us, with sidereal eyes,
Brow-bound and shod with elemental fire,
Beckoning us onward like the god Desire.

Brisk blew the breeze; and through the starry gloam,
Flung from our prow, flew white the furrowed foam.
Long, long we sailed; and now have reached our goal.
Come, let us rest us here and call the roll.

How few we are! Alas, alas, how few!
How many perished! Every storm that blew
Swept from our deck or from our staggering mast
Some well-loved comrade in the boiling vast.

Wildly we saw them sink beneath our prow,
Helpless to aid; pallid of face and brow,
Lost in the foam we saw them sink or fade
Beneath the tempest's rolling cannonade.

They sank; but where they sank, above the wave
A corposant danced, a flame that marked their grave;
And o'er the flame, whereon were fixed our eyes,
An albatross, huge in volcanic skies.

They died; but not in vain their stubborn strife,

The zeal that held them onward, great of life:

They too are with us; they, in spite of death,
Have reached here first. Upon our brows their breath
Breathes softly, vaguely, sweetly as the breeze
From isles of spice in summer-haunted seas.

From palaces and pinnacles of mist
The sunset builds in heaven's amethyst
Beyond yon headland where the billows break,
Perhaps they beckon now; the winds that shake

These tamarisks, that never bowed to storm,
Haply are but their voices filled with charm
Bidding us rest from labor; toil no more;
Draw up our vessel on the happy shore;

And of the lotus of content and peace,
Growing far inland, eat, and never cease
To dream the dreams that keep the heart still young,
Hearing forever how the foam is flung

Beneath the cliff; forgetting all life's care;
Easing the soul of all its long despair.

Let us forget how once within that barque,
Like some swift eagle sweeping through the dark,
We weighed the sun; we weighed the farthest stars;
Traced the dim continents of fiery Mars;

Measured the vapory planets whose long run
Takes centuries to gird their glimmering sun:

Let us forget how oft the crystal mountains
Of the white moon we searched; and plumbed her fountains,
That hale the waters of the æonian deep
In ebb and flow, and in her power keep:

Let us remember her but as a gem,
A mighty pearl, placed in Night's anadem:
Let us forget how once we pierced the flood,
Fathorned its groves of coral, red as blood,

Branching and blooming underneath our keel,
Through which like birds the nautilus and eel,
The rainbowed conch and irised fishes swept,
And where the sea-snake like a long weed slept.

Here let us dream our dreams: let Helen bare
Her white breast for us; and let Dido share
Her rich feast with us; or let Lalage
Laugh in our eyes as once, all lovingly,
She laughed for Flaccus. We are done with all
The lusts of life! its loves are ours. Let fall
The Catilines! the Cæsars! and in Gaul
Their legions perish! And let Phillip's son
In Ammon's desert die; and never a one
Lead back to Greece of all his conquering line
From gemmed Hydaspes.

Here we set our shrine!
Here on this headland templed of God's peaks,
Where Beauty only to our worship speaks
Her mighty truths, gazing beyond the shore
Into the heart of God: her eyes a door
Wherethrough we see the dreams, the mysteries,
That grew to form in the Art that once was Greece:
Making them live once more for us, the shapes
That filled the woods, the mountains, and the capes
Of Hellas: Dryad, Oread, and Faun;
Naiad and Nereid, and all the hosts of Dawn.

Madison Julius Cawein

Masked

Lying alone I dreamed a dream last night:
Methought that Joy had come to comfort me
For all the past, its suffering and slight,
Yet in my heart I felt this could not be.
All that he said unreal seemed and strange,
Too beautiful to last beyond to-morrow;
Then suddenly his features seemed to change,
The mask of joy dropped from the face of Sorrow.

Madison Julius Cawein

Masks

Death rides black-masked to-night; and through the land
Madness beside him brandishes a torch.
The peaceful farmhouse with its vine-wreathed porch
Lies in their way. Death lifts a bony hand
And knocks, and Madness makes a wild demand
Of fierce Defiance: then the night's deep arch
Reverberates, and under beech and latch
A dead face stares; shot where one took his stand.
Then down the night wild hoofs; the darkness beats;
And like a torrent through the startled town
Destruction sweeps; high overhead a flame;
And Violence that shoots amid the streets.
A piercing whistle: one who gallops down:
And Death and Madness go the way they came.

Madison Julius Cawein

May

The golden discs of the rattlesnake-weed,
That spangle the woods and dance-
No gleam of gold that the twilights hold
Is strong as their necromance:
For, under the oaks where the woodpaths lead,
The golden discs of the rattlesnake-weed
Are the May's own utterance.

The azure stars of the bluet bloom,
That sprinkle the woodland's trance-
No blink of blue that a cloud lets through
Is sweet as their countenance:
For, over the knolls that the woods perfume,
The azure stars of the bluet bloom
Are the light of the May's own glance.

With her wondering words and her looks she comes,
In a sunbeam of a gown;
She needs but think and the blossoms wink,
But look, and they shower down.
By orchard ways, where the wild bee hums,
With her wondering words and her looks she comes
Like a little maid to town.

Madison Julius Cawein

Meeting And Parting

When from the tower, like some sweet flower,
The bell drops petals of the hour,
That says the world is homing,
My heart puts off its garb of care
And clothes itself in gold and vair,
And hurries forth to meet her there
Within the purple gloaming.

It's Oh! how slow the hours go,
How dull the moments move!
Till soft and clear the bells I hear,
That say, like music, in my ear,
'Go meet the one you love.'

II.

When curved and white, a bugle bright,
The moon blows glamour through the night,
That sets the world a-dreaming,
My heart, where gladness late was guest,
Puts off its joy, as to my breast
At parting her dear form is pressed,
Within the moon's faint gleaming.

It's Oh! how fast the hours passed!
They were not slow enough!
Too soon, too soon, the sinking moon
Says to my soul, like some sad tune,
'Come! part from her you love.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Meeting In Summer

A tranquil bar
Of rosy twilight under dusk's first star.

A glimmering sound
Of whispering waters over grassy ground.

A sun-sweet smell
Of fresh-reaped hay from dewy field and dell.

A lazy breeze
Jostling the ripeness from the apple-trees.

A vibrant cry,
Passing, then gone, of bullbats in the sky.

And faintly now
The katydid upon the shadowy bough.

And far-off then
The little owl within the lonely glen.

And soon, full soon,
The silvery arrival of the moon.

And, to your door,
The path of roses I have trod before.

And, sweetheart, you!
Among the roses and the moonlit dew.

Madison Julius Cawein

Meeting In The Woods

Through ferns and moss the path wound to
A hollow where the touchmenots
Swung horns of honey filled with dew;
And where like foot-prints violets blue
And bluets made sweet sapphire blots,
'Twas there that she had passed he knew.

The grass, the very wilderness
On either side, breathed rapture of
Her passage: 'twas her hand or dress
That touched some tree a slight caress
That made the wood-birds sing above;
Her step that made the flowers up-press.

He hurried, till across his way,
Foam-footed, bounding through the wood,
A brook, like some wild girl at play,
Went laughing loud its roundelay;
And there upon its bank she stood,
A sunbeam clad in woodland gray.

And when she saw him, all her face
Grew to a wildrose by the stream;
And to his breast a moment's space
He gathered her; and all the place
Seemed conscious of some happy dream
Come true to add to Earth its grace.

Some joy, on which Heav'n was intent
For which God made the world the bliss,
The love, that raised her innocent
Pure face to his that, smiling, bent
And sealed confession with a kiss
Life needs no other testament.

Madison Julius Cawein

Mendicants

Bleak, in dark rags of clouds, the day begins,
That passed so splendidly but yesterday,
Wrapped in magnificence of gold and gray,
And poppy and rose. Now, burdened as with sins,
Their wildness clad in fogs, like coats of skins,
Tattered and streaked with rain; gaunt, clogged with clay,
The mendicant Hours take their somber way
Westward o'er Earth, to which no sunray wins.
Their splashing sandals ooze; their footsteps drip,
Puddle and brim with moisture; their sad hair
Is tagged with haggard drops, that with their eyes'
Slow streams are blent; each sullen fingertip
Rivers; while round them, in the grief-drenched air
Wearies the wind of their perpetual sighs.

Madison Julius Cawein

Microcosm

The memory of what we've lost
Is with us more than what we've won;
Perhaps because we count the cost
By what we could, yet have not done.

'Twixt act and purpose fate hath drawn
Invisible threads we can not break,
And puppet-like these move us on
The stage of life, and break or make.

Less than the dust from which we're wrought,
We come and go, and still are hurled
From change to change, from naught to naught,
Heirs of oblivion and the world.

Madison Julius Cawein

Midsummer

I

The mellow smell of hollyhocks
And marigolds and pinks and phlox
Blends with the homely garden scents
Of onions, silvering into rods;
Of peppers, scarlet with their pods;
And (rose of all the esculents)
Of broad plebeian cabbages,
Breathing content and corpulent ease.

II

The buzz of wasp and fly makes hot
The spaces of the garden-plot;
And from the orchard,-where the fruit
Ripens and rounds, or, loosed with heat,
Rolls, hornet-clung, before the feet,-
One hears the veery's golden flute,
That mixes with the sleepy hum
Of bees that drowsily go and come.

III

The podded musk of gourd and vine
Embower a gate of roughest pine,
That leads into a wood where day
Sits, leaning o'er a forest pool,
Watching the lilies opening cool,
And dragonflies at airy play,
While, dim and near, the quietness
Rustles and stirs her leafy dress.

IV

Far-off a cowbell clangs awake
The noon who slumbers in the brake:
And now a pewee, plaintively,
Whistles the day to sleep again:

A rain-crow croaks a rune for rain,
And from the ripest apple tree
A great gold apple thuds, where, slow,
The red cock curves his neck to crow.

V

Hens cluck their broods from place to place,
While clinking home, with chain and trace,
The cart-horse plods along the road
Where afternoon sits with his dreams:
Hot fragrance of hay-making streams
Above him, and a high-heaped load
Goes creaking by and with it, sweet,
The aromatic soul of heat.

VI

'Coo-ee! coo-ee!' the evenfall
Cries, and the hills repeat the call:
'Coo-ee! coo-ee!' and by the log
Labor unharnesses his plow,
While to the barn comes cow on cow:
'Coo-ee! coo-ee!'-and, with his dog,
Barefooted boyhood down the lane
'Coo-ees' the cattle home again.

Madison Julius Cawein

Mid-Winter

All day the clouds hung ashen with the cold;
And through the snow the muffled waters fell;
The day seemed drowned in grief too deep to tell,
Like some old hermit whose last bead is told.
At eve the wind woke, and the snow clouds rolled
Aside to leave the fierce sky visible;
Harsh as an iron landscape of wan hell
The dark hills hung framed in with gloomy gold.
And then, towards night, the wind seemed some one at
My window wailing: now a little child
Crying outside my door; and now the long
Howl of some starved beast down the flue. I sat
And knew 'twas Winter with his madman song
Of miseries on which he stared and smiled.

Madison Julius Cawein

Mignon

Oh, Mignon's mouth is like a rose,
A red, red rose, that half uncurls
Sweet petals o'er a crimson bee:
Or like a shell, that, opening, shows
Within its rosy curve white pearls,
White rows of pearls,
Is Mignon's mouth that smiles at me.

Oh, Mignon's eyes are like blue gems,
Two azure gems, that gleam and glow,
Soft sapphires set in ivory:
Or like twin violets, whose stems
Bloom blue beneath the covering snow,
The lidded snow,
Are Mignon's eyes that laugh at me.

O mouth of Mignon, Mignon's eyes!
O eyes of violet, mouth of fire!
Within which lies all ecstasy
Of tears and kisses and of sighs:
O mouth, O eyes, and O desire,
O love's desire,
Have mercy on the soul of me!

Madison Julius Cawein

Minions Of The Moon

Through leafy windows of the trees
The full moon shows a wrinkled face,
And, trailing dim her draperies
Of mist from place to place,
The Twilight leads the breeze.

And now, far-off, beside a pool,
Dusk blows a reed, a guttural note;
Then sows the air around her full
Of twinkling disc and mote,
And moth-shapes soft as wool.

And from a glen, where lights glow by,
Through hollowed hands she sends a call,
And Solitude, with owlet cry,
Answers: and Evenfall
Steps swiftly from the sky.

And Mystery, in hodden gray,
Steals forth to meet her: and the Dark
Before him slowly makes to sway
A jack-o'-lantern spark
To light him on his way.

The grasshopper its violin
Tunes up, the katydid its fife;
The beetle drums; the grig makes din,
Informing Elfin life
Night's revels now begin.

And from each side along the way
Old Witchcraft waves a batlike hand,
And summons forth the toadstool gray
To point the path to Faeryland,
Where all man's longings stray.

II.

The snail puts forth two staring horns

And down the toadstool slides;
The wind sits whispering in the thorns
Of one unseen who hides:
Of him, the Sprite,
With glowworm light,
Who watchmans secrets of the Night.

The bee sleeps in the berry-bloom;
The bird dreams on its nest;
The moon-moth swoons through drowsed perfume
Upon a fragrant quest:
It seeks for him,
The Pixy slim,
Who tags with wet each wildflower's rim.

The milkwort leans an ear of pink
And listens for the dew;
The fireflies in the wildrose wink
That seems to listen too:
For her, the Fay,
With sword-like ray,
Who opens buds at close of day.

The moon, that dares not come too near,
Keeps to the highest hill;
The little brook it seems, for fear
Of something strange, is still:
The Mystery,
It well may be,
That talks to it of Faerie.

Madison Julius Cawein

Mirage

He closed his eyes, yet still could see
The leprous hills loom thirstily;
The mesquit glimmering; and the dust
Of alkali; and, rimmed with rust
Of emerald, a mineral pool
From which his horse had drunk him full.

Now he would drink how good to die
After the torture days gone by!
And so he rose, and through the sage
And sand groped, blind with thirst, and rage
At God, whose hand in hate had wrought
This trap of hell where he was caught.

Now what was this that held him fast?
Had he then reached relief at last,
After long years of heat and hate?
Surely there rose a marble gate,
A towered castle! and the sand
And sage had vanished from the land.

He entered where a fountain fell
On foaming crystal Like a spell
He caught its freshness. Then his ear
Heard lute-like music drawing near;
And through a rainbowed mist a girl
Beckoned, her beauty like a pearl.

And there two slave-girls on a mat,
Two naked Nubians, drowsing, sat,
Fingering dim-gemmed and nacreous lutes;
He knew at once that they were mutes,
And this the same Seraglio,
Where love had met him lives ago.

The entrance doors he knew were nine:
Three were of agate, red as wine,
And three of lapis-lazuli,
Cerulean-blue as is the sky;

And three of feldspar, veined with gold,
Each leading to her bower of old.

Behind a lattice or a screen
He knew she smiled and watched, unseen:
He felt her presence in the gloom
As one may sense a strange perfume:
And musk of myrrh and sandalwood
Were guides to lead him where she stood.

Once more he'd see her; hold her fast,
Come back again from out the past;
And, locked in her divine embrace,
Watch, in the heaven of her face,
The ardor of her heart's desire
Change her dark eyes to starry fire.

And then far-off he heard a horn,
And, turning, saw that it was morn
And there she rode, in dawn and dew,
And with her Chevaliers he knew.
The horn led on; he heard its song
The air he had forgot so long:

'How good, ' it sang, 'How good at dawn
To ride with her of Roussillon!
To ride with her through dawn and dew
Beneath a heaven gentian-blue,
With hawk on wrist, a madcap crew,
That wild the horn leads on,

With her of Roussillon!
To hear the falcons' jesses ringing
Bells that set the pulses singing!
To see the heron wildly winging,
O'er mountained Roussillon,
Far, towered Roussillon.

'How good to hear by wood and lawn
Our Lady laugh of Roussillon!
Where wild the torrent leaps the crag,
Through mists that on the mountain lag,

As in the forest leaps the stag,
While clear the horn leads on,

With her of Roussillon!
How good to hear the falcon crying,
To see it strike the quarry flying,
And watch the stricken lapwing dying
By towered Roussillon,
Old, mountained Roussillon!' . . .

The music died. His hot head swung
Upon his neck as wire-hung,
And he awoke to see again
The thirsty peaks, the fevered plain,
Shutting him in with all their hate,
Malignantly, content to wait.

Was it a dream of some old past?
Or would he see her there at last?
He sat and thought; no thing occurred.
The desert watched him, never stirred;
Like some gaunt beast with burning eyes
It stared at him with all its skies.

Around he gazed and searched again
The peaks, like blisters on the plain;
No creature moved. The pool nearby
With its green glitter caught his eye.
Yes, he would drink, and know at last
That secret of the long-gone past. . . .

They found him in that poisoned place
With blackened lips and twisted face
Dead with seared eyes on something far,
Some unknown thing perhaps a star
Or was 't the gold, for which he 'd sought?
The far mirage that turned to naught?

Madison Julius Cawein

Mnemosyne

In classic beauty, cold, immaculate,
A voiceful sculpture, stern and still she stands,
Upon her brow deep-chiselled love and hate,
That sorrow o'er dead roses in her hands.

Madison Julius Cawein

Moly

When by the wall the tiger-flower swings
A head of sultry slumber and aroma;
And by the path, whereon the blown rose flings
Its obsolete beauty, the long lilies foam a
White place of perfume, like a beautiful breast-
Between the pansy fire of the west,
And poppy mist of moonrise in the east,
This heartache will have ceased.

The witchcraft of soft music and sweet sleep-
Let it beguile the burthen from my spirit,
And white dreams reap me as strong reapers reap
The ripened grain and full blown blossom near it;
Let me behold how gladness gives the whole
The transformed countenance of my own soul-
Between the sunset and the risen moon
Let sorrow vanish soon.

And these things then shall keep me company:
The elfins of the dew; the spirit of laughter
Who haunts the wind; the god of melody
Who sings within the stream, that reaches after

The flow'rs that rock themselves to his caress:
These of themselves shall shape my happiness,
Whose visible presence I shall lean upon,
Feeling that care is gone.

Forgetting how the cankered flower must die;
The worm-pierced fruit fall, sicklied to its syrup;
How joy, begotten 'twixt a sigh and sigh,
Waits with one foot forever in the stirrup,-
Remembering how within the hollow lute
Soft music sleeps when music's voice is mute;
And in the heart, when all seems black despair,
Hope sits, awaiting there.

Madison Julius Cawein

Moon Fairies

THE moon, a circle of gold,
O'er the crowded housetops rolled,
And peeped in an attic, where,
'Mid sordid things and bare,
A sick child lay and gazed
At a road to the far-away,
A road he followed, mazed,
That grew from a moonbeam-ray,
A road of light that led
From the foot of his garret-bed
Out of that room of hate,
Where Poverty slept by his mate,
Sickness —out of the street,
Into a wonderland,
Where a voice called, far and sweet,
'Come, follow our Fairy band!'
A purple shadow, sprinkled
With golden star-dust, twinkled
Suddenly into the room
Out of the winter gloom:
And it wore a face to him
Of a dream he'd dreamed: a form
Of Joy, whose face was dim,
Yet bright with a magic charm.
And the shadow seemed to trail,
Sounds that were green and frail:
Dew-dripples; notes that fell
Like drops in a ferny dell;
A whispered lisp and stir,
Like winds among the leaves,
Blent with a cricket-chirr,
And coo of a dove that grieves.
And the Elfin bore on its back
A little faery pack
Of forest scents: of loam
And mossy sounds of foam;
And of its contents breathed
As might a clod of ground
Feeling a bud unsheathed

There in its womb profound.
And the shadow smiled and gazed
At the child; then softly raised
Its arms and seemed to grow
To a tree in the attic low:
And from its glimmering hands
Shook emerald seeds of dreams,
From which grew fairy bands,
Like firefly motes and gleams.
The child had seen them before
In his dreams of Fairy lore:
The Elves, each with a light
To guide his feet a-right,
Out of this world to a world
Where Magic built him towers,
And Fable old, unfurled,
Flags like wonderful flowers.
And the child, who knew this, smiled,
And rose, a different child:
No more he knew of pain,
Or fear of heart and brain. —
At Poverty there that slept
He never even glanced,
But into the moon-road stept,
And out of the garret danced.
Out of the earthly gloom,
Out of the sordid room,
Out, on a moonbeam ray! —
Now at last to play
There with comrades found!
Children of the moon,
There on faery ground,
Where none would find him soon!

Madison Julius Cawein

Moonshiners

How long we had hid there and listened,
Where the trees let in winks o' the sun,
'Fore their Winchesters glittered and glistened
In the gully below by the run,
I never kep' count. It wuz mornin',
An' my legs wuz stove stiff with the chill
O' the night. But my Lize had the warnin'
An' we knew it wuz up with the still
If we ever give up with our watchin':
The six on us me an' Bud Roe,
Two Tollivers, Dickon an' Hotchin
An' the posse nigh twenty or so.
The evenin' before we had reckoned
The sheriff would ride through the glen;
An' it took little less nor a second
To see how we manage it then;
For the valley wound up in a' alley,
Blind-walled with bald bluffs; an' no trees
At its bottom; a trap of a valley,
Scrub thicket not high as my knees.
With me an' the Tollivers watchin'
The rear, an' Bud Roe in the gap,
With Dickon an' Hotch for the scotchin',
We had 'em like rats in a trap.
So we all took a pull at the bottle
Lize brung me last evenin': an' though
We 'd eaten, nor left whut would throttle
A fly, we wuz hungry I know.
Then a caw come hoarse through the quiet:
We knew it the signal they'd reached
The gully: an' when they'd passed by it,
A hawk we had fixed it jest screeched:
When a pewee had whistled, we knew it
The signal the posse wuz in,
Safe into the trap. . . . They would do it!
An' we we wuz glad to begin.
A pistol each side an' a rifle
Or two ready loaded. Our height
Would help me to aim jest a trifle

To left an' my pards front an' right.
An' we laid in the rocks, never winkin'
Jest ready. I heard the dry buzz
O' the grasshoppers; thinkin' an' thinkin'
How lonesome an' solemn it wuz:
When suddent, I riz in a hurry,
The laurel whipped back I could curse!
Lize could n't git rid o' her worry,
An' woman-like come fer the worse.
Jest then through the gully an' thicket
I seed the sun glim on the stocks
O' their Winchesters. Slim as a picket
Lize stood by me there in the rocks.
We waited until the last came in.
I lined on the leader an' said,
'Shoot!' hoarsely. We ushered the game in
With the sheriff an' deputy dead.
It wuz a surprise for 'em certain!
They saw 't wuz a trap, an' rid back;
But the three in the gap raised a curtain,
With death-dealin' crack upon crack.
An' back to the gully with frightened
Sick faces they galloped, like sin;
An' we, in the rocks, lay an' sighted,
An' hell jest happened agin.
They wuz cornered: they seed it: an' grimly
They turned on their death: an' I leant
With my gun on a rock, an' seed dimly
They rid fer us shootin', hell-bent
Through the smoke fer the thick o' our fire:
Then Lize, who wuz loadin' a gun,
Shrieked somethin' an' jumped an' a wire
O' blood down her face. She wuz done.
There wuz six on 'em left. But a baby
Could of finished me then, with her dead
Instid o' myself! An' it may be
The rest on us there had eat lead
If Bud had n't come with another.
Them three wuz enough fer the rest,
Gittin' off as they did! I would bother
With nothin', her head on my breast.
But they got me away; an' together

Brung her to the cave with the shot
In her face. May the buzzards now feather
And roost on them there where they rot!

Madison Julius Cawein

Morgan Le Fay

In dim samite was she bedight,
And on her hair a hoop of gold,
Like fox-fire in the tawn moonlight,
Was glimmering cold.

With soft gray eyes she gloomed and glowered;
With soft red lips she sang a song:
What knight might gaze upon her face,
Nor fare along?

For all her looks were full of spells,
And all her words of sorcery;
And in some way they seemed to say
'Oh, come with me!

'Oh, come with me! oh, come with me!
Oh, come with me, my love, Sir Kay!'-
How should he know the witch, I trow,
Morgan le Fay?

How should he know the wily witch,
With sweet white face and raven hair?
Who by her art bewitched his heart
And held him there.

For soul and sense had waxed amort
To wold and weald, to slade and stream;
And all he heard was her soft word
As one adream.

And all he saw was her bright eyes,
And her fair face that held him still;
And wild and wan she led him on
O'er vale and hill.

Until at last a castle lay
Beneath the moon, among the trees;
Its Gothic towers old and gray
With mysteries.

Tall in its hall an hundred knights
In armor stood with glaive in hand;
The following of some great King,
Lord of that land.

Sir Bors, Sir Balin, and Gawain,
All Arthur's knights, and many mo;
But these in battle had been slain
Long years ago.

But when Morgan with lifted hand
Moved down the hall, they louted low;
For she was Queen of Shadowland,
That woman of snow.

Then from Sir Kay she drew away,
And mocking at him by her side,-
'Behold, Sir Knights, the knave who slew
Your King,' she cried.

Then like one man those shadows raised
Their swords, whereon the moon glanced gray;
And clashing all strode from the wall
Against Sir Kay.

And on his body, bent and bowed,
The hundred blades like one blade fell;
While over all rang long and loud
The mirth of Hell.

Madison Julius Cawein

Moss And Fern

Where rise the brakes of bramble there,
Wrapped with the trailing rose;
Through cane where waters ramble, there
Where deep the sword-grass grows,
Who knows?
Perhaps, unseen of eyes of man,
Hides Pan.

Perhaps the creek, whose pebbles make
A foothold for the mint,
May bear, where soft its trebles make
Confession, some vague hint,
(The print,
Goat-hoofed, of one who lightly ran,)
Of Pan.

Where, in the hollow of the hills
Ferns deepen to the knees,
What sounds are those above the hills,
And now among the trees?
No breeze!
The syrinx, haply, none may scan,
Of Pan.

In woods where waters break upon
The hush like some soft word;
Where sun-shot shadows shake upon
The moss, who has not heard
No bird!
The flute, as breezy as a fan,
Of Pan?

Far in, where mosses lay for us
Still carpets, cool and plush;
Where bloom and branch and ray for us.
Sleep, waking with a rush
The hush
But sounds the satyr hoof a span
Of Pan.

O woods, whose thrushes sing to us,
Whose brooks dance sparkling heels;
Whose wild aromas cling to us,
While here our wonder kneels,
Who steals
Upon us, brown as bark with tan,
But Pan?

Madison Julius Cawein

Mother

Oh, I am going home again,
Back to the old house in the lane,
And mother! who still sits and sews,
With cheeks, each one, a winter rose,
A-watching for her boy, you know,
Who left so many years ago,
To face the world, its stress and strain
Oh, I am going home again.

Yes, I am going home once more,
And mother 'll meet me at the door
With smiles that rainbow tears of joy,
And arms that reach out for her boy,
And draw him to her happy breast,
On which awhile his head he 'll rest,
And care no more, if rich or poor,
At home with her, at home once more.

Yes, I am going home to her,
Whose welcome evermore is sure:
I have been thinking, night and day,
How tired I am of being away!
How homesick for her gentle face,
And welcome of the oldtime place,
And memories of the days that were
Oh, I am going home to her.

Oh, just to see her face again
A-smiling at the windowpane!
To see her standing at the door
And offering her arms once more,
As oft she did when, just a child,
She took me to her heart and smiled,
And hushed my cry and cured my pain
I'm going home to her again.

Madison Julius Cawein

Moths And Fireflies

Since Fancy taught me in her school of spells
I know her tricks-These are not moths at all,
Nor fireflies; but masking Elfland belles
Whose link-boys torch them to Titania's ball.

Madison Julius Cawein

Mrs. Browning

O voice of ecstasy and lyric pain,
Divinely throated and divinely heard
Among old England's songsters! Sprite or bird,
Haunting the woods of song with raptured strain!
In whose wild music Love is born and slain.
And young Desire cries ever a battle word,
And Passion goes, ready with kiss or sword,
To make us captive or set free again.
Above the flowery meads of English song,
Enchantment-sweet, her golden numbers pour,
Commanding and compelling, like Desire!
O nightingale and lark, how o'er the throng
Of all thy sister singers thou dost soar,
Filled with seraphic love and Sapphic fire!

Madison Julius Cawein

Music

Thou, oh, thou!
Thou of the chorded shell and golden plectrum! thou
Of the dark eyes and pale pacific brow!
Music, who by the plangent waves,
Or in the echoing night of labyrinthine caves,
Or on God's mountains, lonely as the stars,
Touchest reverberant bars
Of immemorial sorrow and amaze;
Keeping regret and memory awake,
And all the immortal ache
Of love that leans upon the past's sweet days
In retrospection!-now, oh, now,
Interpreter and heart-physician, thou,
Who gazest on the heaven and the hell
Of life, and singest each as well,
Touch with thy all-mellifluous finger-tips,
Or thy melodious lips,
This sickness named my soul,
Making it whole,
As is an echo of a chord,
Or some symphonic word,
Or sweet vibrating sigh,
That deep, resurgent still doth rise and die
On thy voluminous roll;
Part of the beauty and the mystery
That axles Earth with song; and as a slave,
Swings it around and 'round on each sonorous pole,
'Mid spheric harmony,
And choral majesty,
And diapasoning of wind and wave;
And speeds it on its far elliptic way
'Mid vasty anthemings of night and day.
O cosmic cry
Of two eternities, wherein we see
The phantasms, Death and Life,
At endless strife
Above the silence of a monster grave.

Music And Moonlight

White roses, like a mist
Upon a terraced height,
And 'mid the roses, opal, moonbeam-kissed,
A fountain falling white.

And as the full moon flows,
Orbed fire, into a cloud,
There is a fragrant sound as if a rose
Had sighed its soul aloud.

There is a whisper pale,
As if a rose awoke,
And, having heard in sleep the nightingale,
Still dreaming of it spoke.

Now, as from some vast shell
A giant pearl rolls white,
From the dividing cloud, that winds compel,
The moon sweeps, big and bright.

Moon-mists and pale perfumes,
Wind-wafted through the dusk:
There is a sound as if unfolding blooms
Voiced their sweet thoughts in musk.

A spirit is abroad
Of music and of sleep:
The moon and mists have made for it a road
Adown the violet deep.

It breathes a tale to me,
A tale of ancient day;
And like a dream again I seem to see
Those towers old and gray.

That castle by the foam,
Where once our hearts made moan:
And through the night again you seem to come
Down statued stairs of stone.

Again I feel your hair,
Dark, fragrant, deep and cool:
You lift your face up, pale with its despair,
And wildly beautiful.

Again your form I strain;
Again, unto my heart:
Again your lips, again and yet again,
I press and then we part.

As centuries ago
We did in Camelot;
Where once we lived that life of bliss and woe,
That you remember not.

When you were Guinevere,
And I was Launcelot. .
I have remembered many and many a year,
And you you have forgot.

Madison Julius Cawein

Music Of Summer

I

Thou sit'st among the sunny silences
Of terraced hills and woodland galleries,
Thou utterance of all calm melodies,
Thou lutanist of Earth's most affluent lute,-
Where no false note intrudes
To mar the silent music,-branch and root,-
Charming the fields ripe, orchards and deep woods,
To song similitudes
Of flower and seed and fruit.

II

Oft have I seen thee, in some sensuous air,
Bewitch the broad wheat-acres everywhere
To imitated gold of thy deep hair:
The peach, by thy red lips' delicious trouble,
Blown into gradual dyes
Of crimson; and beheld thy magic double-
Dark-blue with fervid influence of thine eyes-
The grapes' rotundities,
Bubble by purple bubble.

III

Deliberate uttered into life intense,
Out of thy soul's melodious eloquence
Beauty evolves its just preeminence:
The lily, from some pensive-smitten chord
Drawing significance
Of purity, a visible hush stands: starred
With splendor, from thy passionate utterance,
The rose writes its romance
In blushing word on word.

IV

As star by star Day harps in Evening,

The inspiration of all things that sing
Is in thy hands and from their touch takes wing:
All brooks, all birds,-whom song can never sate,-
The leaves, the wind and rain,
Green frogs and insects, singing soon and late,
Thy sympathies inspire, thy heart's refrain,
Whose sounds invigorate
With rest life's weary brain.

V

And as the Night, like some mysterious rune,
Its beauty makes emphatic with the moon,
Thou lute us no immaterial tune:
But where dim whispers haunt the cane and corn,
By thy still strain made strong,
Earth's awful avatar,-in whom is born
Thy own deep music,-labors all night long
With growth, assuring Morn
Assumes with onward song.

Madison Julius Cawein

Musings

Inspiration.

All who have toiled for Art, who've won or lost,
Sat equal priests at her high Pentecost;
Only the chrism and sacrament of flame,
Anointing all, inspired not all the same.

Apportionment.

How often in our search for joy below
Hoping for happiness we chance on woe.

Victory.

They who take courage from their own defeat
Are victors too, no matter how much beat.

Preparation.

How often hope's fair flower blooms richest where
The soul was fertilized with black despair.

Disillusion.

Those unrequited in their love who die
Have never drained life's chief illusion dry.

Success.

Success allures us in the earth and skies:
We seek to win her, but, too amorous,
Mocking, she flees us. Haply, were we wise,
We would not strive and she would come to us.

Science.

Miranda-like, above the world she waves
The wand of Prospero; and, beautiful,

Ariel the airy, Caliban the dull,
Lightning and steam, are her unwilling slaves.

Echo.

Dweller in hollow places, hills and rocks,
Daughter of Silence and old Solitude,
Tip-toe she stands within her cave or wood,
Her only life the noises that she mocks.

The Universal Wind.

Wild son of Heav'n, with laughter and alarm,
Now East, now West, now North, now South he goes,
Bearing in one harsh hand dark death and storm,
And in the other, sunshine and a rose.

Compensation.

Yea, whom He loves the Lord God chasteneth
With disappointments, so that this side death,
Through suffering and failure, they know Hell
To make them worthy in that Heaven to dwell
Of Love's attainment, where they come to be
Parts of its beauty and divinity.

Poppies.

Summer met Sleep at sunset,
Dreaming within the south,
Drugged with his soul's deep slumber,
Red with her heart's hot drouth,
These are the drowsy kisses
She pressed upon his mouth.

Her Eyes And Mouth.

There is no Paradise like that which lies
Deep in the heavens of her azure eyes:
There is no Eden here on Earth that glows
Like that which smiles rich in her mouth's red rose.

Her Soul.

To me not only does her soul suggest
Palms and the peace of tropic shore and wood,
But, oceaened far beyond the golden West,
The Fortunate Islands of true Womanhood.

Her Face.

The gladness of our Southern spring; the grace
Of summer; and the dreaminess of fall
Are parts of her sweet nature. Such a face
Was Ruth's, methinks, divinely spiritual.

Madison Julius Cawein

Mutatis Mutandis

The Fool

Here is a tale for children and their grannies:
There was a fool, a man who'd had his chances
But missed them, somehow; lost them, just for fancies,
Tag-ends of things with which he'd crammed crannies
Of his cracked head, as panes are crammed with paper:
Fragments of song and bits of worthless writing,
Which he was never weary of reciting,
Fluttered his mind as night a windy taper.
A witless fool! who lived in some fair Venice
Of his own building where he dreamed of Beauty:
Who swore each weed a flower the sorry pauper!
This would not do. Men said he was a menace
To all mankind; and, as it was their duty,
Clapped him in prison where he died as proper.

II.

The Scarecrow

Here is a tale for prelates and for parsons:
There was a scarecrow once, a thing of tatters
And sticks and straw, to whom men trusted matters
Of weighty moment murders, thefts and arsons.
None saw he was a scarecrow. Every worship
And honour his. Men set him in high places,
And ladies primped their bodies, tinged their faces,
And kneeled to him as slaves to some great Sirship.
One night a storm, none knew it, blew to pieces
Our jackstraw friend, and the sweet air of heaven
Knew him no more, and was no longer tainted.
Then learned doctors put him in their theses:
The State set up his statue: and thought, even
As thought the Church, perhaps he should be sainted.

III.

Service

Here is a tale for proper men and virgins:
There was a woman once who had a daughter,
A fair-faced wench, as stable as is water,
And frailer than the first spring flower that burgeons.
She did not need to work, but then her mother
Thought it more suitable, and circumspectly
Put her with gentlefolks, where, indirectly,
She rose in service as has many another.
The house she served in soon became divided:
The wife and husband parted, with some scandal:
But she remained and, in the end, was married.
What happened then? You'll say, 'The girl decided
She loved another. 'Nay; not so. The vandal
Wrecked no more homes but lived a life unvaried.

IV.

The Ape

Here is a tale for maidens and for mothers:
There was an ape, a very prince of monkeys,
Who capered in the world of fools and flunkies,
The envy of his set and of all others.
He was the handbook of all social manners:
The beau of beaux, and simian glass of fashion,
To whom all folly functioned, played at passion,
And matrimony waved beleaguering banners.
A girl of girls, one God had given graces
And beauty, more than oft He grants to human,
Captured the creature, and they were united.
And strange to say, she loved him. Saw no traces
Of ape in him. And, like a very woman,
Reformed her countenance, and was delighted.

V.

The Pessimist

Here is a tale for uncles and old aunties:
There was a man once who denied the Devil,
Yet in the world saw nothing else but evil;

A pessimist, with face as sour as Dante's.
Still people praised him; men he loathed and hated,
And cursed beneath his breath for wretched sinners,
While still he drank with them and ate their dinners,
And listened to their talk and tolerated.
At last he wrote a book, full of invective
And vile abuse of earth and all its nations,
Denying God and Devil, Heaven and Hades.
Fame followed this. 'His was the right perspective!'
'A great philosopher!' He lost all patience.
But still went out to dine with Lords and Ladies.

VI.

An Incident

Here is a tale for men and women teachers:
There was a girl who'd ceased to be a maiden;
Who walked by night with heart like Lilith's laden;
A child of sin anathemaed of preachers.
She had been lovely once; but dye and scarlet,
On hair and face, had ravaged all her beauty;
Only her eyes still did her girl-soul duty,
Showing the hell that hounded her poor harlot!
One day a fisherman from out the river
Fished her pale body, (like a branch of willow,
Or golden weed) self-murdered, drowned and broken:
The sight of it had made a strong man shiver;
And on her poor breast, as upon a pillow,
A picture smiled, a baby's, like some token

VII.

Vindication

Here is a tale for gossips and chaste people:
There lived a woman once, a straight-laced lady,
Whose only love was slander. Nothing shady
Escaped her vulture eye. Like some prim steeple
Her course of life pointed to Heaven ever;
And woe unto the sinner, girl or woman,
Whom love undid. She was their fiercest foeman.

No circumstance excused. Misfortune, never....
As she had lived she died. The mourners gathered:
Parson and preacher, this one and another,
And many gossips of most proper carriage.
Her will was read. And then... a child was fathered.
Fat Lechery had his day.... She'd been a mother.
A man was heir.... There'd never been a marriage.

VIII.

Treasure

Here is a tale for infants and old nurses:
There was a man who gathered rags; and peddled:
Who lived alone: with no one ever meddled:
And this old man was very fond of verses.
His house, a ruin, so the tale rehearses;
A hovel over-run of rats and vermin;
Not fit for beast to live in. (Like a sermon
Embodying misery and hell and curses.)
There, one grey dawn of rain and windy weather,
They found him dead; starved; o'er a written paper;
Beside a dim and half-expiring taper:
It was a play, the poor fool'd put together,
Of gnomes and fairies, for his own sad pleasure:
And folks destroyed it, saying, 'We seek for treasure.'

IX.

The Ass

Here is a tale for artists and for writers:
There was an ass, in other words, a critic,
Who brayed and balked and kicked most analytic,
And waved long ears above his brother smiters.
He could not tell a rose-tree from a thistle,
But oft mistook the one thing for the other;
Then wagged his ears most wisely at some brother,
Sent him his he-haw for the Penny Whistle.
A poet sent his volume to him' kindly
Asking for criticism. You might know it:
He made one mouthful of it, weed and flower.

There rose a cry that he had done it blindly.
'Twas poetry! What! would he kill a poet!
Not he! The ass had brayed him into power.

X.

The Cabbage

Here is a tale for any one who wishes:
There grew a cabbage once among the flowers,
A plain, broad cabbage a good wench, whose hours
Were kitchen-busy with plebeian dishes.
The rose and lily, toilless, without mottle,
Patricians born, despised her: 'How unpleasant!'
They cried; 'What odour! Worse than any peasant
Who soils God's air! Give us our smelling- bottle.'
There came a gentleman who owned the garden,
Looking about him at both flower and edible,
Admiring here and there; a simple sinner,
Who sought some bud to be his heart's sweet warden:
But passed the flowers and took it seems incredible!
That cabbage! But a man must have his dinner.

XI.

The Criminal

Here is a tale for all who wish to listen:
There was a thief who, in his cut-throat quarter,
Was hailed as chief; he had a way of barter,
Persuasion, masked, behind a weapon's glisten,
That made it cockrow with each good man's riches.
At last he joined the Brotherhood of Murder,
And rose in his profession; lived a herder
Of crime in some dark tavern of the ditches.
There was a war. He went. Became a gunner.
And slew, as soldiers should, his many a hundred,
In authorized and most professional manner.
Here he advanced again. Was starred a oner.
Was captained, pensioned, and nobody wondered;
And lived and died respectable as a tanner.

XII.

Death And The Fool

Here is a tale for any man or woman:

A fool sought Death; and braved him with his bauble
Among the graves. At last he heard a hobble,
And something passed him, monstrous, super-human.
And by a tomb, that reared a broken column,
He heard it stop. And then Gargantuan laughter
Shattered the hush. Deep silence followed after,
Filled with the stir of bones, cadaverous, solemn.
Then said the fool: 'Come! show thyself, old prancer!
I'll have a bout with thee. I, too, can clatter
My wand and motley. Come now! Death and Folly,
See who's the better man.' There was no answer;
Only his bauble broke; a serious matter
To the poor fool who died of melancholy.

XIII.

The Bagpipe

Here is a tale for poets and for players:

There was a bagpipe once, that wheezed and whistled,
And droned vile discords, notes that fairly bristled,
Nasal and harsh, outbraying all the brayers.
And then the thing assumed another bearing:
Boasted itself an organ of God's making,
A world-enduring instrument, Earth-shaking,
Greater than any organ, more sky-daring.
To prove which, lo, upon an elevation
It pranced and blew to its own satisfaction,
Until 'twas heard from Key West far as Fundy.
But while it piped, some schoolboy took occasion
There was a blow; a sudden sharp impaction;
The wind-bag burst... Sic transit gloria mundi.

XIV.

The Ox

Here is a tale for farmer and for peasant:
There was an ox, who might have ploughed for Jason,
So strong was he, his huge head like a bason,
A Gothic helmet with enormous crescent.
Stolid of look and slow of hoof and steady,
Meek was the beast and born but to be driven,
Unmindful of the yoke which toil had given,
Toil with his goad and lash for ever ready.
One day a bull, who was the bullock's neighbor,
Proud as a sultan haremed with his women,
Lowd to the ox who had received a beating:
'You are a fool! What have you for your labour?
Blows and bad food! Go to. Why don't you show men?'
The ox was but an ox and went on eating.

XV.

The Goose

Here is a tale for spinsters at their sewing:
There was a goose, a little gosling surely,
Who went her goose-girl way and looked demurely
As every goose should when 'tis wise and knowing.
Proper was she as every gosling should be,
And innocent as Margarete or Gretchen,
And did her duty in the house and kitchen,
And like a goose was happy as she could be.
Smug was she with a sleek and dove-like dimple,
Great gooseberry eyes and cheeks out of the dairy:
A goose, aye, just a goose, a little dumb thing.
One day the goose was gone. The tale is simple.
She had eloped. 'Twas nothing ordinary.
A married man with children. That was something.

XVI.

The Beast

Here is a tale for sportsmen when at table:
There was a boar, like that Atalanta hunted,
Who gorged and snored and, unmolested, grunted,
His fat way through the world as such able.

Huge-jowled and paunched and porcine-limbed and marrowed,
King of his kind, deep in his lair he squatted,
And round him fames of many maidens rotted
Where Licence whelped and Lust her monsters farrowed.
There came a damsel, like the one in Spenser,
A Britomart, as sorcerous as Circe,
Who pierced him with a tract, her spear, and ended
The beast's career. Made him a man; a censor
Of public morals; arbiter of mercy;
And led him by the nose and called him splendid.

XVII.

The Owl

Here is a tale for ladies with romances:
There was an owl; composer and musician,
Who looked as wise as if he had a mission,
And at all art cast supercilious glances.
People proclaimed him great because he said it;
And, like the great, he never played, nor printed
His compositions, 'though 'twas whispered, hinted
He'd written something but no one had read it.
Owl-eyed he posed at functions of position,
Hirsute, and eye-glassed, looking analytic,
Opening his mouth to worshipping female knowledge:
And then he married. A woman of ambition.
A singer, teacher, and a musical critic.
Just what he wanted. He became a college.

XVIII.

The Toad

Here is a tale to tell to rich relations:
There was a toad, a Calibanic monster,
In whose squat head ambition had ensconced her
Most bloated jewel, dear to highest stations.
He was received, though mottled as a lichen
In coat and character, because the creature
Croaked as the devil prompted him, or nature,
And said the right thing both in hall and kitchen.

To each he sang according to their liking,
And purred his flattery in the ear of Leisure,
Cringing attendance on the proud and wealthy.
One day a crane, with features of a Viking,
Swallowed him whole and did it with great pleasure:
His system needed such; toads kept him healthy.

XIX.

The Cricket

Here is a tale for those who sing with reason:
There was a cricket, troubadouring fellow,
Who chirped his lay, or zoomed it like a 'cello,
Day in, day out, no matter what the season.
Great was his love for his own violining;
He never wearied saying, 'What performing!'
And oft, when through, would ask, 'Was not that charming?'
Then play it over, right from the beginning.
A talent, such as his, should be rewarded,
So thought he, all unconscious of intention
Of any one among the violin sects,
Until by some one, lo, he was regarded;
Lifted, examined; given special mention;
And placed within a case with other insects.

XX.

The Torrent

Here is a tale for workmen and their masters:
There was a torrent once that down a mountain
Flashed its resistless way; a foaming fountain,
Basaltic-built, 'twixt cataract-hewn pilasters.
Down from its eagle eyrie nearer, nearer,
Its savage beauty born mid rocks and cedars,
Swept free as tempest, wild as mountain leaders,
Of stars and storms the swiftly moving mirror.
Men found it out; and set to work to tame it;
Put it to pounding rock and rafting lumber;
Made it a carrier of the filth of cities:
Harnessed its joy to engines; tried to shame it;

Saying, 'Be civilized!' and piled their cumber
Upon it; bound it. God of all the Pities!

Madison Julius Cawein

My Lady Of The Beeches

Here among the beeches
Winds and wild perfume,
That the twilight pleaches
Into gleam and gloom,
Build for her a room.

Her whose Beauty cometh,
Misty as the morn,
When the wild-bee hummeth,
At its honey-horn,
In the wayside thorn.

As the wood grows dimmer,
With the drowsy night,
Like a moonbeam glimmer
Here she walks in white,
With a firefly light.

Moths around her flitting,
Like a moth she goes,
Here a moment sitting
By this wilding rose,
With my heart's repose.

Every bud and flower
From her look has caught
Something of that hour
While she stood in thought
Gazing into naught.

Every bough that dances
Has assumed the grace
Of her form; and fancies,
Flashed from eye and face,
Brood about the place.

Every wind that flutters,
Says what is expressed
Of her heart and utters

Sounds of peace and rest
Pulsing in her breast.

And the water, shaken
In its plunge and poise,
To itself has taken
Quiet of her voice,
And restrains its joys.

Would that these could tell me
What and whence she is,
She, who doth enspell me,
Fill my soul with bliss
Of her spirit-kiss.

Though the heart beseech her,
And the soul implore,
Who is it may reach her,
Safe behind the door
Of all woodland lore?

Madison Julius Cawein

My Romance

If it so befalls that the midnight hovers
In mist no moonlight breaks,
The leagues of the years my spirit covers,
And my self myself forsakes.

And I live in a land of stars and flowers,
White cliffs by a silvery sea;
And the pearly points of her opal towers
From the mountains beckon me.

And I think that I know that I hear her calling
From a casement bathed with light-
Through music of waters in waters falling
Mid palms from a mountain height.

And I feel that I think my love's awaited
By the romance of her charms;
That her feet are early and mine belated
In a world that chains my arms.

But I break my chains and the rest is easy-
In the shadow of the rose,
Snow-white, that blooms in her garden breezy,
We meet and no one knows.

And we dream sweet dreams and kiss sweet kisses;
The world-it may live or die!
The world that forgets; that never misses
The life that has long gone by.

We speak old vows that have long been spoken;
And weep a long-gone woe:
For you must know our hearts were broken
Hundreds of years ago.

Madison Julius Cawein

Mysteries

Soft and silken and silvery brown,
In shoes of lichen and leafy gown,
Little blue butterflies fluttering around her,
Deep in the forest, afar from town,
There where a stream came trickling down,
I met with Silence, who wove a crown
Of sleep whose mystery bound her.

I gazed in her eyes, that were mossy green
As the rain that pools in a hollow between
The twisted roots of a tree that towers:
And I saw the things that none has seen,
That mean far more than facts may mean,
The dreams, that are true, of an age that has been,
That God has thought into flowers.

I gazed on her lips, that were dewy gray
As the mist that clings, at the close of day,
To the wet hillside when the winds cease blowing;
And I heard the things that none may say,
That are holier far than the prayers we pray,
The murmured music God breathes always
Through the hearts of all things growing.

Soft and subtle and vapory white,
In shoes of shadow and gown of light,
Crimson poppies asleep around her,
Far in the forest, beneath a height,
I came on Slumber, who wove from night
A wreath of silence, that, darkly bright,
With its mystic beauty bound her.

I looked in her face that was pale and still
As the moon that rises above the hill
Where the pines loom sombre as sorrow:
And the things that all have known and will,
I knew for a moment: the myths that fill
And people the past of the soul and thrill
Its hope with a far to-morrow.

I heard her voice, that was strange with pain
As a wind that whispers of wreck and rain
To the leaves of the autumn rustling lonely:
And I felt the things that are felt in vain
By all the longings that haunt the brain
Of man, that come and depart again
And are part of his dreamings only.

Madison Julius Cawein

Myth And Romance

When I go forth to greet the glad-faced Spring,
Just at the time of opening apple-buds,
When brooks are laughing, winds are whispering,
On babbling hillsides or in warbling woods,
There is an unseen presence that eludes:
Perhaps a Dryad, in whose tresses cling
The loamy odors of old solitudes,
Who, from her beechen doorway, calls; and leads
My soul to follow; now with dimpling words
Of leaves; and now with syllables of birds;
While here and there-is it her limbs that swing?
Or restless sunlight on the moss and weeds?

II

Or, haply, 't is a Naiad now who slips,
Like some white lily, from her fountain's glass,
While from her dripping hair and breasts and hips,
The moisture rains cool music on the grass.
Her have I heard and followed, yet, alas!
Have seen no more than the wet ray that dips
The shivered waters, wrinkling where I pass;
But, in the liquid light, where she doth hide,
I have beheld the azure of her gaze
Smiling; and, where the orbing ripple plays,
Among her minnows I have heard her lips,
Bubbling, make merry by the waterside.

III

Or now it is an Oread-whose eyes
Are constellated dusk-who stands confessed,
As naked as a flow'r; her heart's surprise,
Like morning's rose, mantling her brow and breast:
She, shrinking from my presence, all distressed

Stands for a startled moment ere she flies,
Her deep hair blowing, up the mountain crest,
Wild as a mist that trails along the dawn.
And is't her footfalls lure me? or the sound
Of airs that stir the crisp leaf on the ground?
And is't her body glimmers on yon rise?
Or dog-wood blossoms snowing on the lawn?

IV

Now't is a Satyr piping serenades
On a slim reed. Now Pan and Faun advance
Beneath green-hollowed roofs of forest glades,
Their feet gone mad with music: now, perchance,
Sylvanus sleeping, on whose leafy trance
The Nymphs stand gazing in dim ambuscades
Of sun-embodied perfume.-Myth, Romance,
Where'er I turn, reach out bewildering arms,
Compelling me to follow. Day and night
I hear their voices and behold the light
Of their divinity that still evades,
And still allures me in a thousand forms.

Madison Julius Cawein

Nearing Christmas

THE season of the rose and peace is past:
It could not last.
There's heartbreak in the hills and stormy sighs
Of sorrow in the rain-lashed plains and skies,
While Earth regards, aghast,
The last red leaf that flies.
The world is cringing in the darkness where
War left his lair,
And everything takes on a lupine look,
Baring gaunt teeth at every peaceful nook,
And shaking torrent hair
At every little brook.
Cancers of ulcerous flame his eyes, and — hark!
There in the dark
The ponderous stir of metal, iron feet;
And with it, heard around the world, the beat
Of Battle; sounds that mark
His heart's advance, retreat.
With shrapnel pipes he goes his monstrous ways;
And, screeching, plays
The hell-born music Havoc dances to;
And, following with his skeleton-headed crew
Of ravening Nights and Days,
Horror invades the blue.
Against the Heaven he lifts a mailed fist
And writes a list
Of beautiful cities on the ghastly sky:
And underneath them, with no reason why,
In blood and tears and mist,
The postscript, 'These must die!'
Change is the portion and chief heritage
Of every Age.
The spirit of God still waits its time. — And War
May blur His message for a while, and mar
The writing on His page,
To this our sorrowful star.
But there above the conflict, orbed in rays,
Is drawn the face
Of Peace; at last who comes into her own;

Peace, from whose tomb the world shall roll the stone,
And give her highest place
In the human heart alone.

Madison Julius Cawein

Never - Song

Love hath no place in her,
Though in her bosom be
Love-thoughts and dreams that stir
Longings that know not me:
Love hath no place in her,
No place for me.

Never within her eyes
Do I the love-light see;
Never her soul replies
To the sad soul in me:
Never with soul and eyes
Speaks she to me.

She is a star, a rose,
I but a moth, a bee;
High in her heaven she glows,
Blooms far away from me:
She is a star, a rose,
Never for me.

Why will I think of her
To my heart's misery?
Dreaming how sweet it were
Had she a thought of me:
Why will I think of her!
Why, why, ah me!

Madison Julius Cawein

Night

Out of the East, as from an unknown shore,
Thou comest with thy children in thine arms,
Slumber and Dream, whom mortals all adore,
Their flowing raiment sculptured to their charms:
Soft on thy breast thy lovely children rest,
Laid like twin roses in one balmy nest.
Silent thou comest, swiftly too and slow.
There is no other presence like to thine,
When thou approachest with thy babes divine,
Thy shadowy face above them bending low,
Blowing the ringlets from their brows of snow.
Oft have I taken Sleep from thy dark arms,
And fondled her fair head, with poppies wreathed,
Within my bosom's depths, until its storms
With her were hushed and I but faintly breathed.
And then her sister, Dream, with frolic art
Arose from rest, and on my sleeping heart
Blew bubbles of dreams where elfin worlds were lost;
Worlds where my stranger soul sang songs to me,
And talked with spirits by a rainbowed sea,
Or smiled, an unfamiliar shape of frost,
Floating on gales of breathless melody.
Day comes to us in garish glory garbed;
But thou, thou bringest to the tired heart
Rest and deep silence, in which are absorbed
All the vain tumults of the mind and mart.
Whether thou comest with hands full of stars,
Or clothed in storm and clouds, the lightning bars,
Rolling the thunder like some mighty dress,
God moves with thee; we seem to hear His feet,
Wind-like, along the floors of Heaven beat;
To see His face, revealed in awfulness,
Through thee, O Night, to ban us or to bless.

Madison Julius Cawein

Night And Rain

The night has set her outposts there
Of wind and rain;
And to and fro, with ragged hair,
At intervals they search the pane.

The fir-trees, creepers redly climb,
That seem to bleed,
Like old conspirators in crime,
Drip, whispering of some desperate deed.

'Tis as if wild skirts, flying fast,
Besieged the house;
The wittol grass, bent to the blast,
Whines as if witches held carouse.

And now dark feet steal to the door
And tap and tip,
Shuffle, and then go on once more
The eaves keep a persistent drip.

And then a skurry, and a bound;
Wild feet again?
A wind-wrenched tree that to the ground
Sweeps instantly its weight of rain.

What is it, finger on its lip,
That up and down
Treads, with dark raiment all a-drip,
Trailing a tattered leaf of gown?

'O father, I am frightened! See!
There, at the pane!
'Hush! hush! my child, 'tis but a tree
That tosses in the wind and rain.'

A rumble, as it were, of hoofs,
And hollow call:
'O father, what rolls on the roofs,
That sounds like some dark funeral?'

'Hush! hush! my child; it is the storm
The autumn wind.'
'But, father, see! what is that form?
There! wild against the window-blind.'

'It is the firelight in the room.'
The father sighed.
And then the child: "Twas dark as doom,
And had the face of her who died.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Night And Storm At Gloucester

I heard the wind last night that cried and wept
Like some old skipper's ghost outside my door;
And on the roof the rain that tramped and tore
Like feet of seamen on a deck storm-swept.
Against the pane the Night with shudderings crept,
And crouched there wailing; moaning ever more
Its tale of terror; of the wrath on shore,
The rage at sea, bidding all wake who slept.
And then I heard a voice as old as Time;
The calling of the mother of the world,
Ocean, who thundered on her granite crags,
Foaming with fury, meditating crime.
And then, far off, wild minute guns; and, hurled
Through roaring surf, the rush of sails in rags.

Madison Julius Cawein

Nocturne

A disc of violet blue,
Rimmed with a thorn of fire,
The new moon hangs in a sky of dew;
And under the vines, where the sunset's hue
Is blent with blossoms, first one, then two,
Begins the cricket's choir.

Bright blurs of golden white,
And points of silvery glimmer,
The first stars wink in the web of night;
And through the flowers the moths take flight,
In the honeysuckle-colored light,
Where the shadowy shrubs grow dimmer.

Soft through the dim and dying eve,
Sweet through the dusk and dew,
Come, while the hours their witchcraft weave,
Dim in the House of the Soul's-Sweet-Leave,
Here in the pale and perfumed eve,
Here where I wait for you.

A great, dark, radiant rose,
Dripping with starry glower,
Is the night, whose bosom overflows
With the balsam musk of the breeze that blows
Into the heart, as each one knows,
Of every nodding flower.

A voice that sighs and sighs,
Then whispers like a spirit,
Is the wind that kisses the drowsy eyes
Of the primrose open, and, rocking, lies
In the lily's cradle, and soft unties
The rosebud's crimson near it.

Sweet through the deep and dreaming night,
Soft through the dark and dew,
Come, where the moments their magic write,
Deep in the Book of the Heart's-Delight,

Here in the hushed and haunted night,
Here where I wait for you.

Madison Julius Cawein

Noera

Noera, when sad Fall
Has grayed the fallow;
Leaf-cramped the wood-brook's brawl
In pool and shallow;
When, by the woodside, tall
Stands sere the mallow.

Noera, when gray gold
And golden gray
The crackling hollows fold
By every way,
Shall I thy face behold,
Dear bit of May?

When webs are cribs for dew,
And gossamers
Streak by you, silver-blue;
When silence stirs
One leaf, of rusty hue,
Among the burrs:

Noera, through the wood,
Or through the grain,
Come, with the hoiden mood
Of wind and rain
Fresh in thy sunny blood,
Sweetheart, again.

Noera, when the corn,
Reaped on the fields,
The asters' stars adorn;
And purple shields
Of ironweeds lie torn
Among the wealds:

Noera, haply then,
Thou being with me,
Each ruined greenwood glen
Will bud and be

Spring's with the spring again,
The spring in thee.

Thou of the breezy tread;
Feet of the breeze:
Thou of the sunbeam head;
Heart like a bee's:
Face like a woodland-bred
Anemone's.

Thou to October bring
An April part!
Come! make the wild birds sing,
The blossoms start!
Noera, with the spring
Wild in thy heart!

Come with our golden year:
Come as its gold:
With the same laughing, clear,
Loved voice of old:
In thy cool hair one dear
Wild marigold.

Madison Julius Cawein

Nothing To Do

Don't know what to do to-day.
Got so many things to do
I can't do them. Want to play,
But my toys are all too new
I don't like to play with them:
Blocks and paints and dogs and guns;
Watch that winds up by the stem;
And a train of cars that runs
Round a track and far away.
Don't know what to do to-day.
Don't know what to do to-day.

Whether just to stand and look
At my Christmas-tree, or stay
Looking at my picture-book
Full of fairy stories; or
Ask to have them read to me;
Or to bother mother for
Something off the Christmas-tree:
I don't know and I can't say
Don't know what to do to-day.
Don't know what to do to-day.

Never can make up my mind.
I could take my new red sleigh
And go sleighing on behind
Some old wagon on the snow
As the other children do:
But, you see, I just don't know!
There's my brand new wagon, too;
It'd be lonesome, me away.
Don't know what to do to-day.
Don't know what to do to-day.

There's my fine new rocking-horse,
Long of tail and dapple-gray,
I might ride on him of course:
But my new velocipede
What would it do then? or what

Would that 'fiery, untamed steed,'
That I almost had forgot,
Hobbyhorse just think or say?
Don't know what to do to-day.
Don't know what to do to-day.

But I know what I could do:
I could make my donkey bray
By just twisting round a screw
In his stomach, and that's all;
I might make my rooster crow;
And my big mechanical doll
Play his music-box; and, oh!
I could make my old hen lay.
That's what I could do to-day.
'Don't know what to do to-day!'

Mother says, 'Well, I suppose,
Better put your toys away.
You've too many, heaven knows!
Don't know what Old Santa meant
Bringing you a toy-store. You
Have too much, that's evident;
Give some to those children who
Have n't toys with which to play.
That's what you could do to-day.

'Don't know what to do to-day?
That's just what you could do! take
Lot of these new toys, you say
You won't play with, and just make
Christmas visits to the poor:
Little boys and girls Old Kris
Skipped; just made his old sleigh soar
O'er their chimneys; seemed to miss
Every one along his way.
That's what you could do to-day.'
That's what I could do to-day.

Then I helped her put some things,
Toys and cakes and fruit, away;
Parceled up and wrapped with strings,

In a basket. Then we went
And it was a lot of fun!
To an alley-tenement:
Made them happy, every one.
It was better than a play.
That was what I did to-day.

Madison Julius Cawein

November

I

The shivering wind sits in the oaks, whose limbs,
Twisted and tortured, nevermore are still;
Grief and decay sit with it; they, whose chill
Autumnal touch makes hectic-red the rims
Of all the oak leaves; desolating, dims
The ageratum's blue that banks the rill;
And splits the milkweed's pod upon the hill,
And shakes it free of the last seed that swims.
Down goes the day despondent to its close:
And now the sunset's hands of copper build
A tower of brass, behind whose burning bars
The day, in fierce, barbarian repose,
Like some imprisoned Inca sits, hate-filled,
Crowned with the gold corymbus of the stars.

II

There is a booming in the forest boughs;
Tremendous feet seem trampling through the trees:
The storm is at his wildman revelries,
And earth and heaven echo his carouse.
Night reels with tumult; and, from out her house
Of cloud, the moon looks,-like a face one sees
In nightmare,-hurrying, with pale eyes that freeze
Stooping above with white, malignant brows.
The isolated oak upon the hill,
That seemed, at sunset, in terrific lands
A Titan head black in a sea of blood,
Now seems a monster harp, whose wild strings thrill
To the vast fingering of innumerable hands-
Spirits of tempest and of solitude.

Madison Julius Cawein

O Maytime Woods!

From the idyll 'Wild Thorn and Lily'

O Maytime woods! O Maytime lanes and hours!
And stars, that knew how often there at night
Beside the path, where woodbine odors blew
Between the drowsy eyelids of the dusk,-
When, like a great, white, pearly moth, the moon
Hung silvering long windows of your room,-
I stood among the shrubs! The dark house slept.
I watched and waited for-I know not what!-
Some tremor of your gown: a velvet leaf's
Unfolding to caresses of the Spring:
The rustle of your footsteps: or the dew
Syllabing avowal on a tulip's lips
Of odorous scarlet: or the whispered word
Of something lovelier than new leaf or rose-
The word young lips half murmur in a dream:

Serene with sleep, light visions weigh her eyes:
And underneath her window blooms a quince.
The night is a sultana who doth rise
In slippered caution, to admit a prince,
Love, who her eunuchs and her lord defies.

Are these her dreams? or is it that the breeze
Pelts me with petals of the quince, and lifts
The Balm-o'-Gilead buds? and seems to squeeze
Aroma on aroma through sweet rifts
Of Eden, dripping through the rainy trees.

Along the path the buckeye trees begin
To heap their hills of blossoms.-Oh, that they
Were Romeo ladders, whereby I might win
Her chamber's sanctity!-where dreams must pray
About her soul!-That I might enter in!-

A dream,-and see the balsam scent erase
Its dim intrusion; and the starry night
Conclude majestic pomp; the virgin grace

Of every bud abashed before the white,
Pure passion-flower of her sleeping face.

Madison Julius Cawein

October

I oft have met her slowly wandering
Beside a leafy stream, her locks blown wild,
Her cheeks a hectic flush, more fair than Spring,
As if on her the sumach copse had smiled.
Or I have seen her sitting, tall and brown,-
Her gentle eyes with foolish weeping dim,-
Beneath a twisted oak from whose red leaves
She wound great drowsy wreaths and cast them down;
The west-wind in her hair, that made it swim
Far out behind, deep as the rustling sheaves.

Or in the hill-lands I have often seen
The marvel of her passage; glimpses faint
Of glimmering woods that glanced the hills between,
Like Indian faces, fierce with forest paint.
Or I have met her 'twixt two beechen hills,
Within a dinged valley near a fall,
Held in her nut-brown hand one cardinal flower;
Or wading dimly where the leaf-dammed rills
Went babbling through the wildwood's arrased hall,
Where burned the beech and maples glared their power.

Or I have met her by some ruined mill,
Where trailed the crimson creeper, serpentine,
On fallen leaves that stirred and rustled chill,
And watched her swinging in the wild-grape vine.
While Beauty, sad among the vales and mountains,
More sad than death, or all that death can teach,
Dreamed of decay and stretched appealing arms,
Where splashed the murmur of the forest's fountains;
With all her loveliness did she beseech,
And all the sorrow of her wildwood charms.

Once only in a hollow, girt with trees,
A-dream amid wild asters filled with rain,
I glimpsed her cheeks red-berried by the breeze,
In her dark eyes the night's sidereal stain.
And once upon an orchard's tangled path,
Where all the golden-rod had turned to brown,

Where russets rolled and leaves were sweet of breath,
I have beheld her 'mid her aftermath
Of blossoms standing, in her gypsy gown,
Within her gaze the deeps of life and death.

Madison Julius Cawein

Of The Slums

Red-Faced as old carousal, and with eyes
A hard, hot blue; her hair a frowsy flame,
Bold, dowdy-bosomed, from her widow-frame
She leans, her mouth all insult and all lies.
Or slattern-slippered and in sluttish gown,
With ribald mirth and words too vile to name,
A new Doll Tearsheet, glorying in her shame,
Armed with her Falstaff now she takes the town.
The flaring lights of alley-way saloons,
The reek of hideous gutters and black oaths
Of drunkenness from vice-infested dens,
Are to her senses what the silvery moon's
Chaste splendor is, and what the blossoming growths
Of earth and bird-song are to innocence.

Madison Julius Cawein

Oglethorpe

An Ode to be read on the laying of the foundation
stone of the new Oglethorpe University,
January, 1915, at Atlanta,
Georgia

I

AS when with oldtime passion for this Land
Here once she stood, and in her pride, sent forth
Workmen on every hand,
Sowing the seed of knowledge South and North,
More gracious now than ever, let her rise,
The splendor of a new dawn in her eyes;
Grave, youngest sister of that company,
That smiling wear
Laurel and pine
And wild magnolias in their flowing hair;
The sisters Academe,
With thoughts divine,
Standing with eyes a-dream,
Gazing beyond the world, into the sea,
Where lie the Islands of Infinity.

II

Now in these stormy days of stress and strain,
When Gospel seems in vain,
And Christianity a dream we've lost,
That once we made our boast;
Now when all life is brought
Face to grim face with naught,
And a condition speaking, trumpet-lipped,
Of works material, leaving Beauty out
Of God's economy; while, horror-dipped,
Lies our buried faith, full near to perish,
'Mid the high things we cherish,
In these tempestuous days when, to and fro
The serpent, Evil, goes and strews his way
With dragon's teeth that play
Their part as once they did in Jason's day;
And War, with menace loud,
And footsteps, metal-slow,
And eyes a crimson hot,

Is seen, against the Heaven a burning blot
Of blood and tears and woe:
Now when no mortal living seems to know
Whither to turn for hope, we turn to thee,
And such as thou art, asking 'What's to be?'
And that thou point the path
Above Earth's hate and wrath,
And Madness, stalking with his torch aglow
Amid the ruins of the Nations slow
Crumbling to ashes with Old Empire there
In Europe's tiger lair.

III

A temple may'st thou be,
A temple by the everlasting sea,
For the high goddess, Ideality,
Set like a star,
Above the peaks of dark reality:
Shining afar
Above the deeds of War,
Within the shrine of Love, whose face men mar
With Militarism,
That is the prism
Through which they gaze with eyes obscured of Greed,
At the white light of God's Eternity,
The comfort of the world, the soul's great need,
That beacons Earth indeed,
Breaking its light intense
With turmoil and suspense
And failing human Sense.

IV

From thee a higher Creed
Shall be evolved.
The broken lights resolved
Into one light again, of glorious light,
Between us and the Everlasting, that is God.—
The all-confusing fragments, that are night,
Lift up thy rod
Of knowledge and from Truth's eyeballs strip
The darkness, and in armor of the Right,
Bear high the standard of imperishable light!
Cry out, 'Awake! — I slept awhile! — Awake!
Again I take

My burden up of Truth for Jesus' sake,
And stand for what he stood for, Peace and Thought,
And all that's Beauty-wrought
Through doubt and dread and ache,
By which the world to good at last is brought!

V

No more with silence burdened, when the Land
Was stricken by the hand
Of war, she rises, and assumes her stand
For the Enduring; setting firm her feet
On what is blind and brute:
Still holding fast
With honor to the past,
Speaking a trumpet word,
Which shall be heard
As an authority, no longer mute.

VI

Again, yea, she shall stand
For what Truth means to Man
For science and for Art and all that can
Make life superior to the things that weight
The soul down, things of hate
Instead of love, for which the world was planned;
May she demand
Faith and inspire it; Song to lead her way
Above the crags of Wrong
Into the broader day;
And may she stand
For poets still; poets that now the Land
Needs as it never needed; such an one
As he, large Nature's Son
Lanier, who with firm hand
Held up her magic wand
Directing deep in music such as none
Has ever heard
Such music as a bird
Gives of its soul, when dying,
And unconscious if it's heard.

VII

So let her rise, mother of greatness still,
Above all temporal ill;
Invested with all old nobility,

Teaching the South decision, self control
And strength of mind and soul;
Achieving ends that shall embrace the whole
Through deeds of heart and mind;
And thereby bind
Its effort to an end
And reach its goal.

VIII

So shall she win
A wrestler with sin,
Supremely to a place above the years,
And help men rise
To what is wise
And true beyond their mortal finite scan —
The purblind gaze of man;
Aiding with introspective eyes
His soul to see a higher plan
Of life beyond this life; above the gyves
Of circumstance that bind him in his place
Of doubt and keep away his face
From what alone survives;
And what assures
Immortal life to that within, that gives
Of its own self,
And through its giving, lives,
And evermore endures.

Madison Julius Cawein

Old Ghosts

CLOVE-SPICY pinks and phlox that fill the sense
With drowsy indolence;
And in the evening skies
Interior splendor, pregnant with surprise,
As if in some new wise
The full moon soon would rise.
Hung with the crimson aigrets of its seeds
The purple monkshood bleeds;
The dewy crickets chirr,
And everywhere are lights of lavender;
And scents of musk and myrrh
To guide the foot of her.
She passes like a misty glimmer on
To where the rose blooms wan,—
A twilight moth in flight,—
As in the west its streak of chrysolite
The dusk erases quite,
And ushers in the night.
And now another shadow passes slow,
With firefly light a-glow:
The scent of a cigar,
And two who kiss beneath the evening-star,
Where, in a moonbeam bar,
A whippoorwill cries afar.
Again the tale is told, that has been told
So often here of old:
Ghosts of dead lovers they?
Or memories only of some perished day?—
Old ghosts, no time shall lay,
That haunt the place alway.

Madison Julius Cawein

Old Homes

Old homes among the hills! I love their gardens;
Their old rock fences, that our day inherits;
Their doors, round which the great trees stand like wardens;
Their paths, down which the shadows march like spirits;
Broad doors and paths that reach bird-haunted gardens.

I see them gray among their ancient acres,
Severe of front, their gables lichen-sprinkled,-
Like gentle-hearted, solitary Quakers,
Grave and religious, with kind faces wrinkled,-
Serene among their memory-hallowed acres.

Their gardens, banked with roses and with lilies-
Those sweet aristocrats of all the flowers-
Where Springtime mints her gold in daffodillies,
And Autumn coins her marigolds in showers,
And all the hours are toilless as the lilies.

I love their orchards where the gay woodpecker
Flits, flashing o'er you, like a winged jewel;
Their woods, whose floors of moss the squirrels checker
With half-hulled nuts; and where, in cool renewal,
The wild brooks laugh, and raps the red woodpecker.

Old homes! old hearts! Upon my soul forever
Their peace and gladness lie like tears and laughter;
Like love they touch me, through the years that sever,
With simple faith; like friendship, draw me after
The dreamy patience that is theirs forever.

Madison Julius Cawein

Old Jack Frost

Last night we were kept awake.
Could n't sleep for Old Jack Frost;
Wandering round like some old ghost.
Gave the door an awful shake;
Knocked against my bed's brass post.
Last night we were kept awake.
Could n't sleep he made such noise;
Rapped and tapped and prowled around.
Once he made a snapping sound
Just like that of breaking toys.
You'd been scared, too, I'll be bound.
Could n't sleep he made such noise.
All was dark and very still,
When, right at the window, 'bing,'
Came a rap that made me sing,
'Mother, I'm afraid!' until
Mother fussed like everything.
All was dark and very still.
'Old Jack Frost is raising Ned.
And to-morrow, wish to state,
We'll get even sure as fate;
Cure him of his tricks,' she said;
'Start a fire in the grate.
Old Jack Frost is raising Ned.'
Then I heard my father's voice:
'You just let Jack Frost alone.
He's good friends, you should have known,
With Old Santa. Little boys
Are not scared of him, my son.'
Then I heard my father's voice.
So I went to sleep again:
Let him bang the furniture
All he cared to. I was sure
I'd get even; that was plain:
Old Man Fire would be his cure,
So I went to sleep again.
Once he rattled at my mug
Where was water: then he crept
Round the room and softly stept

Here and there upon the rug;
Felt his breath, but I just slept.
Once he rattled at my mug.
Well, you should have seen the things
That he painted on the panes
When 't was morning: towns and trains;
Flowers and fairies; ropes and rings;
Stars and ribboned weather-vanes.
Well, you should have seen the things!
I just shouted when I saw.
Called to father: 'Just look here!
Old Jack Frost is such a dear!
Wish he'd show me how to draw.
I'd be good for one whole year.'
I just shouted when I saw.

Madison Julius Cawein

Old Man Rain

Old Man Rain at the windowpane
Knocks and fumbles and knocks again:
His long-nailed fingers slip and strain:
Old Man Rain at the windowpane
Knocks all night but knocks in vain.
Old Man Rain.

Old Man Rain at the windowpane
Reels and shambles along the lane:
His old gray whiskers drip and drain:
Old Man Rain with fuddled brain
Reels and staggers like one insane.
Old Man Rain.

Old Man Rain is back again,
With old Mis' Wind at the windowpane,
Dancing there with her tattered train:
Her old shawl flaps as she whirls again
In the wildman dance and is torn in twain.
Old Mis' Wind and Old Man Rain.

Madison Julius Cawein

Old Man Winter

There is nothing at all to do to-day.
I can't go out and run and play;
For it's raining and snowing and sleeting, too;
And Old Man Winter he is to blame.
And I just sit here and think it a shame.
There is nothing at all to do.

I stand or sit at the windowpane,
And look at the snow and look at the rain,
And the old dead leaves go flying by;
For Wild Man Wind is making a din;
And mother says that it is a sin:
And I'm almost ready to cry.

I can't go out in the wind and wet,
And it's a long time yet till the table's set,
And we are ready for toast and tea:
It's a long time too till the lamp is lit,
And my father's home and I can sit,
And he can read to me.

And I can not play or do a thing;
And there's no one coming visiting,
For it's storming more and more:
But now and then there's a rat-tat-tat,
And I ask my mother what is that,
And she says, 'The wind at the door.'

And she says, 'Now what can the Old Wind want
A-knocking there with his knuckles gaunt?
You can hear his old hat dripping rain,
And his ragged cloak that flaps and slaps.
Why, I guess he's looking for little chaps,
To give them a cold again.

'You can see him there by the water-spout
With Old Man Rain just flapping about,
His long sharp nose an icicle,
And his fingers too; and his old, wild eyes

Small and gray as the winter skies,
Or ice in a winter well.'

And then she comes to my side and sits
And says, 'Just listen how he hits!
But he can't get in and you can't get out:
And by and by he'll be out of breath,
And grumble and growl himself to death,
Or leave with a mighty shout.'

Right then there comes a step on the stair,
And I run to see; and my father's there;
With snow and rain on his coat and hat.
Now Old Man Winter can break his cane,
Can crack his cane on the windowpane
I don't care a rap for that.

For my father's home! 'It's a wild old night.
The Wind and the Snow are having a fight,'
He says, 'and are mauling each other around:
First Old Man Snow rips out a curse;
Then Wild Man Wind says something worse;
Then both are on the ground.

'And Old Man Snow is underneath,
And he snarls like a wolf and shows his teeth,
While Wild Man Wind just hits and hits:
Then round they wrestle; and Old Snow reels,
His long wild whiskers around his heels,
And his gray cloak torn in bits.

'And before you know it he's up with a bound,
And it's Wild Man Wind that hits the ground,
And Old Man Snow holds down his arm:
You can see them there by the window-light,
Wrangling, wrestling out in the night,
Out in the night and storm.'

Then I look and see how the wind and snow
Just fight it out and thrash and blow;
Their windy rags through the ghostly black
Go whistling past the windowpane:

Then I run to the fire and lamp again,
And reach a book from the rack.

The lamp is lit, and my father's knee
And the fairy tales are ready for me:
And I sit, and he holds me by the hand:
Now Wild Man Wind and Old Man Snow
Can do their worst and bluster and blow,
I am far in Fairyland.

Madison Julius Cawein

Old Sir John

Bald, with old eyes a blood-shot blue, he comes
Into the Boar's-Head Inn: the hot sweat streaks
His fulvous face, and all his raiment reeks
Of all the stews and all the Eastcheap slums.
Upon the battered board again he drums
And croaks for sack: then sits, his harsh haired cheeks
Sunk in his hands rough with the grime of weeks,
While 'round the tap one great bluebottle hums.
All, all are gone, the old companions they
Who made his rogue's world merry: of them all
Not one is left. Old, toothless now, and gray
Alone he waits: the swagger of that day
Gone from his bulk departed even as Doll,
And he, his Hal, who broke his heart, they say.

Madison Julius Cawein

Old Sis Snow

Old Sis Snow, with hair ablow,
Down the road now see her go!
Her old gown pulled back and pinned
Round her legs by Wild-boy Wind
Ough n't he to just be skinned?
Hear her shriek, now high, now low,
Tangled in her hair! my oh!
Is n't she a crazy show?
Old Sis Snow!

Old Sis Snow now to and fro
Ramps and wrestles and hollos 'Whoa!'
Sticks her long white fingers through
Every crack and cranny too,
Reaching after me and you:
Cold! and look how fast they grow!
Ghostly in the lamplight's glow,
Threatening you from head to toe!
Old Sis Snow!

Old Sis Snow! now you go slow!
You'll get tired enough, I know:
Wild-boy Wind will drag you down;
Round your ears will tear your gown;
Strew its rags through field and town.
Now he's at it, blow on blow,
Hitting hard as any hoe.
Hear them how they knock and throw!
Wild-boy Wind and Old Sis Snow!

Madison Julius Cawein

Old Snake-Doctor

Once I found an ant-lion's hole
And an ant-lion in it: nippers
Like a pair of rusty clippers.
And I saw a red ant roll
In its pit, and, quick as Ned,
This old ant-lion fanged its head,
Held it till the ant was dead.

II.

And I told my father: he
Smiled and said, 'He beats the dickens,
With his pinchers; even chickens
Have n't his voracity.
Think now what he would have done
Had you been an ant, my son,
Fallen in that pit like one.

III.

'Daniel in the lion's den!
Guess you'd come home good and gory.
But now here's another story:
You should see these ant-lions when
They have wings; and, blue and green,
Ponds and pools they fly between:
Prettiest things I've ever seen.

IV.

'Look just like the dragonflies;
And perhaps they are snake-feeders;
Name you'll never find in Readers
Read at school: but, I surmise,
Dragonflies are not the same
As these old snake-doctors; name
For which I am not to blame.

V.

'Who's to blame then? If it's not
I or, say, the dictionary,
Since we two seem so contráry,
Must be that old ant-lion what
Can't content itself, that's plain,
With its bug-estate; remain
Just a bug in sun and rain.

VI.

'Has to get himself new clothes!
Gauzy wings that shine and glitter;
Something that he thinks is fitter
His profession, I suppose,
Doctoring things, like water-snakes;
Finery that often takes
Eyes of hungry ducks and drakes:

VII.

'And of fishes, too, the fool.
Who his coat so bright and brassy,
Mirrored in the waters glassy,
Leap for, drag into the pool.
Old snake-doctor, flaunt your fill!
Feed the snakes or cure or kill
In the end you pay the bill.'

Madison Julius Cawein

On Chenoweth's Run

I Thought of the road through the glen,
With its hawk's nest high in the pine;
With its rock, where the fox had his den,
'Mid tangles of sumach and vine,
Where she swore to be mine.

I thought of the creek and its banks,
Now glooming, now gleaming with sun;
The rustic bridge builded of planks,
The bridge over Chenoweth's Run,
Where I wooed her and won.

I thought of the house in the lane,
With its pinks and its sweet mignonette;
Its fence and the gate with the chain,
Its porch where the roses hung wet,
Where I kissed her and met.

Then I thought of the family graves,
Walled rudely with stone, in the West,
Where the sorrowful cedar-tree waves,
And the wind is a spirit distressed,
Where they laid her to rest.

And my soul, overwhelmed with despair,
Cried out on the city and mart!
How I longed, how I longed to be there,
Away from the struggle and smart,
By her and my heart!

By her and my heart in the West,
Laid sadly together as one;
On her grave for a moment to rest,
Far away from the noise and the sun,
On Chenoweth's Run.

Madison Julius Cawein

On Midsummer Night

All the poppies in their beds
Nodding crumpled crimson heads;
And the larkspurs, in whose ears
Twilight hangs, like twinkling tears,
Sleepy jewels of the rain;
All the violets, that strain
Eyes of amethystine gleam;
And the clover-blooms that dream
With pink baby fists closed tight,
They can hear upon this night,
Noiseless as the moon's white light,
Footsteps and the glimmering flight,
Shimmering flight,
Of the Fairies

II.

Every sturdy four-o'clock,
In its variegated frock;
Every slender sweet-pea, too,
In its hood of pearly hue;
Every primrose pale that dozes
By the wall and slow uncloses
A sweet mouth of dewy dawn
In a little silken yawn,
On this night of silvery sheen,
They can see the Fairy Queen,
On her palfrey white, I ween,
Tread dim cirques of haunted green,
Moonlit green,
With her Fairies.

III.

Never a foxglove bell, you see,
That's a cradle for a bee;
Never a lily, that 's a house
Where the butterfly may drowse;
Never a rosebud or a blossom,

That unfolds its honeyed bosom
To the moth, that nestles deep
And there sucks itself to sleep,
But can hear and also see,
On this night of witchery,
All that world of Faery,
All that world where airily,
Merrily,
Dance the Fairies.

IV.

It was last Midsummer Night,
In the moon's uncertain light,
That I stood among the flowers,
And in language unlike ours
Heard them speaking of the Pixies,
Trolls and Gnomes and Water-Nixies;
How in this flow'r's ear a Fay
Hung a gem of rainy ray;
And 'round that flow'r's throat had set
Dim a dewdropp carcanet;
Then among the mignonette
Stretched a cobweb-hammock wet,
Dewy wet,
For the Fairies.

V.

Long I watched; but never a one,
Ariel, Puck, or Oberon,
Mab or Queen Titania
Fairest of them all they say
Clad in morning-glory hues,
Did I glimpse among the dews.
Only once I thought the torch
Of that elfin-rogue and arch,
Robin Goodfellow, afar
Flashed along a woodland bar
Bright, a jack-o'-lantern star,
A green lamp of firefly spar,
Glow-worm spar,

Loved of Fairies.

Madison Julius Cawein

On Old Cape Ann

Annisquam

Old days, old ways, old homes beside the sea;
Old gardens with old-fashioned flowers aflame,
Poppy, petunia, and many a name
Of many a flower of fragrant pedigree.
Old hills that glow with blue- and barberry,
And rocks and pines that stand on guard, the same,
Immutable, as when the Pilgrim came,
And here laid firm foundations of the Free.
The sunlight makes the dim dunes hills of snow,
And every vessel's sail a twinkling wing
Glancing the violet ocean far away:
The world is full of color and of glow;
A mighty canvas whereon God doth fling
The flawless picture of a perfect day.

II.

'The Highlands, ' Annisquam

Here, from the heights, among the rocks and pines,
The sea and shore seem some tremendous page
Of some vast book, great with our heritage,
Breathing the splendor of majestic lines.
Yonder the dunes speak silver; yonder shines
The ocean's sapphire word; there, gray with age,
The granite writes its lesson, strong and sage;
And there the surf its rhythmic passage signs.
The winds, that sweep the page, that interlude
Its majesty with music; and the tides,
That roll their thunder in, that period
Its mighty rhetoric, deep and dream-imbued,
Are what it seems to say, of what abides,
Of what's eternal and of what is God.

III.

Storm At Annisquam

The sun sinks scarlet as a barberry.
Far off at sea one vessel lifts a sail,
Hurrying to harbor from the coming gale,
That banks the west above a choppy sea.
The sun is gone; the tide is flowing free;
The bay is opaled with wild light; and pale
The lighthouse spears its flame now; through a veil
That falls about the sea mysteriously.
Out there she sits and mutters of her dead,
Old Ocean; of the stalwart and the strong,
Skipper and fisher whom her arms dragged down:
Before her now she sees their ghosts; o'erhead
As gray as rain, their wild wrecks sweep along,
And all night long lay siege to this old town.

IV.

From Cove To Cove

The road leads up a hill through many a brake,
Blueberry and barberry, bay and sassafras,
By an abandoned quarry, where, like glass,
A round pool lies; an isolated lake,
A mirror for what presences, that make
Their wildwood toilets here! The road is grass
Gray-scarred with stone: great boulders, as we pass,
Slope burly shoulders towards us. Cedars shake
Wild balsam from their tresses; there and here
Clasping a glimpse of ocean and of shore
In arms of swaying green. Below, at last,
Beside the sea, with derrick and with pier,
By heaps of granite, noise of drill and bore,
A Cape Ann town, towering with many a mast.

V.

Pastures By The Sea

Here where the coves indent the shore and fall
And fill with ebb and flowing of the tides;
Whereon some barge rocks or some dory rides,

By which old orchards bloom, or, from the wall,
Pelt every lane with fruit; where gardens, tall
With roses, riot; swift my gladness glides
To that old pasture where the mushroom hides,
The chicory blooms and Peace sits mid them all.
Fenced in with rails and rocks, its emerald slopes.
Ribbed with huge granite, where the placid cows
Tinkle a browsing bell, roll to a height
Wherefrom the sea, bright as adventuring hopes,
Swept of white sails and plowed of foaming prows,
Leaps like a Nereid on the ravished sight.

VI.

The Dunes

Far as the eye can see, in domes and spires,
Buttress and curve, ruins of shifting sand,
In whose wild making wind and sea took hand,
The white dunes stretch. The wind, that never tires,
Striving for strange effects that he admires,
Changes their form from time to time; the land
Forever passive to his mad demand,
And to the sea's, who with the wind conspires.
Here, as on towers of desolate cities, bay
And wire-grass grow, wherein no insect cries,
Only a bird, the swallow of the sea,
That homes in sand. I hear it far away
Crying or is it some lost soul that flies,
Above the land, ailing unceasingly?

VII.

By The Summer Sea

Sunlight and shrill cicada and the low,
Slow, sleepy kissing of the sea and shore,
And rumor of the wind. The morning wore
A sullen face of fog that lifted slow,
Letting her eyes gleam through of grayest glow;
Wearing a look like that which once she wore
When, Gloucesterward from Dogtown there, they bore

Some old witchwife with many a gibe and blow.
But now the day has put off every care,
And sits at peace beside the smiling sea,
Dreaming bright dreams with lazy-lidded eyes:
One is a castle, precipiced in air,
And one a golden galleons can it be
'Tis but the cloudworld of the sunset skies?

Madison Julius Cawein

On Opening An Old School Volume Of Horace

I HAD forgot how, in my day
The Sabine fields around me lay
In amaranth and asphodel,
With many a cold Bandusian well
Bright-bubbling by the mountain-way.
In forest dells of Faun and Fay
How, lounging in the fountain's spray,
I talked with Horace; felt his spell,
I had forgot.

With Pyrrha and with Lydia
How oft I sat, while Lalaga
Sang, and the fine Falerian fell,
Sparkling, and heard the poet tell
Of loves whose beauty lasts for aye,
I had forgot.

Madison Julius Cawein

On Reading The Life Of Haroun Er Reshid

Down all the lanternd Bagdad of our youth
He steals, with golden justice for the poor:
Within his palace you shall know the truth!
A blood-smeared headsman hides behind each door.

Madison Julius Cawein

On Re-Reading Certain German Poets

THEY hold their own, they have no peers
In gloom and glow, in hopes and fears,
In love and terror, hovering round
The lore of that enchanted ground! —
That mystic region, where one hears,
By bandit towers, the hunt that nears
Wild through the Hartz; the demon cheers
Of Hackelnberg; his horn and hound —
They hold their own.

Dark Wallenstein; and, down the years,
The Lorelei; and, creased with sneers,
Faust, Margaret; —the Sabbath sound,
Witch-whirling, of the Brocken, drowned
In storm, through which Mephisto leers,—
They hold their own.

Madison Julius Cawein

On The Hilltop

There is no inspiration in the view.
From where this acorn drops its thimbles brown
The landscape stretches like a shaggy frown;
The wrinkled hills hang haggard and harsh of hue:
Above them hollows the heaven's stony blue,
Like a dull thought that haunts some sleepdazed clown
Plodding his homeward way; and, whispering down,
The dead leaves dance, a sere and shelterless crew.
Let the sick day stagger unto its close,
Morose and mumbling, like a hoary crone
Beneath her fagots huddled fogs that soon
Shall flare the windy west with ashen glows,
Like some deep, dying hearth; and let the lone
Night come at last night, and its withered moon.

Madison Julius Cawein

On The Road

LET us bid the world good-by,
Now while sun and cloud's above us,
While we've nothing to deny,
Nothing but our selves to love us:
Let us fancy, I and you,
All the dreams we dreamed came true.
We have gone but half the road,
Rugged road of root and boulder;
Made the best of Life's dark load,
Cares, that helped us to grow older:
We, my dear, have done our best —
Let us stop awhile and rest.
Let us, by this halfway stile,
Put away the world's desire,
And sit down, a little while,
With our hearts, and light a fire:
Sing the songs that once we sung
In the days when we were young.
Haply they will bring again,
From the Lands of Song and Story,
To our sides the elfin train
Of the dreams we dreamed of glory,
That are one now with the crew
Of the deeds we did not do.
Here upon the road of Life
Let us rest us; take our pleasure:
Free from care and safe from strife,
Count again our only treasure —
Love, that helped us on our way,
Our companion night and day.

Madison Julius Cawein

One Who Died Young

With her 't is well now. She died young,
With all her hope and faith unmarred,
Nor lived to see the pearls, Love strung,
Without regard,
Cast, lost among
The disillusion that make life so hard.
Time on her body now can lay
No soiling hand and spoil what's fair:
He shall not turn the gold hair gray,
Nor bring crabbed Care,
Day after day,
To line the white brow with the heart's despair.
Far better thus. Yea, even so,
To die before faith turns to dust,
Before the heart has learned to know,
As learn it must,
Of love the woe,
And of all human life the deep disgust.

Madison Julius Cawein

One Who Loved Nature

I

He was not learned in any art;
But Nature led him by the hand;
And spoke her language to his heart
So he could hear and understand:
He loved her simply as a child;
And in his love forgot the heat
Of conflict, and sat reconciled
In patience of defeat.

II

Before me now I see him rise-
A face, that seventy years had snowed
With winter, where the kind blue eyes
Like hospitable fires glowed:
A small gray man whose heart was large,
And big with knowledge learned of need;
A heart, the hard world made its targe,
That never ceased to bleed.

III

He knew all Nature. Yea, he knew
What virtue lay within each flower,
What tonic in the dawn and dew,
And in each root what magic power:
What in the wild witch-hazel tree
Reversed its time of blossoming,
And clothed its branches goldenly
In fall instead of spring.

IV

He knew what made the firefly glow
And pulse with crystal gold and flame;
And whence the bloodroot got its snow,
And how the bramble's perfume came:

He understood the water's word
And grasshopper's and cricket's chirr;
And of the music of each bird
He was interpreter.

V

He kept no calendar of days,
But knew the seasons by the flowers;
And he could tell you by the rays
Of sun or stars the very hours.
He probed the inner mysteries
Of light, and knew the chemic change
That colors flowers, and what is
Their fragrance wild and strange.

VI

If some old oak had power of speech,
It could not speak more wildwood lore,
Nor in experience further reach,
Than he who was a tree at core.
Nature was all his heritage,
And seemed to fill his every need;
Her features were his book, whose page
He never tired to read.

VII

He read her secrets that no man
Has ever read and never will,
And put to scorn the charlatan
Who botanizes of her still.
He kept his knowledge sweet and clean,
And questioned not of why and what;
And never drew a line between
What's known and what is not.

VIII

He was most gentle, good, and wise;
A simpler heart earth never saw:

His soul looked softly from his eyes,
And in his speech were love and awe.

Yet Nature in the end denied
The thing he had not asked for-fame!
Unknown, in poverty he died,
And men forget his name.

Madison Julius Cawein

Opportunity

Behold a hag whom Life denies a kiss
As he rides questward in knighterrant-wise;
Only when he hath passed her is it his
To know, too late, the Fairy in disguise.

Madison Julius Cawein

Orgie

On nights like this, when bayou and lagoon
Dream in the moonlight's mystic radiance,
I seem to walk like one deep in a trance
With old-world myths born of the mist and moon.

Lascivious eyes and mouths of sensual rose
Smile into mine; and breasts of luring light,
And tresses streaming golden to the night,
Persuade me onward where the forest glows.

And then it seems along the haunted hills
There falls a flutter as of beautiful feet,
As if tempestuous troops of Mænads meet
To drain deep bowls and shout and have their wills.

And then I feel her limbs will be revealed
Like some great snow-white moth among the trees;
Her vampire beauty, waiting there to seize
And dance me downward where my doom is sealed.

Madison Julius Cawein

Oriental Romance

I

Beyond lost seas of summer she
Dwelt on an island of the sea,
Last scion of that dynasty,
Queen of a race forgotten long.-
With eyes of light and lips of song,
From seaward groves of blowing lemon,
She called me in her native tongue,
Low-leaned on some rich robe of Yemen.

II

I was a king. Three moons we drove
Across green gulfs, the crimson clove
And cassia spiced, to claim her love.
Packed was my barque with gums and gold;
Rich fabrics; sandalwood, grown old
With odor; gems; and pearls of Oman,-
Than her white breasts less white and cold;-
And myrrh, less fragrant than this woman.

III

From Bassora I came. We saw
Her eagle castle on a claw
Of soaring precipice, o'erawe
The surge and thunder of the spray.
Like some great opal, far away
It shone, with battlement and spire,
Wherefrom, with wild aroma, day
Blew splintered lights of sapphirine fire.

IV

Lamenting caverns dark, that keep
Sonorous echoes of the deep,
Led upward to her castle steep....
Fair as the moon, whose light is shed

In Ramadan, was she, who led
My love unto her island bowers,
To find her.... lying young and dead
Among her maidens and her flowers.

Madison Julius Cawein

Our Dreams

Spare us our Dreams, O God! The dream we dreamed
When we were children and dwelt near the Land
Of Faery, which our Childhood often planned
To reach, beholding where its towers gleamed:
The dream our Youth put seaward with; that streamed
With Love's wild hair, or beckoned with the hand
Of stout Adventure: Then that dream which spanned
Our Manhood's skies with fame; that shone, it seemed,
The one fixed star of purpose, fair and far,
The dream of great achievement, in the heaven
Of our desire, and gave the soul strong wings:
Then that last dream, through which these others are
Made true: The dream that holds us at Life's even,
The mortal hope of far immortal things.

Madison Julius Cawein

Out Of The Depths

Let me forget her face!
So fresh, so lovely! the abiding place
Of tears and smiles that won my heart to her;
Of dreams and moods that moved my soul's dim deeps,
As strong winds stir
Dark waters where the starlight glimmering sleeps.
In every lineament the mind can trace,
Let me forget her face!

II.

Let me forget her form!
Soft and seductive, that contained each charm,
Each grace the sweet word maidenhood implies;
And all the sensuous youth of line and curve,
That makes men's eyes
Bondsmen of beauty eager still to serve.
In every part that memory can warm,
Let me forget her form!

III.

Let me forget her, God!
Her who made honeyed love a bitter rod
To scourge my heart with, barren with despair;
To tear my soul with, sick with vain desire!
Oh, hear my prayer!
Out of the hell of love's unquenchable fire
I cry to thee, with face against the sod,
Let me forget her, God!

Madison Julius Cawein

Overseas

Non numero horas nisi serenas

When Fall drowns morns in mist, it seems
In soul I am a part of it;
A portion of its humid beams,
A form of fog, I seem to flit
From dreams to dreams....

An old chateau sleeps 'mid the hills
Of France: an avenue of sorbs
Conceals it: drifts of daffodils
Bloom by a 'scutcheoned gate with barbs
Like iron bills.

I pass the gate unquestioned; yet,
I feel, announced. Broad holm-oaks make
Dark pools of restless violet.
Between high bramble banks a lake,-
As in a net

The tangled scales twist silver,-shines....
Gray, mossy turrets swell above
A sea of leaves. And where the pines
Shade ivied walls, there lies my love,
My heart divines.

I know her window, slimly seen
From distant lanes with hawthorn hedged:
Her garden, with the nectarine
Espaliered, and the peach tree, wedged
'Twixt walls of green.

Cool-babbling a fountain falls
From gryphons' mouths in porphyry;
Carp haunt its waters; and white balls
Of lilies dip it when the bee
Creeps in and drawls.

And butterflies-each with a face
Of faery on its wings-that seem
Beheaded pansies, softly chase
Each other down the gloom and gleam
Trees interspace.

And roses! roses, soft as vair,
Round sylvan statues and the old
Stone dial-Pompadours, that wear
Their royalty of purple and gold
With wanton air....

Her scarf, her lute, whose ribbons breathe
The perfume of her touch; her gloves,
Modeling the daintiness they sheathe;
Her fan, a Watteau, gay with loves,
Lie there beneath

A bank of eglantine, that heaps
A rose-strewn shadow.-Naive-eyed,
With lips as suave as they, she sleeps;
The romance by her, open wide,
O'er which she weeps.

Madison Julius Cawein

Pastures By The Sea

Here where the coves indent the shore and fall
And fill with ebb and flowing of the tides;
Whereon some barge rocks or some dory rides,
By which old orchards bloom, or, from the wall,
Pelt every lane with fruit; where gardens, tall
With roses, riot; swift my gladness glides
To that old pasture where the mushroom hides,
The chicory blooms and Peace sits mid them all.
Fenced in with rails and rocks, its emerald slopes.
Ribbed with huge granite, where the placid cows
Tinkle a browsing bell, roll to a height
Wherefrom the sea, bright as adventuring hopes,
Swept of white sails and plowed of foaming prows,
Leaps like a Nereid on the ravished sight.

Madison Julius Cawein

Paths

I

What words of mine can tell the spell
Of garden ways I know so well?-
The path that takes me in the spring
Past quince-trees where the bluebirds sing,
And peonies are blossoming,
Unto a porch, wistaria-hung,
Around whose steps May-lilies blow,
A fair girl reaches down among,
Her arm more white than their sweet snow.

II

What words of mine can tell the spell
Of garden ways I know so well?-
Another path that leads me, when
The summer time is here again,
Past hollyhocks that shame the west
When the red sun has sunk to rest;
To roses bowering a nest,
A lattice, 'neath which mignonette
And deep geraniums surge and sough,
Where, in the twilight, starless yet,
A fair girl's eyes are stars enough.

III

What words of mine can tell the spell
Of garden ways I know so well?-
A path that takes me, when the days
Of autumn wrap the hills in haze,
Beneath the pippin-pelting tree,
'Mid flitting butterfly and bee;
Unto a door where, fiery,
The creeper climbs; and, garnet-hued,
The cock's-comb and the dahlia flare,
And in the door, where shades intrude,
Gleams bright a fair girl's sunbeam hair.

IV

What words of mine can tell the spell
Of garden ways I know so well?-
A path that brings me through the frost
Of winter, when the moon is tossed
In clouds; beneath great cedars, weak
With shaggy snow; past shrubs blown bleak
With shivering leaves; to eaves that leak
The tattered ice, whereunder is
A fire-flickering window-space;
And in the light, with lips to kiss,
A fair girl's welcome-smiling face.

Madison Julius Cawein

Pearls

Baroque, but beautiful, between the lunes,
The valves of nacre of a mussel-shell,
Behold, a pearl! shaped like the burnished bell
Of some strange blossom that long afternoons
Of summer coax to open: all the moon's
Chaste lustre in it; hues that only dwell
With purity ... It takes me, like a spell,
Back to a day when, whistling truant tunes,
A barefoot boy I waded 'mid the rocks,
Searching for shells deep in the creek's slow swirl,
Unconscious of the pearls that 'round me lay:
While, 'mid wild-roses, all her tomboy locks
Blond-blowing, stood, unnoticed then, a girl,
My sweetheart once, the pearl I flung away.

Madison Julius Cawein

Penetralia

I am a part of all you see
In Nature; part of all you feel:
I am the impact of the bee
Upon the blossom; in the tree
I am the sap,-that shall reveal
The leaf, the bloom,-that flows and flutes
Up from the darkness through its roots.

I am the vermeil of the rose,
The perfume breathing in its veins;
The gold within the mist that glows
Along the west and overflows
With light the heaven; the dew that rains
Its freshness down and strings with spheres
Of wet the webs and oaten ears.

I am the egg that folds the bird;
The song that beaks and breaks its shell;
The laughter and the wandering word
The water says; and, dimly heard,
The music of the blossom's bell
When soft winds swing it; and the sound
Of grass slow-creeping o'er the ground.

I am the warmth, the honey-scent
That throats with spice each lily-bud
That opens, white with wonderment,
Beneath the moon; or, downward bent,
Sleeps with a moth beneath its hood:
I am the dream that haunts it too,
That crystallizes into dew.

I am the seed within the pod;
The worm within its closed cocoon:
The wings within the circling clod,
The germ, that gropes through soil and sod
To beauty, radiant in the noon:
I am all these, behold! and more-
I am the love at the world-heart's core.

Madison Julius Cawein

Pestilence

High on a throne of noisome ooze and heat,
'Mid rotting trees of bayou and lagoon,
Ghastly she sits beneath the skeleton moon,
A tawny horror coiling at her feet
Fever, whose eyes keep watching, serpent-like,
Until her eyes shall bid him rise and strike.

Madison Julius Cawein

Phantoms

This was her home; one mossy gable thrust
Above the cedars and the locust trees:
This was her home, whose beauty now is dust,
A lonely memory for melodies
The wild birds sing, the wild birds and the bees.

Here every evening is a prayer: no boast
Or ruin of sunset makes the wan world wroth;
Here, through the twilight, like a pale flower's ghost,
A drowsy flutter, flies the tiger-moth;
And dusk spreads darkness like a dewy cloth.

In vagabond velvet, on the placid day,
A stain of crimson, lolls the butterfly;
The south wind sows with ripple and with ray
The pleasant waters; and the gentle sky
Looks on the homestead like a quiet eye.

Their melancholy quaver, lone and low,
When day is done, the gray tree-toads repeat:
The whippoorwills, far in the afterglow,
Complain to silence: and the lightnings beat,
In one still cloud, glimmers of golden heat.

He comes not yet: not till the dusk is dead,
And all the western glow is far withdrawn;
Not till,-a sleepy mouth love's kiss makes red,-
The baby bud opes in a rosy yawn,
Breathing sweet guesses at the dreamed-of dawn.

When in the shadows, like a rain of gold,
The fireflies stream steadily; and bright
Along the moss the glowworm, as of old,
A crawling sparkle-like a crooked light
In smoldering vellum-scrawls a square of night,-

Then will he come; and she will lean to him,-
She,-the sweet phantom,-memory of that place,-
Between the starlight and his eyes; so dim

With suave control and soul-compelling grace,
He cannot help but speak her, face to face.

Madison Julius Cawein

Pixy Wood

The vat-like cups of the fungus, filled
With the rain that fell last night,
Are casks of wine that the elves distilled
For revels the moon did light.

The owlet there with her 'Who-oh-who,'
And the frog with his 'All is right,'
Could tell a tale if they wanted to
Of what took place last night.

In that hollow beech, where the wood decays,
Their toadstool houses stand;
A little village of drabs and grays,
Cone-roofed, of Faeryland.

That moth, which gleams like a lichen there,
Is one of an elfin band,
That whisks away if you merely dare
To try to understand.

The snail, that slides on that mushroom's top,
And the slug on its sleepy trail,
Wax fat on the things the elves let drop
At feast in the moonlight pale.

The whippoorwill, that grieves and grieves,
If it would, could tell a tale
Of what took place here under the leaves
Last night on the Dreamland Trail.

The trillium there and the Mayapple,
With their white eyes opened wide,
Of many a secret sight could tell
If speech were not denied:

Of many a pixy revelry
And rout on which they've spied,
With the hollow tree, which there you see
Opens its eye-knots wide.

Madison Julius Cawein

Poe

Upon the summit of his Century
He reared a Palace of enduring Art,
From whose wild windows never more depart
Beauty's pale light and starry fantasy:
Within is music, sobbing ceaselessly;
And phantom terror, spectres of the heart
And ghosts of grief and love that ever start
From haunted places, fleeing what none may see.
Around its towers the bird, that never dies,
Circles; the tempest beats with black alarm
On one red window where, beyond the storm,
The Lord of that high Palace dreams and sighs,
His Soul, with its Despair, a kingly form,
And Death with infinite pity in his eyes.

Madison Julius Cawein

Poetry

Who hath beheld the goddess face to face,
Blind with her beauty, all his days shall go
Climbing lone mountains towards her temple's place,
Weighed with song's sweet, inexorable woe.

Madison Julius Cawein

Poppies

Summer met Sleep at sunset,
Dreaming within the south,
Drugged with his soul's deep slumber,
Red with her heart's hot drouth,
These are the drowsy kisses
She pressed upon his mouth.

Madison Julius Cawein

Poppy And Mandragora

Let us go far from here!
Here there is sadness in the early year:
Here sorrow waits where joy went laughing late:
The sicklied face of heaven hangs like hate
Above the woodland and the meadowland;
And Spring hath taken fire in her hand
Of frost and made a dead bloom of her face,
Which was a flower of marvel once and grace,
And sweet serenity and stainless glow.
Delay not. Let us go.

Let us go far away
Into the sunrise of a fairer May:
Where all the nights resign them to the moon,
And drug their souls with odor and soft tune,
And tell their dreams in starlight: where the hours
Teach immortality with fadeless flowers;
And all the day the bee weights down the bloom,
And all the night the moth shakes strange perfume,
Like music, from the flower-bells' affluence.
Let us go far from hence.

Why should we sit and weep,
And yearn with heavy eyelids still to sleep?
Forever hiding from our hearts the hate,-
Death within death,-life doth accumulate,
Like winter snows along the barren leas
And sterile hills, whereon no lover sees
The crocus limn the beautiful in flame;
Or hyacinth and jonquil write the name
Of Love in fire, for each passer-by.
Why should we sit and sigh?

We will not stay and long,
Here where our souls are wasting for a song;
Where no bird sings; and, dim beneath the stars,
No silvery water strikes melodious bars;
And in the rocks and forest-covered hills
No quick-tongued echo from her grotto fills

With eery syllables the solitude-
The vocal image of the voice that wooed-
She, of wild sounds the airy looking-glass.
Our souls are tired, alas!

What should we say to her?-
To Spring, who in our hearts makes no sweet stir:
Who looks not on us nor gives thought unto:
Too busy with the birth of flowers and dew,
And vague gold wings within the chrysalis;
Or Love, who will not miss us; had no kiss
To give your soul or the sad soul of me,
Who bound our hearts to her in poesy,
Long since, and wear her badge of service still.-
Have we not served our fill?

We will go far away.
Song will not care, who slays our souls each day
With the dark daggers of denying eyes,
And lips of silence!... Had she sighed us lies,
Not passionate, yet falsely tremulous,
And lent her mouth to ours in mockery; thus
Smiled from calm eyes as if appreciative;
Then, then our love had taught itself to live
Feeding itself on hope, and recompense.
But no!-So let us hence.

So be the Bible shut
Of all her Beauty, and her wisdom but
A clasp for memory! We will not seek
The light that came not when the soul was weak
With longing, and the darkness gave no sign
Of star-born comfort. Nay! why kneel and whine
Sad psalms of patience and hosannas of
Old hope and dreary canticles of love?-
Let us depart, since, as we long supposed,
For us God's book was closed.

Madison Julius Cawein

Portents

ABOVE the world a glare
Of sunset — guns and spears;
An army, no one hears,
Of mist and air:
Long lines of bronze and gold,
Huge helmets, each a cloud;
And then a fortress old
There in the night that phantoms seem to crowd.
A face of flame; a hand
Of crimson alchemy
Is waved: and, solemnly,
At its command,
Opens a fiery well,
A burning hole,
From which a stream of hell,
A river of blood, in frenzy, seems to roll.
And there, upon a throne,
Like some vast precipice,
Above that River of Dis,
Behold a King! alone!
Around whom shapes of blood
Take form: each one the peer
Of those, who, in the wood
Of Dante's Hell froze up the heart with fear.
Then shapes, that breast to breast
Gallop to face a foe:
And through the crimson glow
Th' imperial crest
Of him whose banner flies
Above a world that burns,
A raven in the skies,
And as it flies into a Death's-Head turns.
The wild trees writhe and twist
Their gaunt limbs, wrung with fear:
And now into my ear
A word seems hissed;
A message, filled with dread,
A dark, foreboding word,—
'Behold! we are the dead,

Who here on Earth lived only by the sword!

Madison Julius Cawein

Preludes

I

There is no rhyme that is half so sweet
As the song of the wind in the rippling wheat;
There is no metre that's half so fine
As the lilt of the brook under rock and vine;
And the loveliest lyric I ever heard
Was the wildwood strain of a forest bird.-
If the wind and the brook and the bird would teach
My heart their beautiful parts of speech,
And the natural art that they say these with,
My soul would sing of beauty and myth
In a rhyme and metre that none before
Have sung in their love, or dreamed in their lore,
And the world would be richer one poet the more.

II

A thought to lift me up to those
Sweet wildflowers of the pensive woods;
The lofty, lowly attitudes
Of bluet and of bramble-rose:
To lift me where my mind may reach
The lessons which their beauties teach.

A dream, to lead my spirit on
With sounds of faery shawms and flutes,
And all mysterious attributes
Of skies of dusk and skies of dawn:
To lead me, like the wandering brooks,
Past all the knowledge of the books.

A song, to make my heart a guest
Of happiness whose soul is love;
One with the life that knoweth of
But song that turneth toil to rest:
To make me cousin to the birds,
Whose music needs not wisdom's words.

Premonition

I saw the Summer through her garden go,
A marigold hung in her auburn hair,
Her brown arms heaped with harvest, and the lair
Of popped plenty, like the peach aglow:
Among the pepper-pods, in scarlet row,
And golden gourds and melons, where the pear
And quince hung heavy, in the languid air
She laid her down and let her eyes close slow.
Not so much breath as blows the thistle by,
Not so much sound as rounds a cricket's croon,
Was in her sleep, and yet about her seemed
The long dark sweep of rain, the whirling cry
And roar of winds beneath a stormy moon.
Was it a dream of Autumn that she dreamed?

Madison Julius Cawein

Preparation

How often hope's fair flower blooms richest where
The soul was fertilized with black despair.

Madison Julius Cawein

Problems

Man's are the learnings of his books-
What is all knowledge that he knows
Beside the wit of winding brooks,
The wisdom of the summer rose!

How soil distills the scent in flowers
Baffles his science: heaven-dyed,
How, from the palette of His hours,
God gives them colors, hath defied.

What dream of heaven begets the light?
Or, ere the stars beat burning tunes,
Stains all the hollow edge of night
With glory as of molten moons?

Who is it answers what is birth
Or death, that nothing may retard?
Or what is love, that seems of Earth,
Yet wears God's own divine regard?

Madison Julius Cawein

Processional

Universes are the pages
Of that book whose words are ages;
Of that book which destiny
Opens in eternity.

There each syllable expresses
Silence; there each thought a guess is;
In whose rhetoric's cosmic runes
Roll the worlds and swarming moons.

There the systems, we call solar,
Equatorial and polar,
Write their lines of rushing light
On the awful leaves of night.

There the comets, vast and streaming,
Punctuate the heavens' gleaming
Scroll; and suns, gigantic, shine,
Periods to each starry line.

There, initials huge, the Lion
Looms and measureless Orion;
And, as 'neath a chapter done,
Burns the Great-Bear's colophon.

Constellated, hieroglyphic,
Numbering each page terrific,
Fiery on the nebular black,
Flames the hurling zodiac.

In that book, o'er which Chaldean
Wisdom pored and many an eon
Of philosophy long dead,
This is all that man has read:

He has read how good and evil,
In creation's wild upheaval,
Warred; while God wrought terrible
At foundations red of Hell.

He has read of man and woman;
Laws and gods, both beast and human;
Thrones of hate and creeds of lust,
Vanished now and turned to dust.

Arts and manners that have crumbled;
Cities buried; empires tumbled:
Time but breathed on them its breath;
Earth is builded of their death.

These but lived their little hour,
Filled with pride and pomp and power;
What availed them all at last?
We shall pass as they have past.

Still the human heart will dream on
Love, part angel and part demon;
Yet, I question, what secures
Our belief that aught endures?

In that book, o'er which Chaldean
Wisdom pored and many an eon
Of philosophy long dead,
This is all that man has read.

Madison Julius Cawein

Proem

THERE is no rhyme that is half so sweet
As the song of the wind in the rippling wheat;
There is no metre that 's half so fine
As the lilt of the brook under rock and vine;
And the loveliest lyric I ever heard
Was the wildwood strain of a forest bird.—
If the wind and the brook and the bird would teach
My heart their beautiful parts of speech,
And the natural art that they say these with,
My soul would sing of beauty and myth
In a rhyme and a metre that none before
Have sung in their love, or dreamed in their lore,
And the world would be richer one poet the more.

Madison Julius Cawein

Proem. To Myth And Romance

There is no rhyme that is half so sweet
As the song of the wind in the rippling wheat;
There is no metre that's half so fine
As the lilt of the brook under rock and vine;
And the loveliest lyric I ever heard
Was the wildwood strain of a forest bird.
If the wind and the brook and the bird would teach
My heart their beautiful parts of speech.
And the natural art that they say these with,
My soul would sing of beauty and myth
In a rhyme and a metre that none before
Have sung in their love, or dreamed in their lore,
And the world would be richer one poet the more.

Madison Julius Cawein

Prologue

There is a poetry that speaks
Through common things: the grasshopper,
That in the hot weeds creaks and creaks,
Says all of summer to my ear:
And in the cricket's cry I hear
The fireside speak, and feel the frost
Work mysteries of silver near
On country casements, while, deep lost
In snow, the gatepost seems a sheeted ghost.

And other things give rare delight:
Those guttural harps the green-frogs tune,
Those minstrels of the falling night,
That hail the sickle of the moon
From grassy pools that glass her lune:
Or, all of August in its loud
Dry cry, the locust's call at noon,
That tells of heat and never a cloud
To veil the pitiless sun as with a shroud.

The rain, whose cloud dark-lids the moon,
The great white eyeball of the night,
Makes music for me; to its tune
I hear the flowers unfolding white,
The mushroom growing, and the slight
Green sound of grass that dances near;
The melon ripening with delight;
And in the orchard, soft and clear,
The apple redly rounding out its sphere.

The grigs make music as of old,
To which the fairies whirl and shine
Within the moonlight's prodigal gold,
On woodways wild with many a vine:
When all the wilderness with wine
Of stars is drunk, I hear it say
'Is God restricted to confine
His wonders only to the day,
That yields the abstract tangible to clay?'

And to my ear the mind of Morn,
When on her rubric forehead far
One star burns big, lifts a vast horn
Of wonder where all murmurs are:
In which I hear the waters war,
The torrent and the blue abyss,
And pines, that terrace bar on bar
The mountain side, like lovers' kiss,
And whisper words where naught but grandeur is.

The jutting crags, all iron-veined
With ore, the peaks, where eagles scream,
That pour their cataracts, rainbow-stained,
Like hair, in many a mountain stream,
Can lift my soul beyond the dream
Of all religions; make me scan
No mere external or extreme,
But inward pierce the outward plan
And learn that rocks have souls as well as man.

Madison Julius Cawein

Prototypes

Whether it be that we in letters trace
The pure exactness of a wood bird's strain,
And name it song; or with the brush attain
The high perfection of a wildflower's face;
Or mold in difficult marble all the grace
We know as man; or from the wind and rain
Catch elemental rapture of refrain
And mark in music to due time and place:
The aim of Art is Nature; to unfold
Her truth and beauty to the souls of men
In close suggestions; in whose forms is cast
Nothing so new but 'tis long eons old;
Nothing so old but 'tis as young as when
The mind conceived it in the ages past.

Madison Julius Cawein

Quatrains

THE WIND IN THE PINES

WHEN winds go organing through the pines
On hill and headland, darkly gleaming,
Meseems I hear sonorous lines
Of Iliads that the woods are dreaming.

OPPORTUNITY

BEHOLD a hag whom Life denies a kiss
As he rides questward in knight-errant-wise;
Only when he hath passed her is it his
To know, too late, the Fairy in disguise.

Madison Julius Cawein

Quiet

A Log-Hut in the solitude,
A clapboard roof to rest beneath!
This side, the shadow-haunted wood;
That side, the sunlight-haunted heath.

At daybreak Morn shall come to me
In raiment of the white winds spun;
Slim in her rosy hand the key
That opes the gateway of the sun.

Her smile shall help my heart enough
With love to labour all the day,
And cheer the road, whose rocks are rough,
With her smooth footprints, each a ray.

At dusk a voice shall call afar,
A lone voice like the whippoorwill's;
And, on her shimmering brow one star,
Night shall descend the western hills.

She at my door till dawn shall stand,
With gothic eyes, that, dark and deep,
Are mirrors of a mystic land,
Fantastic with the towns of sleep.

Madison Julius Cawein

Quiet Lanes

From the lyrical eclogue 'One Day and Another'

Now rests the season in forgetfulness,
Careless in beauty of maturity;
The ripened roses round brown temples, she
Fulfills completion in a dreamy guess.
Now Time grants night the more and day the less:
The gray decides; and brown
Dim golds and drabs in dulling green express
Themselves and redden as the year goes down.
Sadder the fields where, thrusting hoary high
Their tasseled heads, the Lear-like corn-stocks die,
And, Falstaff-like, buff-bellied pumpkins lie.-
Deepening with tenderness,
Sadder the blue of hills that lounge along
The lonesome west; sadder the song
Of the wild redbird in the leafage yellow.-
Deeper and dreamier, aye!
Than woods or waters, leans the languid sky
Above lone orchards where the cider press
Drips and the russets mellow.
Nature grows liberal: from the beechen leaves
The beech-nuts' burrs their little purses thrust,
Plump with the copper of the nuts that rust;
Above the grass the spendthrift spider weaves
A web of silver for which dawn designs
Thrice twenty rows of pearls: beneath the oak,
That rolls old roots in many gnarly lines,-
The polished acorns, from their saucers broke,
Strew oval agates.-On sonorous pines
The far wind organs; but the forest near
Is silent; and the blue-white smoke
Of burning brush, beyond that field of hay,
Hangs like a pillar in the atmosphere:
But now it shakes-it breaks, and all the vines
And tree tops tremble; see! the wind is here!
Billowing and boisterous; and the smiling day
Rejoices in its clamor. Earth and sky
Resound with glory of its majesty,

Impetuous splendor of its rushing by.-
But on those heights the woodland dark is still,
Expectant of its coming.... Far away
Each anxious tree upon each waiting hill
Tingles anticipation, as in gray
Surmise of rapture. Now the first gusts play,
Like laughter low, about their rippling spines;
And now the wildwood, one exultant sway,
Shouts-and the light at each tumultuous pause,
The light that glooms and shines,
Seems hands in wild applause.

How glows that garden!-Though the white mists keep
The vagabonding flowers reminded of
Decay that comes to slay in open love,
When the full moon hangs cold and night is deep;
Unheeding still their cardinal colors leap
Gay in the crescent of the blade of death,-
Spaced innocents whom he prepares to reap,-
Staying his scythe a breath
To mark their beauty ere, with one last sweep,
He lays them dead and turns away to weep.-
Let me admire,-
Before the sickle of the coming cold
Shall mow them down,-their beauties manifold:
How like to spurts of fire
That scarlet salvia lifts its blooms, which heap
With flame the sunlight. And, as sparkles creep
Through charring vellum, up that window's screen
The cypress dots with crimson all its green,
The haunt of many bees.
Cascading dark old porch-built lattices,
The nightshade bleeds with berries; drops of blood
Hanging in clusters 'mid the blue monk's-hood.

There is a garden old,
Where bright-hued clumps of zinnias unfold
Their formal flowers; where the marigold
Lifts a pinched shred of orange sunset caught
And elfed in petals; the nasturtium,
Deep, pungent-leaved and acrid of perfume,
Hangs up a goblin bonnet, pixy-brought

From Gnomeland. There, predominant red,
And arrogant, the dahlia lifts its head,
Beside the balsam's rose-stained horns of honey,
Lost in the murmuring, sunny
Dry wildness of the weedy flower bed;
Where crickets and the weed-bugs, noon and night,
Shrill dirges for the flowers that soon shall die,
And flowers already dead.-
I seem to hear the passing Summer sigh:
A voice, that seems to weep,-
'Too soon, too soon the Beautiful passes by!
And soon, among these bowers
Will dripping Autumn mourn with all her flowers'-

If I, perchance, might peep
Beneath those leaves of podded hollyhocks,
That the bland wind with odorous murmurs rocks,
I might behold her,-white
And weary,-Summer, 'mid her flowers asleep,
Her drowsy flowers asleep,
The withered poppies knotted in her locks.

Madison Julius Cawein

Ragamuffin

There's a boy that you must know,
Always ragged, dirty too;
Just a wretched sight and show
Worst boy that I ever knew;
Always hitting other boys
Smaller than himself. Annoys
People, too, by throwing stones.
Breaks more windows! that's his game.
Some one ought to break his bones.
Ragamuffin is his name.
Ragamuffin, Ragamuffin!
Some day some one 'll knock the stuffin'
Out of you and then, perhaps,
You won't bully little chaps.

II.

Never goes to school, but plays
Hookey all the time. His hat
Slouched like some old drunken bat
Reeling through the evening haze,
Here he loafs and tries to scare
Little girls; yes, pulls their hair,
While he mouths at them and jeers:
Chews tobacco, too, the same
As these ragged grasshoppers.
Ragamuffin is his name.
Ragamuffin, Ragamuffin!
Some day you'll go home a-snuffin':
Some big brother's going to fix
You for all your loafer tricks.

III.

And at night he comes around,
Prying in the windows when
Children are alone: and then
Knocks and makes a dreadful sound,
Like a robber getting in;

Scares them till it is a sin,
Looking fierce as robbers do,
Cursing till it is a shame:
It would even frighten you.
Ragamuffin is his name.
Ragamuffin, Ragamuffin!
You had better quit your bluffin';
Watchman sure will cross your trail,
Catch and lock you up in jail.

IV.

But the worst thing that he does,
So I think, is poking fun
At poor beggars; never a one
Beggary or villanous
As himself is. And he laughs,
Fit to kill, and apes and chaffs
Every cripple: lies in wait
Just to mock: pretends he's lame:
Jeers then, 'Say! why ain't you straight?'
Ragamuffin is his name.
Ragamuffin, Ragamuffin!
Some day you will get a cuffin';
Man will kill you with a crutch
Hey! we would n't miss you much.

Madison Julius Cawein

Rain

Around, the stillness deepened; then the grain
Went wild with wind; and every briery lane
Was swept with dust; and then, tempestuous black,
Hillward the tempest heaved a monster back,
That on the thunder leaned as on a cane;
And on huge shoulders bore a cloudy pack,
That gullied gold from many a lightning-crack:
One big drop splashed and wrinkled down the pane,
And then field, hill, and wood were lost in rain.

At last, through clouds,-as from a cavern hewn.
Into night's heart,-the sun burst angry roon;
And every cedar, with its weight of wet,
Against the sunset's fiery splendor set,
Frightened to beauty, seemed with rubies strewn:
Then in drenched gardens, like sweet phantoms met,
Dim odors rose of pink and mignonette;
And in the east a confidence, that soon
Grew to the calm assurance of the moon.

Madison Julius Cawein

Rain In The Woods

When on the leaves the rain persists,
And every gust brings showers down;
When all the woodland smokes with mists,
I take the old road out of town
Into the hills through which it twists.

I find the vale where catnip grows,
Where boneset blooms, with moisture bowed;
The vale through which the red creek flows,
Turbid with hill-washed clay, and loud
As some wild horn a hunter blows.

Around the root the beetle glides,
A living beryl; and the ant,
Large, agate-red, a garnet, slides
Beneath the rock; and every plant
Is roof for some frail thing that hides.

Like knots against the trunks of trees
The lichen-colored moths are pressed;
And, wedged in hollow blooms, the bees
Seem clots of pollen; in its nest
The wasp has crawled and lies at ease.

The locust harsh, that sharply saws
The silence of the summer noon;
The katydid that thinly draws
Its fine file o'er the bars of moon;
And grasshopper that drills each pause:

The mantis, long-clawed, furtive, lean
Fierce feline of the insect hordes
And dragonfly, gauze-winged and green,
Beneath the wild-grape's leaves and gourd's,
Have housed themselves and rest unseen.

The butterfly and forest-bird
Are huddled on the same gnarled bough,
From which, like some rain-voweled word

That dampness hoarsely utters now,
The tree-toad's voice is vaguely heard.

I crouch and listen; and again
The woods are filled with phantom forms
With shapes, grotesque in mystic train,
That rise and reach to me cool arms
Of mist; the wandering wraiths of rain.

I see them come; fantastic, fair;
Chill, mushroom-colored: sky and earth
Grow ghostly with their floating hair
And trailing limbs, that have their birth.
In wetness fungi of the air.

O wraiths of rain! O ghosts of mist!
Still fold me, hold me, and pursue!
Still let my lips by yours be kissed!
Still draw me with your hands of dew
Unto the tryst, the dripping tryst.

Madison Julius Cawein

Rainless

The locust builds its are of sound
And tops it with a spire;
The roadside leaves pant to the ground
With dust from hoof and tire.

The insects, day and night, make din,
And with the heat grow shriller;
And everywhere great spiders spin,
And crawls the caterpillar.

The wells are dry; the creeks are pools;
Weeds cram their beds with bristles;
And when a wind breathes, naught it cools,
The air grows white with thistles.

For months the drouth has burned and baked
The wood and field and garden;
The flower-plots are dead; and, raked,
Or mown, the meadows harden.

The Summer, sunk in godlessness,
From quarter unto quarter,
Now drags, now lifts a dusty dress,
That shows a sloven garter.

The child of Spring, it now appears,
Has turned a drab, a harlot,
Death's doxy; Death's, who near her leers
In rags of gold and scarlet

Madison Julius Cawein

Reasons

Yea, why I love thee let my heart repeat:
I look upon thy face and then divine
How men could die for beauty, such as thine,
Deeming it sweet
To lay my life and manhood at thy feet,
And for a word, a glance,
Do deeds of old romance.

II

Yea, why I love thee let my heart unfold:
I look into thy heart and then I know
The wondrous poetry of the long-ago,
The Age of Gold,
That speaks strange music, that is old, so old,
Yet young, as when 't was born,
With all the youth of morn.

III

Yea, why I love thee let my heart conclude:
I look into thy soul and realize
The undiscovered meaning of the skies,
That long have wooed
The world with far ideals that elude,
Out of whose dreams, maybe,
God shapes reality.

Madison Julius Cawein

Reconciliation

LISTEN, dearest! you must love me more,
More than you did before! —
Hark, what a beating here of wings!
Never at rest,
Dear, in your breast! —
Is it your heart with its flutterings,
Making a music, love, for us both?
Or merely a moth, a velvet-winged moth,
Which out of the garden's fragrance swings,
Weaving a spell,
That holds the rose and the moon in thrall? —
I love you more than I can tell;
And no recall
How long ago
Our quarrel and all! —
You say, you know,
A perfect pearl grows out of — well,
A little friction; tiny grain
Of sand or shell —
So love grew out of that moment's pain,
The heart's disdain —
Since then I have thought of no one but you,
And how your heart would beat on mine,
Like light on dew.
And I thought how foolish to fret and pine!
Better to claim the fault all mine!
To go to you and tell you that:
And how stale and flat
All life without you was, and vain!
And when I came, you turned and smiled,
Like a darling child,
And I knew from your look that, in your heart,
You had followed the self-same train
Of thought that made me yours again. —
Dearest! no more! —
We shall never part! —
So. Turn your face as you did before.—
I smooth your brow
And kiss you.— Now...

Tell me true —
Did you miss me, dear, as I missed you?

Madison Julius Cawein

Reed Call For April

When April comes, and pelts with buds
And apple-blooms each orchard space,
And takes the dog-wood-whitened woods
With rain and sunshine of her moods,
Like your fair face, like your fair face:
It's honey for the bloom and dew,
And honey for the heart!
And, oh, to be away with you
Beyond the town and mart.

II.

When April comes, and tints the hills
With gold and beryl that rejoice,
And from her airy apron spills
The laughter of the winds and rills,
Like your young voice, like your young voice:
It's gladness for God's bending blue,
And gladness for the heart!
And, oh, to be away with you
Beyond the town and mart.

III.

When April comes, and binds and girds
The world with warmth that breathes above,
And to the breeze flings all her birds,
Whose songs are welcome as the words
Of you I love, of you I love:
It's music for all things that woo,
And music for the heart!
And, oh, to be away with you
Beyond the town and mart.

Madison Julius Cawein

Reincarnation

High in the place of outraged liberty,
He ruled the world, an emperor and god
His iron armies swept the land and sea,
And conquered nations trembled at his nod.

By him the love that fills man's soul with light,
And makes a Heaven of Earth, was crucified;
Lust-crowned he lived, yea, lived in God's despite,
And old in infamies, a king he died.

Justice begins now. Many centuries
In some vile body must his soul atone
As slave, as beggar, loathsome with disease,
Less than the dog at which we fling a stone.

Madison Julius Cawein

Requiem

I

No more for him, where hills look down,
Shall Morning crown
Her rainy brow with blossom bands!-
The Morning Hours, whose rosy hands
Drop wildflowers of the breaking skies
Upon the sod 'neath which he lies.-
No more for him! No more! No more!

II

No more for him, where waters sleep,
Shall Evening heap
The long gold of the perfect days!
The Eventide, whose warm hand lays
Great poppies of the afterglow
Upon the turf he rests below.-
No more for him! No more! no more!

III

No more for him, where woodlands loom,
Shall Midnight bloom
The star-flowered acres of the blue!
The Midnight Hours, whose dim hands strew
Dead leaves of darkness, hushed and deep,
Upon the grave where he doth sleep.-
No more for him! No more! No more!

IV

The hills, that Morning's footsteps wake:
The waves that take
A brightness from the Eve; the woods
And solitudes, o'er which Night broods,
Their Spirits have, whose parts are one
With him, whose mortal part is done.
Whose part is done.

Madison Julius Cawein

Requiescat

The roses mourn for her who sleeps
Within the tomb;
For her each lily-flower weeps
Dew and perfume.

In each neglected flower-bed
Each blossom droops its lovely head,
They miss her touch, they miss her tread,
Her face of bloom,
Of happy bloom.

The very breezes grieve for her,
A lonely grief;
For her each tree is sorrower,
Each blade and leaf.

The foliage rocks itself and sighs,
And to its woe the wind replies,
They miss her girlish laugh and cries,
Whose life was brief,
Was very brief.

The sunlight, too, seems pale with care,
Or sick with woe;
The memory haunts it of her hair,
Its golden glow.

No more within the bramble-brake
The sleepy bloom is kissed awake
The sun is sad for her dear sake,
Whose head lies low,
Lies dim and low.

The bird, that sang so sweet, is still
At dusk and dawn;
No more it makes the silence thrill
Of wood and lawn.

In vain the buds, when it is near,

Open each pink and perfumed ear,
The song it sings she will not hear
Who now is gone,
Is dead and gone.

Ah, well she sleeps who loved them well,
The birds and bowers;
The fair, the young, the lovable,
Who once was ours.

Alas! that loveliness must pass!
Must come to lie beneath the grass!
That youth and joy must fade, alas!
And die like flowers,
Earth's sweetest flowers!

Madison Julius Cawein

Response

There is a music of immaculate love,
That beats within the virgin veins of Spring,
And trillium blossoms, like the stars that cling
To fairies' wands; and, strung on sprays above,
White-hearts and mandrake blooms that look enough
Like the elves' washing white with laundering
Of May-moon dews; and all pale-opening
Wild-flowers of the woods are born thereof.
There is no sod Spring's white foot brushes but
Must feel the music that vibrates within,
And thrill to the communicated touch
Responsive harmonies, that must unshut
The heart of Beauty for Song's concrete kin,
Emotions that are flowers born of such.

Madison Julius Cawein

Restraint

Dear heart and love! what happiness to sit
And watch the firelight's varying shade and shine
On thy young face; and through those eyes of thine
As through glad windows-mark fair fancies flit
In sumptuous chambers of thy soul's chaste wit
Like graceful women: then to take in mine
Thy hand, whose pressure brims my heart's divine
Hushed rapture as with music exquisite!
When I remember how thy look and touch
Sway, like the moon, my blood with ecstasy,
I dare not think to what fierce heaven might lead
Thy soft embrace; or in thy kiss how much
Sweet hell,-beyond all help of me,-might be,
Where I were lost, where I were lost indeed!

Madison Julius Cawein

Revelment

A sense of sadness in the golden air;
A pensiveness, that has no part in care,
As if the Season, by some woodland pool,
Braiding the early blossoms in her hair,
Seeing her loveliness reflected there,
Had sighed to find herself so beautiful.

A breathlessness; a feeling as of fear;
Holy and dim, as of a mystery near,
As if the World, about us, whispering went
With lifted finger and hand-hollowed ear,
Harkening a music, that we cannot hear,
Haunting the quickening earth and firmament.

A prescience of the soul that has no name;
Expectancy that is both wild and tame,
As if the Earth, from out its azure ring
Of heavens, looked to see, as white as flame,-
As Perseus once to chained Andromeda came,-
The swift, divine revelment of the Spring.

Madison Julius Cawein

Reverie

What ogive gates from gold of Ophir wrought,
What walls of Pariah, whiter than a rose,
What towers of crystal, for the eyes of thought,
Hast builded on far Islands of Repose?
Thy cloudy columns, vast, Corinthian,
Or huge, Ionic, colonnade the heights
Of dreamland, looming o'er the soul's deep seas;
Built melodies of marble, that no man
Has ever reached, except in fancy's flights,
Templing the presence of perpetual ease.

Oft, where o'er plastic frieze and plinths of spar,
In glimmering solitudes of pillared stone,
The twilight blossoms with one violet star,
With thee, O Reverie, I have stood alone,
And there beheld, from out the Mythic Age,
The rosy breasts of Cytherea fair,
Full-cestused, and suggestive of what loves
Immortal rise; and heard the lyric rage
Of sun-burnt Poesy, whose throat breathes bare
O'er leopard skins, fluting among his groves.

Oft, where thy castled peaks and templed vales
Cloud like convulsive sunsets shores that dream,
Myrrh-fragrant, over siren seas whose sails
Gleam white as lilies on a liliated stream,
My soul has dreamed. Or by thy sapphire sea,
In thy arcaded gardens, in the shade
Of breathing sculpture, oft has walked with thought,
And bent, in shadowy attitude, its knee
Before the shrine of Beauty that must fade
And leave no memory of the mind that wrought.

Who hath beheld thy caverns where, in heaps,
The wines of Lethe and Love's witchery,
In sealéd Amphoræ a sibyl keeps,
World-old, for ever guarded secretly?
No wine of Xeres or of Syracuse!
No fine Falernian and no vile Sabine!

The stolen fire of a demigod,
Whose bubbled purple goddess feet did bruise
In crusted vats of vintage, where the green
Flames with wild poppies, on the Samian sod.

Oh, for the deep enchantment of one draught!
The reckless ecstasy of classic earth!
With godlike eyes to laugh as gods have laughed
In eyes of mortal brown, a mighty mirth.
Of deity delirious with desire!
To breathe the dropping roses of the shrines,
The splashing wine-libation and the blood,
And all the young priest's dreaming! To inspire
My eager soul with beauty, 'til it shines
An utt'rance of life's loftier brotherhood!

So would I slumber in the old-world shades,
And Poesy should touch me, as some bold
Wild bee a pulpy lily of the glades,
Barbaric-covered with the kernelled gold;
And feel the glory of the Golden Age
Less godly than my purpose, strong to dare
Death with the pure immortal lips of love:
Less lovely than my soul's ideal rage
To mate itself with Music and declare
Itself part meaning of the stars above.

Madison Julius Cawein

Riches

What mines the morning heavens unfold!
What far Alaskas of the skies!
That, veined with elemental gold,
Sierra on Sierra rise.

Heap up the gold of all the world,
The ore that makes men fools and slaves;
What is it to the gold, cloud-curved,
That rivers through the sunset's caves!

Search Earth for riches all who will,
The gold that soils, that turns to dust
Be mine the wealth no thief can steal,
The gold of God that can not rust.

Madison Julius Cawein

Riders In The Night

Masks

Death rides black-masked to-night; and through the land
Madness beside him brandishes a torch.
The peaceful farmhouse with its vine-wreathed porch
Lies in their way. Death lifts a bony hand
And knocks, and Madness makes a wild demand
Of fierce Defiance: then the night's deep arch
Reverberates, and under beech and latch
A dead face stares; shot where one took his stand.
Then down the night wild hoofs; the darkness beats;
And like a torrent through the startled town
Destruction sweeps; high overhead a flame;
And Violence that shoots amid the streets.
A piercing whistle: one who gallops down:
And Death and Madness go the way they came.

II.

The Raid

Rain and black night. Beneath the covered bridge
The rushing Fork that roars among its rocks.
Nothing is out. Nothing? What's that which blocks
The long grey road upon the rain-swept ridge?
A horseman! No! A mask! As hewn from jet
With ready gun he waits and sentinels
The open way. Far off he hears wild bells;
And now a signal shrills through wind and wet.
Was that the thunder, or the rushing stream?
The tunnel of the bridge throbs with mad hoofs;
Now its black throat pours out a midnight cloud
Riders! behind whom steadily a gleam
Grows to a glare that silhouettes dark roofs,
Whence armed Pursuit gathers and gallops loud.

III.

The Rendezvous

A lonely barn, lost in a field of weeds;
A fallen fence, where partly hangs a gate:
The skies are darkening and the hour is late;
The Indian dusk comes, red in rainy beads.
Along a path, which from a woodland leads,
Horsemen come riding who dismount and wait:
Here Anarchy conspires with Crime and Hate,
And Madness masks and on its business speeds.
Another Kuklux in another war
Of blacker outrage down the night they ride,
Brandishing a torch and gun before each farm.
Is Law asleep then? Does she fear? Where are
The servants of her strength, the Commonwealth's pride?
And where the steel of her restraining arm?

IV.

In Black And Red

The hush of death is on the night. The corn,
That loves to whisper to the wind; the leaves,
That dance with it, are silent: one perceives
No motion mid the fields, as dry as horn.
What light is that? It cannot be the morn!
Yet in the east it seems its witchcraft weaves
A fiery rose. Look! how it grows! it heaves
And flames and tosses! 'Tis a burning barn!
And now the night is rent with shouts and shots.
Dark forms and faces hurry past. The gloom
Gallops with riders. Homes are less than straw
Before this madness: human lives, mere lots
Flung in and juggled from the cap of Doom,
Where Crime stamps yelling on the face of Law.

Madison Julius Cawein

Riley

His Birthday, October the 7th, 1912

RILEY, whose pen has made the world your debtor,
Whose Art has kept you young through sixty years,
Brimming our hearts with laughter and with tears,
Holding her faith pure to the very letter:
We come to you today, both man and woman,
And happy little children, girl and boy,—
To laurel you with all our love and joy,
And crown you for the dreams your pen made human:
For Orphant Annie and for Old Aunt Mary,
The Raggedty Man, who never will grow older,
And all the kindly folks from Griggsby's Station,
Immortal throngs, with Spirk and Wunk and Faery,
Who swarm behind you, peering o'er your shoulder,
Sharing with you the blessings of a Nation.

Madison Julius Cawein

Robert Browning

MASTER of human harmonies, where gong
And harp and violin and flute accord;
Each instrument confessing you its lord,
Within the deathless orchestra of Song.
Albeit at times your music may sound wrong
To our dulled senses, and its meaning barred
To Earth's slow understanding, never marred
Your message brave: clear, and of trumpet tongue.
Poet-revealer, who, both soon and late,
Within an age of doubt kept clean your faith,
Crying your cry of 'With the world all's well!'
How shall we greet you from our low estate,
Keys in the keyboard that is life and death,
The organ whence we hear your music swell?

Madison Julius Cawein

Romance

Thus have I pictured her:-In Arden old
A white-browed maiden with a falcon eye,
Rose-flushed of face, with locks of wind-blown gold,
Teaching her hawks to fly.

Or, 'mid her boar-hounds, panting with the heat,
In huntsman green, sounding the hunt's wild prize,
Plumed, dagger-belted, while beneath her feet
The spear-pierced monster dies.

Or in Brecehand, on some high tower,
Clad white in samite, last of her lost race,
My soul beholds her, lovelier than a flower,
Gazing with pensive face.

Or, robed in raiment of romantic lore,
Like Oriana, dark of eye and hair,
Riding through realms of legend evermore,
And ever young and fair.

Or now like Bradamant, as brave as just,
In complete steel, her pure face lit with scorn,
At giant castles, dens of demon lust,
Winding her bugle-horn.

Another Una; and in chastity
A second Britomart; in beauty far
O'er her who led King Charles's chivalry
And Paynim lands to war....

Now she, from Avalon's deep-dingled bowers,-
'Mid which white stars and never-waning moons
Make marriage; and dim lips of musk-mouthed flowers
Sigh faint and fragrant tunes,-

Implores me follow; and, in shadowy shapes
Of sunset, shows me,-mile on misty mile
Of purple precipice,-all the haunted capes
Of her enchanted isle.

Where, bowered in bosks and overgrown with vine,
Upon a headland breasting violet seas,
Her castle towers, like a dream divine,
With stairs and galleries.

And at her casement, Circe-beautiful,
Above the surgeless reaches of the deep,
She sits, while, in her gardens, fountains lull
The perfumed wind asleep.

Or, round her brow a diadem of spars,
She leans and hearkens, from her raven height,
The nightingales that, choring to the stars,
Take with wild song the night.

Or, where the moon is mirrored in the waves,
To mark, deep down, the Sea King's city rolled,
Wrought of huge shells and labyrinthine caves,
Ribbed pale with pearl and gold.

There doth she wait forever; and the kings
Of all the world have wooed her: but she cares
For none but him, the Love, that dreams and sings,
That sings and dreams and dares.

Madison Julius Cawein

Romaunt Of The Oak

'I rode to death, for I fought for shame
The Lady Maurine of noble name,

'The fair and faithless!-Though life be long
Is love the wiser?-Love made song

'Of all my life; and the soul that crept
Before, arose like a star and leapt:

'Still leaps with the love that it found untrue,
That it found unworthy.-Now run me through!

'Yea, run me through! for meet and well,
And a jest for laughter of fiends in hell,

'It is that I, who have done no wrong,
Should die by the hand of Hugh the Strong,

'Of Hugh her leman!-What else could be
When the devil was judge twixt thee and me?

'He splintered my lance, and my blade he broke-
Now finish me thou 'neath the trysting oak!' ...

The crest of his foeman,-a heart of white
In a bath of fire,-stooped i' the night;

Stooped and laughed as his sword he swung,
Then galloped away with a laugh on his tongue....

But who is she in the gray, wet dawn,
'Mid the autumn shades like a shadow wan?

Who kneels, one hand on her straining breast,
One hand on the dead man's bosom pressed?

Her face is dim as the dead's; as cold
As his tarnished harness of steel and gold.

O Lady Maurine! O Lady Maurine!
What boots it now that regret is keen?

That his hair you smooth, that you kiss his brow
What boots it now? what boots it now?...

She has haled him under the trysting oak,
The huge old oak that the creepers cloak.

She has stood him, gaunt in his battered arms,
In its haunted hollow.-'Be safe from storms,'

She laughed as his cloven casque she placed
On his brow, and his riven shield she braced.

Then sat and talked to the forest flowers
Through the lonely term of the day's pale hours.

And stared and whispered and smiled and wept,
While nearer and nearer the evening crept.

And, lo, when the moon, like a great gold bloom
Above the sorrowful trees did loom,

She rose up sobbing, 'O moon, come see
My bridegroom here in the old oak-tree!

'I have talked to the flowers all day, all day,
For never a word had he to say.

'He would not listen, he would not hear,
Though I wailed my longing into his ear.

'O moon, steal in where he stands so grim,
And tell him I love him, and plead with him.

'Soften his face that is cold and stern
And brighten his eyes and make them burn,

'O moon, O moon, so my soul can see
That his heart still glows with love for me!' ...

When the moon was set, and the woods were dark,
The wild deer came and stood as stark

As phantoms with eyes of fire; or fled
Like a ghostly hunt of the herded dead.

And the hoot-owl called; and the were-wolf snarled;
And a voice, in the boughs of the oak-tree gnarled,

Like the whining rush of the hags that ride
To the witches' sabbath,-crooned and cried.

And wrapped in his mantle of wind and cloud
The storm-fiend stalked through the forest loud.

When she heard the dead man rattle and groan
As the oak was bent and its leaves were blown,

And the lightning vanished and shimmered his mail,
Through the swirling sweep of the rain and hail,

She seemed to hear him, who seemed to call,-
'Come hither, Maurine, the wild leaves fall!

'The wild leaves rustle, the wild leaves flee;
Come hither, Maurine, to the hollow tree!

'To the trysting tree, to the tree once green;
Come hither, Maurine! come hither, Maurine!' ...

They found her closed in his armored arms-
Had he claimed his bride on that night of storms?

Madison Julius Cawein

Rome

Above the circus of the world she sat,
Beautiful and base, a harlot crowned with pride:
Fierce nations, upon whom she sneered and spat,
Shrieked at her feet and for her pastime died.

Madison Julius Cawein

Rose And Leaf

All the roses now are gone,
All their glories shed:
Here's a rose that grows not wan,
Rose of love to wear upon
Your fair breast instead.

Everywhere sere leaves are seen
Golden, red and grey:
Here's a leaf for ever green,
Leaf of truth to hold between
Your white hands alway.

Here's my leaf and here's my rose.
Take them. They are yours.
In my garden nothing grows,
Garden of my heart, God knows,
That as long endures.

Madison Julius Cawein

Rose And Redbird - A Faerytale

I had the strangest dream last night:
I dreamed the poppies, red and white,
That over-ran the flower-bed,
Changed to wee women, white and red,
Who, jeweled with the twinkling wet,
Joined hands and danced a minuet.

And there, beside the garden walk,
I thought a red-rose stood at talk
With a black cricket; and I heard
The cricket say, 'You are the bird,
Red-crested, who comes every day
To sing his lyric roundelay.'

The rose replied, 'Nay! you must know
That bird and I loved long-ago:
I am a princess, he a prince:
And we were parted ever since
The world of science made us don
The new disguises we have on.'

And then the rose put off disguise
And stood revealed before my eyes,
A faery princess; and, in black,
His tiny fiddle on his back,
An elfin fiddler, long of nose,
The cricket bowed before the rose.

A house of moss and firefly-light
Now seemed to rise within the night
Beside the tree where, bending low,
The flowers stood, a silken row,
Around the rose, a faery band
Before the Queen of Faeryland.

And suddenly I saw the side
Of a great beech-tree open wide,
And there, behold! were wondrous things,
Slim flower-like people bright with wings,

Who bowed before a throne of state,
Whereon the rose and redbird sate.

And then I woke; and there, behold,
Was naught except the moonlight's gold
On tree and garden; and the flowers
Safe snuggled in their beds and bowers:
The rose was gone, but where she'd stood
Lay scattered crimson of her hood.

The cricket still was at his tune
Somewhere between the dawn and moon:
And I'd have sworn it was a dream
Had I not glimpsed a glowworm gleam
And heard a chuckling in the tree,
And seen the dewdropp wink at me.

Madison Julius Cawein

Rose Leaves When The Rose Is Dead

See how the rose leaves fall
The rose leaves fall and fade:
And by the wall, in dusk funereal,
How leaf on leaf is laid,
Withered and soiled and frayed.

How red the rose leaves fall
And in the ancient trees,
That stretch their twisted arms about the hall,
Burdened with mysteries,
How sadly sighs the breeze.

How soft the rose leaves fall
The rose leaves drift and lie:
And over them dull slugs and beetles crawl,
And, palely glimmering by,
The glow-worm trails its eye.

How thick the rose leaves fall
And strew the garden way,
For snails to slime and spotted toads to sprawl,
And, plodding past each day,
Coarse feet to tread in clay.

How fast they fall and fall
Where Beauty, carved in stone,
With broken hands veils her dead eyes; and, tall,
White in the moonlight lone,
Looms like a marble moan.

How slow they drift and fall
And strew the fountained pool,
That, in the nymph-carved basin by the wall,
Reflects in darkness cool.
Ruin made beautiful.

How red the rose leaves fall
Fall and like blood remain
Upon the dial's disc, whose pedestal,

Black-mossed and dark with stain,
Crumbles in sun and rain.

How wan they seem to fall
Around one where she stands
Dim in their midst, beyond the years' recall,
Reaching pale, passionate hands
Into the past's vague lands.

How still they fall and fall
Around them where they meet
As oft of old: she in her gem-pinned shawl
Of white; and he, complete
In black from head to feet.

How faint the rose leaves fall
Around them where, it seems,
He holds her clasped parting from her and all
His heart's young hopes and dreams
There in the moon's thin beams.

Around them rose leaves fall
And in the stress and urge
Of winds that strew them lightly over all,
With deep, autumnal surge,
There seems to rise a dirge:

'See how the rose leaves fall
Upon thy dead, O soul!
The rose leaves of the love that once in thrall
Held thee beyond control,
Making thy heart's world whole.

'God help them still to fall
Around thee, bowed above
The face within thy heart, beneath the pall!
The perished face thereof,
The beautiful face of Love.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Rosemary

Above her, pearl and rose the heavens lay;
Around her, flowers scattered earth with gold,
Or down the path in insolence held sway
Like cavaliers who ride the elves' highway
Scarlet and blue, within a garden old.

Beyond the hills, faint-heard through belts of wood,
Bells, Sabbath-sweet, swooned from some far-off town;
Gamboge and gold, broad sunset colors strewed
The purple west as if, with God imbued,
Her mighty pallet Nature there laid down.

Amid such flowers, underneath such skies,
Embodying all life knows of sweet and fair,
She stood; love's dreams in girlhood's face and eyes,
White as a star that comes to emphasize
The mingled beauty of the earth and air.

Behind her, seen through vines and orchard trees,
Gray with its twinkling windows-like the face
Of calm old-age that sits and smiles at ease
Porched with old roses, haunts of honey-bees,
The homestead loomed dim in a glimmering space.

Ah! whom she waited in the afterglow,
Soft-eyed and dreamy 'mid the lily and rose,
I do not know, I do not wish to know;
It is enough I keep her picture so,
Hung up, like poetry, o'er my life's dull prose.

A fragrant picture, where I still may find
Her face untouched of sorrow or regret,
Unspoiled of contact, ever young and kind,
Glad spiritual sweetheart of my soul and mind,
She had not been, perhaps, if we had met.

Madison Julius Cawein

Santa Claus

When my mother is n't here,
And I just won't go to bed,
And it's cold outside and near
Christmas; and the kitchen-shed
'S covered thick with frost and snow;
Then my nurse she says, 'Oh! oh!
Better get to bed! My Laws!
Think I hear Old Santa Claus!'

Then I hurry; never kick,
Squirm or cry or anything:
But jump into bed right quick:
'Fraid to look around; and cling
Fast to nurse; and close my eyes
Tight: she looking just as wise!
Scared, too, don't you know? because
She fast heard Old Santa Claus.

Why in goodness I'm afraid
I don't know. For Santa's good,
So they say, and brings much aid
To all folks. It's understood
Specially to girls and boys,
Christmas-trees and cakes and toys;
But there must be some good cause
Makes one 'fraid of Santa Claus.

It's his whiskers, I suppose;
Gray and big about his chin,
Where you just can see his nose
And his eyes, each like a pin:
And his clothes all made of hair
Twinkling thick with frost. Declare
If I saw him I'd have cause
To be scared of Santa Claus.

One night, week from Christmas, I
Looked out through the window-pane;
And right in our back-yard, why,

Some one walked in wind and rain,
Swishing, splashing with a whip.
Did n't I just hop and skip
Into bed? because, because
Guess it was Old Santa Claus.

And I am all shivery
When I wake up winter nights,
And it's dark and I can't see,
And the black wind fights and fights
Round the chimney; then right quick
Under cover my head I stick,
Crying, 'Mother! wake up! 'cause
Think I hear Old Santa Claus!'

Madison Julius Cawein

Science

Miranda-like, above the world she waves
The wand of Prospero; and, beautiful,
Ariel the airy, Caliban the dull,
Lightning and steam, are her unwilling slaves.

Madison Julius Cawein

Seasons

I heard the forest's green heart beat
As if it heard the happy feet
Of one who came, like young Desire:
At whose fair coming birds and flowers
Sprang up, and Beauty, filled with fire,
Touched lips with Song amid the bowers
And Love led on the dancing Hours.

II.

And then I heard a voice that rang,
And to the leaves and blossoms sang:
'My child is Life: I dwell with Truth:
I am the Spirit glad of Birth:
I bring to all things joy and youth:
I am the rapture of the Earth.
Come look on me and know my worth.'

III.

And then the woodland heaved a sigh,
As if it saw a shape go by
A shape of sorrow or of dread,
That seemed to move as moves a mist,
And left the leaves and flowers dead,
And with cold lips my forehead kissed,
While phantoms all around held tryst.

IV.

And then I heard a voice that spoke
Unto the fading beech and oak:
'I am the Spirit of Decay,
Whose child is Death, that means relief:
I breathe and all things pass away:
I am Earth's glory and its grief.
Come look on me: thy time is brief.'

Senorita

An agate-black, your roguish eyes
Claim no proud lineage of the skies,
No starry blue; but of good earth
The reckless witchery and mirth.

Looped in your raven hair's repose,
A hot aroma, one red rose
Dies; envious of that loveliness,
By being near which its is less.

Twin sea shells, hung with pearls, your ears,
Whose slender rosiness appears
Part of the pearls; whose pallid fire
Binds the attention these inspire.

One slim hand crumples up the lace
About your bosom's swelling grace;
A ruby at your samite throat
Lends the required color note.

The moon bears through the violet night
A pearly urn of chalice light;
And from your dark-railed balcony
You stoop and wave your fan at me.

O'er orange orchards and the rose
Vague, odorous lips the south wind blows,
Peopling the night with whispers of
Romance and palely passionate love.

The heaven of your balcony
Smiles down two stars, that say to me
More peril than Angelica
Wrought with her beauty in Cathay.

Oh, stoop to me! and, speaking, reach
My soul like song that learned sweet speech
From some dim instrument-who knows?-
Or flower, a dulcimer or rose.

Madison Julius Cawein

September

The bubbled blue of morning-glory spires,
Balloon-blown foam of moonflowers, and sweet snows
Of clematis, through which September goes,
Song-hearted, rich in realized desires,
Are flanked by hotter hues: by tawny fires
Of acrid marigolds, that light long rows
Of lamps, and salvias, red as day's red close,
That torches seem by which the Month attires
Barbaric beauty; like some Asian queen,
Towering imperial in her two-fold crown
Of harvest and of vintage; all her form
Majestic gold and purple: in her mien
The might of motherhood; her baby brown,
Abundance, high on one exultant arm.

Madison Julius Cawein

September On Cape Ann

The partridge-berry flecks with flame the way
That leads to ferny hollows where the bee
Drones on the aster. Far away the sea
Points its deep sapphire with a gleam of grey.
Here from this height where, clustered sweet, the bay
Clumps a green couch, the haw and barberry
Beading her hair, sad Summer, seemingly,
Has fallen asleep, unmindful of the day.
The chipmunk barks upon the old stone wall;
And in the shadows, like a shadow, stirs
The woodchuck where the boneset's blossom creams.
Was that a phoebe with its pensive call?
A sighing wind that shook the drowsy firs?
Or only Summer waking from her dreams?

Madison Julius Cawein

Service

Here is a tale for proper men and virgins:
There was a woman once who had a daughter,
A fair-faced wench, as stable as is water,
And frailer than the first spring flower that burgeons.
She did not need to work, but then her mother
Thought it more suitable, and circumspectly
Put her with gentlefolks, where, indirectly,
She rose in service as has many another.
The house she served in soon became divided:
The wife and husband parted, with some scandal:
But she remained and, in the end, was married.
What happened then? You'll say, 'The girl decided
She loved another. 'Nay; not so. The vandal
Wrecked no more homes but lived a life unvaried.

Madison Julius Cawein

Service 2

I passed a cottage 'twixt the town and wood,
And marked its garden, blossoming bright and bold,
And breathing many a scent. Awhile I stood
Near pink and marigold.

It seemed a place of prayer; of love and peace;
Where gray Content with children at his knees,
Like blessings manifold,
Rested among the trees.

An old man came into the garden-plot;
And 'mid the tansy and the scarlet sage
Found for himseft a dim and quiet spot
Wherein to turn a page:

For in his hand he bore a well-thumbed book,
Upon whose pages now and then he'd look;
And then, as if with age,
His hoary head he shook.

I said to him: 'You have a lovely place.
How rich your garden blooms! How sweet its shade!
How good to sit here in the eve and face
Those hills of woods while fade.

The sunset's splendors like a bannered host
Before the glory of the Holy Ghost,
While Dusk, in light arrayed,
Takes up his starry post.'

The old man smiled, and turned around to stare
Not at me but above my head, as if
He saw a form, a flying phantom there,
A flaming hippogriff:

Then said, 'You find here what I keep in mind
Thoughts thoughts of beauty with which God is kind
To an old man grown stiff
And half-way deaf and blind.

'This garden, now, in every herb and flower,
Expresses what the Bible says in part.
Unto my soul: To serve God every hour,
In thought, or through some art,

With loveliness: as men did long ago,
Work at some beauty that shall gleam and glow
With worship of the heart,
Whose dream shall burn below.

'For men may serve God in their humblest works:
In gardens, say, like mine; wherein the Word
Walks with me, and in every rosebush lurks
'God's blessing like a bird.'

And so he ceased. And, like the Seraphim,
The sunset clouds spread golden over him;
And in the trees I heard,
The wind, like some far hymn.

Madison Julius Cawein

Shadows On The Shore

The doubtful dawn came dim and wan,
And dimmer grew the day:
The kildee whistled among the weeds,
The blue crane clanged in the river reeds,
And a mist fell wild and gray.

At dawn she stood, her heavy hood
Flung back, in the ferry boat,
To watch the rebel raiders ride,
Her rebel-love, with his men beside,
His kiss on her mouth and throat.

Like some dark spell the tempest fell,
Like some wild curse night came:
For hours she heard the warring dead,
Whose batteries opened overhead
With thunder and with flame.

And now again, in wind and rain,
She toiled at the creaking oar:
Oh what had she heard in the night and storm?
Whose voice was that? and whose the form
That galloped to the shore?

Across the stream, in the tempest's gleam,
Who sent that wild halloo?
In the lightning's glare, who was it there,
The wind and the rain in his tossing hair,
And his gray cloak torn in two?

Through rain and blast pull fast, pull fast!
Oar down the rushing tide!
Look where he rides in the lightning's glow!
And hearken now to his far hallo!
But only his horse, with head hung low,
A blur of blood on the saddlebow,
Comes whinnying to her side.

Sibylline

THERE is a glory in the apple boughs
Of silver moonlight; like a torch of myrrh,
Burning upon an altar of sweet vows,
Dropped from the hand of some wan worshipper:
And there is life among the apple blooms
Of whisp'ring winds; as if a god addressed
The flamen from the sanctuary glooms
With secrets of the bourne that hope hath guessed,
Saying: 'Behold! a darkness which illumes,
A waking which is rest.'

There is a blackness in the apple trees
Of tempest; like the ashes of an urn
Hurt hands have gathered upon blistered knees,
With salt of tears, out of the flames that burn:
And there is death among the blooms, that fill
The night with breathless scent,—as when, above
The priest, the vision of his faith doth will
Forth from his soul the beautiful form thereof,—
Saying: 'Behold! a silence never still;
The other form of love.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Simulacra

Dark in the west the sunset's sombre wrack
Unrolled vast walls the rams of war had split,
Along whose battlements the battle lit
Tempestuous beacons; and, with gates hurled back,
A mighty city, red with ruin and sack,
Through burning breaches, crumbling bit by bit,
Showed where the God of Slaughter seemed to sit
With Conflagration glaring at each crack.
Who knows? perhaps as sleep unto us makes
Our dreams as real as our waking seems
With recollections time can not destroy,
So in the mind of Nature now awakes,
Haply, some wilder memory, and she dreams
The stormy story of the fall of Troy.

Madison Julius Cawein

Since Then

I found myself among the trees
What time the reapers ceased to reap;
And in the sunflower-blooms the bees
Huddled brown heads and went to sleep,
Rocked by the balsam-breathing breeze.

I saw the red fox leave his lair,
A shaggy shadow, on the knoll;
And tunneling his thoroughfare
Beneath the soil, I watched the mole-
Stealth's own self could not take more care.

I heard the death-moth tick and stir,
Slow-honeycombing through the bark;
I heard the cricket's drowsy chirr,
And one lone beetle burr the dark-
The sleeping woodland seemed to purr.

And then the moon rose: and one white
Low bough of blossoms-grown almost
Where, ere you died, 'twas our delight
To meet,-dear heart!-I thought your ghost....
The wood is haunted since that night.

Madison Julius Cawein

Sings

The dim verbena drugs the dusk
With lemon-heavy odours where
The heliotropes breathe drowsy musk
Into the jasmine-dreamy air;
The moss-rose bursts its dewy husk
And spills its attar there.

The orange at thy casement swings
Star-censers oozing rich perfumes;
The clematis, long-petalled, clings
In clusters of dark purple blooms;
With flowers, like moons or sylphide wings,
Magnolias light the glooms.

Awake, awake from sleep!
Thy balmy hair,
Down-fallen, deep on deep,
Like blossoms there'
That dew and fragrance weep'
Will fill the night with prayer.
Awake, awake from sleep!

And dreaming here it seems to me
A dryad's bosom grows confessed,
Bright in the moss of yonder tree,
That rustles with the murmurous West
Or is it but a bloom I see,
Round as thy virgin breast?

Through fathomless deeps above are rolled
A million feverish worlds, that burst,
Like gems, from Heaven's caskets old
Of darkness fires that throb and thirst;
An aloe, showering buds of gold,
The night seems, star-immersed.

Unseal, unseal thine eyes!
O'er which her rod
Sleep sways; and like the skies,

That dream and nod,
Their starry majesties
Will fill the night with God.

Unseal, unseal thine eyes!

Madison Julius Cawein

Sleep Is A Spirit

Sleep is a spirit, who beside us sits,
Or through our frames like some dim glamour flits;
From out her form a pearly light is shed,
As from a lily, in a lily-bed,
A firefly's gleam. Her face is pale as stone,
And languid as a cloud that drifts alone
In starry heav'n. And her diaphanous feet
Are easy as the dew or opaline heat
Of summer.

Lo! with ears aurora pink
As Dawn's she leans and listens on the brink
Of being, dark with dreadfulness and doubt,
Wherein vague lights and shadows move about,
And palpitations beat like some huge heart
Of Earth the surging pulse of which we're part.

One hand, that hollows her divining eyes,
Glowes like the curved moon over twilight skies;
And with her gaze she fathoms life and death
Gulfs, where man's conscience, like a restless breath
Of wind, goes wand'ring; whispering low of things,
The irremediable, where sorrow clings.

Around her limbs a veil of woven mist
Wavers, and turns from fibered amethyst
To textured crystal; through which symbol'd bars
Of silver burn, and cabalistic stars
Of nebulous gold.

Shrouding her feet and hair,
Within this woof, fantastic, everywhere,
Dreams come and go; the instant images
Of things she sees and thinks; realities,
Shadows, with which her heart and fancy swarm.

That in the veil take momentary form:
Now picturing heaven in celestial fire,
And now the hell of every soul's desire;

Hinting at worlds, God wraps in mystery,
Beyond the world we know and touch and see.

Madison Julius Cawein

Snow And Fire

Deep-hearted roses of the purple dusk
And lilies of the morn;
And cactus, holding up a slender tusk
Of fragrance on a thorn;
All heavy flowers, sultry with their musk,
Her presence puts to scorn.

For she is like the pale, pale snowdropp there,
Scentless and chaste of heart;
The moonflower, making spiritual the air,
Like some pure work of art;
Divine and holy, exquisitely fair,
And virtue's counterpart.

Yet when her eyes gaze into mine, and when
Her lips to mine are pressed,
Why are my veins all fire then? and then
Why should her soul suggest
Voluptuous perfumes, maddening unto men,
And prurient with unrest?

Madison Julius Cawein

So Much To Do

The face of the world is a homely face,
And the look of the world unkind,
When harsh on your arm a hand it lays
And bids you into the grind,
That 's little to your mind, my dear,
That 's little to your mind.

But it 's work that counts in the world, you see;
Not what we dream, but do:
For the dreamer of dreams, whatever he be,
If he 'd have his dreams come true,
Must be a workman, too, my dear,
Must be a workman, too.

So much to do; so much to know;
So much that life would shirk!
But each is one of a hive below,
The world's great Hive of Irk,
Where each must do his work, my dear,
Each one must do his work.

A song, a look, a word of cheer,
Will help more than a sigh!
For this is the law of the hive, my dear,
That every bee must try, my dear,
And all the drones must die, my dear,
That all the drones must die.

Oft-times it seems that the end is far,
And the work we do, in vain;
That night will never reveal a star,
And day bring only rain,
To trouble our hearts again, my dear,
To trouble our hearts again.

But ever the stars are shining there
With ever the old regard;
And be it foul, or be it fair,
However long debarred,

All work has its reward, my dear,
All work has its reward.

Could summer come without the rose?
Or morn without the sun?
And thus shall toil bring soul's repose
To each and every one,
Whose work at last is done, my dear,
Whose work at last is done.

For the face of the world is a homely face,
But the look in its eyes is kind
To him who sets his heart's brisk pace
To the work he has in mind,
And turns not with the wind, my dear,
And turns not with the wind.

Madison Julius Cawein

Solstice

The ant is busy with its house,
The bee is at its tree;
And by its nest among the boughs
The bird makes melody.
The Day, reluctant still to leave,
Sits crystal at its noon,
Like some sweet girl, with naught to grieve,
Sighing a dreamy tune.
Oh, hark, my heart, and quit your quest!
The song she sighs is one of rest.
The butterfly is on its flower;
The wasp is at its clay;
The wind to bramble lane and bower
Whispers of yesterday.
The Afternoon goes to its close,
With bright attendant states,
Like some calm queen who seeks repose.
Behind her palace gates.
Oh, look, my heart, your pining cease!
That way, at last, you shall find peace.
The cricket trills; the beetle booms;
The mole heaves at its mound:
Pale moths come forth like ghosts of blooms;
The firefly goes its round.
The eve puts off her gown of gold,
And for a moment stands
Before her couch, a lamp of old,
The new moon, in her hands.
Oh, heart, go follow where it gleams,
And find again your world of dreams.
The life that wakes at dark comes out:
The spider nimbly weaves;
The bat flits silently about;
The drowsy owlet grieves.
The Night goes stealing to her tryst,
Breathing a fragrant sigh;
One jewel from her starry wrist
Drops down the quiet sky.
Heart, let it be a sign to you

Of love behind the bending blue.

Madison Julius Cawein

Some Reckon Time By Stars

Some reckon time by stars,
And some by hours:
Some measure days by dreams,
And some by flowers:
My heart alone records
My days and hours.

Some have a dial, a clock
That strikes a bell:
Some keep a calendar
To con and spell:
But I I have my love,
Infallible.

My heart is clock enough:
It beats for her.
Both day and night it makes
A happy stir:
It keeps the time quite true
With throbs for her.

The only calendar,
That marks my seasons,
Is that sweet face of hers,
Her moods and reasons,
Wherein no record is
Of winter seasons.

Madison Julius Cawein

Song Of The Elf

When the poppies, with their shields,
Sentinel
Forest and the harvest fields,
In the bell
Of a blossom, fair to see,
There I stall the bumble-bee,
My good stud;
There I stable him and hold,
Harness him with hairy gold;
There I ease his burly back
Of the honey and its sack
Gathered from each bud.

II.

Where the glow-worm lights its lamp,
There I lie;
Where, above the grasses damp,
Moths go by;
Now within the fussy brook,
Where the waters wind and crook
Round the rocks,
I go sailing down the gloom
Straddling on a wisp of broom;
Or, beneath the owlet moon,
Trip it to the cricket's tune
Tossing back my locks.

III.

Ere the crowfoot on the lawn
Lifts its head,
Or the glow-worm's light be gone,
Dim and dead,
In a cobweb hammock deep,
'Twixt two ferns I swing and sleep,
Hid away;
Where the drowsy musk-rose blows
And a dreamy runnel flows,

In the land of Faëry,
Where no mortal thing can see,
All the elfin day.

Madison Julius Cawein

Song Of The Night-Riders

It's up and out with the bat and owl!
We ride by night in fair and foul;
In foul and fair we take the pike,
And no man knows where our hand shall strike;
For, gun and pistol, and torch and mask,
These are our laws let any ask:
And should one ask, why, tell him then
That we are the New-Jeans Gentlemen.
It's up and out with owl and bat!
Where the road winds back by wood and flat.
Black clouds are hunting the flying moon
Let them hunt her down! and midnight soon
Shall blossom a wilder light, when down
We gallop and shoot and burn the town.
Who cares a curse who asks us then!
For we are the New-Jeans Gentlemen.
It's up and on! give the horse his head!
The rain is out and the world in bed.
Ride on to the village, and then ride back,
Where stands a house by the railroad track:
Riddle its windows and batter its door,
And call him out and shoot some more.
And if he question, why, damn him! then
Just shoot him down like gentlemen.
Why, he was a wretch beneath all scorn
Who planted the weed instead of corn.
And here is another who sold, by God!
Just bare his back and ply the rod!
Now burn his barn! and, sink or swim,
It's sport for us but Hell for him.
And well he'll know when we leave him then
That we are the New-Jeans Gentlemen.
Yes; we are kin to the bat and owl:
We wait till night, then prey and prowl.
The man who plants or sells this year
Our hounds shall smell him out, no fear.
The hunt is up! Who'll bid us halt?
We'll sow his beds with grass and salt,
Or shoot him down like a dog, and then

Ride off like New-Jeans Gentlemen.

Madison Julius Cawein

Sound And Sights

Often, when I wake at night,
I can hear the strangest sounds,
Stealthy noises, left and right,
As of some one going his rounds:
On the stairs there comes a crack
As if some one mounted there;
Then the door creaks; and the back
Settles of the rocking-chair,
As if some one had sat down.
Then I get up in my gown;
Run to mother; hide my head;
Snuggle down by her in bed.
And she says to me, 'My dear,
There is nothing here to fear:
All the noises that you hear
Are the old house and the weather,
Dry old weather,
Having a little talk together.
You just heard the old house stretching,
Waking up to have a chat:
Seems to me that it is catching.
Don't wake up again for that.'

II.

And again I wake at night,
And can see the queerest things:
In the gas-jet's lowered light,
The tall mantle with its rings
And its mirror seems a face
With a monster eye and nose
And a mouth, the fireplace,
Making faces at me. Those
Chairs against the wall move out,
Limping, as if lame with gout:
And I'm scared as scared can be,
Call, till father comes to me.
And he says, 'There's nothing there;
Nothing that could hurt or scare.

And that mantle and that chair
Guess that they were only courting,
Queerly courting,
While the other was cavorting.
You just saw what these were thinking;
Longing there to hug and kiss:
Seems to me you caught them winking.
But don't wake again for this.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Sounds And Sights Ii

Little leaves, that lean your ears
From each branch and bough of spring,
What is that your rapture hears?
Song of bird or flight of wing,
All so eager, little ears?
'Hush, oh, hush! Oh, don't you hear
Steps of beauty drawing near?
Neither flight of bee nor bird
Hark! the steps of Love are heard!'
Little buds, that crowd with eyes
Every bush and every tree,
What is this that you surmise?
What is that which you would see,
So attentive, little eyes?
'Look, oh, look! Oh, can't you see
Loveliness camps 'neath each tree?
See her hosts and hear them sing,
Marching with the maiden Spring!'

Madison Julius Cawein

Spirit Of Dreams

Where hast thou folded thy pinions,
Spirit of Dreams?
Hidden elusive garments
Woven of gleams?
In what divine dominions,
Brighter than day,
Far from the world's dark torments,
Dost thou stay, dost thou stay?
When shall my yearnings reach thee
Again?
Not in vain let my soul beseech thee!
Not in vain! not in vain!

II

I have longed for thee as a lover
For her, the one;
As a brother for a sister
Long dead and gone.
I have called thee over and over
Names sweet to hear;
With words than music trister,
And thrice as dear.
How long must my sad heart woo thee,
Yet fail?
How long must my soul pursue thee,
Nor avail, nor avail?

III

All night hath thy loving mother,
Beautiful Sleep,
Lying beside me, listened
And heard me weep.
But ever thou soughtest another

Who sought thee not;
For him thy soft smile glistened
I was forgot.

When shall my soul behold thee
As before?
When shall my heart infold thee?
Nevermore? nevermore?

Madison Julius Cawein

Spring I

When on the mountain tops ray-crowned Apollo
Turns his swift arrows, dart on glittering dart,
Let but a rock glint green, the wild goats follow
Glad-grazing shyly on each sparse-grown part.

Rolled into plunging torrents spring the fountains;
And slope and vale and meadowland grow green;
While on ridg'd levels of a hundred mountains,
Far fleece by fleece, the woolly flocks convene.

With measured stride, deliberate and steady,
The scattered cattle seek the beetling steep,
But shelter for th' assembled herd is ready
In many hollows that the walled rocks heap:

The lairs of Pan; and, lo, in murmuring places,
In bushy clefts, what woodland Nymphs arouse!
Where, full of yearning for the azure spaces,
Tree, crowding tree, lifts high its heavy boughs.

Old forests, where the gnarly oak stands regnant
Bristling with twigs that still repullulate,
And, swoln with spring, with sappy sweetness pregnant,
The maple blushes with its leafy weight.

And, mother-like, in cirques of quiet shadows,
Milk flows, warm milk, that keeps all things alive;
Fruit is not far, th' abundance of the meadows,
And honey oozes from the hollow hive.

Madison Julius Cawein

Spring II

First Came the rain, loud, with sonorous lips;
A pursuivant who heralded a prince:
And dawn put on her livery of tints,
And dusk bound gold about her hair and hips:
And, all in silver mail, the sunlight came,
A knight, who bade the winter let him pass;
And freed imprisoned beauty, naked as
The Court of Love, in all her wildflower shame.
And so she came, in breeze-borne loveliness,
Across the hills; and heav'n bent down to bless:
Above her head the birds were as a lyre;
And at her feet, like some strong worshipper,
The shouting water pæn'd praise of her
Who, with blue eyes, set the wild world on fire.

Madison Julius Cawein

Spring On The Hills

Ah, shall I follow, on the hills,
The Spring, as wild wings follow?
Where wild-plum trees make wan the hills,
Crabapple trees the hollow,
Haunts of the bee and swallow?

In redbud brakes and flowery
Acclivities of berry;
In dogwood dingles, showery
With white, where wrens make merry?
Or drifts of swarming cherry?

In valleys of wild strawberries,
And of the clumped May-apple;
Or cloudlike trees of haw-berries,
With which the south winds grapple,
That brook and byway dapple?

With eyes of far forgetfulness,
Like some wild wood-thing's daughter,
Whose feet are beelike fretfulness,
To see her run like water
Through boughs that slipped or caught her.

O Spring, to seek, yet find you not!
To search, yet never win you!
To glimpse, to touch, but bind you not!
To lose, and still continue,
All sweet evasion in you!

In pearly, peach-blush distances
You gleam; the woods are braided
Of myths; of dream-existences...
There, where the brook is shaded,
A sudden splendor faded.

O presence, like the primrose's,
Again I feel your power!
With rainy scents of dim roses,

Like some elusive flower,
Who led me for an hour!

Madison Julius Cawein

Spring Twilight

The sun set late; and left along the west
A belt of furious ruby, o'er which snows
Of clouds unrolled; each cloud a mighty breast
Blooming with almond-rose.

The sun set late; and wafts of wind beat down,
And cuffed the blossoms from the blossoming quince;
Scattered the pollen from the lily's crown,
And made the clover wince.

By dusky forests, through whose fretful boughs
In flying fragments shot the evening's flame,
Adown the tangled lane the quiet cows
With dreamy tinklings came.

The sun set late; but hardly had he gone
When o'er the moon's gold-litten crescent there,
Clean Phosphor, polished as a precious stone,
Burned in fair deeps of air.

As from faint stars the glory waned and waned,
The crickets made the oldtime garden shrill;
And past the luminous pasture-lands complained
The first far whippoorwill.

Madison Julius Cawein

Storm At Annisquam

The sun sinks scarlet as a barberry.
Far off at sea one vessel lifts a sail,
Hurrying to harbor from the coming gale,
That banks the west above a choppy sea.
The sun is gone; the tide is flowing free;
The bay is opaled with wild light; and pale
The lighthouse spears its flame now; through a veil
That falls about the sea mysteriously.
Out there she sits and mutters of her dead,
Old Ocean; of the stalwart and the strong,
Skipper and fisher whom her arms dragged down:
Before her now she sees their ghosts; o'erhead
As gray as rain, their wild wrecks sweep along,
And all night long lay siege to this old town.

Madison Julius Cawein

Storm Sabbat

Against the pane the darkness, wet and cold,
Pressed a wild face and raised a ragged arm
Of cloud, clothed on with thunder and alarm
And terrible with elemental gold.
Above the fisher's hut, beyond the wold,
The wind, a Salem witch, rushed shrieking harm,
And swept her mad broom over every farm
To devil-revels in some forest old.
Hell and its-hags, it seemed, held court again
On every rock, trailing a tattered gown
Of surf, and whirling, screaming, to the sea
Elf-locks, fantastic, of dishevelled rain;
While in their midst death hobbled up and down
Monstrous and black, with diabolic glee.

Madison Julius Cawein

Success

Success allures us in the earth and skies:
We seek to win her, but, too amorous,
Mocking, she flees us. Haply, were we wise,
We would not strive and she would come to us.

Madison Julius Cawein

Summer

Hang out your loveliest star, O Night! O Night!
Your richest rose, O Dawn!
To greet sweet Summer, her, who, clothed in light,
Leads Earth's best hours on.
Hark! how the wild birds of the woods
Throat it within the dewy solitudes!
The brook sings low and soft,
The trees make song,
As, from her heaven aloft
Comes blue-eyed Summer like a girl along.

II.

And as the Day, her lover, leads her in
How bright his beauty glows!
How red his lips, that ever try to win
Her mouth's delicious rose!
And from the beating of his heart
Warm winds arise and sighing thence depart;
And from his eyes and hair
The light and dew
Fall round her everywhere,
And Heaven above her is an arch of blue.

III.

Come to the forest, or the treeless meadows
Deep with their hay or grain;
Come where the hills lift high their thrones of shadows,
Where tawny orchards reign.
Come where the reapers whet the scythe;
Where golden sheaves are heaped; where berries blythe,
With willow-basket and with pail,
Swarm knoll and plain;
Where flowers freckle every vale,
And beauty goes with hands of berry-stain.

IV.

Come where the dragon-flies, a brassy blue,
Flit round the wildwood streams,
And, sucking at some horn of honey-dew,
The wild-bee hums and dreams.
Come where the butterfly waves wings of sleep,
Gold-disked and mottled over blossoms deep;
Come where beneath the rustic bridge
The green frog cries;
Or in the shade the rainbowed midge,
Above the emerald pools, with murmurings flies.

V.

Come where the cattle browse within the brake,
As red as oak and strong;
Where far-off bells the echoes faintly wake,
And milkmaids sing their song.
Come where the vine-trailed rocks, with waters hoary,
Tell to the sun some legend or some story;
Or, where the sunset to the land
Speaks words of gold;
Where ripeness walks, a wheaten band
Around her hair and blossoms manifold.

VI.

Come where the woods lift up their stalwart arms
Unto the star-sown skies;
Knotted and gnarled, that to the winds and storms
Fling mighty rhapsodies:
Or to the moon repeat what they have seen,
When Night upon their shoulders vast doth lean.
Come where the dew's clear syllable
Drips from the rose;
And where the fire-flies fill
The night with golden music of their glows.

VII.

Now while the dingles and the vine-roofed glens
Whisper their flowery tale
Unto the silence; and the lakes and fens

Unto the moonlight pale
Murmur their rapture, let us seek her out,
Her of the honey throat, and peachy pout,
Summer! and at her feet,
The love of old
Lay like a sheaf of wheat,
And of our hearts the purest gold of gold.

Madison Julius Cawein

Summer Noontide

The slender snail clings to the leaf,
Gray on its silvered underside;
And slowly, slower than the snail, with brief
Bright steps, whose ripening touch foretells the sheaf,
Her warm hands berry-dyed,
Comes down the tanned Noontide.

The pungent fragrance of the mint
And pennyroyal drench her gown,
That leaves long shreds of trumpet-blossom tint
Among the thorns, and everywhere the glint
Of gold and white and brown
Her flowery steps waft down.

The leaves, like hands with emerald veined,
Along her way try their wild best
To reach the jewel whose hot hue was drained
From some rich rose that all the June contained
The butterfly, soft pressed
Upon her sunny breast.

Her shawl, the lace-like elder bloom,
She hangs upon the hillside brake,
Smelling of warmth and of her breast's perfume,
And, lying in the citron-colored gloom
Beside the lilled lake,
She stares the buds awake.

Or, with a smile, through watery deeps
She leads the oaring turtle's legs;
Or guides the crimson fish, that swims and sleeps
From pad to pad, from which the young frog leaps;
And to its nest's green eggs
The bird that pleads and begs.

Then 'mid the fields of unmown hay
She shows the bees where sweets are found;
And points the butterflies, at airy play,
And dragonflies, along the water-way,

Where honeyed flowers abound
For them to flicker 'round.

Or, where ripe apples pelt with gold
Some barn around which, coned with snow,
The wild-potato blooms she mount its old
Mossed roof, and through warped sides, the knots have holed
Lets her long glances glow
Into the loft below.

To show the mud-wasp at its cell
Slenderly busy; swallows, too,
Packing against a beam their nest's clay shell;
And crouching in the dark the owl as well
With all her downy crew
Of owlets gray of hue.

These are her joys, and until dusk
Lounging she walks where reapers reap,
From sultry raiment shaking scents of musk,
Rustling the corn within its silken husk,
And driving down heav'n's deep
White herds of clouds like sheep.

Madison Julius Cawein

Sun And Flowers

The spring is coming! hear it blow!
The rain and wind have cleared the snow;
And I am going to play my fill
With sunlight on the windy hill.

And I am going to laugh and run,
And be the comrade of the sun;
And, like the wildflowers, wink my eyes
At him and at the springtime skies.

And I am going to leap and shout
And toss my hair and arms about,
And fill my soul with sunshine as
The blossoms do and waving grass.

And I am going to dance and sing
And match the swallow on the wing,
And put my arms about each tree,
And kiss it as the sun does me.

And I am going to lie face down
Upon the hillside, far from town,
And hug it as the sunlight does,
And watch the pussy-willows fuzz.

I wish I was as big and bright
As is the sunlight: then I might
Hold all the hillside in my joy
But I am just a little boy.

And I am only sweet and small
As are the wildflowers, that is all,
So mother says; and thus you see
The sun can get ahead of me.

Blow wind and rain! and sweep away
The snow and sleet of yesterday!
And bring the sunlight and the flowers
And all the laughing springtime hours.

Madison Julius Cawein

Sunset And Storm

Deep with divine tautology,
The sunset's mighty mystery
Again has traced the scroll-like west
With hieroglyphs of burning gold:
Forever new, forever old,
Its miracle is manifest.

Time lays the scroll away. And now
Above the hills a giant brow
Of cloud Night lifts; and from his arm,
Barbaric black, upon the world,
With thunder, wind and fire, is hurled
His awful argument of storm.

What part, O man, is yours in such?
Whose awe and wonder are in touch
With Nature,-speaking rapture to
Your soul,-yet leaving in your reach
No human word of thought or speech
Commensurate with the thing you view.

Madison Julius Cawein

Sunset Clouds

Low clouds, the lightning veins and cleaves,
Torn from the forest of the storm,
Sweep westward like enormous leaves
O'er field and farm.

And in the west, on burning skies,
Their wrath is quenched, their hate is hushed,
And deep their drifted thunder lies
With splendor flushed.

The black turns gray, the gray turns gold;
And, seaed in deeps of radiant rose,
Summits of fire, manifold
They now repose.

What dreams they bring! what thoughts reveal!
That have their source in loveliness,
Through which the doubts I often feel
Grow less and less.

Through which I see that other night,
That cloud called Death, transformed of Love
To flame, and pointing with its light
To life above.

Madison Julius Cawein

Sunset Dreams

The moth and beetle wing about
The garden ways of other days;
Above the hills, a fiery shout
Of gold, the day dies slowly out,
Like some wild blast a huntsman blows:
And o'er the hills my Fancy goes,
Following the sunset's golden call
Unto a vine-hung garden wall,
Where she awaits me in the gloom,
Between the lily and the rose,
With arms and lips of warm perfume,
The dream of Love my Fancy knows.

The glowworm and the firefly glow
Among the ways of bygone days;
A golden shaft shot from a bow
Of silver, star and moon swing low
Above the hills where twilight lies:
And o'er the hills my Longing flies,
Following the star's far-arrowed gold,
Unto a gate where, as of old,
She waits amid the rose and rue,
With star-bright hair and night-dark eyes,
The dream, to whom my heart is true,
My dream of Love that never dies.

Madison Julius Cawein

Sunset In Autumn

Blood-Coloured oaks, that stand against a sky of gold and brass;
Gaunt slopes, on which the bleak leaves glow of brier and sassafras,
And broom-sedge strips of smoky-pink and pearl gray clumps of grass
In which, beneath the ragged sky, the rain pools gleam like glass.

From West to East, from wood to wood, along the forest-side,
The winds, the sowers of the Lord, with thunderous footsteps stride;
Their stormy hands rain acorns down; and mad leaves, wildly dyed,
Like tatters of their rushing cloaks, stream round them far and wide.

The frail leaf-cricket in the weeds rings a faint fairy bell;
And like a torch of phantom ray the milkweed's windy shell
Glimmers; while, wrapped in withered dreams, the wet autumnal smell
Of loam and leaf, like some sad ghost, steals over field and dell.

The oaks, against a copper sky o'er which, like some black lake
Of Dis, bronze clouds, like surges fringed with sullen fire, break
Loom sombre as Doom's citadel above the vales that make
A pathway to a land of mist the moon's pale feet shall take.

Now, dyed with burning carbuncle, a limbo-litten pane,
Within its walls of storm, the West opens to hill and plain,
On which the wild-geese ink themselves, a far triangled train,
And then the shuttering clouds close down and night is here again.

Madison Julius Cawein

Sunset On The River

A Sea of onyx are the skies,
Cloud-islanded with fire;
Such nacre-colored flame as dyes
A sea-shell's rosy spire;
And at its edge one star sinks slow,
Burning, into the overglow.

II.

Save for the cricket in the grass,
Or passing bird that twitters,
The world is hushed. Like liquid glass
The soundless river glitters
Between the hills that hug and hold
Its beauty like a hoop of gold.

III.

The glory deepens; and, meseems,
A vasty canvas, painted
With revelations of God's dreams
And visions symbol-sainted,
The west is, that each night-cowled hill
Kneels down before in worship still.

IV.

There is no thing to wake unrest;
No sight or sound to jangle
The peace that evening in the breast
Brings, smoothing out the tangle
Of gnarls and knots of care and strife
That snarl the colored cord of life.

Madison Julius Cawein

Superstition

In the waste places, in the dreadful night,
When the wood whispers like a wandering mind,
And silence sits and listens to the wind,
Or, 'mid the rocks, to some wild torrent's flight;
Bat-browed thou wadest with thy wisp of light
Among black pools the moon can never find;
Or, owlet-eyed, thou hootest to the blind
Deep darkness from some cave or haunted height.
He who beholds but once thy fearsome face,
Never again shall walk alone! but wan
And terrible attendants shall be his
Unutterable things that have no place
In God or Beauty that compel him on,
Against all hope, where endless horror is.

Madison Julius Cawein

Swinging

Under the boughs of spring
She swung in the old rope-swing.

Her cheeks, with their happy blood,
Were pink as the apple-bud.

Her eyes, with their deep delight,
Were glad as the stars of night.

Her curls, with their romp and fun,
Were hoiden as wind and sun.

Her lips, with their laughter shrill,
Were wild as a woodland rill.

Under the boughs of spring
She swung in the old rope-swing.

And I,-who leaned on the fence,
Watching her innocence,

As, under the boughs that bent,
Now high, now low, she went,

In her soul the ecstasies
Of the stars, the brooks, the breeze,-

Had given the rest of my years,
With their blessings, and hopes, and fears,

To have been as she was then;
And, just for a moment, again

A boy in the old rope-swing
Under the boughs of spring.

Madison Julius Cawein

Tabernacles

The little tents the wildflowers raise
Are tabernacles where Love prays
And Beauty preaches all the days.

I walk the woodland through and through,
And everywhere I see their blue
And gold where I may worship too.

All hearts unto their inmost shrine
Of fragrance they invite; and mine
Enters and sees the All Divine.

I hark; and with some inward ear
Soft words of praise and prayer I hear,
And bow my head and have no fear.

For God is present as I see
In them; and gazes out at me
Kneeling to His divinity.

Oh, holiness that Nature knows,
That dwells within each thing that grows,
Vestured with dreams as is the rose.

With perfume! whereof all things preach
The birds, the brooks, the leaves, that reach
Our hearts and souls with loving speech;

That makes a tabernacle of
The flowers; whose priests are Truth and Love,
Who help our souls to rise above.

The Earth and that which we name sin
Unto the knowledge that is kin
To Heaven, to which at last we win.

Madison Julius Cawein

Take Heart

Take heart again. Joy may be lost awhile.
It is not always Spring.
And even now from some far Summer Isle
Hither the birds may wing.

Madison Julius Cawein

That Night When I Came To The Grange

The trees took on fantastic shapes
That night when I came to the grange;
The very bushes seemed to change;
This seemed a hag's head, that an ape's:
The road itself seemed darkly strange
That night when I came to the grange.

The storm had passed, but still the night
Cloaked with deep clouds its true intent,
And moody on its way now went
With muttered thunder and the light,
Torch-like, of lightning that was spent
Flickering the mask of its intent.

Like some hurt thing that bleeds to death,
Yet never moves nor heaves a sigh,
Some last drops shuddered from the sky:
The darkness seemed to hold its breath
To see the sullen tempest die,
That never moved nor heaved a sigh.

Within my path, among the weeds,
The glow-worm, like an evil eye,
Glared malice; and the boughs on high
Flung curses at me, menaced deeds
Of darkness if I passed them by:
They and the glow-worm's glaring eye.

The night-wind rose, and raved at me,
Hung in the tree beside the gate;
The gate that snarled its iron hate
Above the gravel, grindingly,
And set its teeth to make me wait,
Beside the one tree near the gate.

The next thing that I knew a bat
Out of the rainy midnight swept
An evil blow: and then there crept,
Malignant with its head held flat,

A hiss before me as I stept,
A fang, that from the midnight swept.

I drew my dagger then, the blade
That never failed me in my need;
'Twere well to be prepared; indeed,
Who knew what waited there? what shade,
Or substance, banded to impede
My entrance of which there was need.

The blade, at least, was tangible
Among the shadows I must face;
Its touch was real; and in case
Hate waylaid me, would serve me well;
I needed something in that place
Among the shadows I must face.

The dead thorn took me by surprise,
A hag-like thing with twisted clutch;
From o'er the wall I felt it touch
My brow with talons; at my eyes
It seemed to wave a knotted crutch,
A hag-like thing with twisted clutch.

A hound kept howling in the night;
He and the wind were all I heard:
The wind that maundered some dark word
Of wrong, that nothing would make right,
To every rain-dropp that it stirred:
The hound and wind were all I heard.

The grange was silent as the dead:
I looked at the dark face of it:
Nowhere was any candle lit:
It looked like some huge nightmare head
With death's-head eyes. I paused a bit
To study the dark face of it.

And then I rang and knocked: I gave
The great oak door loud blow on blow:
No servant answered: wild below
The echoes clanged as in a cave:

The evil mansion seemed to know
Who struck the door with blow on blow.

Silence: no chink of light to say
That he and his were living there,
That sinful man with snow-white hair,
That creature, I had come to slay;
That wretched thing, who did not dare
Reveal that he was hiding there.

I broke my dagger on the door,
Yet woke but echoes in the hall:
Then set my hands unto the wall
And clomb the ivy as before
In boyhood, to a window tall,
That was my room's once in that hall.

At last I stood again where he,
That vile man with the sneering face,
That fiend, that foul spot on our race,
Had sworn none of our family
Should ever stand again: the place
Was dark as his own devil's face.

I stood, and felt as if some crime
Closed in on me, hedged me around:
It clutched at me from closets; bound
Its arms around me; time on time
I turned and grasped; but nothing found,
Only the blackness all around.

The darkness took me by the throat:
I could not hear but felt it hiss
'Take this, you hound! and this! and this!'
Then, all at once, afar, remote,
I heard a door clang. Murder is
More cautious yet, whose was that hiss?

Oh, for a light! The blackness jeered
And mouthed at me; its sullen face
Was as a mask on all the place,
From which two sinister sockets leered;

A death's-head, that my eyes could trace,
That stared me sullen in the face.

Then silence packed the hall and stair
And crammed the rooms from attic down,
Since that far door had clanged; its frown
Upon the darkness, everywhere,
Had settled; like a graveyard gown
It clothed the house from attic down.

And then I heard a groan and one
Long sigh then silence. Who was near?
Was it the darkness at my ear
That mocked me with a deed undone?
Or was it he, who waited here,
To kill me when I had drawn near?

I drew my sword then: stood and stared
Into the night, that was a mask
To all the house, that made my task
A hopeless one. Ah! had it bared
Its teeth at me what more to ask!
My sword had gone through teeth and mask!

It was not fair to me; my cause!
The villain darkness bound my eyes.
Why, even the moon refused to rise.
It might have helped me in that pause,
Before I groped the room, whose size
Seemed monstrous to my night-bound eyes.

What was it that I stumbled on?
God! for a light that I might see!
There! something sat that stared at me
Some loathsome, twisted thing the spawn
Of hell and midnight. Was it he?
God! for a light that I might see!

And then the moon! thank Heaven! the moon
Broke through the clouds, a face chalk-white:
Now then, at last, I had a light!
And then I saw the thing seemed hewn

From marble at the moment's sight,
Bathed in the full moon's wistful white.

He sat, or rather crouched, there dead:
Her dagger in his heart that girl's:
His open eyes as white as pearls
Malignant staring overhead:
One hand clutched full of torn-out curls.
Her dagger in his heart that girl's.

I knew the blade. Why, I had seen
The thing stuck in her gipsy hair,
Worn as they wear them over there
In Spain: its gold hilt crusted green
With jade-like gems of cruel glare.
She wore it in her gipsy hair.

She called it her'green wasp, ' and smiled
As if of some such deed she dreamed:
And yet to me she always seemed
A child, a little timid child,
Who at a mouse has often screamed
And yet of deeds like this she dreamed.

Where was she now? Some pond or pool
Would yield her body up some day.
Poor little waif, that'd gone astray!
And I! oh God! how great a fool
To know so long and yet delay!
Some pond would yield her up some day.

The world was phantomed with the mist
That night when I came from the grange.
So, she had stabbed him. It was strange.
Who would have thought that she who kiss'd
Would kill him too! Well, women change.
Their curse is on the lonely grange!

Madison Julius Cawein

The Age Of Gold

The clouds that tower in storm, that beat
Arterial thunder in their veins;
The wildflowers lifting, shyly sweet,
Their perfect faces from the plains,-
All high, all lowly things of Earth
For no vague end have had their birth.

Low strips of mist that mesh the moon
Above the foaming waterfall;
And mountains, that God's hand hath hewn,
And forests, where the great winds call,-
Within the grasp of such as see
Are parts of a conspiracy;

To seize the soul with beauty; hold
The heart with love: and thus fulfill
Within ourselves the Age of Gold,
That never died, and never will,-
As long as one true nature feels
The wonders that the world reveals.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Aurora

Night and the sea, and heaven overhead
Cloudless and vast, as 'twere of hollowed spar,
Wherein the facets gleamed of many a star,
And the half-moon a crystal radiance shed.
Then suddenly, with burning banners spread,
In pale celestial armour, as for war,
Into the heaven, flaming from afar,
The Northern Lights their phalanxed splendours led.
Night, for the moment, seemed to catch her breath,
And earth gazed, silent with astonishment,
As spear on spear the auroral armies came;
As when, triumphant over hell and death,
The victor angels thronged God's firmament
With sword on sword and burning oriflamme.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Awakening

God made that night of pearl and ivory,
Perfect and holy as a holy thought
Born of perfection, dreams, and ecstasy,
In love and silence wrought.

And she, who lay where, through the casement failing,
The moonlight clasped with arms of vapory gold
Her Danae beauty, seemed to hear a calling
Deep in the garden old.

And then it seemed, through some strange sense, she heard
The roses softly speaking in the night.
Or was it but the nocturne of a bird
Haunting the white moonlight?

It seemed a fragrant whisper vaguely roaming
From rose to rose, a language sweet that blushed,
Saying, 'Who comes? Who is this swiftly coming,
With face so dim and hushed?

'And now, and now we hear a wild heart beating
Whose heart is this that beats among our blooms?
Whose every pulse in rapture keeps repeating
Wild words like wild perfumes.'

And then it ceased: and then she heard a sigh,
As if a lily syllabled sweet scent,
Or was it but the wind that silverly
Touched some stringed instrument?

And then again a rumor she detected
Among the roses, words of musk and myrrh,
Saying, 'He comes! the one she hath expected,
Who long hath sought for her.

The one whose coming made her soul awaken;
Whose face is fragrance and whose feet are fire:
The one by whom her being shall be shaken
With dreams and deep desire.'

And then she rose; and to the casement hastened,
And flung it wide and, leaning outward, gazed;
Above, the night hung, moon and starlight chastened;
Below, with shadows mazed,

The garden bloomed. Around her and o'erhead
All seemed at pause save one wild star that streamed,
One rose that fell. And then she sighed and said,
'I must have dreamed, have dreamed.'

And then again she seemed to hear it speak,
A moth that murmured of a star attained,
Or was it but the fountain whispering weak,
White where the moonbeams rained?

And still it grew; and still the sound insisted,
Louder and sweeter, burning into form,
Until at last a presence, starlight-misted,
It shone there rosy warm.

Crying, 'Come down! long have I watched and waited!
Come down! draw near! or, like some splendid flower,
Let down thy hair! so I may climb as fated
Into thy heart's high tower.

Lower! bend lower! so thy heart may hear me,
Thy soul may clasp me! Beautiful above
All beautiful things, behold me, yea, draw near me!
Behold! for I am Love.'

Madison Julius Cawein

The Bagpipe

Here is a tale for poets and for players:

There was a bagpipe once, that wheezed and whistled,
And droned vile discords, notes that fairly bristled,
Nasal and harsh, outbraying all the brayers.

And then the thing assumed another bearing:
Boasted itself an organ of God's making,
A world-enduring instrument, Earth-shaking,
Greater than any organ, more sky-daring.

To prove which, lo, upon an elevation
It pranced and blew to its own satisfaction,
Until 'twas heard from Key West far as Fundy.
But while it piped, some schoolboy took occasion
There was a blow; a sudden sharp impaction;
The wind-bag burst... Sic transit gloria mundi.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Ballad Of The Rose

Booted and spurred he rode toward the west,
A rose, from the woman who loved him best,
Lay warm with her kisses there in his breast,
And the battle beacons were burning.

As over the draw he galloping went,
She, from the gateway's battlement,
With a wafted kiss and a warning bent
'Beware of the ford at the turning!'

An instant only he turned in his sell,
And lightly fingered his petronel,
Then settled his sword in its belt as well,
And the horns to battle were sounding.

She watched till he reached the beacon there,
And saw its gleam on his helm and hair,
Then turned and murmured, 'God keep thee, Clare!
From that wolf of the hills and his hounding.'

And on he rode till he came to the hill,
Where the road turned off by the ruined mill,
Where the stream flowed shallow and broad and still,
And the battle beacon was burning.

Into the river with little heed,
Down from the hill he galloped his steed
The water whispered on rock and reed,
'Death hides by the ford at the turning!'

And out of the night on the other side,
Their helms and corselets dim descried,
He saw ten bandit troopers ride,
And the horns to battle were blaring.

Then he reined his steed in the middle ford,
And glanced behind him and drew his sword,
And laughed as he shouted his battle-word,
'Clare! Clare! and my steel needs airing!'

Then down from the hills at his back there came
Ten troopers more. With a face of flame
Red Hugh of the Hills led on the same,
In the glare of the beacon's burning.

Again the cavalier turned and gazed,
Then quick to his lips the rose he raised,
And kissed it, crying, 'Now God be praised!
And help her there when mourning!'

Then he rose in his stirrups and loosened rein,
And shouting his cry spurred on amain
Into the troopers to slay and be slain,
While the horns to battle were blowing.

With ten behind him and ten before,
And the battle beacon to light the shore,
Small doubt of the end in his mind he bore,
With her rose in his bosom glowing.

One trooper he slew with his petronel,
And one with his sword when his good steed fell,
And they haled him, fighting, from horse and sell
In the light of the beacon's burning.

Quoth Hugh of the Hills, 'To yonder tree
Now hang him high where she may see;
Then bear this rose and message from me
'The ravens feast at the turning.'

Madison Julius Cawein

The Battle

BLACK clouds hung low and heavy,
Above the sunset glare;
And in the garden dimly
We wandered here and there.
So full of strife, of trouble
The night was dark, afraid,
Like our own love, so merely
For tears and sighings made.
That when it came to parting,
And I must mount and go,
With all my soul I wished it —
That God would lay me low.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Beast

Here is a tale for sportsmen when at table:
There was a boar, like that Atalanta hunted,
Who gorged and snored and, unmolested, grunted,
His fat way through the world as such able.
Huge-jowled and paunched and porcine-limbed and marrowed,
King of his kind, deep in his lair he squatted,
And round him fames of many maidens rotted
Where Licence whelped and Lust her monsters farrowed.
There came a damsel, like the one in Spenser,
A Britomart, as sorcerous as Circe,
Who pierced him with a tract, her spear, and ended
The beast's career. Made him a man; a censor
Of public morals; arbiter of mercy;
And led him by the nose and called him splendid.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Best Of Life

With soul self-blind
Do n't struggle on merely at last to find
The best of life, the dream, is left behind.

Why desperately!
Struggle and strive? after long years to see
Substance alone has no reality.

To find, alas!
The starry glitter in the mountain pass,
The light you climbed for is no star, but glass.

Help, one and all!
Dreamers we need, not workmen, for the wall
The Tower of Beauty that shall never fall.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Birthday Party

Had a birthday yesterday.
First one for, I think, a year.
Won't have one again, they say,
Till another year is here.
Funny, don't you think so? I
Can't just understand now why.

Anyhow my birthday came;
And I had, oh! lots of things
Birthday gifts I just can't name,
Even count them: toys and rings;
Hoops and books and hats. Indeed,
Everything that I don't need.

What I wanted was n't suits;
Wooden toys and 'Wonderland';
But a hoe to dig up roots;
And a spade to shovel sand;
Rake to rake where father said
He has made a flower-bed.

But I did n't get them; and
Did n't get a box of paints,
Which I wanted. I raised sand,
Till my mother said, 'My saints!
If you don't behave yourself,
Party'll be laid on the shelf.'

So I did behave, and played
With the little girls and boys,
Who just stayed and stayed and stayed,
Played with me and with my toys;
Broke some, too; but, never mind,
Had the best time of its kind.

Had the dinner then. I bet
Y' never saw a finer sight.
A big birthday cake was set,
Thick with icing, round and white,

In the centre of the table,
Looking all that it was able.

On it four pink candles burned:
And we had a lot of fun
When a little girl there turned,
Blew them out, yes, every one,
And I kissed her for it yes
And she liked it, too, I guess.

When I saw my father, why,
All the children then were gone;
Only child around was I.
I was playing on the lawn
By myself when father came,
And he kissed me just the same.

And I asked my father where
Do the birthdays come from, while
He sat in his rocking-chair,
Looking at me with a smile.
Then I asked him where they go
When they're gone. He did n't know.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Black Knight

I had not found the road too short,
As once I had in days of youth,
In that old forest of long ruth,
Where my young knighthood broke its heart,
Ere love and it had come to part,
And lies made mockery of truth.
I had not found the road too short.

A blind man, by the nightmare way,
Had set me right when I was wrong.-
I had been blind my whole life long-
What wonder then that on this day
The blind should show me how astray
My strength had gone, my heart once strong.
A blind man pointed me the way.

The road had been a heartbreak one,
Of roots and rocks and tortured trees,
And pools, above my horse's knees,
And wandering paths, where spiders spun
'Twixt boughs that never saw the sun,
And silence of lost centuries.
The road had been a heartbreak one.

It seemed long years since that black hour
When she had fled, and I took horse
To follow, and without remorse
To slay her and her paramour
In that old keep, that ruined tower,
From whence was borne her father's corse.
It seemed long years since that black hour.

And now my horse was starved and spent,
My gallant destrier, old and spare;
The vile road's mire in mane and hair,
I felt him totter as he went:-
Such hungry woods were never meant
For pasture: hate had reaped them bare.
Aye, my poor beast was old and spent.

I too had naught to stay me with;
And like my horse was starved and lean;
My armor gone; my raiment mean;
Bare-haired I rode; uneasy sith
The way I'd lost, and some dark myth
Far in the woods had laughed obscene.
I had had naught to stay me with.

Then I dismounted. Better so.
And found that blind man at my rein.
And there the path stretched straight and plain.
I saw at once the way to go.
The forest road I used to know
In days when life had less of pain.
Then I dismounted. Better so.

I had but little time to spare,
Since evening now was drawing near;
And then I thought I saw a sneer
Enter into that blind man's stare:
And suddenly a thought leapt bare,-
What if the Fiend had set him here!-
I still might smite him or might spare.

I braced my sword: then turned to look:
For I had heard an evil laugh:
The blind man, leaning on his staff,
Still stood there where my leave I took:
What! did he mock me? Would I brook
A blind fool's scorn?-My sword was half
Out of its sheath. I turned to look:

And he was gone. And to my side
My horse came nickering as afraid.
Did he too fear to be betrayed?-
What use for him? I might not ride.
So to a great bough there I tied,
And left him in the forest glade:
My spear and shield I left beside.

My sword was all I needed there.

It would suffice to right my wrongs;
To cut the knot of all those thongs
With which she'd bound me to despair,
That woman with her midnight hair,
Her Circe snares and Siren songs.
My sword was all I needed there.

And then that laugh again I heard,
Evil as Hell and darkness are.
It shook my heart behind its bar
Of purpose, like some ghastly word.
But then it may have been a bird,
An owlet in the forest far,
A raven, croaking, that I heard.

I loosed my sword within its sheath;
My sword, disuse and dews of night
Had fouled with rust and iron-blight.
I seemed to hear the forest breathe
A menace at me through its teeth
Of thorns 'mid which the way lay white.
I loosed my sword within its sheath.

I had not noticed until now
The sun was gone, and gray the moon
Hung staring; pale as marble hewn;-
Like some old malice, bleak of brow,
It glared at me through leaf and bough,
With which the tattered way was strewn.
I had not noticed until now.

And then, all unexpected, vast
Above the tops of ragged pines
I saw a ruin, dark with vines,
Against the blood-red sunset massed:
My perilous tower of the past,
Round which the woods thrust giant spines.
I never knew it was so vast.

Long while I stood considering.-
This was the place and this the night.
The blind man then had set me right.

Here she had come for sheltering.
That ruin held her: that dark wing
Which flashed a momentary light.
Some time I stood considering.

Deep darkness fell. The somber glare
Of sunset, that made cavernous eyes
Of those gaunt casements 'gainst the skies,
Had burnt to ashes everywhere.
Before my feet there rose a stair
Of oozy stone, of giant size,
On which the gray moon flung its glare.

Then I went forward, sword in hand,
Until the slimy causeway loomed,
And huge beyond it yawned and gloomed
The gateway where one seemed to stand,
In armor, like a burning brand,
Sword-drawn; his visor barred and plumed.
And I went toward him, sword in hand.

He should not stay revenge from me.
Whatever lord or knight he were,
He should not keep me long from her,
That woman dyed in infamy.
No matter. God or devil he,
His sword should prove no barrier.-
Fool! who would keep revenge from me!

And then I heard, harsh over all,
That demon laughter, filled with scorn:
It woke the echoes, wild, forlorn,
Dark in the ivy of that wall,
As when, within a mighty hall,
One blows a giant battle-horn.
Loud, loud that laugh rang over all.

And then I struck him where he towered:
I struck him, struck with all my hate:
Black-plumed he loomed before the gate:
I struck, and found his sword that showered
Fierce flame on mine while black he glowered

Behind his visor's wolfish grate.
I struck; and taller still he towered.

A year meseemed we battled there:
A year; ten years; a century:
My blade was snapped; his lay in three:
His mail was hewn; and everywhere
Was blood; it streaked my face and hair;
And still he towered over me.
A year meseemed we battled there.

'Unmask!' I cried. 'Yea, doff thy casque!
Put up thy visor! fight me fair!
I have no mail; my head is bare!
Take off thy helm, is all I ask!
Why dost thou hide thy face?-Unmask!'-
My eyes were blind with blood and hair,
And still I cried, 'Take off thy casque!'

And then once more that laugh rang out
Like madness in the caves of Hell:
It hooted like some monster well,
The haunt of owls, or some mad rout
Of witches. And with battle shout
Once more upon that knight I fell,
While wild again that laugh rang out.

Like Death's own eyes his glared in mine,
As with the fragment of my blade
I smote him helmwise; huge he swayed,
Then crashed, like some cadaverous pine,
Uncasqued, his face in full moonshine:
And I-I saw; and shrank afraid.
For, lo! behold! the face was mine.

What devil's work was here!-What jest
For fiends to laugh at, demons hiss!-
To slay myself? and so to miss
My hate's reward?-revenge confessed!-
Was this knight I?-My brain I pressed.-
Then who was he who gazed on this?-
What devil's work was here!--What jest!

It was myself on whom I gazed-
My darker self!-With fear I rose.-
I was right weak from those great blows.-
I stood bewildered, stunned and dazed,
And looked around with eyes amazed.-
I could not slay her now, God knows!-
Around me there a while I gazed.

Then turned and fled into the night,
While overhead once more I heard
That laughter, like some demon bird
Wailing in darkness.-Then a light
Made clear a woman by that knight.
I saw 'twas she, but said no word,
And silent fled into the night.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Blue Bird

From morn till noon upon the window-pane
The tempest tapped with rainy finger-nails,
And all the afternoon the blustering gales
Beat at the door with furious feet of rain.
The rose, near which the lily bloom lay slain,
Like some red wound dripped by the garden rails,
On which the sullen slug left slimy trails
Meseemed the sun would never shine again.
Then in the drench, long, loud and full of cheer,
A skyey herald tabarded in blue,
A bluebird bugled... and at once a bow
Was bent in heaven, and I seemed to hear
God's sapphire spaces crystallizing through
The strata'd clouds in azure tremolo.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Blue Mertensia

This is the path he used to take,
That ended at a rose-porched door:
He takes it now for oldtime's sake;
And love of yore.

The blue mertensia, by the stone,
Lifts questioning eyes, that seem to say,
'Why is it now you walk alone
On this dim way?'

And then a wild bird, from a bough,
Out of his heart the answer takes:
'He walks alone with memory now
And heart that breaks.

'And Loss and Longing, witches, who
Usurp the wood and change to woe
The dream of happiness he knew
Long, long ago.

'The faery princess, from whose gaze
The blue mertensia learned that look,
Retaining still beside these ways
The joy it took.'

He listens, conscious of no part
In wildwood question and reply
The wood, from out its mighty heart,
Heaves one deep sigh.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Boy Columbus

And he had mused on lands each bird,
That winged from realms of Falerina,
O'er seas of the Enchanted Sword,
In romance sang him, till he heard
Vague foam on Islands of Alcina.

For rich Levant and old Castile
Let other seamen freight their galleys;
With Polo he and Mandeville
Through stranger seas a dreamy keel
Sailed into wonder-peopled valleys.

Far continents of flow'r and fruit,
Of everlasting spring; where fountains
'Mid flow'rs, with human faces, shoot;
Where races dwell, both man and brute,
In cities under golden mountains.

Where cataracts their thunders hurl
From heights the tempest has at mercy;
Vast peaks that touch the moon, and whirl
Their torrents down of gold and pearl;
And forests strange as those of Circe.

Let rapiered Love lute, in the shade
Of royal gardens, to the Palace
And Court, that haunt the balustrade
Of terraces and still parade
Their vanity and guile and malice.

Him something calls diviner yet
Than Love, more mighty than a lover;
Heroic Truth that will not let
Deed lag; a purpose, westward set,
In eyes far-seeing to discover.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Boy In The Rain

Sodden and shivering, in mud and rain,
Half in the light that serves but to reveal
The blackness of an alley and the reel
Homeward of wretchedness in tattered train,
A boy stands crouched; big drops of drizzle drain
Slow from a rag that was a hat: no steel
Is harder than his look, that seems to feel
More than his small life's share of woe and pain.
The pack of papers, huddled by his arm,
Is pulp; and still he hugs the worthless lot....
A door flares open to let out a curse
And drag him in out of the night and storm.
Out of the night, you say? You know not what!
To blacker night, God knows! and hell, or worse!

Madison Julius Cawein

The Boy Next Door

There's a boy who lives next door;
And this boy is just as bad
As a boy can be; and poor!
He's so poor it makes me sad
When I see him. Out at knee;
And no shoes; and, more than that,
Hardly any shirt or hat.
He's as poor as Poverty.

II.

But I like him; yes, I do.
He can play 'most any game,
And tell fairy stories, too;
Funny stories, just the same
As my father does. And he
Told me one about a frog,
Living near a lake or bog,
Frog that married a bumblebee.

III.

And another of Jumping Joan
And Hink Minx, the old witch that
Sits before the fire alone
Frying fat for her black cat.
And of Craney Crow; her dog
And her chicken. But the best,
One I like more than the rest,
'S that one of the bee and frog.

IV.

Well, the bumblebee would sing
All day long; and all the night
Sang the old frog; till the thing,
So folks said, was done in spite,
Just to keep the flowers awake:
One a rose, a brier-rose;

And the other, one of those
Lilies that grow in a lake.

V.

All day long the bee would prod
At the rose and buzz and keep
Shaking it; it couldn't nod,
Much less ever go to sleep:
Humming to it, 'Don't you hear?
I'm so happy! Can't you be
Just a little neighborly?
Ain't my froggie just a dear?'

VI.

And the frog all night would sing
To the water-lily; while
On the pad he'd sit or cling,
On his face an ear-wide smile,
Croaking, 'Listen! have you heard
All about my bouncing bee?
Don't you wish that you were she?
I'm as happy as a bird!'

VII.

Then the water-lily'd yawn,
And the rose would bat its eyes:
One would say, 'It's nearly dawn.
Better sleep. So I advise.'
And the other, 'Jumping Jim!
That old frog's a wonder! made
Just for you. Can't I persuade
You to sing your songs to him?'

VIII.

Finally it got so bad
That the rose and lily agreed
They would fix them. Both were mad
And just dying to be freed

From this tuneful tyranny.
So the rose just took a thorn,
When the bee dropped in one morn,
Stabbed her; killed her dead, you see.

IX.

That night by the yellow moon,
Sitting on the lily-pad,
Tuning up his old bassoon,
Did n't that old frog feel sad
When the lily told him! Cried
Fit to break one's heart; and, plunk!
In he plunged right there and sunk:
Drowned, committed suicide.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Boy On The Farm

Out in Oldham County once
Met a boy who showed me how
He could milk an old red cow.
Yes; he was n't any dunce.
Put me on an old-gray mare;
Rode me to an old mill, where
They were grinding corn. He filled
A big sack and then we sat
By the dam and there he killed
A black snake, as long as that.

Then he showed me how to row
In an old flat boat that leaked,
Where the dam was stained and streaked
With big lilies, white as snow.
Then he showed me how to swim
Jumping from a sycamore limb:
While he splashed around, why, I
Waded up and down the shore;
Then, when he was dressed and dry,
Mounted that old mare once more.

And he took the bag of meal
'That's for corn-cakes, ' so he said:
'And it makes the grandest bread!
Cornbread. Ain't it heavy? Feel.'
And he slung it on across
That old mare, who, with a toss
Of her tail, turned right for home.
On the way he showed me where
Hornets had their nest, like some
Foot-ball made of paper there.

And he showed me how to catch
Bumblebees and how to keep
Them from stinging; made a leap,
Caught one in a clover-patch;
And he showed me then where they
Stow their honey-bags away:

Caught two bees and was n't stung:
Took one's bag and gave it me,
And I put it on my tongue:
Sweet! yes sir, and smelt of bee.

Then he caught a locust; took
Its two wings, like some queer toy's;
Showed me how it made its noise;
Held it up and shook and shook
Till it rattled. And that night
Showed me, with a lantern light,
How the pond-toads puffed their throats,
Each one like a toy-balloon,
Swelling, piping reedy notes,
Making music for the moon.

No; he was n't any dunce;
No, sir. Why, he'd tell the time
By the sun, he could. And climb!
Climbed a great tall poplar once
Hundred feet or more, and straight
As the flag-pole at our gate.
When he's up there, took his hat,
Tossed it up and cried, 'Hurrah!'
Bet you no man could do that;
No! not even my own Pa.

Lose him? Why, he'd tell his way
In the darkest night, he could;
In the deepest, darkest wood,
By the stars, he said: by day
Knew it by these lichens on
Trunks of trees. When I am grown
He's a-going to teach me all
Everything he knows; and I'm
Going there again this Fall
Live there, may be, all the time.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Briar Rose

Youth, with an arrogant air,
Passes me by:
Age, on his tottering staff,
Stops with a sigh.

'Here is a flower, 'he says,
'I knew when young:
It keeps its oldtime place
The woods among.

'Fresh and fragrant as when
I was a boy;
Still is it young as then,
And full of joy.

'Years have not changed it, no;
In leaf and bloom
It keeps the selfsame glow,
And the same perfume.

'Time, that has grayed my hair,
And bowed my form,
Retains it young and fair
And full of charm.

'The root from which it grows
Is firm and fit,
And every year bestows
New strength on it.

'Not so with me. The years
Have changed me much;
And care and pain and tears
Have left their touch.

'It keeps a sturdy stock,
And blooms the same,
Beside the selfsame rock
Where I carved my name.

'My name? I do not know
It is my own.
'T was carved so long ago,
'T is moss-o'ergrown.'

(He stoops beside the flower.
He feels its need.
And for a thoughtful hour
He gives it heed.

(It begs him, it seems,
In heart and mind,
Of memories and dreams
Of days once kind.)

'It gives and I must take
Thoughts sweet with pain;
And feel again the ache
Of the all-in-vain.

'If it could understand
All it implies
Of loss to me who planned
In life's emprise,

'It would not look so fair,
Nor flaunt its youth,
But strip its branches bare,
And die of ruth.

'Ah me! days come and go;
And I am old
This wild rose tells me so,
As none has told.

'Had it not played a part
In a love long past,
It would not break my heart
With loss at last.'

The Broken Drouth

It seemed the listening forest held its breath
Before some vague and unapparent form
Of fear, approaching with the wings of death,
On the impending storm.

Above the hills, big, bellying clouds loomed, black
And ominous, yet silent as the blue
That pools calm heights of heaven, deepening back
'Twixt clouds of snowdrift hue.

Then instantly, as when a multitude
Shout riot and war through some tumultuous town,
Innumerable voices swept the wood
As wild the wind rushed down.

And fierce and few, as when a strong man weeps,
Great rain-drops dashed the dust; and, overhead,
Ponderous and vast down the prodigious deeps,
Went slow the thunder's tread.

And swift and furious, as when giants fence,
The lightning foils of tempest went insane;
Then far and near sonorous Earth grew dense
With long sweet sweep of rain.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Brook

To it the forest tells
The mystery that haunts its heart and folds
Its form in cogitation deep, that holds
The shadow of each myth that dwells
In nature be it Nymph or Fay or Faun
And whispering of them to the dales and dells,
It wanders on and on.

To it the heaven shows
The secret of its soul; true images
Of dreams that form its aspect; and with these
Reflected in its countenance it goes,
With pictures of the skies, the dusk and dawn,
Within its breast, as every blossom knows,
For them to gaze upon.

Through it the world-soul sends
Its heart's creating pulse that beats and sings
The music of maternity whence springs
All life; and shaping earthly ends,
From the deep sources of the heavens drawn,
Planting its ways with beauty, on it wends,
On and forever on.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Burden Of Desire

In some glad way I know thereof:
A garden glows down in my heart,
Wherein I meet and often part
With many an ancient tale of love
A Romeo garden, banked with bloom,
And trellised with the eglantine;
In which a rose climbs to a room,
A balcony one mass of vine,
Dim, haunted of perfume
A balcony, whereon she gleams,
The soft Desire of all Dreams,
And smiles and bends like Juliet,
Year after year.
While to her side, all dewy wet,
A rose stuck in his ear,
Love climbs to draw her near.

II.

And in another way I know:
Down in my soul a graveyard lies,
Wherein I meet, in ghostly wise,
With many an ancient tale of woe
A graveyard of the Capulets,
Deep-vaulted with ancestral gloom,
Through whose dark yews the moonlight jets
On many a wildly caryen tomb,
That mossy mildew frets
A graveyard where the Soul's Desire
Sleeps, pale-entombed; and, kneeling by her,
Love, like that hapless Montague,
Year after year,
Weary and worn and wild of hue,
Within her sepulchre,
Falls bleeding on her bier.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Bush-Sparrow

Ere wild-haws, looming in the glooms,
Build bolted drifts of breezy blooms;
And in the whistling hollow there
The red-bud bends, as brown and bare
As buxom Roxy's up-stripped arm;
From some gray hickory or larch,
Sighed o'er the sodden meads of March,
The sad heart thrills and reddens warm
To hear you braving the rough storm,
Frail courier of green-gathering powers;
Rebelling sap in trees and flowers;
Love's minister come heralding
O sweet saint-voice among bleak bowers!
O brown-red pursuivant of Spring!

II.

'Moan' sob the woodland waters still
Down bloomless ledges of the hill;
And gray, gaunt clouds like harpies hang
In harpy heavens, and swoop and clang
Sharp beaks and talons of the wind:
Black scowl the forests, and unkind
The far fields as the near: while song
Seems murdered and all beauty wrong.
One weak frog only in the thaw
Of spawny pools wakes cold and raw,
Expires a melancholy bass
And stops as if bewildered: then
Along the frowning wood again,
Flung in the thin wind's vulture face,
From woolly tassels of the proud,
Red-bannered maples, long and loud,
'The Spring is come! is here! her Grace! her Grace!'

III.

'Her Grace, the Spring! her Grace! her Grace!
Climbs, beautiful and sunny browed,

Up, up the kindling hills and wakes
Blue berries in the berry brakes:
With fragrant flakes, that blow and bleach,
Deep-powders smothered quince and peach:
Eyes dogwoods with a thousand eyes;
Teaches each sod how to be wise
With twenty wildflowers to one weed,
And kisses germs that they may seed.
In purest purple and sweet white
Treads up the happier hills of light,
Bloom, cloudy-borne, song in her hair
And balm and beam of odorous air.
Winds, her retainers; and the rains
Her yeomen strong that sweep the plains:
Her scarlet knights of dawn, and gold
Of eve, her panoply unfold:
Her herald tabarded behold!
Awake to greet! prepare to sing!
She comes, the darling Duchess, Spring!

Madison Julius Cawein

The Cabbage

Here is a tale for any one who wishes:
There grew a cabbage once among the flowers,
A plain, broad cabbage a good wench, whose hours
Were kitchen-busy with plebeian dishes.
The rose and lily, toilless, without mottle,
Patricians born, despised her: 'How unpleasant!'
They cried; 'What odour! Worse than any peasant
Who soils God's air! Give us our smelling- bottle.'
There came a gentleman who owned the garden,
Looking about him at both flower and edible,
Admiring here and there; a simple sinner,
Who sought some bud to be his heart's sweet warden:
But passed the flowers and took it seems incredible!
That cabbage! But a man must have his dinner.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Call Of April

April calling, April calling,
April calling me!
I hear the voice of April there
In each old apple tree:
Bee-boom and wild perfume,
And wood-brook melody,
O hark, my heart, and hear, my heart,
The April Ecstasy!

Hark to the hills, the oldtime hills,
That talk with sea and sky!
Or speak in murmurs with God's winds
Who on their bosoms lie:
Bird-call and waterfall
And white clouds blowing by,
O hark, my heart, O hear, my heart,
The April's cosmic cry!

There runs a whisper through the woods,
The word of bough to bough,
A sound of dead things donning green,
Of Beauty waking now:
Fern-bower and wilding flower,
Each like a prayer or vow,
O see, my heart, O look, my heart,
Where Earth crowns white her brow!

And far away, and far away,
Yet nearer than she seems,
Look where she takes the oldtime trail
And walks again with dreams:
Bird note and blue remote
And laughter of wild streams,
O hark, my heart, O hear, my heart,
And follow where she gleams!

Earth has put off her winter garb
Of gray and drab and dun,
And robes herself in raiment green

Of love and laughter spun:
Wood-bloom and wood-perfume
And colors of the sun,
O hark, my heart, O hear, my heart,
Where her wild footsteps run!

O April, mother of my soul,
Take to your heart your child:
And let him lie a little while
Upon its rapture wild:
Lean close and near, and let him hear
The words that once beguiled,
And on his eyes the kiss again
Of longing reconciled.

O kiss, that fills the fields with flowers
And thrills with green each grove,
Dream down into this heart again
And grow to songs thereof:
Wild songs in singing throngs,
That swift shall mount above,
And, like to birds, with lyric words,
Take Earth and Heaven with love.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Catbird

I

The tufted gold of the sassafras,
And the gold of the spicewood-bush,
Bewilder the ways of the forest pass,
And brighten the underbrush:
The white-starred drifts of the wild-plum tree,
And the hawk with its pearly plumes,
And the redbud, misted rosily,
Dazzle the woodland glooms.

II

And I hear the song of the catbird wake
I' the boughs o' the gnarled wild-crab,
Or there where the snows of the dogwood shake,
That the silvery sunbeams stab:
And it seems to me that a magic lies
In the crystal sweet of its notes,
That a myriad blossoms open their eyes
As its strain above them floats.

III

I see the bluebell's blue unclose,
And the trillium's stainless white;
The birdfoot-violet's purple and rose,
And the poppy, golden-bright!
And I see the eyes of the bluet wink,
And the heads of the white-hearts nod;
And the baby mouths of the woodland-pink
And sorrel salute the sod.

IV

And this, meseems, does the catbird say,
As the blossoms crowd i' the sun:-
'Up, up! and out! oh, out and away!
Up, up! and out, each one!

Sweethearts! sweethearts! oh, sweet, sweet, sweet!
Come listen and hark to me!
The Spring, the Spring, with her fragrant feet,
Is passing this way!-Oh, hark to the beat
Of her beelike heart!-Oh, sweet, sweet, sweet!
Come! open your eyes and see!
See, see, see!

Madison Julius Cawein

The Charcoal Man

Once a charcoal wagon passed,
And an old black charcoalman,
'Blacker than a midnight blast,'
Mother said. And he began
Crying, 'Charcoal! charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal.'
And the boys they mocked him, too,
Just the same as parrots do:
'Charcoal! Charcoal!
Blacker than a cellar hole!
Charcoal! Charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal!
Char-co-oal!'
But he never looked at them,
Only cracked his blacksnake whip,
Sucking at his old pipe-stem,
Not much blacker than his lip:
Crying, 'Charcoal! charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal!'
And the boys they mimicked him
While he rode on black and grim:
'Charcoal! Charcoal!
Blacker than your old pipe's bowl!
Charcoal! Charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal!
Char-co-oal!'
Then he turned and shook his head
With a sort o' grimy smile;
'Wish you had my job,' he said;
'Come and try it for a while,
Crying, 'Charcoal! charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal!'
But the boys kept up the fun
Crying louder, every one,
'Charcoal! Charcoal!
Slower than an old black mole!
Charcoal! Charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal!
Char-co-oal!'

Down he got then from his team,
In his old patched coat and hat,
Rags and dirt at every seam,
Blacker than our old black cat:
Crying, 'Charcoal! charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal!'
And the boys they stood far off,
Mocking him with gibe and scoff:
'Charcoal! Charcoal!
Leaner than an old bean pole!
Charcoal! Charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal!
Char-co-oal!'
I felt sorry for him then:
And my mother called him in:
Bought a boxful. Gentlemen!
Ought to 've seen him laugh and grin,
Crying, 'Charcoal! charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal!'
And the boys they danced and laughed,
Pleased as he was, while they chaffed:
'Charcoal! Charcoal!
Shovel it and let it roll!'
And he answered them as droll
'Charcoal! Charcoal!
Made enough to pay my toll.
Charcoal! Charcoal!
Run and tell your mothers, boys,
Here's the place to buy your choice
Charcoal! Charcoal!
Best they ever bought or stole,
Charcoal! Charcoal!
Bring your barrels here to fill!
You can bring them if you will!
Charcoal! Charcoal!
Help along a needy soul!
Charcoal! charcoal!
Come and buy my charcoal!
Char-co-oal!'

Madison Julius Cawein

The Charcoal-Burner's Hut

Deep in a valley, green with ancient beech,
And wandered through of one small, silent stream,
Whose bear-grassed banks bristled with brush and burr,
Tick-trefoil and the thorny marigold,
Bush-clover and the wahoo, hung with pods,
And mass on mass of bugled jewelweed,
Horsemint and doddered ragweed, dense, unkempt,
I came upon a charcoal-burner's hut,
Abandoned and forgotten long ago;
His hut and weedy pit, where once the wood
Smouldered both day and night like some wild forge,
A wildwood forge, glaring as wild-cat eyes.

A mossy roof, black, fallen in decay,
And rotting logs, exuding sickly mold
And livid fungi, and the tottering wreck,
Rude remnants, of a chimney, clay and sticks,
Were all that now remained to say that once,
In time not so remote, one labored here,
Labored and lived, his world bound by these woods:
A solitary soul whose life was toil,
Toil, grimy and unlovely: sad, recluse,
A life, perhaps, that here went out alone,
Alone and unlamented.

Lost forever,
Haply, somewhere, in some far wilder spot,
Far in the forest, lone as was his life,
A grave, an isolated grave, may mark,
Tangled with cat-brier and the strawberry-bush,
The place he lies in; undistinguishable
From the surrounding forest where the lynx
Whines in the moonlight and the she-fox whelps.
A life as some wood-fungus now forgotten:
The Indian-pipe, or ghost-flower, here that rises
And slowly rots away in autumn rains.

Or, it may be, a comrade carved a line
Of date and death on some old trunk of tree,

Whose letters long ago th' erasing rust
Of moss and gradual growth of drowsy years
Slowly obliterated: or, may be,
The rock, all rudely lettered, like his life,
Set up above him by some kindly hand,
A tree's great, grasping roots have overthrown,
Where lichens long ago effaced his name.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Child At The Gate

THE sunset was a sleepy gold,
And stars were in the skies
When down a weedy lane he strolled
In vague and thoughtless wise.
And then he saw it, near a wood,
An old house, gabled brown,
Like some old woman, in a hood,
Looking toward the town.
A child stood at its broken gate,
Singing a childish song,
And weeping softly as if Fate
Had done her child's heart wrong.
He spoke to her: —'Now tell me, dear,
Why do you sing and weep?'—
But she — she did not seem to hear,
But stared as if asleep.
Then suddenly she turned and fled
As if with soul of fear.
He followed; but the house looked dead,
And empty many a year.
The light was wan: the dying day
Grew ghostly suddenly:
And from the house he turned away,
Wrapped in its mystery.
They told him no one dwelt there now:
It was a haunted place.—
And then it came to him, somehow,
The memory of a face.
That child's — like hers, whose name was Joy —
For whom his heart was fain:
The face of her whom, when a boy,
He played with in that lane.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Chipmunk

I

He makes a roadway of the crumbling fence,
Or on the fallen tree,-brown as a leaf
Fall stripes with russet,-gambols down the dense
Green twilight of the woods. We see not whence
He comes, nor whither (in a time so brief)
He vanishes-swift carrier of some Fay,
Some pixy steed that haunts our child-belief-
A goblin glimpse upon some wildwood way.

II

What harlequin mood of nature qualified
Him so with happiness? and limbed him with
Such young activity as winds, that ride
The ripples, have, dancing on every side?
As sunbeams know, that urge the sap and pith
Through hearts of trees? yet made him to delight,
Gnome-like, in darkness,-like a moonlight myth,-
Lairing in labyrinths of the under night.

III

Here, by a rock, beneath the moss, a hole
Leads to his home, the den wherein he sleeps;
Lulled by near noises of the laboring mole
Tunneling its mine-like some ungainly Troll-
Or by the tireless cricket there that keeps
Picking its rusty and monotonous lute;
Or slower sounds of grass that creeps and creeps,
And trees unrolling mighty root on root.

IV

Such is the music of his sleeping hours.
Day hath another-'tis a melody
He trips to, made by the assembled flowers,
And light and fragrance laughing 'mid the bowers,

And ripeness busy with the acorn-tree.
Such strains, perhaps, as filled with mute amaze
(The silent music of Earth's ecstasy)
The Satyr's soul, the Faun of classic days.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Christmas Tree

Christmas is just one week off,
And Old Santa's in the house;
In the attic heard a cough
Th' other day when not a mouse
Nor a rat, I know, was there.
Mother said, 'You'd better be
Good, or else, I do declare!
There won't be a Christmas-tree.'

Christmas is next week. And I'm
So excited! In the night
Hardly ever sleep. One time
Woke and heard strange footsteps, right
In the hall, go down the stair;
When I cried to mother, she
Said, 'Lie down, now! I declare
If you don't no Christmas-tree.'

Yes; next week is Christmas. And
I heard some one laughing sure,
Low, half smothered by a hand,
In the parlor where the door
'S always locked and, my! my hair
Fairly crept. And suddenly
Heard a hoarse voice say, 'Take care!
Or you'll get no Christmas-tree.'

Mother was a-lying down;
'T was n't she. And then the cook
And my nurse had gone in town.
Father, he was at a book.
Must have been Old Santa there
Just a-lying low to see
If I'm good or I declare!
Trimming up my Christmas-tree.

One night, huh! the kitchen door
Banged wide open. 'T was n't wind.
And three knocks, or was it four?

Shook the window. I just skinned
Out of there and up the stair
Where my mother was; and she
Smiled, 'T was Santa, I'll declare!
Bringing in your Christmas-tree.'

And I never pout or cry
When I have to go to bed;
Just get in my gown and lie
Quiet; listening for the tread
Of a foot upon the stair,
Or a voice it seems to me
Santa's saying, 'I declare,
It's a lovely Christmas-tree!'

Every one just walks the chalk
Now it's near to Christmas. Yes,
I'm as careful in my talk
As a boy could be, I guess:
'For Old Santa's everywhere, '
Mother says mysteriously,
'And, unless you're good, 'declare
You won't have a Christmas-tree.'

Madison Julius Cawein

The Close Of Summer

The melancholy of the woods and plains
When summer nears its close; the drowsy, dim,
Unfathomed sadness of the mists that swim
About the valleys after night-long rains;
The humming garden, with its tawny chains
Of gourds and blossoms, ripened to the brim;
And then at eve the low moon's quiet rim,
And the slow sunset, whose one cloud remains,
Fill me with peace that is akin to tears;
Unutterable peace, that moves as in a dream
Mid fancies, sweeter than it knows or tells:
That sees and hears with other eyes and ears,
And walks with Memory beside a stream
That flows through fields of fadeless asphodels.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Closed Door

SHUT it out of the heart — this grief,
O Love, with the years grown old and hoary!
And let in joy that life is brief,
And give God thanks for the end of the story.
The bond of the flesh is transitory,
And beauty goes with the lapse of years —
The brow's white rose and the hair's dark glory —
God be thanked for the severing shears!
Over the past, Heart, waste no tears!
Over the past and all its madness,
Its wine and wormwood, hopes and fears,
That never were worth a moment's sadness.
Here she lies who was part o' its gladness,
Wife and mistress, and shared its woe,
The good of life as well as its badness,—
Look on her face and see if you know.
Is this the face? — yea, ask it slow! —
The hair, the form, that we used to cherish? —
Where is the glory of long-ago?
The beauty we said would never perish.—
Like a dream we dream, or a thought we nourish,
Nothing of earth immortal is:
This is the end however we flourish —
All that is fair must come to this.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Coward

He found the road so long and lone
That he was fain to turn again.
The bird's faint note, the bee's low drone
Seemed to his heart to monotone
The unavailing and the vain,
And dirge the dreams that life had slain.
And for a while he sat him there
Beside the way, and bared his head:
He felt the hot sun on his hair;
And weed-warm odors everywhere
Waked memories, forgot or dead,
Of days when love this way had led
To that old house beside the road
With white board-fence and picket gate,
And garden plot that gleamed and glowed
With color, and that overflowed
With fragrance; where, both soon and late,
She 'mid the flowers used to wait.
Was it the same? or had it changed,
As he and she, with months and years?
How long now had they been estranged?
How far away their lives had ranged,
Since that last meeting, filled with tears,
And boyish hopes and maiden fears!
He closed his eyes, and seemed to see
That parting now: The moon above
The old house and its locust tree;
The moths that glimmered drowsily
From flower to flower, the scent whereof
Seemed portion of that oldtime love.
Her face was lifted, pale and wet;
Her body tense as if with pain:
He stooped, yes, he could see it yet
A moment and their young lips met,
And then. . . There in the lonely lane
He seemed to live it o'er again.
Why gone? 'Twas for her sake.
But what had come of all his toil?
The City, like some monster snake,

Had dragged him down down, half awake,
Crushing him in its grimy coil,
Whence none escapes without a soil.
He was not clean yet. She would read
Failure, vice-written, in his face.
But, haply, now she had no need
Of him, whose life, like some wild weed
Full grown, with evil would replace
The love in her heart's garden-space.
He could not bear to look and see
The question in those virgin eyes.
What answer for that look had he?
He thought it out. It could not be.
He could not live a life of lies.
Better to break all oldtime ties.
And then he rose. The house was near
There where the road turned from the wood.
Whose voice was that he seemed to hear?
Then heart and soul were seized with fear,
And, turning, as if death-pursued,
He fled into the solitude.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Creaking Door

COME in, old Ghost of all that used to be! —
You find me old,
And love grown cold,
And fortune fled to younger company:
Departed, as the glory of the day,
With friends! — And you, it seems, have come to stay.—
'T is time to pray.
Come; sit with me, here at Life's creaking door,
All comfortless.—
Think, nay! then, guess,
What was the one thing, eh? that made me poor? —
The love of beauty, that I could not bind?
My dream of truth? or faith in humankind? —
But, never mind!
All are departed now, with love and youth,
Whose stay was brief;
And left but grief
And gray regret — two jades, who tell the truth; —
Whose children — memories of things to be,
And things that failed,— within my heart, ah me!
Cry constantly.
None can turn time back, and no man delay
Death when he knocks.—
What good are clocks,
Or human hearts, to stay for us that day
When at Life's creaking door we see his smile,—
Death's! at the door of this old House of Trial? —
Old Ghost, let's wait awhile.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Creek-Road

CALLING, the heron flies athwart the blue
That sleeps above it; reach on rocky reach
Of water sings by sycamore and beech,
In whose warm shade bloom lilies not a few.
It is a page whereon the sun and dew
Scrawl sparkling words in dawn's delicious speech;
A laboratory where the wood-winds teach,
Dissect each scent and analyze each hue.
Not otherwise than beautiful, doth it
Record the happenings of each summer day;
Where we may read, as in a catalogue,
When passed a thresher; when a load of hay;
Or when a rabbit; or a bird that lit;
And now a barefoot truant and his dog.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Cricket I

First of the insect choir, in the spring
We hear his faint voice fluttering in the grass,
Beneath some blossom's rosy covering
Or frond of fern upon a wildwood pass.

When in the marsh, in clamorous orchestras,
The shrill hylodes pipe; when, in the haw's
Bee-swarmed blooms, or tasseling sassafras,
Sweet threads of silvery song the sparrow draws,
Bow-like, athwart the vibrant atmosphere,
Like some dim dream low-breathed in slumber's ear,
We hear his 'Cheer, cheer, cheer.'

II.

All summer through the mellowing meadows thrill
To his blithe music. Be it day or night,
Close gossip of the grass, on field and hill
He serenades the silence with delight:

Silence, that hears the melon slowly split
With ripeness; and the plump peach, hornet-bit,
Loosen and fall; and everywhere the white,
Warm, silk-like stir of leafy lights that flit
As breezes blow; above which, loudly clear,
Like joy who sings of life and has no fear,
We hear his 'Cheer, cheer, cheer.'

III.

Then in the autumn, by the waterside,
Leaf-huddled; or along the weed-grown walks,
He dirges low the flowers that have died,
Or with their ghosts holds solitary talks.

Lover of warmth, all day above the click
And crunching of the sorghum-press, through thick
Sweet steam of juice; all night when, white as chalk,
The hunter's-moon hangs o'er the rustling rick,

Within the barn 'mid munching cow and steer,
Soft as a memory the heart holds dear,
We hear his 'Cheer, cheer, cheer.'

IV.

Kinsman and cousin of the Faëry Race,
All winter long he sets his sober mirth,
That brings good-luck to many a fire-place,
To folk-lore song and story of the hearth.

Between the back-log's bluster and the slim
High twittering of the kettle, sounds that hymn
Home-comforts, when, outside, the starless Earth
Is iced in every laden limb,
Defying frost and all the sad and sear,
Like love that dies not and is always near,
We hear his 'Cheer, cheer, cheer.'

Madison Julius Cawein

The Criminal

Here is a tale for all who wish to listen:

There was a thief who, in his cut-throat quarter,
Was hailed as chief; he had a way of barter,
Persuasion, masked, behind a weapon's glisten,
That made it cockrow with each good man's riches.
At last he joined the Brotherhood of Murder,
And rose in his profession; lived a herder
Of crime in some dark tavern of the ditches.
There was a war. He went. Became a gunner.
And slew, as soldiers should, his many a hundred,
In authorized and most professional manner.
Here he advanced again. Was starred a oner.
Was captained, pensioned, and nobody wondered;
And lived and died respectable as a tanner.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Cry Of Earth

THE Season speaks this year of life
Confusing words of strife,
Suggesting weeds instead of fruits and flowers
In all Earth's bowers.
With heart of Jael, face of Ruth,
She goes her way uncouth
Through hills and fields, where fog and sunset seem
Wild smoke and steam.
Around her, spotted as a leopard skin,
She draws her cloak of whin,
And through the dark hills sweeps dusk's last red glare
Wild on her hair.
Her hands drip leaves, like blood, and burn
With frost; her moony urn
She lifts, where Death, 'mid driving stress and storm,
Rears his gaunt form.
And all night long she seems to say
'Come forth, my Winds, and slay! —
And everywhere is heard the wailing cry
Of dreams that die.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Cup Of Comus

PROEM

THE Nights of song and story,
With breath of frost and rain,
Whose locks are wild and hoary,
Whose fingers tap the pane
With leaves, are come again.
The Nights of old October,
That hug the hearth and tell,
To child and grandsire sober,
Tales of what long befell
Of witch and warlock spell.
Nights, that, like gnome and faery,
Go, lost in mist and moon,
And speak in legendary
Thoughts or a mystic rune,
Much like the owlet's croon.
Or whirling on like witches,
Amid the brush and broom,
Call from the Earth its riches,
Of leaves and wild perfume,
And strew them through the gloom.
Till death, in all his starkness,
Assumes a form of fear,
And somewhere in the darkness
Seems slowly drawing near
In raiment torn and sere.
And with him comes November,
Who drips outside the door,
And wails what men remember
Of things believed no more,
Of superstitious lore.
Old tales of elf and dæmon,
Of Kobold and of Troll,
And of the goblin woman
Who robs man of his soul
To make her own soul whole.
And all such tales, that glamoured
The child-heart once with fright,
That aged lips have stammered

For many a child's delight,
Shall speak again to-night.
To-night, of moonlight minted,
That is a cup divine,
Whence Death, all opal-tinted,—
Wreathed red with leaf and vine,—
Shall drink a magic wine.
A wonder-cup of Comus,
That with enchantment streams,
In which the heart of Momus,—
That, moon-like, glooms and gleams,
Is drowned with all its dreams.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Cup Of Joy

Let us mix a cup of Joy
That the wretched may employ,
Whom the Fates have made their toy.

Who have given brain and heart
To the thankless world of Art,
And from Fame have won no part.

Who have labored long at thought;
Starved and toiled and all for naught;
Sought and found not what they sought....

Let our goblet be the skull
Of a fool; made beautiful
With a gold nor base nor dull:

Gold of madcap fancies, once
It contained, that, sage or dunce,
Each can read whoever runs.

First we pour the liquid light
Of our dreams in; then the bright
Beauty that makes day of night.

Let this be the must wherefrom,
In due time, the mettlesome
Care-destroying drink shall come.

Folly next: with which mix in
Laughter of a child of sin,
And the red of mouth and chin.

These shall give the tang thereto,
Effervescence and rich hue
Which to all good wine are due.

Then into our cup we press
One wild kiss of wantonness,
And a glance that says not less.

Sparkles both that give a fine
Lustre to the drink divine,
Necessary to good wine.

Lastly in the goblet goes
Sweet a love-song, then a rose
Warmed upon her breast's repose.

These bouquet our drink. Now measure
With your arm the waist you treasure
Lift the cup and, 'Here's to Pleasure!'

Madison Julius Cawein

The Dance Of Summer

Summer, gowned in catnip-gray,
Goes her weedy wildwood way,
Where with rosehip-buttoned coat,
Cardinal flower-plume afloat,
With the squirrel-folk at play,
Brown September, smiling, stands,
Chieftain of the Romany bands
Of the Fall a gypsy crew,
Glimmering in lobelia-blue,
Gold and scarlet down the lands.
Summer, with a redbird trill,
Dares him follow at her will,
There to romp in tree and vine,
Drink the sunset's crimson wine,
And on beauty feast his fill.
He his Autumn whistle takes,
And his dark hair backward shakes;
Pipes a note, and bids her on,
Dancing like a woodland faun,
And she follows through the brakes.
She must follow: she is bound
By the wildness of the sound.
Is it love or necromance?
Down the world he leads the dance,
And the woods go whirling round.
Wildly briars clutch and hold;
Branches reach out arms of gold;
Naught can stay them. Pipe, and follow
Over hill and over hollow
Till the night fall dark and cold.
Now her gown is torn in shreds,
And her gossamer veil is threads
Streaming round her nakedness;
And the flowers, at her distress,
Weep and hide their drooping heads.
Round her whirl the frightened leaves,
And the stammering water grieves;
Nut and haw the forest throws
At her as she dancing goes

To the pipe that magic weaves.
Death will have her. She must spin
Till, a skeleton, she win
To the land where Winter dwells,
Where shall end Fall's gipsy spells,
And her long white sleep begin.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Dead Day

The west builds high a sepulcher
Of cloudy granite and of gold,
Where twilight's priestly hours inter
The Day like some great king of old.

A censer, rimmed with silver fire,
The new moon swings above his tomb;
While, organ-stops of God's own choir,
Star after star throbs in the gloom.

And Night draws near, the sadly sweet-
A nun whose face is calm and fair-
And kneeling at the dead Day's feet
Her soul goes up in mists like prayer.

In prayer, we feel through dewy gleam
And flowery fragrance, and-above
All earth-the ecstasy and dream
That haunt the mystic heart of love.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Dead Dream

Between the darkness and the day
As, lost in doubt, I went my way,
I met a shape, as faint as fair,
With star-like blossoms in its hair:
Its body, which the moon shone through,
Was partly cloud and partly dew:
Its eyes were bright as if with tears,
And held the look of long-gone years;
Its mouth was piteous, sweet yet dread,
As if with kisses of the dead:
And in its hand it bore a flower,
In memory of some haunted hour.
I knew it for the Dream I'd had
In days when life was young and glad.
Why had it come with love and woe
Out of the happy Long-Ago?
Upon my brow I felt its breath,
Heard ancient words of faith and death,
Sweet with the immortality
Of many a fragrant memory:
And to my heart again I took
Its joy and sorrow in a look,
And kissed its eyes and held it fast,
And bore it home from out the past
My Dream of Beauty and of Truth,
I dreamed had perished with my Youth.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Dead Oread

Her heart is still and leaps no more
With holy passion when the breeze,
Her whilom playmate, as before,
Comes with the language of the bees,
Sad songs her mountain cedars sing,
And water-music murmuring.

Her calm white feet,-erst fleet and fast
As Daphne's when a god pursued,-
No more will dance like sunlight past
The gold-green vistas of the wood,
Where every quailing floweret
Smiled into life where they were set.

Hers were the limbs of living light,
And breasts of snow; as virginal
As mountain drifts; and throat as white
As foam of mountain waterfall;
And hyacinthine curls, that streamed
Like crag-born mists, and gloomed and gleamed.

Her presence breathed such scents as haunt
Moist, mountain dells and solitudes;
Aromas wild as some wild plant
That fills with sweetness all the woods:
And comradeships of stars and skies
Shone in the azure of her eyes.

Her grave be by a mossy rock
Upon the top of some wild hill,
Removed, remote from men who mock
The myths and dreams of life they kill:
Where all of beauty, naught of lust
May guard her solitary dust.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Death Of Love

So Love is dead, the Love we knew of old!
And in the sorrow of our hearts' hushed halls
A lute lies broken and a flower falls;
Love's house stands empty and his hearth lies cold.
Lone in dim places, where sweet vows were told,
In walks grown desolate, by ruined walls
Beauty decays; and on their pedestals
Dreams crumble and th' immortal gods are mold.
Music is slain or sleeps; one voice alone,
One voice awakes, and like a wandering ghost
Haunts all the echoing chambers of the Past-
The voice of Memory, that stills to stone
The soul that hears; the mind, that, utterly lost,
Before its beautiful presence stands aghast.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Desire Of The Moth

Woman's a star, a rose;
Man but a moth, a bee:
High now as heaven she glows,
Low now as earth and sea:
Star of the world and rose,
Clothed on with mystery.
Ever a goal, a lure,
Man, for his joy and woe,
Strives to attain to her,
Beating wild wings below,
Dying to make him sure
If she be flame or snow.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Devil's Race-Horse

Devil's Race-Horse seems to me
Strangest thing I ever saw:
Up in our old maple-tree
They're at home; stand rearingly,
Lean of neck and long of claw.
Strangest thing I ever saw.

'Always praying, 'father says,
'For some bug it may devour;
Insect that it grabs and slays,
Fly or moth that comes its ways,
Journeying from flower to flower:
Insect that it may devour.'

And my nurse says: 'I suppose
Little imps that devil sleep,
Tickle children on the nose,
Pull their hair and pinch their toes,
Ride these things around a heap:
Little imps that devil sleep.

'They're their fly-by-nights, their steeds,
Door-knob eyed and weird of wing,
That they stable in the weeds
Of the garden, where it feeds,
Tiger-like, on everything:
Door-knob eyed and weird of wing.

'You can see the saddle there
Ready on its ugly back:
Or sometimes the imps ride bare,
Like the wind, with hair aflare,
Through the midnight deep and black,
Straddle of its ugly back.

'And they fly where little boys
Lie asleep within their beds:
Boys, who all day make a noise,
Eat a lot, and break their toys,

Fight and stand upon their heads;
Urchins safe now in their beds.

'And they come to little girls
Who lie sleeping in their cribs;
Who all day have tossed their curls,
Nibbled like a lot of squirrels,
Torn their frocks and soiled their bibs;
Romps now safe within their cribs.

'And these imps just flutter round
On their Devil's Horses there;
And though you are sleeping sound,
You will hear them, I'll be bound,
And soon feel them at your hair,
On their Devil's Horses there.

'Sometimes on your face they light,
And you feel their long claws rake
Right across your nose; or right
On your lip they prance and bite,
And you writhe and scream and wake,
When you feel their long claws rake.

'And your parents wake up, too;
Turn the light on; come and say,
'What's the matter now with you?
Dreaming? Had the nightmare? Knew
That you ate too much to-day.'

That's what both your parents say.'...
Then I tell my nurse that I
Wish I was an imp, and those
Were my horses: how I'd fly!
Yes, right to her bed, oh my!
And whizz round her head and nose!
Wish I was an imp like those!

Madison Julius Cawein

The Dittany

The scent of dittany was hot.
Its smell intensified the heat:
Into his brain it seemed to beat
With memories of a day forgot,
When she walked with him through the wheat,
And noon was heavy with the heat.

Again her eyes gazed into his
With all their maiden tenderness;
Again the fragrance of her dress
Swooned on his senses; and, with bliss,
Again he felt her heart's caress
Full of a timid tenderness.

What of that spray she plucked and gave?
The spray of this wild dittany,
Whose scent brought back to memory
A something lost, beyond the grave.
He knew now what it meant, ah me!
That spray of withered dittany.

How many things he had forgot!
Far, lovely things Life flings away!
And where was she now? Who could say?
The dittany, whose scent was hot,
Spoke to his heart; and, old and gray,
Through the lone land he went his way.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Dream

This was my dream:

It seemed the afternoon
Of some deep tropic day; and yet the moon
Stood round and bright with golden alchemy
High in a heaven bluer than the sea.
Long lawny lengths of perishable cloud
Hung in a west o'er rolling forests bowed;
Clouds raining colours, gold and violet,
That, opening, seemed from mystic worlds to let
Hints down of Parian beauty and lost charms
Of dim immortals, young, with floating forms.
And all about me fruited orchards grew,
Pear, quince and peach, and plums of dusty blue;
Rose-apricots and apples streaked with fire,
Kissed into ripeness by the sun's desire
And big with juice. And on far, fading hills,
Down which it seemed a hundred torrent rills
Flashed rushing silver, vines and vines and vines
Of purple vintage swollen with cool wines;
Pale pleasant wines and fragrant as late June,
Their delicate tang drawn from the wine-white moon
And from the clouds o'er this sweet world there dripped
An odorous music, strangely feverish-lipped,
That swung and swooned and panted in mad sighs;
Investing at each throb the air with eyes,
And forms of sensuous spirits, limpid white,
Clad on with raiment as of starry night;
Fair, faint embodiments of melody,
From out whose hearts of crystal one could see
The music stream like light through delicate hands
Hollowing a lamp. And as on sounding sands
The ocean murmur haunts the rosy shells,
Within whose convolutions beauty dwells,
My soul became a vibrant harp of love,
Re-echoing all the harmony above.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Dream Child

There is a place (I know it well)
Where beech trees crowd into a gloom,
And where a twinkling woodland well
Flings from a rock a rippling plume,
And, like a Faun beneath a spell,
The silence breathes of beam and bloom.

And here it was I met with her,
The child I never hoped to see,
Who long had been heart's-comforter,
And soul's-companion unto me,
Telling me oft of myths that were,
And of far faerylands to-be.

She stood there smiling by the pool,
The cascade made below the rocks;
Innocent, naked, beautiful,
The frail gerardia in her locks,
A flower, elfin-sweet and cool,
Freckled as faery four-o'clocks.

Her eyes were rain-bright; and her hair
An amber gleam like that which tips
The golden leaves when Fall comes fair;
And twin red berries were her lips;
Her beauty, pure and young and bare,
Shone like a star from breasts to hips.

Oft had I seen her thus, of old,
In dreams, where she played many parts:
A form, possessing in its mold
The high perfection of all Arts,
With all the hopes to which men hold,
And loves for which they break their hearts.

And she was mine. Within her face
I read' her soul. . . . Then, while she smiled,
A sudden wind swept through the place
And she was gone. My heart beat wild;

The leaves shook and, behold, no trace
Was there of her, the faery child.

Only a ray of gold that hung
Above the water; and a bough,
Rain-bright and berried, low that swung:
Yet, in my heart of hearts, somehow,
I felt (I need not search among
The trees) that she was hiding now.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Dream In The Wood

The beauty of the day put joy,
Unbounded, in the woodland's breast,
Through which the wind, like some wild boy,
Ran on and took no rest.

The little stream that made its home,
Under the spicewood bough and beech,
Hummed to its heart a song of foam,
Or with the moss held speech.

And he, whose heart was weighed with tears,
And who had come to seek a dream,
For a dim while forgot his fears,
Harkening the wind and stream.

The wind for him assumed a form,
A child's, with wildflowers in its hair;
It seemed to take him by the arm
To lead him far from care.

The streamlet raised a hand of spray
By every rock, and waved him on,
Whispering, 'Come, take this wildwood way,
And find your dream long gone.'

And he, who heard and followed these,
Came on a secret place apart,
And there, behold! the dream of peace
He found in his own heart.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Dream Of Roderick

Below, the tawny Tagus swept
Past royal gardens, breathing balm;
Upon his couch the monarch slept;
The world was still; the night was calm.

Gray, Gothic-gated, in the ray
Of moonrise, tower-and castle-crowned,
The city of Toledo lay
Beneath the terraced palace-ground.

Again, he dreamed, in kingly sport
He sought the tree-sequestered path,
And watched the ladies of his Court
Within the marble-basined bath.

Its porphyry stairs and fountained base
Shone, houried with voluptuous forms,
Where Andalusia vied in grace
With old Castile, in female charms.

And laughter, song, and water-splash
Rang round the place, with stone arcaded,
As here a breast or limb would flash
Where beauty swam or beauty waded.

And then, like Venus, from the wave
A maiden came, and stood below;
And by her side a woman slave
Bent down to dry her limbs of snow.

Then on the tessellated bank,
Robed on with fragrance and with fire,
Like some exotic flower-she sank,
The type of all divine desire.

Then her dark curls, that sparkled wet,
She parted from her perfect brows,
And, lo, her eyes, like lamps of jet
Within an alabaster house.

And in his sleep the monarch sighed,
'Florinda!'-Dreaming still he moaned,
'Ah, would that I had died, had died!
I have atoned! I have atoned!' ...

And then the vision changed: O'erhead
Tempest and darkness were unrolled,
Full of wild voices of the dead,
And lamentations manifold.

And wandering shapes of gaunt despair
Swept by, with faces pale as pain,
Whose eyes wept blood and seemed to glare
Fierce curses on him through the rain.

And then, it seemed, 'gainst blazing skies
A necromantic tower sate,
Crag-like on crags, of giant size;
Of adamant its walls and gate.

And from the storm a hand of might
Red-rolled in thunder, reached among
The gate's huge bolts-that burst; and night
Clanged ruin as its hinges swung.

Then far away a murmur trailed,
As of sad seas on cavern'd shores,
That grew into a voice that wailed,
'They come! they come! the Moors! the Moors!'

And with deep boom of atabals
And crash of cymbals and wild peal
Of battle-bugles, from its walls
An army rushed in glimmering steel.

And where it trod he saw the torch
Of conflagration stalk the skies,
And in the vanward of its march
The monster form of Havoc rise.

And Paynim war-cries rent the storm,

Athwart whose firmament of flame,
Destruction reared an earthquake form
On wreck and death without a name ...

And then again the vision changed:
Where flows the Guadalete, see,
The warriors of the Cross are ranged
Against the Crescent's chivalry.

With roar of trumpets and of drums
They meet; and in the battle's van
He fights; and, towering towards him, comes
Florinda's father, Julian;

And one-eyed Taric, great in war:
And where these couch their burning spears,
The Christian phalanx, near and far,
Goes down like corn before the shears.

The Moslem wins: the Christian flies:
'Allah il Allah,' hill and plain
Reverberate: the rocking skies,
'Allah il Allah,' shout again.

And then he dreamed the swing of swords
And hurl of arrows were no more;
But, louder than the howling hordes,
Strange silence fell on field and shore.

And through the night, it seemed, he fled,
Upon a white steed like a star,
Across a field of endless dead,
Beneath a blood-red scimitar.

Of sunset: And he heard a moan,
Beneath, around, on every hand-
'Accurséd! Yea, what hast thou done
To bring this curse upon thy land?'

And then an awful sense of wings:
And, lo! the answer-"Twas his lust
That was his crime. Behold! E'en kings

Must reckon with Me. All are dust.'

Madison Julius Cawein

The Dreamer

Far as the eye can see, in domes and spires,
Buttress and curve, ruins of shifting sand,
In whose wild making wind and sea took hand,
The white dunes stretch. The wind, that never tires,
Striving for strange effects that he admires,
Changes their form from time to time; the land
Forever passive to his mad demand,
And to the sea's, who with the wind conspires.
Here, as on towers of desolate cities, bay
And wire-grass grow, wherein no insect cries,
Only a bird, the swallow of the sea,
That homes in sand. I hear it far away
Crying or is it some lost soul that flies,
Above the land, ailing unceasingly?

Madison Julius Cawein

The Dunes

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Buttress and curve, ruins of shifting sand,
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Crying or is it some lost soul that flies,
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Madison Julius Cawein

The Egret Hunter

Through woods the Spanish moss makes gray,
With deeps the daylight never reaches,
The water sluices slow its way,
And chokes with weeds its beaches.

'T was here, lost in this lone bayou,
Where poison brims each blossom's throat,
Last night I followed a firefly glow,
And oared a leaky boat.

The way was dark; and overhead
The wailing limpkin moaned and cried;
The moss, like cerements of the dead,
Waved wildly on each side.

The way was black, albeit the trees
Let here and there the moonlight through,
The shadows, 'mid the cypress-knees,
Seemed ominous of hue.

And then behold! a boat that oozed
Slow slime and trailed rank water-weeds,
Loomed on me: in which, interfused,
Great glow-worms glowed like beads.

And in its rotting hulk, upright,
His eyeless eyes fixed far before,
A dead man sat, and stared at night,
Grasping a rotting oar.

Slowly it passed; and fearfully
The moccasin slid in its wake;
The owl shrunk shrieking in its tree;
And in its hole the snake.

But I, who met it face to face,
I could not shrink or turn aside:
Within that dark and demon place
There was no place to hide.

Slowly it passed; for me too slow!
The grim Death, in the moon's faint shine,
Whose story, haply, none may know
Save th' owl that haunts the pine.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Elements

I saw the spirit of the pines that spoke
With spirits of the ocean and the storm:
Against the tumult rose its tattered form,
Wild rain and darkness round it like a cloak.
Fearful it stood, limbed like some twisted oak,
Gesticulating with one giant arm,
Raised as in protest of the night's alarm,
Defiant still of some impending stroke.
Below it, awful in its majesty,
The spirit of the deep, with rushing locks,
Raved: and above it, lightning-clad and shod,
Thundered the tempest. Thus they stood, the three;
Terror around them; while, upon the rocks,
Destruction danced, mocking at man and God.

Madison Julius Cawein

The End Of All

I do not love you now,
O narrow heart, that had no heights but pride!
You, whom mine fed; to whom yours still denied
Food when mine hungered, and of which love died
I do not love you now.

II.

I do not love you now,
O shallow soul, with depths but to deceive!
You, whom mine watered; to whom yours did give
No dropp to drink to help my love to live
I do not love you now.

III.

I do not love you now!
But did I love you in the old, old way,
And knew you loved me 'though the words should slay
Me and your love forever, I would say,
'I do not love you now!
I do not love you now!'

Madison Julius Cawein

The End Of Summer

THE rose, that wrote its message on the noon's
Bright manuscript, has turned her perfumed face
Towards Fall, and waits, heart-heavy, for the moon's
Pale flower to take her place.

With eyes distraught, and dark disheveled hair,
The Season dons a tattered cloak of storm
And waits with Night that, darkly, seems to share
Her trouble and alarm.

It is the close of summer. In the sky
The sunset lit a fire of drift and sat
Watching the last Day, robed in empire, die
Upon the burning ghat.

The first leaf crimsons and the last rose falls,
And Night goes stalking on, her cloak of rain
Dripping, and followed through her haunted halls
By all Death's phantom train.

The sorrow of the Earth and all that dies,
And all that suffers, in her breast she bears;
Outside the House of Life she stops and cries
The burden of her cares.

Then on the window knocks with crooked hands,
Her tree-like arms to Heaven wildly-hurled:
Love hears her crying, 'Who then understands? —
Has God forgot the world?'

Madison Julius Cawein

The End Of The Century

There are moments when, as missions,
God reveals to us strange visions;
When, within their separate stations,
We may see the Centuries,
Like revolving constellations
Shaping out Earth's destinies.

I have gazed in Time's abysses,
Where no smallest thing Earth misses
That was hers once. 'Mid her chattels,
There the Past's gigantic ghost
Sits and dreams of thrones and battles
In the night of ages lost.

Far before her eyes, unholy
Mist was spread; that darkly, slowly
Rolled aside, like some huge curtain
Hung above the land and sea;
And beneath it, wild, uncertain,
Rose the wraiths of memory.

First I saw colossal spectres
Of dead cities: Troy once Hector's
Pride; then Babylon and Tyre;
Karnac, Carthage, and the gray
Walls of Thebes, Apollo's lyre
Built; and Rome and Nineveh.

Empires followed: first, in seeming,
Old Chaldea lost in dreaming;
Egypt next, a bulk Memnonian
Staring from her pyramids;
Then Assyria, Babylonian
Night beneath her hell-lit lids.

Greece, in classic white, sidereal
Armored; Rome, in dark, imperial
Purple, crowned with blood and fire,
Down the deeps barbaric strode;

Gaul and Britain stalking by her,
Skin-clad and tattooed with woad.

All around them, rent and scattered,
Lay their gods with features battered,
Brute and human, stone and iron,
Caked with gems and gnarled with gold;
Temples, that did once environ
These, in wreck around them rolled.

While I stood and gazed and waited,
Slowly night obliterated
All; and other phantoms drifted
Out of darkness pale as stars;
Shapes that tyrant faces lifted,
Sultans, kings, and emperors.

Man and steed in ponderous metal
Panoplied, they seemed to settle,
Condors gaunt of devastation,
On the world: behind their march
Desolation; conflagration
Loomed before them with her torch.

Helmets flamed like fearful flowers;
Chariots rose and moving towers;
Captains passed; each fierce commander
With his gauntlet on his sword:
Agamemnon, Alexander,
Cæsar, each led on his horde.

Huns and Vandals; wild invaders:
Goths and Arabs; stern Crusaders:
Each, like some terrific torrent,
Rolled above a ruined world;
Till a cataract abhorrent
Seemed the swarming spears uphurled.

Banners and escutcheons, kindled
By the light of slaughter, dwindled
Died in darkness; the chimera
Of the Past was laid at last.

But, behold, another era
From her corpse rose, vague and vast.

Demogorgon of the Present!
Who in one hand raised a Crescent,
In the other, with submissive
Fingers, lifted up a Cross;
Reverent and yet derisive
Seemed she, robed in gold and dross.

In her skeptic eyes professions
Of great faith I saw; expressions,
Christian and humanitarian,
Played around her cynic lip;
Still I knew her a barbarian
By the sword upon her hip.

And she cherished strange idolons,
Pagan shadows Platos, Solons
From whose teachings she indentured
Forms of law and sophistry;
Seeking still for truth she ventured
Just so far as these could see.

When she vanished, I uplifting
Eyes to where the dawn was rifting
Darkness, lo! beheld a shadow
Towering on Earth's utmost peaks;
'Round whom morning's eldorado
Rivered gold in blinding streaks.

On her brow I saw the stigma
Still of death; and life's enigma
Filled her eyes: around her shimmered
Folds of silence; and afar,
Faint above her forehead, glimmered
Lone the light of one pale star.

Then a voice, above or under
Earth, against her seemed to thunder
Questions, wherein was repeated,
'Christ or Cain?' and 'God or beast?'

And the Future, shadowy-sheeted,
Turning, pointed towards the East.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Faery Pipe

Woods of wonder, wonder ways,
Where the Faery Piper plays,
Bidding all to up and follow
Over haunted hill and hollow,
And behold again the Fays
Whirling in a moonlit maze.

He whom once our Childhood knew,
Piper of the Dream-come-true;
Who with music reared us towers
Of Adventure, where the Hours
Wove enchantments; peopled too
With the deeds of Daring-do.

Oh, to hear the pipe he blows
Saying all of Let's-Suppose!
Who once bade us brave the danger
Of the Dragon, for the stranger,
Princess, who, to tell her woes,
Dropped from her high Tower a rose.

She, for whom we would have died,
To whose Tower the pipe was guide,
And from Witchcraft's power delivered.
How the dungeon-tower shivered
When our trumpet blast defied,
Challenging its giant pride!

Oh, again to stand and see
Vision grow reality!
Hear the Elfland bugles blowing,
And, beyond all seeing, knowing,
Gallop to our empery
There again in Faërie!

Oh, again to leave regret,
Fever of the world and fret!
Tears and loss and work and worry!
For the Land of Song and Story,

For that Land none can forget,
Of which Thought is minion yet. . . .

Woods of wonder, wonder ways,
Where the Faery Piper plays,
Saying, 'Quit your melancholy!
Leave the world of work and folly!
Follow me to where the Fays
Trip it as in Childhood's days.'

Madison Julius Cawein

The Farmstead

Yes, I love the homestead. There
In the spring the lilacs blew
Plenteous perfume everywhere;
There in summer gladioles grew
Parallels of scarlet glare.

And the moon-hued primrose cool
Satin-soft and redolent;
Honeysuckles beautiful,
Filling all the air with scent;
Roses red or white as wool.

Roses, glorious and lush,
Rich in tender-tinted dyes,
Like the gay tempestuous rush
Of unnumbered butterflies,
Clustering o'er each bending bush.

Here japonica and box,
And the wayward violets;
Clumps of star-enamelled phlox,
And the myriad flowery jets
Of the twilight four-o'-clocks.

Ah, the beauty of the place!
When the June made one great rose,
Full of musk and mellow grace,
In the garden's humming close,
Of her comely mother face!

Bubble-like, the hollyhocks
Budded, burst, and flaunted wide
Gypsy beauty from their stocks;
Morning glories, bubble-dyed,
Swung in honey-hearted flocks.

Tawny tiger-lilies flung
Doublets slashed with crimson on;
Graceful slave-girls, fair and young,

Like Circassians, in the sun
Alabaster lilies swung.

Ah, the droning of the bee;
In his dusty pantaloons
Tumbling in the fleurs-de-lis;
In the drowsy afternoons
Dreaming in the pink sweet-pea.

Ah, the moaning wildwood-dove!
With its throat of amethyst
Rippled like a shining cove
Which a wind to pearl hath kissed,
Moaning, moaning of its love.

And the insects' gossip thin
From the summer hotness hid
In lone, leafy deeps of green;
Then at eve the katydid
With its hard, unvaried din.

Often from the whispering hills,
Borne from out the golden dusk,
Gold with gold of daffodils,
Thrilled into the garden's musk
The wild wail of whippoorwills.

From the purple-tangled trees,
Like the white, full heart of night,
Solemn with majestic peace,
Swam the big moon, veined with light;
Like some gorgeous golden-fleece.

She was there with me. And who,
In the magic of the hour,
Had not sworn that they could view,
Beading on each blade and flower
Moony blisters of the dew?

And each fairy of our home,
Firefly, its taper lit
In the honey-scented gloam,

Dashing down the dusk with it
Like an instant-flaming foam.

And we heard the calling, calling,
Of the screech-owl in the brake;
Where the trumpet-vine hung, crawling
Down the ledge, into the lake
Heard the sighing streamlet falling.

Then we wandered to the creek
Where the water-lilies, growing
Thick as stars, lay white and weak;
Or against the brooklet's flowing
Bent and bathed a bashful cheek.

And the moonlight, rippling golden,
Fell in virgin aureoles
On their bosoms, half unfolden,
Where, it seemed, the fairies' souls
Dwelt as perfume, un beholden;

Or lay sleeping, pearly-tented,
Baby-cribbed within each bud,
While the night-wind, piney-scented,
Swooning over field and flood,
Rocked them on the waters dented.

Then the low, melodious bell
Of a sleeping heifer tinkled,
In some berry-briered dell,
As her satin dewlap wrinkled
With the cud that made it swell.

And, returning home, we heard,
In a beech-tree at the gate,
Some brown, dream-behaunted bird,
Singing of its absent mate,
Of the mate that never heard.

And, you see, now I am gray,
Why within the old, old place,
With such memories, I stay;

Fancy out her absent face
Long since passed away.

She was mine yes! still is mine:
And my frosty memory
Reels about her, as with wine
Warmed into young eyes that see
All of her that was divine.

Yes, I loved her, and have grown
Melancholy in that love,
And the memory alone
Of perfection such whereof
She could sanctify each stone.

And where'er the poppies swing
There we walk, as if a bee
Bent them with its airy wing,
Down her garden shadowy
In the hush the evenings bring.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Father

There is a hall in every house,
Behind whose wainscot gnaws the mouse;
Along whose sides are empty rooms,
Peopled with dreams and ancient dooms.
When down this hall you take your light,
And face, alone, the hollow night,
Be like the child who goes to bed,
Though faltering and half adread
Of something crouching crookedly
In every corner he can see,
Ready to snatch him into gloom,
Yet goes on bravely to his room,
Knowing, above him, watching there,
His father waits upon the stair.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Faun

The joys that touched thee once, be mine!
The sympathies of sky and sea,
The friendships of each rock and pine,
That made thy lonely life, ah me!
In Tempe or in Gargaphie.

Such joy as thou didst feel when first,
On some wild crag, thou stood'st alone
To watch the mountain tempest burst,
With streaming thunder, lightning-sown,
On Latmos or on Pelion.

Thy awe! when, crowned with vastness, Night
And Silence ruled the deep's abyss;
And through dark leaves thou saw'st the white
Breasts of the starry maids who kiss
Pale feet of moony Artemis.

Thy dreams! when, breasting matted weeds
Of Arethusa, thou didst hear
The music of the wind-swept reeds;
And down dim forest-ways drew near
Shy herds of slim Arcadian deer.

Thy wisdom! that knew naught but love
And beauty, with which love is fraught;
The wisdom of the heart-whereof
All noblest passions spring-that thought
As Nature thinks, 'All else is naught.'

Thy hope! wherein To-morrow set
No shadow; hope, that, lacking care
And retrospect, held no regret,
But bloomed in rainbows everywhere,
Filling with gladness all the air.

These were thine all: in all life's moods
Embracing all of happiness:
And when within thy long-loved woods

Didst lay thee down to die-no less
Thy happiness stood by to bless.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Festival Of The Aisne

IMPERIAL Madness, will of hand,
Builds vast an altar here, and rears
Before the world, on godly land,
A Moloch form of blood and tears.
And far as eye can see, behold,
Priests plunge into its brazen arms
Men, that its iron maw of mold
Mangles, returning horrible forms.
Its Priests are armies, moving slow,
And crowned like kings, in human-guise:
And theirs it is to make it flow —
The crimson stream of sacrifice.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Feud

Rocks, trees and rocks; and down a mossy stone
The murmuring ooze and trickle of a stream
Through bushes, where the mountain spring lies lone,
A gleaming cairngorm where the shadows dream,
And one wild road winds like a saffron seam.

Here sang the thrush, whose pure, mellifluous note
Dropped golden sweetness on the fragrant June;
Here cat and blue-bird and wood-sparrow wrote
Their presence on the silence with a tune;
And here the fox drank 'neath the mountain moon.

Frail ferns and dewy mosses and dark brush
Impenetrable briars, deep and dense,
And wiry bushes, brush, that seemed to crush
The struggling saplings with its tangle, whence
Sprawled out the ramble of an old rail-fence.

A wasp buzzed by; and then a butterfly
In orange and amber, like a floating flame;
And then a man, hard-eyed and very sly,
Gaunt-checked and haggard and a little lame,
With an old rifle, down the mountain came.

He listened, drinking from a flask he took
Out of the ragged pocket of his coat;
Then all around him cast a stealthy look;
Lay down; and watched an eagle soar and float,
His fingers twitching at his hairy throat.

The shades grew longer; and each Cumberland height
Loomed, framed in splendours of the dolphin dusk.
Around the road a horseman rode in sight;
Young, tall, blonde-bearded. Silent, grim, and brusque,
He in the thicket aimed The gun ran husk;

And echoes barked among the hills and made
Repeated instants of the shot's distress.
then silence and the trampled bushes swayed;

Then silence, packed with murder and the press
Of distant hoofs that galloped riderless.

Madison Julius Cawein

The First Quarter

January

Shaggy with skins of frost-furred gray and drab,
Harsh, hoary hair framing a bitter face,
He bends above the dead Year's fireplace
Nursing the last few embers of its slab
To sullen glow: from pinched lips, cold and crab,
The starved flame shrinks; his breath, like a menace,
Shrieks in the flue, fluttering its sooty lace,
Piercing the silence like an icy stab.
From rheum-gnarled knees he rises, slow with cold,
And to the frost-bound window, muttering, goes,
With iron knuckles knocking on the pane;
And, lo! outside, his minions manifold
Answer the summons: wolf-like shapes of woes,
Hunger and suffering, trooping to his train.

II.

February

Gray-muffled to his eyes in rags of cloud,
His whip of winds forever in his hand,
Driving the herded storms along the land,
That shake the wild sleet from wild hair and crowd
Heaven with tumultuous bulks, he comes, lowbrowed
And heavy-eyed; the hail, like stinging sand,
Whirls white behind, swept backward by his band
Of wild-hoofed gales that o'er the world ring loud.
All day the tatters of his dark cloak stream
Congealing moisture, till in solid ice
The forests stand; and, clang on thunderous clang,
All night is heard, as in the moon's cold gleam
Tightens his grip of frost, his iron vise,
The boom of bursting boughs that icicles fang.

III.

March

This is the tomboy month of all the year,
March, who comes shouting o'er the winter hills,
Waking the world with laughter, as she wills,
Or wild halloos, a windflower in her ear.
She stops a moment by the half-thawed mere
And whistles to the wind, and straightway shrills
The hyla's song, and hoods of daffodils
Crowd golden 'round her, leaning their heads to hear.
Then through the woods, that drip with all their eaves,
Her mad hair blown about her, loud she goes
Singing and calling to the naked trees,
And straight the oilets of the little leaves
Open their eyes in wonder, rows on rows,
And the first bluebird bugles to the breeze.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Fool

Here is a tale for children and their grannies:
There was a fool, a man who'd had his chances
But missed them, somehow; lost them, just for fancies,
Tag-ends of things with which he'd crammed crannies
Of his cracked head, as panes are crammed with paper:
Fragments of song and bits of worthless writing,
Which he was never weary of reciting,
Fluttered his mind as night a windy taper.
A witless fool! who lived in some fair Venice
Of his own building where he dreamed of Beauty:
Who swore each weed a flower the sorry pauper!
This would not do. Men said he was a menace
To all mankind; and, as it was their duty,
Clapped him in prison where he died as proper.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Forest Of Fear

The cut-throat darkness hemmed me 'round:
I waited, helpless in its grasp.
The forest gave no sign or sound:
The wind was dead: no insect's rasp
I heard, nor water's gulp and gasp
Fitting its strength against a stone.
The only sound that there was made
Was my wild heart's that sobbed alone,
Knowing itself to be afraid
Of that vast wood where it had strayed.
I dared not move. There was no star
To indicate where God might be.
Night and his henchmen, without bar,
Had there assumed their empery.
Nothing but prayer was left to me.
Around me seemed to loom the dead
Of ages past, gaunt in the gloom.
And when I heard a stealthy tread
As of one groping from the tomb,
I braced myself to meet my doom.
And then I heard a breathing low
As of a beast that seeks its prey;
And then the footstep, soft and slow,
Approached again from far away.
I held my breath lest it betray
Me to some Death in monstrous guise?
With fang or talon, or a blade
Grasped in a hand of giant size?
Or was't a fiend? And then I prayed,
Who never yet had prayed, for aid.
I closed my eyes. My heart was still.
I did not look. I knew it stood
Glaring upon me all its fill.
When would it strike? The ancient wood
Seemed waiting eager for my blood.
I prayed and prayed. The something there
Stood waiting still a fiend from Hell
Gloating upon my soul's despair?
This was the end, I knew too well;

It pealed within me like a bell.
And then I thought, 'In spite of all,
It is but death. Earth can not go
Further than death, whate'er befall.
With open eyes I'll take the blow,
And face to face now meet my foe.'
'My foe?' Perhaps it was a friend.
What whim put in my heart that thought?
I had no friends. This was the end,
And I would face it: I was caught
In the old gin that sin had wrought.
And then I looked I looked to see
How could it be? serene of eye,
A little Child beneath a tree.
A Child that glimmered starrily;
A Christ-like Child not born to die.
And overhead I saw the night'
Had doffed its cowl of, black, and stood
Revealed in azure and in white,
While all the staring solitude
Looked on the round moon o'er the wood.
I called the Child. It smiling came;
Undid the bonds of my despair,
And led me forth. I said, 'Your name?'
It smiled and, gazing, answered, 'Prayer.'
And with that word went into air.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Forest Of Old Enchantment

Squaw-Berry, bramble, Solomon's-seal,
And rattlesnake-weed make wild the place:
You seem to feel that a Faun will steal
Or leap before your face. . . .
Is that the reel of a Satyr's heel,
Or the brook in its headlong race?
Yellow puccoon and the blue-eyed grass,
And briars a riot of bloom:
And now from the mass of that sassafras
What is it shakes perfume?
A Nymph, who has for her looking-glass
That pool in the mossy gloom?
Mile on mile of the trees and vines,
And rock and fern and root:
What is it pines where the wild-grape twines?
A dove? or Pan's own flute?
And there! what shines into rosy lines?
A flower? or Dryad's foot?
White-plantain, bluet, and, golden-clear,
The crowfoot's earth-bound star:
Now what draws near to the spirit ear?
A god? or a sunbeam-bar?
And what do we hear with a sense of fear?
Diana? or winds afar?
If we but thought as the old Greeks thought,
And knew what the ancients knew,
Then Beauty sought of the soul were caught
And breathed into being too:
And' out of naught were the real wrought,
And the dream of the world made true.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Forest Of Shadows

Deep in the hush of a mighty wood
I came to a place of dread and dream,
And forms of shadows, whose shapes elude
The searching swords of the sun's dim gleam,
Builders of silence and solitude.
And there where a glimmering water crept
From rock to rock with a slumberous sound,
Tired to tears, on the mossy ground,
Under a tree I lay and slept.
Was it the heart of an olden oak?
Was it the soul of a flower that died?
Or was it the wildrose there that spoke,
The wilding lily that palely sighed?
For all on a sudden it seemed I awoke:
And the leaves and the flowers were all intent
On a visible something of light and bloom
A presence, felt as a wild perfume
Or beautiful music, that came and went.
And all the grief, I had known, was gone;
And all the anguish of heart and soul;
And the burden of care that had made me wan
Lifted and left me strong and whole
As once in the flush of my youth's dead dawn.
And, lo! it was night. And the oval moon,
A silvery silence, paced the wood:
And there in its light like snow she stood,
As starry still as a star aswoon.
At first I thought that I looked into
A shadowy water of violet,
Where the faint reflection of one I knew,
Long dead, gazed up from its mirror wet,
Till she smiled in my face as the living do;
Till I felt her touch, and heard her say,
In a voice as still as a rose unfolds,
'You have come at last; and now nothing holds;
Give me your hand; let us wander away.
'Let us wander away through the Shadow Wood,
Through the Shadow Wood to the Shadow Land,
Where the trees have speech and the blossoms brood

Like visible music; and hand in hand
The winds and the waters go rainbow-hued:
Where ever the voice of beauty sighs;
And ever the dance of dreams goes on;
Where nothing grows old; and the dead and gone,
And the loved and lost, smile into your eyes.
'Let us wander away! let us wander away!
Do you hear them calling, 'Come here and live'?
Do you hear what the trees and the flowers say,
Wonderful, wild, and imperative,
Hushed as the hues of the dawn of day?
They say, 'Your life, that was rose and rue
In a world of shadows where all things die,
Where beauty is dust and love, a lie,
Is finished. Come here! we are waiting for you!'
And she took my hand: and the trees around
Seemed whispering something I dared not hear:
And the taciturn flowers, that strewed the ground,
Seemed thinking something I felt with fear,
A beautiful something that made no sound.
And she led me on through the forest old,
Where the moon and the midnight stood on guard,
Sentinel spirits that shimmered the sward,
Silver and sable and glimmering gold.
And then in an instant I knew. I knew
What the trees had whispered, the winds had said;
What the flowers had thought in their hearts of dew,
And the stars had syllabled overhead,
And she bent above me and smiled, 'T is true!
Heart of my heart, you have heard aright .
Look in my eyes and draw me near!
Look in my eyes and have no fear!
Heart of my heart, you died to-night!'

Madison Julius Cawein

The Forest Spring

Push back the brambles, berry-blue:
The hollowed spring is full in view:
Deep-tangled with luxuriant fern
Its rock-embedded, crystal urn.
Not for the loneliness that keeps
The coigne wherein its silence sleeps;
Not for wild butterflies that sway
Their pansy pinions all the day
Above its mirror; nor the bee,
Nor dragon-fly, that passing see
Themselves reflected in its spar;
Not for the one white liquid star,
That twinkles in its firmament;
Nor moon-shot clouds, so slowly sent
Athwart it when the kindly night
Beads all its grasses with the light
Small jewels of the dimpled dew;
Not for the day's inverted blue
Nor the quaint, dimly coloured stones
That dance within it where it moans:
Not for all these I love to sit
In silence and to gaze in it.
But, know, a nymph with merry eyes
Looks at me from its laughing skies;
A graceful glimmering nymph who plays
All the long fragrant summer days
With instant sights of bees and birds,
And speaks with them in water words,
And for whose nakedness the air
Weaves moony mists, and on whose hair,
Unfilleted, the night will set
That lone star as a coronet.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Forest Way

I

I climbed a forest path and found
A dim cave in the dripping ground,
Where dwelt the spirit of cool sound,
Who wrought with crystal triangles,
And hollowed foam of rippled bells,
A music of mysterious spells.

II

Where Sleep her bubble-jewels spilled
Of dreams; and Silence twilight-filled
Her emerald buckets, star-instilled,
With liquid whispers of lost springs,
And mossy tread of woodland things,
And drip of dew that greenly clings.

III

Here by those servitors of Sound,
Warders of that enchanted ground,
My soul and sense were seized and bound,
And, in a dungeon deep of trees
Entranced, were laid at lazy ease,
The charge of woodland mysteries.

IV

The minions of Prince Drowsihead,
The wood-perfumes, with sleepy tread,
Tiptoed around my ferny bed:
And far away I heard report
Of one who dimly rode to Court,
The Faery Princess, Eve-Amort.

V

Her herald winds sang as they passed;

And there her beauty stood at last,
With wild gold locks, a band held fast,
Above blue eyes, as clear as spar;
While from a curved and azure jar
She poured the white moon and a star.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Fountain Of Love

The source of laughter lies so near to tears,
And pain to rapture, that one fountain flows
From forth the two Love's; in whose deeps appears
The image of the Heaven each man knows.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Garden Of Dreams

Not while I live may I forget
That garden which my spirit trod!
Where dreams were flowers, wild and wet,
And beautiful as God.

Not while I breathe, awake, adream,
Shall live again for me those hours,
When, in its mystery and gleam,
I met her 'mid the flowers.

Eyes, talismanic heliotrope,
Beneath mesmeric lashes, where
The sorceries of love and hope
Had made a shining lair.

And daydawn brows, wherever hung
The twilight of dark locks: wild birds,
Her lips, that spoke the rose's tongue
Of fragrance-voweled words.

I will not tell of cheeks and chin,
That held me as sweet language holds;
Nor of the eloquence within
Her breasts' twin-mooned molds.

Nor of her body's languorous
Wind-grace, that glanced like starlight through
Her clinging robe's diaphanous
Web of the mist and dew.

There is no star so pure and high
As was her look; no fragrance such
As her soft presence; and no sigh
Of music like her touch.

Not while I live may I forget
That garden of dim dreams, where I
And Beauty born of Music met,
Whose spirit passed me by.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Ghost

There's a house across the street
That nobody goes into;
Say it's haunted, yes, they do;
Ghosts livethere, they say, or meet:
Saw one in a winding-sheet
At a window once, and took
To my heels and ran and ran,
Never gave another look,
Till I met a nigger-man.

And I told him. And he said,
'Dat ole house am ha'nted sure.
'Deed it wuz a ghost! a pure
Sure nuff ghost, I am afred.
Better run home; git ter bed;
Or he'll kotch yer. Lawzy me!
I won't pass dat house ter-night.
Onct I pass dar: whut'd I see?
Why, I seed a walking light.

'Yep; an' it went up an' down
Like a fire-bug. I wuz skeer'd
Wus'n you wuz. An' I heer'd
Chains a-trompin' all aroun':
An' I laid dar on de groun'
Skeer'd to def. An' den I seed
Whut'd yer reckon? seed my lands!
Seed a skel'ton! yarse indeed!
Hulding up two skel'ton hands.

'Den I run'd jest like you did.
Ought ter t'ar dat ole house down.
Hit's disgrace ter dis yere town
Dat's my sintimints an' rid
Us ob all de ghosts, instid
Ob a-letting 'em cavort
'Roun', an' skeer folks lef' an' right!
T'ing ter do would be ter start
Bonfire in it some dark night.'

Then he turned and went away.

And I hurried home and told
Father, and he said, 'That old
Negro-man has had his say;
Mine I'll have another day.
Come with me now. Let us see
If that ghost of yours now goes:
If it's a reality,
Or a fraud as I suppose.'

And he took his walking-stick,
And I followed. Sure enough,
At the window was that stuff,
Sheet, or piece of old bed-tick,
Waving in the wind. And quick
In my father went. And why,
Heard him laughing; and I saw
That he had the old ghost by
A long string that he could draw.

Was n't anything at all
But an old white window-blind,
That the folks had left behind,
In the window of the hall:
Had got loosened from the wall
And the wind kept flapping it.
I laughed, too; but was almost
Just put out a little bit
Wanted it to be a ghost.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Giant And The Star

Here's the tale my father told,
Walking in the park one night,
When the stars shone big and bright,
And the autumn wind blew cold:
Once a giant lived of old
In a far-off country, far
As the moon is, where one star,
Golden bright and fair of ray,
Lit the people on their way,
In the darkness gone astray.

And this star was beautiful
As a baby's eyes of blue,
And as bright as they are, too,
Brighter, father said. And who'll
Ever guess what happened? You'll
Wonder when I tell you that
This great, ugly giant sat
In his den, among the bones
Of dead pilgrims, luckless ones,
Throwing at this star big stones.

By his side a lion crouched,
A great cub, who helped him catch
Men and women; keeping watch
Night and day: the giant slouched
In or out the cave and pouched
Travelers. His club, a tree,
Knotted, flung across his knee.
So he lounged or sat, his eyes,
Red as flames, fixed on the skies,
Watching for that star to rise.

For, you see, he'd had no meat
For a week or two; the light
Of the star led people right;
He just gnashed his teeth and eat
Herbs; the lion at his feet
Huddled, mad with hunger, too;

Glaring, as all lions do,
Gaunt it crouched and whined and howled,
While the giant prowled and prowled,
Or sat sullen and just growled.

How he hated all mankind!
So he growled there all day long;
And his big voice, like a gong,
Made the mountain ring. And blind,
Like a bat, without a mind,
He could see no sense or use
In that star; so would abuse,
Curse it, all because its light,
Like a lamp, led pilgrims right,
And they were n't lost in night.

For, you see, the only food
Of this awful ogre was
Men and women; and because
They escaped him in the wood,
And it happened that he could
Never get enough to eat,
Waiting there for human meat,
Thus he thought, 'If it were out,
Then they'd come my way, no doubt,
Having night here all about.

'I'll just blow it out, ' he said,
And heaved up his bulky bones,
And went grumbling up the stones
To the very mountain's head,
Shaking with his mighty tread
All the crags and pines around.
Then he sat there on the ground
And began to blow and blow,
Till at last, oh slow, so slow!
Duller grew that star's bright glow.

Then the giant stopped a bit,
And drew in another breath:
Saying, 'This will be its death!'
Bulged his cheeks and blew at it,

Blew and blew and never quit
Till the star was blown quite out.
Then he rose and, with a shout,
Back into his den again
He went lumbering; the plain
Groaned; the mountain felt the strain.

In his cave he squatted, grim,
Humped and ugly, with his club
Flung across his knees; his cub,
Mountain lion, close to him,
Glaring; both its eyes a rim
Of green smoulder. And that night,
Sure enough, the giant was right:
Since the star no longer shone,
People lost their way alone,
And he captured many a one.

And they squatted in their den,
He and his big lion cub,
By his side his bloody club;
Squatted, snarling, crunching men
That night must have brought them ten.
And when all were eaten he,
The old giant, groaningly
Raised himself and went, I think,
To a stream to get a drink,
Foaming at the mountain's brink.

He had clean forgotten now
All about that star, you know,
That had lit the world below:
Now it was so dark, I vow,
He got lost too; don't know how;
Cursed himself and said, 'Odsblood!
I've got lost in this curst wood!
Wish I had a torch. No doubt
That old star threw light about.

Sorry now I blew it out!
Hardly had he spoken when
Crash he went, huge club and all,

Headlong o'er the mountain wall,
Where he'd thrown the bones of men,
Often, he had eaten. Then
How he bellowed! and the rocks
Echoed with loud breakbone knocks
As adown the mountain side
Sheer he plunged; limbs sprawling wide,
Fell and broke his neck and died.

And the next day, father said,
Came a hunter with a bow,
Found that lion-cub, you know,
Crouching near that giant's head;
With his bow he shot it dead.
And that night, as broad as day,
Pilgrims journeying their way,
Saw a light grow, bar on bar,
Lighting them the road afar.
God had lit another star.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Glory And The Dream

There in the past I see her as of old,
Blue-eyed and hazel-haired, within a room
Dim with a twilight of tenebrious gold;
Her white face sensuous as a delicate bloom
Night opens in the tropics. Fold on fold
Pale laces drape her; and a frail perfume,
As of a moonlit primrose brimmed with rain,
Breathes from her presence, drowsing heart and brain.

Her head is bent; some red carnations glow
Deep in her heavy hair; her large eyes gleam;
Bright sister stars of those twin worlds of snow,
Her breasts, through which the veined violets stream;
I hold her hand; her smile comes sweetly slow
As thoughts of love that haunt a poet's dream;
And at her feet once more I sit and hear
Wild words of passion-dead this many a year.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Glowworm

How long had I sat there and had not beheld
The gleam of the glow-worm till something compelled!...

The heaven was starless, the forest was deep,
And the vistas of darkness stretched silent in sleep.

And late 'mid the trees had I lingered until
No thing was awake but the lone whippoorwill.

And haunted of thoughts for an hour I sat
On a lichen-gray rock where the moss was a mat.

And thinking of one whom my heart had held dear,
Like terrible waters, a gathering fear.

Came stealing upon me with all the distress
Of loss and of yearning and powerlessness:

Till the hopes and the doubts and the sleepless unrest
That, swallow-like, built in the home of my breast,

Now hither, now thither, now heavenward flew,
Wild-winged as the winds are: now suddenly drew

My soul to abysses of nothingness where
All light was a shadow, all hope, a despair:

Where truth, that religion had set upon high,
The darkness distorted and changed to a lie:

And dreams of the beauty ambition had fed
Like leaves of the autumn fell blighted and dead.

And I rose with my burden of anguish and doom,
And cried, 'O my God, had I died in the womb!

'Than born into night, with no hope of the morn,
An heir unto shadows, to live so forlorn!

'All effort is vain; and the planet called Faith
Sinks down; and no power is real but death.

'Oh, light me a torch in the deepening dark
So my sick soul may follow, my sad heart may mark!'

And then in the darkness the answer!-It came
From Earth not from Heaven-a glimmering flame,

Behold, at my feet! In the shadow it shone
Mysteriously lovely and dimly alone:

An ember; a sparkle of dew and of glower;
Like the lamp that a spirit hangs under a flower:

As goldenly green as the phosphorus star
A fairy may wear in her diadem's bar:

An element essence of moonlight and dawn
That, trodden and trampled, burns on and burns on.

And hushed was my soul with the lesson of light
That God had revealed to me there in the night:

Though mortal its structure, material its form,
The spiritual message of worm unto worm.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Golden Hour I

She comes, the dreamy daughter
Of day and night, a girl,
Who o'er the western water
Lifts up her moon of pearl:
Like some Rebecca at the well,
Who fills her jar of crystal shell,
Down ways of dew, o'er dale and dell,
Dusk comes with dreams of you,
Of you,
Dusk comes with dreams of you.

II.

She comes, the serious sister
Of all the stars that strew
The deeps of God, and glister
Bright on the darkling blue:
Like some loved Ruth, who heaps her arm
With golden gleanings of the farm,
Down fields of stars, where shadows swarm,
Dusk comes with thoughts of you,
Of you,
Dusk comes with thoughts of you.

III.

She comes, and soft winds greet her,
And whispering odors woo;
She is the words and meter
They set their music to:
Like Israfel, a spirit fair,
Whose heart's a silvery dulcimer,
Down listening slopes of earth and air
Dusk comes with love of you,
Of you,
Dusk comes with love of you.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Goose

Here is a tale for spinsters at their sewing:
There was a goose, a little gosling surely,
Who went her goose-girl way and looked demurely
As every goose should when 'tis wise and knowing.
Proper was she as every gosling should be,
And innocent as Margarete or Gretchen,
And did her duty in the house and kitchen,
And like a goose was happy as she could be.
Smug was she with a sleek and dove-like dimple,
Great gooseberry eyes and cheeks out of the dairy:
A goose, aye, just a goose, a little dumb thing.
One day the goose was gone. The tale is simple.
She had eloped. 'Twas nothing ordinary.
A married man with children. That was something.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Grasshopper

The grasshopper, that sang its sleepy song
All summer long,
The orchard lands and harvest fields among,
Taking no heed of aught save its own joy,
Without alloy,
Cheering the ear with its 'Ahoy! ahoy!'
A merry note of summer's self a part,
Like my old heart,
Is silent now and cold; its singing done.
The grasshopper's a-cold and summer's gone,
And I'm alone.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Grasshopper I

What joy you take in making hotness hotter,
In emphasising dulness with your buzz,
Making monotony more monotonous!
When Summer comes, and drouth hath dried the water
In all the creeks, we hear your ragged rasp
Filling the stillness. Or, as urchins beat
A stagnant pond whereon the bubbles gasp,
Your switch-like music whips the midday heat.
O bur of sound caught in the Summer's hair,
We hear you everywhere!

We hear you in the vines and berry-brambles,
Along the unkempt lanes, among the weeds,
Amid the shadeless meadows, gray with seeds,
And by the wood 'round which the rail-fence rambles,
Sawing the sunlight with your sultry saw.
Or, like to tomboy truants, at their play
With noisy mirth among the barn's deep straw,
You sing away the careless summer-day.
O brier-like voice that clings in idleness
To Summer's drowsy dress!

You tramp of insects, vagrant and unheeding,
Improvident, who of the summer make
One long green mealtime, and for winter take
No care, aye singing or just merely feeding!
Happy-go-lucky vagabond, 'though frost
Shall pierce, ere long, your green coat or your brown,
And pinch your body, let no song be lost,
But as you lived into your grave go down
Like some small poet with his little rhyme,
Forgotten of all time.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Gray Sisters

What is that which walks by night
In flying tatters of leaves and weeds,
When the clouds rush by like daemon steeds,
And the moon is a jack-o'-lantern light
Low in the pool's dark reeds?
What is that, like a soul who sinned?
Is it a witch? or the Autumn wind?
What is that which sits and glowers
Under the trees by the forest pool?
With a cloak of moss whence the raindrops drule,
Chilling the air with a sense of showers
And touch of the cold toadstool:
What is that, with its breath of gloom?
Is it a witch? or the Fall perfume?
What is that in a mantle of gray,
With rags, like water, that wreathe and wind?
That gropes the forest, as if to find
A path, long-lost, on its midnight way,
Shadowy, old and blind:
What is that, so white and whist?
Is it a witch? or the Autumn mist?
You may have met them; you may have heard;
As I have heard them; as I have met:
The three gray sisters of wind and wet
Each With a spell or a cryptic word
Working her magic yet:
The three gray sisters, the witches old,
Daughters of Autumn, who haunt the wold.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Hamadryad

She stood among the longest ferns
The valley held; and in her hand
One blossom, like the light that burns
Vermilion o'er a sunset land;
And round her hair a twisted band
Of pink-pierced mountain-laurel blooms:
And darker than dark pools, that stand
Below the star-communing glooms,
Her eyes beneath her hair's perfumes.

I saw the moonbeam sandals on
Her flowerlike feet, that seemed too chaste
To tread true gold: and, like the dawn
On splendid peaks that lord a waste
Of solitude lost gods have graced,
Her face: she stood there, faultless-hipped,
Bound as with cestused silver, chased
With acorn-cup and crown, and tipped
With oak leaves, whence her chiton slipped.

Limbs that the gods call loveliness!
The grace and glory of all Greece
Wrought in one marble shape were less
Than her perfection! 'Mid the trees
I saw her and time seemed to cease
For me. And, lo! I lived my old
Greek life again of classic ease,
Barbarian as the myths that rolled
Me back into the Age of Gold.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Harvest Moon

Globed in Heav'n's tree of azure, golden mellow
As some round apple hung
High in hesperian boughs, thou hangest yellow
The branch-like mists among:
Within thy light a sunburnt youth, named Health,
Rests 'mid the tasseled shocks, the tawny stubble;
And by his side, clad on with rustic wealth
Of field and farm, beneath thy amber bubble,
A nut-brown maid, Content, sits smiling still:
While through the quiet trees,
The mossy rocks, the grassy hill,
Thy silvery spirit glides to yonder mill,
Around whose wheel the breeze
And shimmering ripples of the water play,
As, by their mother, little children may.

II

Sweet spirit of the moon, who walkest,-lifting
Exhaustless on thy arm,
A pearly vase of fire,-through the shifting
Cloud-halls of calm and storm,
Pour down thy blossoms! let me hear them come,
Pelting with noiseless light the twinkling thickets,
Making the darkness audible with the hum
Of many insect creatures, grigs and crickets:
Until it seems the elves hold revelries
By haunted stream and grove;
Or, in the night's deep peace,
The young-old presence of Earth's full increase
Seems telling thee her love,
Ere, lying down, she turns to rest, and smiles,
Hearing thy heart beat through the myriad miles.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Haunted Garden

THERE a tattered marigold
And dead asters manifold,
Showed him where the garden old
Of time bloomed:
Briar and thistle overgrew
Corners where the rose once blew,
Where the phlox of every hue
Lay entombed.
Here a coreopsis flower
Pushed its disc above a bower,
Where once poured a starry shower,
Bronze and gold:
And a twisted hollyhock,
And the remnant of a stock,
Struggled up, 'mid burr and dock,
Through the mold.
Flower-pots, with mossy cloak,
Strewed a place beneath an oak,
Where the garden-bench lay broke
By the tree:
And he thought of her, who here
Sat with him but yesteryear;
Her, whose presence now seemed near
Stealthily.
And the garden seemed to look
For her coming. Petals shook
On the spot where, with her book,
Oft she sat.—
Suddenly there blew a wind:
And across the garden blind,
Like a black thought in a mind,
Stole a cat.
Lean as hunger; like the shade
Of a dream; a ghost unlaid;
Through the weeds its way it made,
Gaunt and old:
Once 't was hers. He looked to see
If she followed to the tree.—
Then recalled how long since she

Had been mold.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Haunted House

I

The shadows sit and stand about its door
Like uninvited guests and poor;
And all the long, hot summer day
The grating locust dins its roundelay
In one old sycamore.
The squirrel leaves upon its rotting roof,
In empty hulls, its tracks;
And in its clapboard cracks
The spider weaves a windy woof;
Its cells the mud-wasp packs.
The she-fox whelps upon its floor;
The owlet roosts above its door;
And where the musty mosses run,
The freckled snake basks in the sun.

II

The children of what fathers sleep
Beneath these melancholy pines?
The slow slugs crawl among their graves where creep
The doddered poison-vines.
The orchard, near the meadow deep,
Lifts up decrepit arms,
Gray-lichened in a withering heap.
No sap swells up to make it leap
As once in calms and storms;
No blossom lulls its age asleep;
Each breeze brings sad alarms.
Big, bell-round pears and apples, russet-red,
No maiden gathers now;
The worm-bored trunks weep gum, like tears, instead,
From each decaying bough.

III

The woodlands around it are solitary
And fold it like gaunt hands;
The sunlight is sad and the moonlight is dreary,
And the hum of the country is weary, so weary!
And the bees go by in bands

To other lovelier lands.
The grasses are rotting in walk and in bower;
The lonesomeness,-dank and rank
As a chamber where lies for a lonely hour
An old-man's corpse with many a flower,-
Is hushed and blank.
And even the birds have passed it by,
To sing their songs to a happier sky,
A happier sky and bank.

IV

In its desolate halls are lying,
Gold, blood-red and browned,
Drifted leaves of summer dying;
And the winds, above them sighing,
Turn them round and round,
Make a ghostly sound
As of footsteps failing, flying,
Voices through the chambers crying,
Of the haunted house.

V

Gazing down in her white shroud,
Shroud of windy cloud,
Comes at night the phantom moon;
Comes and all the shadows soon,
Crowding in the rooms, arouse;
Shadows, ghosts, her rays lead on,
Till beneath the cloud
Like a ghost she's gone,
In her gusty shroud,
O'er the haunted house.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Heart O' Spring

Whiten, oh whiten, O clouds of lawn!
Lily-like clouds that whiten above,
Now like a dove, and now like a swan,
But never, oh never pass on! pass on!
Never so white as the throat of my love.

Blue-black night on the mountain peaks
Is not so black as the locks o' my love!
Stars that shine through the evening streaks
Over the torrent that flashes and breaks,
Are not so bright as the eyes o' my love!

Moon in a cloud, a cloud of snow,
Mist in the vale where the rivulet sounds,
Dropping from ledge to ledge below,
Turning to gold in the sunset's glow,
Are not so soft as her footstep sounds.

Sound o' May winds in the blossoming trees,
Is not so sweet as her laugh that rings;
Song o' wild birds on the morning breeze,
Birds and brooks and murmur o' bees,
Are harsh to her voice when she laughs or sings.

The rose of my heart is she, my dawn!
My star o' the east, my moon above!
My soul takes ship for the Avalon
Of her heart of hearts, and shall sail on
Till it anchors safe in its haven of love.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Heart's Desire

God made her body out of foam and flowers,
And for her hair the dawn and darkness blent;
Then called two planets from their heavenly towers,
And in her face, divinely eloquent,
Gave them a firmament.

God made her heart of rosy ice and fire,
Of snow and flame, that freezes while it burns;
And of a starbeam and a moth's desire
He made her soul, to'ards which my longing turns,
And all my being years.

So is my life a prisoner unto passion,
Enslaved of her who gives nor sign nor word;
So in the cage her loveliness doth fashion
Is love endungeoned, like a golden bird
That sings but is not heard.

Could it but once convince her with beseeching!
But once compel her as the sun the South!
Could it but once, fond arms around her reaching,
Upon the red carnation of her mouth
Dew its eternal drouth!

Then might I rise victorious over sadness,
O'er fate and change, and, with but little care,
Torched by the glory of that moment's gladness,
Breast the black mountain of my life's despair,
And die or do and dare.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Heart's Own Day

This is the heart's own day:
With dreaming eyes
Life seems to look away
Beyond the skies
Into some long-gone May.

A May that can not die;
Across whose hills
Youth's heart goes singing by,
'Mid daffodils,
With Love the young and shy.

Love of the slender form
And elvish face;
Who with uplifted arm
Points to one place
A place of oldtime charm.

Where once the lilies grew
For Love to twine,
With violets, white and blue,
And columbine,
Of gold and crimson hue.

Gone is the long-ago;
Gone like the wind;
And Love we used to know
Sits dumb and blind,
With locks of winter snow.

And by him Memory
Sits sketching back
Into the used-to-be,
In white and black,
One flower on his knee.

One rose, whose crimson gleams
Like Youth's glad heart,
And fills the day with dreams,

And is a part
Of the old love it seems.

That touches with the tints
Of Faeryland
This day; and makes a prince
Of Samarcand,
Of him, whose hand
Hers held in dreams long since.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Heaven-Born

Not into these dark cities,
These sordid marts and streets,
That the sun in his rising pities,
And the moon with sorrow greets,
Does she, with her dreams and flowers,
For whom our hearts are dumb,
Does she of the golden hours,
Earth's heaven-born Beauty, come.

Afar 'mid the hills she tarries,
Beyond the farthest streams,
In a world where music marries
With color that blooms and beams;
Where shadow and light are wedded,
Whose children people the Earth,
The fair, the fragrant-headed,
The pure, the wild of birth.

Where Morn with rosy kisses
Wakes ever the eyes of Day;
And, winds in her radiant tresses,
Haunts every wildwood way:
Where Eve, with her mouth's twin roses,
Her kisses sweet with balm,
The eyes of the glad Day closes,
And, crowned with stars, sits calm.

There, lost in contemplation
Of things no mortal sees,
She dwells, the incarnation
Of idealities;
Of dreams, that long have fired
Men's hearts with joy and pain,
The far, the dear-desired,
Whom no man shall attain.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Herb-Gatherer

A grey, bald hillside, bristling here and there
With leprous-looking grass, that, knobbed with stones,
Slopes to a valley where a wild stream moans,
And every bush seems tortured to despair
And shows its teeth of thorns as if to tear
All things to pieces: where the skull and bones
Of some dead beast protrude, like visible groans,
From one bleak place the winter rains washed bare.
Amid the desolation, in decay,
Like some half-rotted fungus, grey as slag,
A hut of lichened logs; and near it, old,
Unspeakably old, a man, the colour of clay,
Sorting damp roots and herbs into a bag
With trembling hands purple and stiff with cold.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Hills

There is no joy of earth that thrills
My bosom like the far-off hills!
Th' unchanging hills, that, shadowy,
Beckon our mutability
To follow and to gaze upon
Foundations of the dusk and dawn.
Meseems the very heavens are massed
Upon their shoulders, vague and vast
With all the skyey burden of
The winds and clouds and stars above.
Lo, how they sit before us, seeing
The laws that give all Beauty being!
Behold! to them, when dawn is near,
The nomads of the air appear,
Unfolding crimson camps of day
In brilliant bands; then march away;
And under burning battlements
Of twilight plant their tinted tents.
The truth of olden myths, that brood
By haunted stream and haunted wood,
They see; and feel the happiness
Of old at which we only guess:
The dreams, the ancients loved and knew,
Still as their rocks and trees are true:
Not otherwise than presences
The tempest and the calm to these:
One, shouting on them all the night;
Black-limbed and veined with lambent light;
The other with the ministry
Of all soft things that company
With music an embodied form,
Giving to solitude the charm
Of leaves and waters and the peace
Of bird-begotten melodies
And who at night cloth still confer
With the mild moon, that telleth her
Pale tale of lonely love, until
Wan images of passion fill
The heights with shapes that glimmer by

Clad on with sleep and memory.

Madison Julius Cawein

The House Of Life

They are the wise who look before,
Nor fear to look behind;
Who in the darkness still ignore
Pale shadows of the mind.

Who, having lost, though loss be much,
Still dare to dream and do:
For what was shattered at a touch
It may be mended, too.

The House of Life hath many a door
That leads to many a room;
And only they who look before
Shall win beyond its gloom.

Who stand and sigh and look behind,
Regretful of past years,
No room, of all those rooms, shall find
That is not filled with fears.

'T is better not to stop or stay;
But set all fear aside,
Fling wide the door, whate'er the way,
And enter at a stride.

Who dares, may win to his desire;
Or, failing, reach the tower,
Whereon Life lights the beacon-fire
Of one immortal hour.

Madison Julius Cawein

The House Of Moss

How fancy romped and played here,
Building this house of moss!
A faery house, the shade here
And sunlight gleam across;
And how it danced and swayed here,
A child with locks atoss!

I pause to gaze and ponder;
And, whisk! I seem to know
How, in that house and under,
The starry elf-lamps glow,
And pixy dances sunder
The hush when night falls slow.

Oh, that a witch had willed it
That those child-dreams come true!
With which the child-heart filled it
While 'neath glad hands it grew,
And, dim, amont, it builded
Far better than it knew.

For Middleage, that wandered
And found it hidden here,
And, pausing, gazed and pondered
Knowing a mystery near
A dream, its childhood squandered,
Or lost, gone many a year.

Had not Time so distorted
My vision, haply I
Had also viewed, wild-hearted,
Dreams which that child drew nigh,
And to the world imparted
Strange news none dare deny.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Hunter's Moon

Darkly October; Where the wild fowl fly,
Utters a harsh and melancholy cry;
And slowly closing, far a sunset door,
Day wildly glares world once more,
Where Twilight, with one star to lamp her by,
Walks with the Wind that haunts the hills and shore.

The Spirit of Autumn, with averted gaze,
Comes slowly down the ragged garden ways;
And where she walks she lays a finger cold
On rose and aster, lily and marigold,
And at her touch they turn, in mute amaze,
And bow their heads, assenting to the cold.

And all around rise phantoms of the flowers,
Scents, ghost-like, gliding from the dripping bowers;
And evermore vague, spectral voices ring
Of Something gone, or Something perishing:
Joy's requiem; hope's tolling of the Hours;
Love's dirge of dreams for Beauty sorrowing.

And now the moon above the garden side
Lifts a pale face and looks down misty-eyed,
As if she saw the ghost of yesteryear
That once with Happiness went wandering here
And the young Loveliness of days that died
Sitting with Memory 'mid the sad and sere.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Hushed House

I, who went at nightfall, came again at dawn;
On Love's door again I knocked. Love was gone.

He who oft had bade me in, now would bid no more;
Silence sat within his house; barred its door.

When the slow door opened wide through it I could see
How the emptiness within stared at me.

Through the dreary chambers, long I sought and sighed,
But no answering footstep came; naught replied.

Then at last I entered, dim, a darkened room:
There a taper glimmered gray in the gloom.

And I saw one lying crowned with helichrys;
Never saw I face as fair as was his.

Like a wintry lily was his brow in hue;
And his cheeks were each a rose, wintry too.

Then my soul remembered all that made us part,
And what I had laughed at once broke my heart.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Idyll Of The Standing Stone

The teasel and the horsemint spread
The hillside as with sunset, sown
With blossoms, o'er the Standing-Stone
That ripples in its rocky bed:
There are no treasures that hold
Gold richer than the marigold
That crowns its sparkling head.

'Tis harvest time: a mower stands
Among the morning wheat and whets
His scythe, and for a space forgets
The labor of the ripening lands;
Then bends, and through the dewy grain
His long scythe hisses, and again
He swings it in his hands.

And she beholds him where he mows
On acres whence the water sends
Faint music of reflecting bends
And falls that interblend with flows:
She stands among the old bee-gums,-
Where all the apiary hums,-
A simple bramble-rose.

She hears him whistling as he leans,
And, reaping, sweeps the ripe wheat by;
She sighs and smiles, and knows not why,
Nor what her heart's disturbance means:
He whets his scythe, and, resting, sees
Her rose-like 'mid the hives of bees,
Beneath the flowering beans.

The peacock-purple lizard creeps
Along the rail; and deep the drone
Of insects makes the country lone
With summer where the water sleeps:
She hears him singing as he swings
His scythe-who thinks of other things
Than toil, and, singing, reaps.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Image In The Glass

The slow reflection of a woman's face
Grew, as by witchcraft, in the oval space
Of that strange glass on which the moon looked in:
As cruel as death beneath the auburn hair
The dark eyes burned; and, o'er the faultless chin,
Evil as night yet as the daybreak fair,
Rose-red and sensual smiled the mouth of sin.

II.

The glorious throat and shoulders and, twin crests
Of snow, the splendid beauty of the breasts,
Filled soul and body with the old desire
Daughter of darkness! how could this thing be?
You, whom I loathed! for whom my heart's fierce fire
Had burnt to ashes of satiety!
You, who had sunk my soul in all that's dire!

III.

How came your image there? and in that room!
Where she, the all adored, my life's sweet bloom,
Died poisoned! She, my scarcely one week's bride
Yea, poisoned by a gift you sent to her,
Thinking her death would win me to your side.
And so it did! but... well, it made some stir
By your own hand, I think, they said you died.

IV.

Time passed. And then was it the curse of crime,
That night of nights, which forced my feet to climb
To that locked bridal-room? 'T was midnight when
A longing, like to madness, mastered me,
Compelled me to that chamber, which for ten
Sad years was sealed; a dark necessity
To gaze upon I knew not what again.

V.

Love's ghost, perhaps. Or, in the curvature
Of that strange mirror, something that might cure
The ache in me some message, said perchance
Of her dead loveliness, which once it glassed,
That might repeat again my lost romance
In momentary pictures of the past,
While in its depths her image swam in trance.

VI.

I did not dream to see the soulless eyes
Of you I hated; nor the lips where lies
And kisses curled; your features, that were tuned
To all demonic, smiling up as might
Some deep damnation! while... my God! I swooned!.
Oozed slowly out, between the breast's dead white,
The ghastly red of that wide dagger-wound.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Infanticide

She took her babe, the child of shame and sin,
And wrapped it warmly in her shawl and went
From house to house for work. Propriety bent
A look of wonder on her; raised a din
Of Christian outrage. None would take her in.
All that she had was gone; had long been spent.
Penniless and hungry by the road she leant,
No friend to go to and no one of kin.
The babe at last began to cry for food.
Her breasts were dry; she had no milk to give.
She was so tired and cold. What could she do?
... The next day in a pool within a wood
They found the babe.... 'Twas hard enough to live,
She found, for one; impossible for two.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Intruder

THERE is a smell of roses in the room
Tea-roses, dead of bloom;
An invalid, she sits there in the gloom,
And contemplates her doom.
The pattern of the paper, and the grain
Of carpet, with its stain,
Have stamped themselves, like fever, on her brain,
And grown a part of pain.
It has been long, so long, since that one died,
Or sat there by her side;
She felt so lonely, lost, she would have cried,—
But all her tears were dried.
A knock came on the door: she hardly heard;
And then — a whispered word,
And someone entered; at which, like a bird,
Her caged heart cried and stirred.
And then — she heard a voice; she was not wrong:
His voice, alive and strong:
She listened, while the silence filled with song —
Oh, she had waited long!
She dared not turn to see; she dared not look;
But slowly closed her book,
And waited for his kiss; could scarcely brook
The weary time he took.
There was no one remembered her — no one!
But him, beneath the sun.—
Who then had entered? entered but to shun
Her whose long work was done.
She raised her eyes, and — no one! — Yet she felt
A presence near, that smelt
Like faded roses; and that seemed to melt
Into her soul that knelt.
She could not see, but knew that he was there,
Smoothing her hands and hair;
Filling with scents of roses all the air,
Standing beside her chair.
And so they found her, sitting quietly,
Her book upon her knee,
Staring before her, as if she could see —

What was it — Death? or he?

Madison Julius Cawein

The Iron Age

And these are Christians! God! the horror of it!
How long, O Lord! how long, O Lord! how long
Wilt Thou endure this crime? and there, above it,
Look down on Earth nor sweep away the wrong!
Are these Thy teachings? Where is then that pity,
Which bade the weary, suffering come to Thee?
War takes its toll of life in field and City,
And Thou must see! O Christianity!
And then the children! Oh, Thou art another!
Not God! but Fiend, whom God has given release!
Will prayer avail naught? tears of father, mother?
To give at last the weary world surcease
From butchery? that back again hath brought her
Into that age barbarian that priced
Hate above Love; and, shod with steel and slaughter,
Stamped on the Cross and on the face of Christ.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Iron Crag

UPON the iron crags of War I heard his terrible daughters
In battle speak while at their feet,
In gulfs of human waters,
A voice, intoning, 'Where is God?' in ceaseless sorrow beat:
And to my heart, in doubt, I said,
'God? — God's above the storm!
O heart, be brave, be comforted,
And keep your hearth-stone warm
For her who breasts the storm —
God's Peace, the fair of form.'
I heard the Battle Angels cry above the slain's red mountains,
While from their wings the lightnings hurled
Of Death's destroying fountains,
And thunder of their revels rolled around the ruined world:
Still to my heart, in fear, I cried,
'God? — God is watching there!
My heart,— oh, keep the doorway wide
Here in your House of Care,
For her who wanders there,
God's Peace, with happy hair.'
The darkness and the battle passed: and rushing on wild pinions
The hosts of Havoc shrieked their hate
And fled to Hell's dominions,—
And, lo! I heard, out in the night, a knocking at the gate:
And one who cried aloud to me:—
'The night and storm are gone!
Oh, open wide the door and see
Who waits here in the dawn! —
Peace, with God's splendor on
Back to the sad world drawn!'

Madison Julius Cawein

The Iron Cross

THEY pass, with heavy eyes and hair,
Before the Christ upon the Cross,
The Nations, stricken with their loss,
And lifting faces of despair.
What is the prayer they pray to Him,
Christ Jesus on the Iron Cross?
The Christ, neglected, dark with moss,
Whose hands are pierced, whose face is grim.
Is it forgiveness for great sin
They plead before the Iron Cross?
Or for some gift of gold or dross?
Or battle lost, that they would win?
With eyes where hate and horror meet,
They pass before the Iron Cross,
The Cross, that ancient words emboss,
Where hangs the Christ with nail-pierced feet.
His hair is fallen on his face.
His head hangs sidewise from the Cross —
The Crucified, who knows all loss,
And had on Earth no resting place.
'O world of men,' he seems to say,
'Behold me on your Iron Cross!
To me why kneel and tell your loss?
Why kneel to me and weep and pray?
'Have I not taught you to forgive?
And bade you from my Iron Cross
Believe, and bear your grief and loss,
That after death you too may live?
'You have not followed at my call!
You keep me on this Iron Cross,
And pray me keep you from all loss,
And save and comfort you withal.—
'You ask for love, and hate the more! —
You keep me on this Iron Cross!—
Restore to me my greater loss,
The brotherhood of rich and poor.'
They pass, with weary eyes and hair,
Before the Christ upon the Cross —
The Nations, wailing of their loss,

And lifting faces of despair.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Jack-O'-Lantern

Last night it was Hallowe'en.
Darkest night I've ever seen.
And the boy next door, I thought,
Would be glad to know of this
Jack-o'-lantern father brought
Home from Indianapolis.
And he was glad. Borrowed it.
Put a candle in and lit;
Hid among the weeds out there
In the side lot near the street.
I could see it, eyes aglare,
Mouth and nose red slits of heat.
My! but it looked scary! He
Perched an old hat on it, see?
Like some hat a scarecrow has,
Battered, tattered all around;
And he fanned long arms of grass
Up and down above the ground.
First an Irish woman, shawled,
With a basket, saw it; bawled
For her Saints and wept and cried,
'Is it you, Pat? Och! I knew
He would git you whin you died!
'Faith! there's little change in you!'
Then the candle sputtered, flared,
And went out; and on she fared,
Muttering to herself. When lit,
No one came for longest while.
Then a man passed; looked at it;
On his face a knowing smile.
Then it scared a colored girl
Into fits. She gave a whirl
And a scream and ran and ran
Thought Old Nick had hold her skin;
And she ran into a man,
P'liceman, and he run her in.
But what pleased me most was that
It made one boy lose his hat;
A big fool who thinks he's smart,

Brag about the boys he beat:
Knew he'd run right from the start:
Biggest coward on the street.
Then a crowd of girls and boys
Gathered with a lot of noise.
When they saw the lantern, well!
They just took a hand: they thought
That they had him when he fell;
But he turned on them and fought.
He just took that lantern's stick,
Laid about him hard and quick,
And they yelled and ran away.
Then he brought me all he had
Of my lantern. And, I say,
Could have cried I was so mad.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Jongleur

Last night I lay awake and heard the wind,
That madman jongleur of the world of air,
Making wild music: now he seemed to fare
With harp and lute, so intimately twinned
They were as one; now on a drum he dinned,
Now on a tabor; now, with blow and blare
Of sackbut and recorder, everywhere
Shattered the night; then on a sudden thinned
To bagpipe wailings as of maniac grief
That whined itself to sleep. And then, meseemed,
Out in the darkness, mediæval-dim,
I saw him dancing, like an autumn leaf,
In tattered tunic, while around him streamed
His lute's wild ribbons 'thwart the moon's low rim.

Madison Julius Cawein

The 'Kentucky'

Here's to her who bears the name
Of our State;
May the glory of her fame
Be as great!
In the battle's dread eclipse,
When she opens iron lips,
When our ships confront the ships
Of the foe,
May each word of steel she utters carry woe!
Here's to her!

II

Here's to her, who, like a knight
Mailed of old,
From far sea to sea the Right
Shall uphold.
May she always deal defeat,
When contending navies meet,
And the battle's screaming sleet
Blinds and stuns,
With the red, terrific thunder of her guns.
Here's to her!

III

Here's to her who bears the name
Of our State;
May the glory of her fame
Be as great!
Like a beacon, like a star,
May she lead our squadrons far,
When the hurricane of war
Shakes the world,
With her pennant in the vanward broad unfurled.

Here's to her!

Madison Julius Cawein

The Lamp At The Window

Like some gaunt ghost the tempest wails
Outside my door; its icy nails
Beat on the pane: and Night and Storm
Around the house, with furious flails
Of wind, from which the slant sleet hails,
Stalk up and down; or, arm in arm,
Stand giant guard; the wild-beast lair
Of their fierce bosoms black and bare.
My lamp is lit, I have no fear.
Through night and storm my love draws near.
Now through the forest how they go,
With whirlwind hoofs and manes of snow,
The beasts of tempest, Winter herds!
That lift huge heads of mist and low
Like oxen; beasts of air that blow
Ice from their nostrils; winged like birds,
And bullock-breasted, onward hurled,
That shake with tumult all the world.
My lamp is set where love can see,
Who through the tempest comes to me.
I press my face against the pane,
And seem to see, from wood and plain,
In phantom thousands, stormy pale,
The ghosts of forests, tempest-slain,
Vast wraiths of woodlands, rise and strain
And rock wild limbs against the gale;
Or, borne in fragments overhead,
Sow night with horror and with dread.
He comes! my light is as an arm
To guide him onward through the storm.
I hear the tempest from the sky
Cry, eagle-like, its battle-cry;
I hear the night, upon the peaks,
Send back its condor-like reply;
And then again come booming by
The forest's challenge, hoarse as speaks
Hate unto hate, or wrath to wrath,
When each draws sword and sweeps the path.
But let them rage! through darkness far

My bright light leads him like a star.
The cliffs, with all their plumes of pines,
Bow down high heads: the battle-lines
Of all the hills, that iron seams,
Shudder through all their rocky spines:
And under shields of matted vines
The vales crouch down: and all the streams
Are hushed and frozen as with fear
As from the deeps the winds draw near.
But let them come! my lamp is lit!
Nor shall their fury flutter it.
Now 'round and 'round, with stride on stride,
In Boreal armor, darkness-dyed,
I hear the thunder of their strokes
The heavens are rocked on every side
With all their clouds: and far and wide
The earth roars back with all its oaks.
Still at the pane burns bright my light
To guide him onward through the night;
To lead love through the night and storm
Where my young heart shall make him warm.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Lamplight Camp

Whenever on the windowpane
I hear the fingers of the rain,
And in the old trees, near the door,
The wind that whispers more and more,
Bright in the light made by the lamp
I make myself a hunter's camp.

The shadows of the desk and chairs
Are trees and woods; the corners, lairs
Where wolves and wildcats lie in wait
For any one who walks too late;
Upon my knees with my toy-gun
I hunt and slaughter many a one.

And now I rescue Riding Hood
From the great Wolf within the wood;
Now little Silver Locks, who flies
From the Three Bears with angry eyes;
And many a little girl who dwells
In story books, as mother tells.

So up and down and all around
My wildwood camp I prowl or bound,
From corner unto corner till
I reach the door and windowsill,
Where Jack-o'-Lantern hides, I know,
Outside the lamplight's steady glow.

And he, the goblin-fiend, my nurse
Once scared me with, when I was worse
Than naughty; would not go to sleep,
But keep awake; and cry and creep
Out of my bed, the goblin black,
The foul fiend, Flibberty-Jibberty Jack.

And when I think perhaps that these
May catch me, on my father's knees
I climb and listen to the rain
And wind outside the windowpane,

And feel so safe with him that I
Go right to sleep, and never cry.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Land Of Candy

There was once a little boy —
So my father told me — who
Never cared for any toy,
But just sweet things, as boys do,
Cakes and comfits, cream and ice,
All the things that boys think nice,
That they like, but ought not to;
Doctors say so, more or less,
And their parents, too, I guess:
But they don't know everything. —
Boys know something, too, by jing.

II

Well, this little boy he cried
Day and night for sweet things; ate
Cake and candy soon and late —
That is, if they did n't hide
All such things in some good place
Where he could n't find them. So,
One day, when they did n't know,
In the park he met a man, —
Funniest man you ever saw, —
In a suit of red and tan,
Thin, and straighter than a straw,
Like a stick of candy; and
This old man just took his hand,
Led him off to Candyland.

III

First place that they came to, why,
Was a wood that reached the sky;
Forest of Stick Candy. My!
How the little boy made it fly!
Why, the tree trunks were as great,
Big around as, at our gate,
Are the sycamores; the whole
Stripéd like a barber's pole:

And the ground was strewn and strown
With the pieces winds had blown
From the branches: and as fast
As one fell another grew
In its place; and, through and through,
Each was better than the last.

IV

After this they came into
A great grove of Sugar-Plums,
And an orchard, such as few
Ever saw, of Creams and Gums,
Marshmallow and Chocolate,
Where the boy just ate and ate
Till he was brimful and felt
As, I guess, a turkey feels
On Thanksgiving; to its belt
Stuffed with chestnuts. And the seals
At the circus, that I saw,
Looked just like that boy, I know,
When he'd eaten bushels —pshaw!
Loads of all that candy. Oh!
He just lay down there and sighed
When he couldn't eat no more,
Though he'd eaten more than four
Boys could eat, yes, twenty-four,
And he just lay there and cried,
Cried to eat more. And the man,
The Stick-Candy Man, he said
Never a word; just smiled instead
Sweet as any candy can.

V

When they'd rested there awhile,
That old man with his sweet smile
Took him by the hand and said,
'Don't you think it's time for bed?'
But the boy he shook his head:
'I want cakes and ice cream now;
Then I'll go and not before.' —

Wish that I could show you how
Sweet that old man smiled then! Sweet? —
It was just like honeyed heat
Trickling down from head to feet,
Or just like a candy store
Flung right at you. But the boy,
At that smile, felt no great joy,
But as if he'd eaten more
Than he ought to. 'I feel ill,'
Said he. 'If I had a drink
I'd feel better. — Say, I think
I smell water. What's that hill?
Is it snow?' — The old man smiled,
Smiled that smile again, and, quick, —
For it made him feel so sick, —
From him turned the boy; and, — 'Child,'
Like some melting sugar-stick,
Drooled the old man, 'I'll be bent,
Or be eaten, it's not snow:
But to me it's evident,
If you really want to know,
That hill's ice-cream. Feel the chill
On my neck now....If you will
We will go there.' — And they went:
Found a stranger country still,
Filled with greater wonderment.

VI

The very ground was sugar there;
And all around them, everywhere,
Great cakes grew up like mushrooms; some
No bigger than a baby's thumb,
And others huge as hats they wear
In picture books of pirate kings:
And some were jelly-cakes; great rings
Of reddest jelly; macaroons
And sponge-cakes like enormous moons:
And every kind of cake there is
Just overrun the premises.
And in the middle of the land
A mountain, they had seen afar,
Of Ice-Cream towered white and grand;

Such mountains as there only are
In Candyland. And from it fell
Two fountains: one of Lemonade,
The other Sodawater. — Well,
The little boy just took a spade
And dug into that mountainside
And ate and ate, and cried and cried,
Because he could n't eat it all,
Nor all the cakes that grew around,
Like mushrooms, from the sugary ground;
Nor drink up every waterfall
Of Soda and of Lemonade. —
(I wish that I'd been there to aid!
Don't you? I know I'd done my best. —
And father said he knew, or guessed,
That that old man felt sorry, too,
Because the boy just had to rest.
And I felt sorry. Would n't you?)

VII

And that big hill would never melt:
Just stayed the same. No sooner than
One took a spoonful it began
To grow back in its place. One dealt
It out in shovelfuls still
There was no less in that huge hill.
And fast — yes, faster than one knew,
The mushroom-cakes around you grew;
Wherever one was taken, why,
Up came another, better by
A long ways: and it were no use
To try to drink the fountains dry:
They ran the more; a perfect sluice,
My father said, that played the deuce
With any little boy that'd try.

VIII

So in that land a long, long time,
At least a month, he stayed. Each day
Was like the other. — (Sometime I'm

A-going to Candyland and stay
A year, or longer; yes, you bet!
No matter what my parents say.) —
What happened next? — why, I forget.
But one day in the Orchard where
Cream Candies grew —or was it in
The Woods of Candystick? or there
Where brown the Sugarlands begin
Of Mushroom-cakes? — the old man found
The boy flat, lying on the ground,
The sugar-earth kicked up around,
And cakes and cream knocked all about
And broken into bits, and he
Just crying fit to kill; all out,
And sick of everything, you see.
And when the old man smiled and smiled
That smile again, the boy went wild,
And shook his fist right in his face
And shrieked out at him, 'You Disgrace!
Get out! You make me sick!' — A stone
(You see rock-candy strewed the place
Just like the stones that strew our own)
He picked and aimed and would have thrown
And knocked the old man's head right off,
Had he not stopped him, with a cough,
Saying, 'My boy! why, this won't do!
What ails you, eh?' — The boy said, 'You! —
Don't smile at me! — I'll break your head!
You sugar-coated pill! with this! —
I'm sick of sweets and you,' he said,
'Your face so like a candy-kiss? —
What ails me? — Eggs! and bacon! bread!
And milk and toast and chicken-wings,
One never has here! things they fed
Me on at home! those are the things! —
Take me back home where I can eat
The things I never wanted once —
But now I want them! bread and meat! —
Oh, was n't I an awful dunce! —
Now, you old sinner, take me back! ' —
And with those words the old man's face
Fell in a frown that seemed to crack

It all to pieces. All grew black
About the little boy a space;
But when it lightened up once more
Why, there! he was n't any place
But right in front of their big door —
His home. —I say! my! he was glad;
And hurried in, a different lad
From him who had gone out. — And he,
From that time on, took toast and tea,
And milk and eggs, and never teased,
As once he used to tease, for cakes
And candy and such things! — My sakes!
But were n't both his parents pleased!

Madison Julius Cawein

The Land Of Hearts Made Whole

Do you know the way that goes
Over fields of rue and rose,
Warm of scent and hot of hue,
Roofed with heaven's bluest blue,
To the Vale of Dreams Come True?

Do you know the path that twines,
Banked with elder-bosks and vines,
Under boughs that shade a stream,
Hurrying, crystal as a gleam,
To the Hills of Love a-Dream?

Tell me, tell me, have you gone
Through the fields and woods of dawn,
Meadowlands and trees that roll,
Great of grass and huge of bole,
To the Land of Hearts Made Whole?

On the way, among the fields,
Poppies lift vermilion shields,
In whose hearts the golden Noon,
Murmuring her drowsy tune,
Rocks the sleepy bees that croon.

On the way, amid the woods,
Mandrakes muster multitudes,
'Mid whose blossoms, white as tusk,
Glides the glimmering Forest-Dusk,
With her fluttering moths of musk.

Here you hear the stealthy stir
Of shy lives of hoof and fur;
Harmless things that hide and peer,
Hearts that sucked the milk of fear
Fox and rabbit, squirrel and deer.

Here you see the mossy flight
Of faint forms that love the night
Whippoorwill and owlet-things,

Whose far call before you brings
Wonder-worlds of happenings.

Now in sunlight, now in shade,
Water, like a brandished blade,
Foaming forward, wild of flight,
Startles then arrests the sight,
Whirling steely loops of light.

Thro' the tree-tops, down the vale,
Breezes pass and leave a trail
Of cool music that the birds,
Following in happy herds,
Gather up in twittering words.

Blossoms, frail and manifold,
Strew the way with pearl and gold;
Blurs, that seem the darling print
Of the Springtime's feet, or glint
Of her twinkling gown's torn tint.

There the myths of old endure:
Dreams that are the world-soul's cure;
Things that have no place or play
In the facts of Everyday
'Round your presence smile and sway.

Suddenly your eyes may see,
Stepping softly from her tree,
Slim of form and wet with dew,
The brown dryad; lips the hue
Of a berry bit into.

You may mark the naiad rise
From her pool's reflected skies;
In her gaze the heaven that dreams,
Starred, in twilight-haunted streams,
Mixed with water's grayer gleams.

You may see the laurel's girth,
Big of bloom, give fragrant birth
To the oread whose hair,

Musk and darkness, light and air,
Fills the hush with wonder there.

You may mark the rocks divide,
And the faun before you glide,
Piping on a magic reed,
Sowing many a music seed,
From which bloom and mushroom bead.

Of the rain and sunlight born,
Young of beard and young of horn,
You may see the satyr lie,
With a very knowing eye,
Teaching youngling birds to fly.

These shall cheer and follow you
Through the Vale of Dreams Come True;
Wind-like voices, leaf-like feet;
Forms of mist and hazy heat,
In whose pulses sunbeams beat.

Lo! you tread enchanted ground!
From the hollows all around
Elf and spirit, gnome and fay,
Guide your feet along the way
Till the dewy close of day.

Then beside you, jet on jet,
Emerald-hued or violet,
Flickering swings a firefly light,
Aye to guide your steps a-right
From the valley to the height.

Steep the way is; when at last
Vale and wood and stream are passed,
From the heights you shall behold
Panther heavens of spotted gold
Tiger-tawny deeps unfold.

You shall see on stocks and stones
Sunset's bell-deep color tones
Fallen; and the valleys filled

With dusk's purple music, spilled
On the silence rapture-thrilled.

Then, as answering bell greets bell,
Night ring in her miracle
Of the doméd dark, o'er-rolled,
Note on note, with starlight cold,
'Twixt the moon's broad peal of gold.

On the hill-top Love-a-Dream
Shows you then her window-gleam;
Brings you home and folds your soul
In the peace of vale and knoll,
In the Land of Hearts Made Whole.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Land Of Illusion

So we had come at last, my soul and I,
Into that land of shadowy plain and peak,
On which the dawn seemed ever about to break
On which the day seemed ever about to die.

II

Long had we sought fulfillment of our dreams,
The everlasting wells of Joy and Youth;
Long had we sought the snow-white flow'r of Truth,
That blooms eternal by eternal streams.

III

And, fonder still, we hoped to find the sweet
Immortal presence, Love; the bird Delight
Beside her; and, eyed with sidereal night,
Faith, like a lion, fawning at her feet.

IV

But, scorched and barren, in its arid well,
We found our dreams' forgotten fountain-head;
And by black, bitter waters, crushed and dead,
Among wild weeds, Truth's trampled asphodel.

V

And side by side with pallid Doubt and Pain,
Not Love, but Grief did meet us there: afar
We saw her, like a melancholy star,

Or pensive moon, move towards us o'er the plain.

VI

Sweet was her face as song that sings of home;
And filled our hearts with vague, suggestive spells
Of pathos, as sad ocean fills its shells
With sympathetic moanings of its foam.

VII

She raised one hand and pointed silently,
Then passed; her eyes, gaunt with a thirst unslaked,
Were worlds of woe, where tears in torrents ached,
Yet never fell. And like a winter sea,-

VIII

Whose caverned crags are haunts of wreck and wrath,
That house the condor pinions of the storm,-
My soul replied; and, weeping, arm in arm,
To'ards those dim hills, by that appointed path,

IX

We turned and went. Arrived, we did discern
How Beauty beckoned, white 'mid miles of flowers,
Through which, behold, the amaranthine Hours
Like maidens went each holding up an urn;

X

Wherein, it seemed-drained from long chalices
Of those slim flow'rs-they bore mysterious wine;
A popped vintage, full of sleep divine
And pale forgetting of all miseries.

XI

Then to my soul I said, 'No longer weep.
Come, let us drink; for hateful is the sky,
And earth is full of care, and life's a lie.
So let us drink; yea, let us drink and sleep.'

XII

Then from their brimming urns we drank sweet must,
While, all around us, rose-crowned faces laughed
Into our eyes; but hardly had we quaffed
When, one by one, these crumbled into dust.

XIII

And league on league the eminence of blooms,
That flashed and billowed like a summer sea,
Rolled out a waste of thorns and tombs; where bee
And butterfly and bird hung dead in looms

XIV

Of worm and spider. And through tomb and brier,
A thin wind, parched with thirsty dust and sand,
Went wailing as if mourning some lost land
Of perished empire, Babylon or Tyre.

XV

Long, long with blistered feet we wandered in
That land of ruins, through whose sky of brass
Hate's Harpy shrieked; and in whose iron grass
The Hydra hissed of undestroyable Sin.

XVI

And there at last, behold, the House of Doom,-
Red, as if Hell had glared it into life,
Blood-red, and howling with incessant strife,-
With burning battlements, towered in the gloom.

XVII

And throned within sat Darkness.-Who might gaze
Upon that form, that threatening presence there,
Crowned with the flickering corpse-lights of Despair,
And yet escape sans madness and amaze?

XVIII

And we had hoped to find among these hills
The House of Beauty!-Curst, yea, thrice accurst,
The hope that lures one on from last to first
With vain illusions that no time fulfills!

XIX

Why will we struggle to attain, and strive,
When all we gain is but an empty dream?-
Better, unto my thinking, doth it seem

To end it all and let who will survive;

XX

To find at last all beauty is but dust;
That love and sorrow are the very same;
That joy is only suffering's sweeter name;
And sense is but the synonym of lust.

XXI

Far better, yea, to me it seems to die;
To set glad lips against the lips of Death-
The only thing God gives that comforteth,
The only thing we do not find a lie.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Last Song

She sleeps; he sings to her. The day was long,
And, tired out with too much happiness,
She fain would have him sing of old Provence;
Quaint songs, that spoke of love in such soft tones,
Her restless soul was straight besieged of dreams,
And her wild heart beleagured of deep peace,
And heart and soul surrendered unto sleep.
Like perfect sculpture in the moon she lies,
Its pallor on her through heraldic panes
Of one tall casement's gulèd quarterings.
Beside her couch, an antique table, weighed
With gold and crystal; here, a carven chair,
Whereon her raiment,-that suggests sweet curves
Of shapely beauty,-bearing her limbs' impress,
Is richly laid: and, near the chair, a glass,
An oval mirror framed in ebony:
And, dim and deep,-investing all the room
With ghostly life of woven women and men,
And strange fantastic gloom, where shadows live,
Dark tapestry,-which in the gusts-that twinge
A grotesque cresset's slender star of light
Seems moved of cautious hands, assassin-like,
That wait the hour.
She alone, deep-haired
As rosy dawn, and whiter than a rose,
Divinely breasted as the Queen of Love,
Lies robeless in the glimmer of the moon,
Like Danaë within the golden shower.
Seated beside her aromatic rest,
In rapture musing on her loveliness,
Her knight and troubadour. A lute, aslope
The curious baldric of his tunic, glints
With pearl-reflections of the moon, that seem
The silent ghosts of long-dead melodies.
In purple and sable, slashed with solemn gold,
Like stately twilight o'er the snow-heaped hills,
He bends above her.
Have his hands forgot
Their craft, that they pause, idle on the strings?

His lips, their art, that they cease, speechless there?
His eyes are set.... What is it stills to stone
His hands, his lips? and mails him, head and heel,
In terrible marble, motionless and cold?
Behind the arras, can it be he feels,
Black-browed and grim, with eyes of sombre fire,
Death towers above him with uplifted sword?

Madison Julius Cawein

The Leaf-Cricket

I

Small twilight singer
Of dew and mist: thou ghost-gray, gossamer winger
Of dusk's dim glimmer,
How chill thy note sounds; how thy wings of shimmer
Vibrate, soft-sighing,
Meseems, for Summer that is dead or dying.
I stand and listen,
And at thy song the garden-beds, that glisten
With rose and lily,
Seem touched with sadness; and the tuberose chilly,
Breathing around its cold and colorless breath,
Fills the pale evening with wan hints of death.

II

I see thee quaintly
Beneath the leaf; thy shell-shaped winglets faintly-
(As thin as spangle
Of cobwebbed rain)-held up at airy angle;
I hear thy tinkle
With faery notes the silvery stillness sprinkle;

Investing wholly
The moonlight with divinest melancholy:
Until, in seeming,
I see the Spirit of Summer sadly dreaming
Amid her ripened orchards, russet-strewn,
Her great, grave eyes fixed on the harvest-moon.

III

As dewdrops beady;
As mist minute, thy notes ring low and reedy:
The vaguest vapor
Of melody, now near; now, like some taper
Of sound, far-fading-
Thou will-o'-wisp of music aye evading.

Among the bowers,
The fog-washed stalks of Autumn's weeds and flowers,
By hill and hollow,
I hear thy murmur and in vain I follow-
Thou jack-o'-lantern voice, thou pixy cry,
Thou dirge, that tellest Beauty she must die.

IV

And when the frantic
Wild winds of Autumn with the dead leaves antic;
And walnuts scatter
The mire of lanes; and dropping acorns patter
In grove and forest,
Like some frail grief with the rude blast thou warrest,
Sending thy slender
Far cry against the gale, that, rough, untender,
Untouched of sorrow,
Sweeps thee aside, where, haply, I to-morrow
Shall find thee lying-tiny, cold and crushed,
Thy weak wings folded and thy music hushed.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Lesson

This is the lesson I have learned of Beauty:
Who gathers flowers finds that flowers fade:
Who sets love in his heart above his duty
Misses the part for which that love was made.
Than passion, haply, there is nothing madder:
Who plucks its red rose plucks with it a thorn:
More than soul's pain what hurt can make us sadder?
And yet of this immortal things are born.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Limnad

The lake she haunts gleams dreamily
'Twixt sleepy boughs of melody,
Set 'mid the hills beside the sea,
In tangled bush and brier;
Where the ghostly sunsets write
Wondrous things in golden light;
And above the pine-crowned height,
Clouds of twilight, rosy white,
Build their towers of fire.

II.

'Mid the rushes there that swing,
Flowering flags where voices sing
When low winds are murmuring,
Murmuring to stars that glitter;
Blossom-white, with purple locks,
Underneath the stars' still flocks,
In the dusky waves she rocks,
Rocks, and all the landscape mocks
With a song most sweet and bitter.

III.

Soft it sounds, at first, as dreams
Filled with tears that fall in streams;
Then it soars, until it seems
Beauty's very self hath spoken;
And the woods grow silent quite,
Stars wax faint and flowers turn white;
And the nightingales that light
Near, or hear her through the night,
Die, their hearts with longing broken.

IV.

Dark, dim and sad o'er mournful lands,
White-throated stars heaped in her hands,
Like wildwood buds, the Twilight stands,

The Twilight dreaming lingers;
Listening where the Limnad sings
Witcheries, whose beauty brings
A great moon from hidden springs,
Pale with amorous quiverings
Feet of fire and silvery fingers.

V.

In the vales Auloniads,
On the mountains Oreads,
On the leas Leimoniads,
Naked as the stars that glisten,
Pan, the Satyrs, Dryades,
Fountain-lovely Naiades,
Foam-lipped Oceanides,
Breathless 'mid their seas and trees,
Stay and stop and lean and listen.

VI.

Large-eyed, Siren-like she stands,
In the lake or on its sands,
And with rapture from the hands
Of the Night some stars are shaken;
To her song the rushes swing,
Lilies nod and ripples ring,
Lost in helpless listening
These will wake that hear her sing,
But one mortal will not waken.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Little Boy And His Shadow

There's something now that no one knows,
That never seems to mind me
Where is it that my shadow goes
That often walks behind me?
Where does it go when I come home;
For often I'm without it;
It's queer and very worrisome,
I'd like to know about it.

When I go out on sunny days,
Why, there it is beside me:
And there it skips and there it plays,
And from it I can't hide me.
I cannot run away from it,
It runs as fast as Fido;
And if I stand or if I sit
It stands and sits as I do.

But if I run into a square
Where trees stand or a dwelling,
Why, then it's gone! I wonder where!
Who knows? It's hard as spelling.
And then it never says a word;
It's surely in a trance, or
Just deaf and dumb and never heard;
If not, why don't it answer?

And in the moonlight, when I walk,
Why, then it walks before me
And mimics me, but will not talk,
But rather seems t' ignore me.
And I have noticed that at noon
I walk on it, it's smaller,
But in the night-time, by the moon,
It's often ten times taller.

But at the door, both day and night,
It never fails to leave me,
That is, unless there is a light

By which it may perceive me.
Why don't it go to bed with me?
Why don't it lie beside me?
It seems to lack in courtesy,
And often can't abide me.

Why should it come to skip and run
Without a word or comment,
And stay with me in moon and sun,
Then quit me in a moment?
Why don't it come in-doors and play?
I'm sure that it is able,
Why don't it stay with me all day,
And eat with me at table?

But that's the way it is, you see,
When one is least expecting
It leaves or comes quite suddenly
From where there's no detecting.
Sometimes it's short; sometimes it's long;
Sometimes it's just a glimmer;
It acts so queer I know it's wrong,
And puzzling as my primer.

For, sometimes, when by candlelight
I go to bed, it quivers
Upon the stairs, out of the night,
And scares me into shivers.
From ghostly corners, humped and gnarled,
It leaps, or down the ceiling,
Crabbed, crookéd-kneed and knuckle-snarled,
Goes gesturing and reeling.

But where it goes when I'm in bed
And fast asleep and dreaming
No one can tell me. Mother said
That I beat all for scheming
And bothering her with questions: that
She wished I was as quiet
As is my shadow or the cat:
Dear knows! she'd profit by it.

My father said he'd come to find
That it is most bewild'rin';
He had no doubt it changed its mind
As frequently as children.
'I can't, ' he said, 'tell where it goes,
Or stays, when gone, denied you;
Unless it goes, as I suppose,
And lives and hides inside you.'

Madison Julius Cawein

The Little Boy, The Wind, And The Rain

Sometimes, when I'm gone to-bed,
And it's all dark in the room,
Seems I hear somebody tread
Heavy, rustling through the gloom:
And then something there goes 'boom,'
Stumbling on the floor o'erhead;
And I cover eyes and ears:
Never dare to once look out,
But just cry till mother hears,
Says there's naught to cry about:
'Old Mis' Wind is at her capers.
Shut your eyes and go to sleep.
She has got among those papers,
In the attic, with her sweep.
Shut your eyes and go to sleep.'

II.

Sometimes when the lamplight's flame
Flickers, fingers tap the pane;
Knuckled fingers, just the same,
Rapping with long nails again:
Bony hands then seem to strain,
Pulling at the window-frame:
And I cry, 'Who's there?' And then
Sit bolt up in bed and call
Till my father drops his pen,
Saying to me from the hall:
'Old Man Rain is at his nonsense.
Close your eyes and go to sleep.
Makes a lot of noise. My conscience!
What a fuss his fingers keep!
Close your eyes and go to sleep.'

Madison Julius Cawein

The Little People

When the lily nods in slumber,
And the roses all are sleeping;
When the night hangs deep and umber,
And the stars their watch are keeping;
When the clematis uncloses
Like a hand of snowy fire,
And the golden-lipped primroses,
To the tiger-moths' desire,
Each a mouth of musk unpuckers
Silken pouts of scented sweetness,
That they sip with honey-suckers;
Shod with hush and winged with fleetness,
You may see the Little People,
'Round and 'round the drowsy steeple
Of a belfried hollyhock,
Clothed in phlox and four-o'clock,
Gay of gown and pantaloons,
Dancing by the glimmering moon,
Till the cock, the long-necked cock,
Crows them they must vanish soon.

II.

When the cobweb is a cradle
For the dreaming dew to sleep in;
And each blossom is a ladle
That the perfumed rain lies deep in;
When the gleaming fireflies scribble
Darkness as with lines flame-tragic,
And the night seems some dim sibyl
Speaking gold, or wording magic
Silent-syllabled and golden;
Capped with snapdragon and hooded
With the sweet-pea, vague-beholden,
You may see the Little People,
Underneath the sleepy steeple
Of a towering mullen-stock,
Trip it over moss and rock
To the owlet's elvish tune

And the tree-toad's gnome bassoon,
Till the cock, the barnyard cock,
Crows them they must vanish soon.

III.

When the wind upon the water
Seems a boat of ray and ripple,
That some fairy moonbeam daughter
Steers with sails that drift and dripplle;
When the sound of grig and cricket,
Ever singing, ever humming,
Seems a goblin in the thicket
On his elfin viol strumming;
When the toadstool, coned and milky,
Heaves a roof for snails to clamber;
Thistledown- and milkweed-silky,
With loose locks of jade and amber,
You may see the Little People,
Underneath the pixy steeple
Of a doméd mushroom, flock,
Quaint in wildflower vest and frock,
Whirling by the waning moon
To the whippoorwill's weird tune,
Till the cock, the far-off cock,
Crows them they must vanish soon.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Locust

Thou pulse of hotness, who, with reedlike breast,
Makest meridian music, long and loud,
Accentuating summer!-Dost thy best
To make the sunbeams fiercer, and to crowd
With lonesomeness the long, close afternoon-
When Labor leans, swart-faced and beady-browed,
Upon his sultry scythe-thou tangible tune
Of heat, whose waves incessantly arise
Quivering and clear beneath the cloudless skies.

Thou singest, and upon his haggard hills
Drouth yawns and rubs his heavy eyes and wakes;
Brushes the hot hair from his face; and fills
The land with death as sullenly he takes
Downward his dusty way. 'Midst woods and fields
At every pool his burning thirst he slakes:
No grove so deep, no bank so high it shields
A spring from him; no creek evades his eye:
He needs but look and they are withered dry.

Thou singest, and thy song is as a spell
Of somnolence to charm the land with sleep;
A thorn of sound that pierces dale and dell,
Diffusing slumber over vale and steep.
Sleepy the forest, nodding sleepy boughs;
Sleepy the pastures with their sleepy sheep:
Sleepy the creek where sleepily the cows
Stand knee-deep; and the very heaven seems
Sleepy and lost in undetermined dreams.

Art thou a rattle that Monotony,
Summer's dull nurse, old sister of slow Time,
Shakes for Day's peevish pleasure, who in glee
Takes its discordant music for sweet rhyme?
Or oboe that the Summer Noontide plays,
Sitting with Ripeness 'neath the orchard tree,
Trying repeatedly the same shrill phrase,
Until the musky peach with weariness
Drops, and the hum of murmuring bees grows less?

Madison Julius Cawein

The Lonely Land

A RIVER binds the lonely land,
A river like a silver band,
To crags and shores of yellow sand.
It is a place where kildees cry,
And endless marshes eastward lie,
Whereon looks down a ghostly sky.
A house stands gray and all alone
Upon a hill, as dim of tone,
And lonely, as a lonely stone.
There are no signs of life about;
No barnyard bustle, cry and shout
Of children who run laughing out.
No crow of cocks, no low of cows,
No sheep-bell tinkling under boughs
Of beech, or song in garth or house.
Only the curlew's mournful call,
Circling the sky at evenfall,
And loon lamenting over all.
A garden, where the sunflower dies
And lily on the pathway lies,
Looks blindly at the blinder skies.
And round the place a lone wind blows,
As when the Autumn grieving goes,
Tattered and dripping, to its close.
And on decaying shrubs and vines
The moon's thin crescent, dwindling shines,
Caught in the claws of sombre pines.
And then a pale girl, like a flower,
Enters the garden: for an hour
She waits beside a wild-rose bower.
There is no other one around;
No sound, except the cricket's sound
And far-off baying of a hound.
There is no fire or candle-light
To flash its message through the night
Of welcome from some casement bright.
Only the moon, that thinly throws
A shadow on the girl and rose,
As to its setting slow it goes.

And when 'tis gone, from shore and stream
There steals a mist, that turns to dream
That place where all things merely seem.
And through the mist there goes a cry,
Not of the earth nor of the sky,
But of the years that have passed by.
And with the cry there comes the rain,
Whispering of all that was in vain
At every door and window-pane.
And she, who waits beside the rose,
Hears, with her heart, a hoof that goes,
Gallop ing afar to where none knows.
And then she bows her head and weeps...
And suddenly a shadow sweeps
Around, and in its darkening deeps.
The house, the girl, the cliffs and stream
Are gone.— And they, and all things seem
But phantoms, merely, in a dream.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Long Room

HE found the long room as it was of old,
Glimmering with sunset's gold;
That made the tapestries seem full of eyes
Strange with a wild surmise:
Glaring upon a Psyche where she shone
Carven of stainless stone,
Holding a crystal heart where many a sun
Seemed starrily bound in one:
And near her, grim in rigid metal, stood
An old knight in a wood,
Groping his way: the bony wreck, that was
His steed, at weary pause.
And over these a canvas — one mad mesh
Of Chrysoprase tints of flesh
And breasts — Bohemian cups, whose glory gleamed
For one who, brutish, seemed
A hideous Troll, unto whose lustful arms
She yielded glad her charms.
Then he remembered all her shame; and knew
The thing that he must do:
These were but records of his life: the whole
Portrayed to him his soul.—
So, drawing forth the slim Bithynian phial,
He drained it with a smile.
And 'twixt the Knight and Psyche fell and died;
The arras, evil-eyed,
Glared grimly at him where all night he lay,
And where a stealthy ray
Pointed her to him — her, that nymph above,
Who gave the Troll her love.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Lost Dream

THE black night showed its hungry teeth,
And gnawed with sleet at roof and pane;
Beneath the door I heard it breathe —
A beast that growled in vain.
The hunter wind stalked up and down,
And crashed his ice-spears through each tree;
Before his rage, in tattered gown,
I saw the maid moon flee.
There stole a footstep to my door;
A voice cried in my room and — there!
A shadow cowed and gaunt and hoar,
Death, leaned above my chair.
He beckoned me; he bade me rise,
And follow through the madman night;
Into my heart's core pierced his eyes,
And lifted me with might.
I rose; I made no more delay;
And followed where his eyes compelled;
And through the darkness, far away,
They lit me and enspelled.
Until we reached an ancient wood,
That flung its twisted arms around,
As if in anguish that it stood
On dark, unhallowed ground.
And then I saw it — cold and blind —
The dream, that had my heart to share,
That fell, before its feet could find
Its home, and perished there.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Lost Garden

Roses, brier on brier,
Like a hedge of fire,
Walled it from the world and rolled
Crimson 'round it; manifold
Blossoms, 'mid which once of old
Walked my Heart's Desire.

There the golden Hours
Dwelt; and 'mid the bowers
Beauty wandered like a maid;
And the Dreams that never fade
Sat within its haunted shade
Gazing at the flowers.

There the winds that vary
Melody and marry
Perfume unto perfume, went,
Whispering to the buds, that bent,
Messages whose wonderment
Made them sweet to carry.

There the waters hoary
Murmured many a story
To the leaves that leaned above,
Listening to their tales of love,
While the happiness thereof
Flushed their green with glory.

There the sunset's shimmer
'Mid the bowers, dimmer
Than the woods where Fable dwells,
And Romance her legends tells,
Wrought dim dreams and dimmer spells,
Filled with golden glimmer.

There at night the wonder
Of the moon would sunder
Foliage deeps with breast of pearl,
Wandering like a glimmering girl,

Fair of form and bright of curl,
Through the trees and under.

There the stars would follow,
Over hill and hollow,
Spirit shapes that danced the dew
From frail cups of sparry hue;
Firefly forms that fleeter flew
Than the fleetest swallow.

There my heart made merry;
There, 'mid bloom and berry,
Dreamed the dreams that are no more,
In that garden lost of yore,
Set in seas, without a shore,
That no man may ferry.

Where perhaps her lyre,
Wreathed with serest brier,
Sorrow strikes now; sad its gold
Sighing where, 'mid roses old,
Fair of face and dead and cold
Lies my Heart's Desire.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Love Of Loves

I Have not seen her face, and yet
She is more sweet than any thing
Of Earth than rose or violet
That Mayday winds and sunbeams bring.

Of all we know, past or to come,
That beauty holds within its net,
She is the high compendium:
And yet

I have not touched her robe, and still
She is more dear than lyric words
And music; or than strains that fill
The throbbing throats of forest birds.

Of all we mean by poetry,
That rules the soul and charms the will,
She is the deep epitome:
And still

She is my world; ah, pity me!
A dream that flies whom I pursue;
Whom all pursue, whoe'er they be,
Who toil for art and dare and do.

The shadow-love for whom they sigh,
The far ideal affinity,
For whom they live and gladly die
Ah, me!

Madison Julius Cawein

The Lubber Fiend

In the woods, not long ago,
Met with Robin Goodfellow;
First we heard his horse-like laugh
In an ivy-bush near by;
Then we saw him, like a calf,
Or a frisky colt, just fly
Kicking high his frantic heels,
Squealing as a scared pig squeals.

Snorting, baaing, neighing too,
Through the woods he fairly flew;
Father followed him, but he
Could n't catch him long of limb
As a grasshopper, you see,
There's no man could capture him:
Then, besides, his color's green,
So he's rarely ever seen.

Often when you're in the woods,
Just a-walking with your moods,
And not thinking; listening how
Still it is, right near your head
Breaks the bellow of a cow
And you dropp scared nearly dead:
That's old Robin you can't see
'Cause he's colored like a tree.

And I've heard he calls and calls
In the woods for help, or falls,
Like an urchin, from a tree:
You jump up and shout and run
But there's nothing there to see;
Just a snickering as of fun
in the thicket, or somewhere,
And you're madder than a hare.

Sometimes in dark woods a light
Flashes in your eyes, as bright
As a firefly after rain;

And your eyes are dazzled so
That you shut them look again
Nothing's there. That's Goodfellow,
With his jack-o'-lantern; see?
Hiding in some hollow tree.

These are pranks he plays on men
When he feels all right; but when
He is out of humor, well!
Better keep away! he'll harm:
Leads you with a heifer's bell,
Or horn-lantern, to some farm,
You suppose; but 't is n't! no!
Some old bog in which you go.

Sometimes he's called Puck, they say:
And it was the other day
Father read me from a book
That some people call him Lob
One who haunts the ingle-nook,
Or sits humped upon the hob
Whistling up the chimney-flue
Till the kettle whistles too.

He's the Lubber Fiend, that sweeps
Ashes in your face and creeps
Under cracks when north winds howl;
Hides behind the closet door
And peeps at you, like an owl,
Bumps you shrieking on the floor;
And at night he rides a mare
Round your bed and everywhere.

And he teases dogs that doze
By the fire; and, I suppose,
They must see him in their dreams
When they snarl and glare o'erhead:
And it's he, or so it seems,
Tumbles children out of bed,
Wakes the house and makes a fuss;
For he's awful mischievous.

That's what I heard father say,
And I know it's true. Some day
I'm a-going to be a boy
Just like Robin; romp and shout,
And kick up my heels for joy,
And scare people round about;
Just play tricks on every one.

Don't you think it would be fun?
Take an old cow-horn, that's harsh
As a frog that haunts the marsh,
And when folks are in their beds
Blow it at the windowsill
Till they cover up their heads;
And when all again is still,
Hear them wonder what it was
That was making all that fuss.

Or I'll make a pumpkin face;
Light, and hide it in some place
Where are bushes; and when men
Come along I'll grunt and groan
Like an old pig in its pen;
When they run I'll throw a stone,
Or just vanish; and they'll say
' What was that, I wonder? eh?'

It would be a lot of fun,
Would n't it? to make folks run;
Jumping at them from the dark
Like a big black dog, oh my!
It would be the greatest lark!
Wonder why it is that I
Can't grow up at once like you
And do things I'd like to do?

Madison Julius Cawein

The Lust Of The World

SINCE Man first lifted up his eyes to hers
And saw her vampire beauty, which is lust,
All else is dust
Within the compass of the universe.
With heart of Jael and with face of Ruth
She sits upon the tomb of Time and quaffs
Heart's blood and laughs
At all Life calls most noble and the truth.
The fire of conquest and the wine of dreams
Are in her veins; and in her eyes the lure
Of things unsure,
Urging the world forever to extremes.
Without her, Life would stagnate in a while.—
Her touch it is puts pleasure even in pain.—
So Life attain
Her end, she cares not if the means be vile.
She knows no pity, mercy, or remorse.—
Hers is to build and then exterminate:
To slay, create,
And twixt the two maintain an equal course.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Magic Purse

WHAT is the gold of mortal-kind
To that men find
Deep in the poet's mind! —
That magic purse
Of Dreams from which
God builds His universe!
That makes life rich
With, many a vision;
Taking the soul from out its prison
Of facts with the precision
A wildflower dons
When Spring comes knocking at the door
Of Earth across the windy lawns;
Calling to Joy to rise and dance before
Her happy feet:
Or with the beat
And bright exactness of a star,
Hanging its punctual point afar,
When Night comes tripping over Heaven's floor,
Leaving a gate ajar.
That leads the Heart from all its aching
Far above where day is breaking;
Out of the doubts, the agonies,
The strife and sin, to join with these —
Hope and Beauty and Joy that build
Their golden walls
Of sunset where, with spirits filled,
A Presence calls,
And points a land
Where Love walks, silent; hand in hand
With the Spirit of God, and leads Man right
Out of the darkness into the light.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Mameluke

I

She was a queen. 'Midst mutes and slaves,
A mameluke, he loved her.--Waves
Dashed not more hopelessly the paves
Of her high marble palace-stair
Than lashed his love his heart's despair.-
As souls in Hell dream Paradise,
He suffered yet forgot it there
Beneath Rommaneh's houri eyes.

II

With passion eating at his heart
He served her beauty, but dared dart
No amorous glance, nor word impart.-
Taifi leather's perfumed tan
Beneath her, on a low divan
She lay 'mid cushions stuffed with down:
A slave-girl with an ostrich fan
Sat by her in a golden gown.

III

She bade him sing. Fair lutanist,
She loved his voice. With one white wrist,
Hooped with a blaze of amethyst,
She raised her ruby-crusted lute:
Gold-welted stuff, like some rich fruit,
Her raiment, diamond-showered, rolled
Folds pigeon-purple, whence one foot
Drooped in an anklet-twist of gold.

IV

He stood and sang with all the fire
That boiled within his blood's desire,
That made him all her slave yet higher:
And at the end his passion durst

Quench with one burning kiss its thirst.-
O eunuchs, did her face show scorn
When through his heart your daggers burst?
And dare ye say he died forlorn?

Madison Julius Cawein

The Man Hunt

THE woods stretch wild to the mountain side,
And the brush is deep where a man may hide,

They have brought the bloodhounds up again
To the roadside rock where they found the slain.

They have brought the bloodhounds up, and they
Have taken the trail to the mountain way.

Three times they circled the trail and crossed,
And thrice they found it and thrice they lost.

Now straight through the pines and the underbrush
They follow the scent through the forest's hush.

And their deep-mouthed bay is a pulse of fear
In the heart of the wood that the man must hear.

The man who crouches among the trees
From the stern-faced men that follow these.

A huddle of rocks that the ooze has mossed—
And the trail of the hunted again is lost.

An upturned pebble; a bit of ground
A heel has trampled—the trail is found.

And the woods re-echo the bloodhounds' bay
As again they take to the mountain way.

A rock; a ribbon of road; a ledge,
With a pine-tree clutching its crumbling edge.

A pine, that the lightning long since clave,
Whose huge roots hollow a ragged cave.

A shout; a curse; and a face aghast,
And the human quarry is laired at last.

The human quarry, with clay-clogged hair
And eyes of terror, who waits them there;

That glares and crouches and rising then
Hurls clods and curses at dogs and men.

Until the blow of a gun-butt lays
Him stunned and bleeding upon his face.

A rope, a prayer, and an oak-tree near.
And a score of hands to swing him clear.

A grim black thing for the setting sun
And the moon and the stars to look upon.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Man In Gray

Again, in dreams, the veteran hears
The bugle and the drum;
Again the boom of battle nears,
Again the bullets hum:
Again he mounts, again he cheers,
Again his charge speeds home
O memories of those long gone years!
O years that are to come!

We live in dreams as well as deeds, in thoughts as well as acts;
And life through things we feel, not know, is realized the most;
The conquered are the conquerors, despite the face of facts,
If they still feel their cause was just who fought for it and lost.

II.

Again, in thought, he hears at dawn
The far reveille die;
Again he marches stern and wan
Beneath a burning sky:
He bivouacs; the night comes on;
His comrades 'round him lie
O memories of the years long gone!
O years that now go by!

The vintager of Earth is War, is War whose grapes are men;
Into his wine-vats armies go, his wine-vats steaming red:
The crimson vats of battle where he stalks, as in a den,
Drunk with the must of Hell that spurts beneath his iron tread.

III.

Again, in mind, he's lying where
The trenches slay with heat;
Again his flag floats o'er him, fair
In charge or fierce retreat:
Again all's lost; again despair
Makes death seem three times sweet
O years of tears that crowned his hair

With laurels of defeat!

There is reward for those who dare, for those who dare and do;
Who face the dark inevitable, who fall and know no shame:
Upon their banner triumph sits and in the horn they blew,
Naught's lost if honor be not lost, defeat is but a name.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Menace

The hat he wore was full of holes,
And his battered shoes were worn to the soles.
His shirt was a rag, held together with pins,
And his trousers patched with outs and ins.
A negro tramp, a roustabout,
Less safe than a wild beast broken out:
And like to a beast, he slouched along
The lane which the birds made sweet with song:
Where the wild rose wooed with golden eyes
The honeybees and the butterflies.
But the bird's glad song and the scent of the rose
Meant nothing to him of the love man knows.
If he heard or heeded 't was but to curse
Love had no place in his universe.
And there in the lane one met with him
A girl of ten who was fair and slim:
A farmer's daughter, whose auburn hair
Shone bright as a sunbeam moving there:
And bare of head, as she was of foot,
She passed the tramp with a smiled salute.
She bore in her hand, that was dark with stain,
A pail of berries she'd picked I' the lane.
Without a word he let her pass
Like a wildrose nodding above the grass.
Innocent, trusting, free from guile,
She met his look with a friendly smile.
And he? He laughed when the child had passed,
And a furtive glance about him cast,
Then turned and followed. His chance was now
To serve the Whiteman out somehow.
He would get even for many a kick.
Now was his time to turn a trick.

Next day they found her, battered and torn,
Her small child's body hid under a thorn.
And, oh! I wonder, good brother of mine,
Why God in His Heaven gave never a sign.
Why she, the lovely, the young, the shy,

Like a beast of the field should have to die:
While he, the hideous, kin to the ape,
God, in His Heaven, should let escape.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Mill-Water

The water-flag and wild cane grow
'Round banks whereon the sunbeams sow
Fantastic gold when, on its shores,
The wind sighs through the sycamores.

In one green angle, just in reach,
Between a willow-tree and beech,
Moss-grown and leaky lies a boat
The thick-grown lilies keep afloat.

And through its waters, half awake,
Slow swims the spotted water-snake;
And near its edge, like some gray streak,
Stands gaunt the still fly-up-the-creek.

Between the lily-pads and blooms
The water-spirits set their looms,
That weave the lace-like light that dims
The glimmering leaves of under limbs.

Each lily is the hiding-place
Of some dim wood-imp's elvish face,
That watches you with gold-green eyes
Where bubbles of its breathing rise.

I fancy, when the waxing moon
Leans through the trees and dreams of June,
And when the black bat slants its wing,
And lonelier the green-frogs sing;
I fancy, when the whippoorwill

In some old tree sings wild and shrill,
With glow-worm eyes that dot the dark,
Each holding high a firefly spark

To torch its way, the wood-imps come:
And some float rocking here; and some
Unmoor the lily leaves and oar
Around the old boat by the shore.

They climb through oozy weeds and moss;
They swarm its rotting sides and toss
Their firefly torches o'er its edge
Or hang them in the tangled sedge.

The boat is loosed. The moon is pale.
Around the dam they slowly sail.
Upon the bow, to pilot it,
A jack-o'-lantern gleam doth sit.

Yes, I have seen it in my dreams!
Naught is forgotten! naught, it seems!
The strangled face, the tangled hair
Of the drown'd woman trailing there.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Miracle Of The Dawn

What would it mean for you and me
If dawn should come no more!
Think of its gold along the sea,
Its rose above the shore!
That rose of awful mystery,
Our souls bow down before.

What wonder that the Inca kneeled,
The Aztec prayed and pled
And sacrificed to it, and sealed, -
With rites that long are dead, -
The marvels that it once revealed
To them it comforted.

What wonder, yea! what awe, behold!
What rapture and what tears
Were ours, if wild its rivered gold, -
That now each day appears, -
Burst on the world, in darkness rolled,
Once every thousand years!

Think what it means to me and you
To see it even as God
Evolved it when the world was new!
When Light rose, earthquake-shod,
And slow its gradual splendor grew
O'er deeps the whirlwind trod.

What shoutings then and cymballings
Arose from depth and height!
What worship-solemn trumpetings,
And thunders, burning-white,
Of winds and waves, and anthemings
Of Earth received the Light.

Think what it meant to see the dawn!
The dawn, that comes each day! -
What if the East should ne'er grow wan,
Should nevermore grow gray!

That line of rose no more be drawn
Above the ocean's spray!

Madison Julius Cawein

The Miser

Withered and gray as winter; gnarled and old,
With bony hands he crouches by the coals;
His beggar's coat is patched and worn in holes;
Rags are his shoes: clutched in his claw-like hold
A chest he hugs wherein he hoards his gold.
Far-heard a bell of midnight slowly tolls:
The bleak blasts shake his hut like wailing souls,
And door and window chatter with the cold.
Nor sleet nor snow he heeds, nor storm nor night.
Let the wind howl! and let the palsy twitch
His rheum-racked limbs! here 's that will make them glow
And warm his heart! here 's comfort joy and light!
How the gold glistens! Rich he is; how rich
Only the death that knocks outside shall know.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Moon In The Wood

From hill and hollow, side by side,
The shadows came, like dreams, to sit
And watch, mysterious, sunset-eyed,
The wool-winged moths and bats aflutter,
And the lone owl that cried and cried.
And then the forest rang a gong,
Hoarse, toadlike; and from out the gate
Of darkness came a sound of song,
As of a gnome that called his mate,
Who answered in his own strange tongue.
And all the forest leaned to hear,
And saw, from forth the entangling trees,
A naked spirit drawing near,
A glimmering presence, whom the breeze
Kept whispering, 'Forward! Have no fear.'

II.

The woodland, seeming at a loss,
Afraid to breathe, or make a sound,
Poured, where her silvery feet should cross,
A dripping pathway on the ground,
And hedged it in with ferns and moss.
And then the silence sharply shook
A cricket tambourine; and Night
From out her musky bosom took
A whippoorwill flute, and, lost to sight
Sat piping to a wildwood brook.
Until from out the shadows came
A furtive foot, a gleam, a glow;
And with a lamp of crystal flame
The spirit stole, as white as snow,
And put the firmament to shame.

III.

Then up and down vague movements went,
As if the faeries sought an herb;
And here and there a bush was bent,

A wildflower raised: the wood-pool's curb
Was circled with a scarf of scent.
And deep within her house of weeds
Old Mystery hung a glowworm lamp,
And decked her hair with firefly beads,
And sate herself 'mid dew and damp,
And crooned a love-song to the reeds.
Then through the gates of solitude,
Where Witchery her shuttle plied,
The Spirit entered, white and nude
And where she went, on every side,
Dreams followed through the solitude.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Moon Spirit

One night I lingered in the wood
And saw a spirit-form that stood
Among the wildflowers. Like the dew
It twinkled; partly wind and scent;
Then down a moonbeam there it blew,
And like a gleam of water went.
Or was it but a dream that grew
Out of the wind and dew and scent.
Could I have seized it, made it mine,
As poets have the thought divine
Of Nature, then I too might know,
(Like them who once wild magic bound
Into their rhymes of long-ago),
Such ecstasy of earth around
As never yet held heart before
Or language for its beauty found.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Morn That Breaks Its Heart Of Gold

From an ode 'In Commemoration of the Founding of the
Massachusetts Bay Colony.'

The morn that breaks its heart of gold
Above the purple hills;
The eve, that spills
Its nautilus splendor where the sea is rolled;
The night, that leads the vast procession in
Of stars and dreams,-
The beauty that shall never die or pass:-
The winds, that spin
Of rain the misty mantles of the grass,
And thunder raiment of the mountain-streams;
The sunbeams, penciling with gold the dusk
Green cowls of ancient woods;
The shadows, thridding, veiled with musk,
The moon-pathed solitudes,
Call to my Fancy, saying, 'Follow! follow!'
Till, following, I see,-
Fair as a cascade in a rainbowed hollow,-
A dream, a shape, take form,
Clad on with every charm,-

The vision of that Ideality,
Which lured the pioneer in wood and hill,
And beckoned him from earth and sky;
The dream that cannot die,
Their children's children did fulfill,
In stone and iron and wood,
Out of the solitude,
And by a stalwart act
Create a mighty fact-
A Nation, now that stands
Clad on with hope and beauty, strength and song,
Eternal, young and strong,
Planting her heel on wrong,
Her starry banner in triumphant hands....

Within her face the rose

Of Alleghany dawns;
Limbed with Alaskan snows,
Floridian starlight in her eyes,-
Eyes stern as steel yet tender as a fawn's,-
And in her hair
The rapture of her rivers; and the dare,
As perishless as truth,
That o'er the crags of her Sierras flies,
Urging the eagle ardor through her veins,
Behold her where,
Around her radiant youth,

The spirits of the cataracts and plains,
The genii of the floods and forests, meet,
In rainbow mists circling her brow and feet:
The forces vast that sit
In session round her; powers paraclete,
That guard her presence; awful forms and fair,
Making secure her place;
Guiding her surely as the worlds through space
Do laws sidereal; edicts, thunder-lit,
Of skyed eternity, in splendor borne
On planetary wings of night and morn.

*

From her high place she sees
Her long procession of accomplished acts,
Cloud-winged refulgences
Of thoughts in steel and stone, of marble dreams,
Lift up tremendous battlements,
Sun-blinding, built of facts;
While in her soul she seems,
Listening, to hear, as from innumerable tents,
AEonian thunder, wonder, and applause
Of all the heroic ages that are gone;
Feeling secure
That, as her Past, her Future shall endure,

As did her Cause
When redly broke the dawn
Of fierce rebellion, and, beneath its star,
The firmaments of war
Poured down infernal rain,
And North and South lay bleeding mid their slain.
And now, no less, shall her great Cause prevail,
More so in peace than war,
Through the thrilled wire and electric rail,
Carrying her message far:
Shaping her dream
Within the brain of steam,
That, with a myriad hands,
Labors unceasingly, and knits her lands
In firmer union; joining plain and stream
With steel; and binding shore to shore
With bands of iron;-nerves and arteries,
Along whose adamant forever pour
Her concrete thoughts, her tireless energies.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Mountain-Still

The Moonshiner

He leans far out and watches: Down below
The road seems but a ribbon through the trees:
The bluff, from which he gazes, whence he sees
Some ox-team or some horseman come and go,
Is briered with brush. A man comes riding slow
Around a bend of road. Against his knees
The branches whip. He sits at careless ease.
It is the sheriff, armed for any foe.
A detonation tears the echoes from
Each pine-hung crag; upon the rider's brow
A smear of red springs out: he shades it now,
His grey eyes on the bluff. The crags are dumb.
Smoke wreathes one spot. The sheriff, with a cough,
Marks well that place, and then rides slowly off.

II.

The Sheriff

Night and the mountain road: a crag where burns
What seems a star, low down: three men that glide
From tree and rock towards it: one a guide
For him who never from his purpose turns,
Who stands for law among these mountain kerns.
At last the torchlit cave, along whose side
The still is seen, and men who have defied
The law so long law, who the threshold spurns
With levelled weapons now.... Wolves in a den
Fight not more fiercely than these fought; wild fear
In every face, and rage and pale surprise.
The smoke thins off, and in the cave four men
Lie dead or dying: one that mountaineer,
And one the sheriff with the fearless eyes.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Naiad

She sits among the iris stalks
Of babbling brooks; and leans for hours
Among the river's lily flowers,
Or on their whiteness walks:
Above dark forest pools, gray rocks
Wall in, she leans with dripping locks,
And listening to the echo, talks
With her own face Iothera.
There is no forest of the hills,
No valley of the solitude,
Nor fern nor moss, that may elude
Her searching step that stills:
She dreams among the wild-rose brakes
Of fountains that the ripple shakes,
And, dreaming of herself, she fills
The silence with 'Iothera.'
And every wind that haunts the ways
Of leaf and bough, once having kissed
Her virgin nudity, goes whist
With wonder and amaze.
There blows no breeze which hath not learned
Her name's sweet melody, and yearned
To kiss her mouth that laughs and says,
'Iothera, Iothera.'
No wild thing of the wood, no bird,
Or brown or blue, or gold or gray,
Beneath the sun's or moonlight's ray,
That hath not loved and heard;
They are her pupils; she can say
No new thing but, within a day,
They have its music, word for word,
Harmonious as Iothera.
No man who lives and is not wise
With love for common flowers and trees,
Bee, bird, and beast, and brook, and breeze,
And rocks and hills and skies,
Search where he will, shall ever see
One flutter of her drapery,
One glimpse of limbs, or hair, or eyes

Of beautiful Iothera.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Name On The Tree

I saw a name carved on a tree —
'Julia';
A simpler name there could not be—
Julia:
But seeing it I seemed to see
A Devon garden,— pleasantly
About a parsonage, — the bee
Made drowsy-sweet; where rosemary
And pink and phlox and peony
Bowed down to one
Whom Herrick made to bloom in Poetry.
A moment there I saw her stand,—
Julia;
A gillyflower in her hand,—
Julia:
And then, kind-faced and big and bland,
As raised by some magician's wand,
Herrick himself passed by, sun-tanned,
And smiling; and the quiet land
Seemed to take on and understand
A dream long dreamed,
And for the lives of two some gladness planned.
And then I seemed to hear a sigh,—
'Julia!'
And someone softly walking nigh,—
Julia:
The leaves shook; and a butterfly
Trailed past; and through the sleepy sky
A bird flew, crying strange its cry —
Then suddenly before my eye
Two lovers strolled — They knew not why
I looked amazed,—
But I had seen old ghosts of long dead loves go by.

Madison Julius Cawein

The New God

I look about me, and behold
How all is changed: The sound and sane,
The kind, the true, the hale and old,
That once made strong the features plain
Of life, are cast in other mold,
That bears the stamp of greed and gold
A god unclean, who drags a chain
Of jewelled lust, which men call Gain,
Binding their hearts to all that's vain,
That God at last for punishment
Shall curse with woe and discontent.

Madison Julius Cawein

The New York Skyscraper

The Woolworth Building
ENORMOUSLY it lifts
Its tower against the splendor of the west;
Like some wild dream that drifts
Before the mind, and at the will's behest,—
Enchantment-based, gigantic steel and stone,—
Is given permanence;
A concrete fact,
Complete, alone,
Glorious, immense,
Such as no nation here on Earth has known:
Epitomizing all
That is American, that stands for youth,
And strength and truth;
That's individual,
And beautiful and free,—
Resistless strength and tireless energy.
Even as a cataract,
Its superb fact
Suggests vast forces Nature builds with — Joy,
And Power and Thought,
She to her aid has brought
For eons past, will bring for eons yet to be,
Shaping the world to her desire: the three
Her counsellors constantly,
Her architects, through whom her dreams come true, —
Her workmen, bringing forth,
With toil that shall not cease,
Mountains and plains and seas,
That make the Earth
The glory that it is:
And, one with these,
Such works of man as this,
This building, towering into the blue,
A beacon, round which like an ocean wide,
Circles and flows the restless human tide.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Night-Rain

Tattered, in ragged raiment of the rain,
The Night arrives. Outside the window there
He stands and, streaming, taps upon the pane;
Or, crouching down beside the cellar-stair,
Letting his hat-brim drain,
Mutters, black-gazing through his trickling hair.

Then on the roof with cautious feet he treads,
Whispering a word into the windy flues;
And all the house, huddling its flowerbeds,
Looks, dark of face, as if it heard strange news,
Hugging the musky heads
Of all its roses to its sides of ooze.

Now in the garden, with a glowworm lamp,
Night searches, letting his black mantle pour;
Treading the poppies down with heavy tramp,
Thudding the apple, sodden to its core,
Into the dripping damp,
From boughs the wet loads, dragging more and more.

Then at the barn he fumbles, gropes his way,
Through splashing pools; and, seeping, enters in
The stalls and creeps among the bedding hay,
Burying him moistly to his clammy chin,
While near him, brown and gray,
The dozing cattle make a drowsy din.

The martin-box, poled high above the gate,
He pushes till the fluttering fledglings wake,
Wondering what bird it is that comes so late:
Then to the henhouse door he gives a shake;
Or, like a thief await,
Leans listening softly with black heart aquake.

Then with his ragged cloak flung back he goes,
With flickering lantern, where the stream o'erflowed,
Breathing wet scents of wayside weed,
And guttural music of the frog and toad;

A firefly-light, that glows,
Green in his hand to guide him on his road.

And doffing then, upon the wooded hill,
His hat of cloud, a little while he stands,
Harkening in silence to the leaping rill;
Then, stooping low, he lifts in azure hands
A great gold daffodil
The moon and pins it in his cloak's blown bands.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Night-Wind

I have heard the wind on a winter's night,
When the snow-cold moon looked icily through
My window's flickering firelight,
Where the frost his witchery drew:
I have heard the wind on a winter's night,
Wandering ways that were frozen white,
Wail in my chimney-flue:
And its voice was the voice, so it seemed to me,
The voice of the world's vast misery.

II.

I have heard the wind on a night of spring,
When the leaves unclasped their girdles of gold,
And the bird on the bough sang slumbering,
In the lilac's fragrant fold:
I have heard the wind on a night of spring,
Shaking the musk from its dewy wing,
Sigh in my garden old:
And it seemed that it said, as it sighed above,
'I am the voice of the Earth's great love.'

III.

I have heard the wind on a night of fall,
When a devil's-dance was the rain's down pour,
And the wild woods reeled to its demon call,
And the carpet fluttered the floor:
I have heard the wind on a night of fall,
Heaping the leaves by the garden wall,
Weep at my close-shut door:
And its voice, so it seemed, as it sorrowed there,
Was the old, old voice of the world's despair.

IV.

I have heard the wind on a summer night,
When the myriad stars stormed heaven with fire,
And the moon-moth glimmered in phantom flight,

And the crickets creaked in choir:
I have heard the wind on a summer night,
Rocking the red rose and the white,
Murmur in bloom and brier:
And its voice was the voice, so it seemed to me,
Of Earth's primordial mystery.

Madison Julius Cawein

The North Shore

September On Cape Ann

The partridge-berry flecks with flame the way
That leads to ferny hollows where the bee
Drones on the aster. Far away the sea
Points its deep sapphire with a gleam of grey.
Here from this height where, clustered sweet, the bay
Clumps a green couch, the haw and barberry
Beading her hair, sad Summer, seemingly,
Has fallen asleep, unmindful of the day.
The chipmunk barks upon the old stone wall;
And in the shadows, like a shadow, stirs
The woodchuck where the boneset's blossom creams.
Was that a phoebe with its pensive call?
A sighing wind that shook the drowsy firs?
Or only Summer waking from her dreams?

II.

In An Annisquam Garden

Old phantoms haunt it of the long ago;
Old ghosts of old-time lovers and of dreams:
Within the quiet sunlight there, meseems,
I see them walking where those lilies blow.
The hardy phlox sways to some garment's flow;
The salvia there with sudden scarlet streams,
Caught from some ribbon of some throat that gleams,
Petunia-fair, in flounce and furbelow.
I seem to hear their whispers in each wind
That wanders mid the flowers. There they stand!
Among the shadows of that apple-tree!
They are not dead, whom still it keeps in mind,
This garden, planted by some lovely hand
That keeps it fragrant with its memory.

III.

The Elements

I saw the spirit of the pines that spoke
With spirits of the ocean and the storm:
Against the tumult rose its tattered form,
Wild rain and darkness round it like a cloak.
Fearful it stood, limbed like some twisted oak,
Gesticulating with one giant arm,
Raised as in protest of the night's alarm,
Defiant still of some impending stroke.
Below it, awful in its majesty,
The spirit of the deep, with rushing locks,
Raved: and above it, lightning-clad and shod,
Thundered the tempest. Thus they stood, the three;
Terror around them; while, upon the rocks,
Destruction danced, mocking at man and God.

IV.

Night And Storm At Gloucester

I heard the wind last night that cried and wept
Like some old skipper's ghost outside my door;
And on the roof the rain that tramped and tore
Like feet of seamen on a deck storm-swept.
Against the pane the Night with shudderings crept,
And crouched there wailing; moaning ever more
Its tale of terror; of the wrath on shore,
The rage at sea, bidding all wake who slept.
And then I heard a voice as old as Time;
The calling of the mother of the world,
Ocean, who thundered on her granite crags,
Foaming with fury, meditating crime.
And then, far off, wild minute guns; and, hurled
Through roaring surf, the rush of sails in rags.

V.

The Voice Of Ocean

A cry went through the darkness; and the moon,
Hurrying through storm, gazed with a ghastly face,
Then cloaked herself in scud: the merman race

Of surges ceased; and then th' Æolian croon
Of the wild siren, Wind, within the shrouds
Sunk to a sigh. The ocean in that place
Seemed listening; haunted, for a moment's space,
By something dread that cried against the clouds.
Mystery and night; and with them fog and rain:
And then that cry again as if the deep
Uttered its loneliness in one dark word:
Her horror of herself; her Titan pain;
Her monsters; and the dead that she must keep,
Has kept, alone, for centuries, unheard.

VI.

Waves

I saw the daughters of the ocean dance
With wind and tide, and heard them on the rocks:
White hands they waved me, tossing sunlit locks,
Green as the light an emerald holds in trance.
Their music bound me as with necromance
Of mermaid beauty, that for ever mocks,
And lured me as destruction lures wild flocks
Of light-led gulls and storm-tossed cormorants.
Nearer my feet they crept: I felt their lips:
Their hands of foam that caught at me, to press,
As once they pressed Leander: and, straightway,
I saw the monster-ending of their hips;
The cruelty hid in their soft caress;
The siren-passion ever more to slay.

VII.

A Bit Of Coast

One tree, storm-twisted, like an evil hag,
The sea-wind in its hair, beside a path
Waves frantic arms, as if in wild-witch wrath
At all the world. Gigantic, grey as slag,
Great boulders shoulder through the hills, or crag
The coast with danger, monster-like, that lifts
Huge granite, round which wheel the gulls and swifts,

And at whose base the rotting sea-weeds drag.
Inward the hills are wooded; valley-cleft;
Tangled with berries; vistaed dark with pines;
At whose far end, as 'twere within a frame,
Some trail of water that the ocean left
Gleams like a painting where one white sail shines,
Lit with the sunset's poppy-coloured flame.

VIII.

Autumn At Annisquam

The bitter-sweet and red-haw in her hands,
And in her hair pale berries of the bay,
She haunts the coves and every Cape Ann way,
The Indian, Autumn, wandered from her bands.
Beside the sea, upon a rock, she stands,
And looks across the foam, and straight the grey
Takes on a sunset tone, and all the day
Murmurs with music of forgotten lands.
Now in the woods, knee-deep among the ferns,
She walks and smiles and listens to the pines,
The sweetheart pines, that kiss and kiss again,
Whispering their love: and now she frowns and turns
And in the west the fog in ragged lines
Rears the wild wigwams of the tribes of rain.

IX.

Storm Sabbat

Against the pane the darkness, wet and cold,
Pressed a wild face and raised a ragged arm
Of cloud, clothed on with thunder and alarm
And terrible with elemental gold.
Above the fisher's hut, beyond the wold,
The wind, a Salem witch, rushed shrieking harm,
And swept her mad broom over every farm
To devil-revels in some forest old.
Hell and its-hags, it seemed, held court again
On every rock, trailing a tattered gown
Of surf, and whirling, screaming, to the sea

Elf-locks, fantastic, of dishevelled rain;
While in their midst death hobbled up and down
Monstrous and black, with diabolic glee.

X.

The Aurora

Night and the sea, and heaven overhead
Cloudless and vast, as 'twere of hollowed spar,
Wherein the facets gleamed of many a star,
And the half-moon a crystal radiance shed.
Then suddenly, with burning banners spread,
In pale celestial armour, as for war,
Into the heaven, flaming from afar,
The Northern Lights their phalanxed splendours led.
Night, for the moment, seemed to catch her breath,
And earth gazed, silent with astonishment,
As spear on spear the auroral armies came;
As when, triumphant over hell and death,
The victor angels thronged God's firmament
With sword on sword and burning oriflamme.

XI.

Dogtown

Far as the eye can see the land is grey,
And desolation sits among the stones
Looking on ruin who, from rocks like bones,
Stares with a dead face at the dying day.
Mounds, where the barberry and bay hold sway,
Show where homes rose once; where the village crones
Gossiped, and man, with many sighs and groans,
Laboured and loved and went its daily way.
Only the crow now, like a hag returned,
Croaks on the common that its hoarse voice mocks.
Meseems that here the sorrow of the earth
Has lost herself, and, with the past concerned,
Sits with the ghosts of dreams that haunt these rocks,
And old despairs to which man's soul gave birth.

XII.

An Abandoned Quarry

The barberry burns, the rose-hip crimsons warm,
And haw and sumach hedge the hill with fire,
Down which the road winds, worn of hoof and tire,
Only the blueberry-picker plods now from the farm.
Here once the quarry-driver, brown of arm,
Wielded the whip when, deep in mud and mire,
The axle strained, and earned his daily hire,
Labouring bareheaded in both sun and storm.
Wild-cherry now and blackberry and bay
Usurp the place: the wild-rose, undisturbed,
Riots, where once the workman earned his wage,
Whose old hands rest now, like this granite grey,
These rocks, whose stubborn will whilom he curbed,
Hard as the toil that was his heritage.

XIII.

A Pool Among The Rocks

I know a pool, whose crystalline repose
Sleeps under walls of granite, whence the pine
Leans looking at its image, line for line
Repeated with the sumach and wild-rose
That redden on the rocks; where, at day's close,
The sunset dreams, and lights incarnadine
Dark waters and the place seems brimmed with wine,
A giant cup that splendour overflows.
Night, in her livery of stars and moon,
Stoops to its mirror, gazing steadily;
And, saddened by her beauty, drops one tear,
A falling star; while round it sighs the rune
Of winds, conspirators that sweep from sea,
Whispering of things that fill the heart with fear.

XIV.

High On A Hill

There is a place among the Cape Ann hills
That looks from fir-dark summits on the sea,
Whose surging sapphire changes constantly
Beneath deep heavens, Morning windowsills,
With golden calm, or sunset citadels
With storm, whose towers the winds' confederacy
And bandit thunder hold in rebel fee,
Swooping upon the fisher's sail that swells.
A place, where Sorrow ceases to complain,
And life's old Cares put all their burdens by,
And Weariness forgets itself in rest.
Would that all life were like it; might obtain
Its pure repose, its outlook, strong and high,
That sees, beyond, far Islands of the Blest.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Old Barn

Low, swallow-swept and gray,
Between the orchard and the spring,
All its wide windows overflowing hay,
And crannied doors a-swing,
The old barn stands to-day.

Deep in its hay the Leghorn hides
A round white nest; and, humming soft
On roof and rafter, or its log-rude sides,
Black in the sun-shot loft,
The building hornet glides.

Along its corn-crib, cautiously
As thieving fingers, skulks the rat;
Or in warped stalls of fragrant timothy,
Gnaws at some loosened slat,
Or passes shadowy.

A dream of drouth made audible
Before its door, hot, smooth, and shrill
All day the locust sings. . What other spell
Shall hold it, lazier still
Than the long day's, now tell:

Dusk and the cricket and the strain
Of tree-toad and of frog; and stars
That burn above the rich west's ribbéd stain;
And dropping pasture bars,
And cow-bells up the lane.

Night and the moon and katydid,
And leaf-lisp of the wind-touched boughs;
And mazy shadows that the fireflies thrid;
And sweet breath of the cows,
And the lone owl here hid.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Old Byway

Its rotting fence one scarcely sees
Through sumac and wild blackberries,
Thick elder and the bramble-rose,
Big ox-eyed daisies where the bees
Hang droning in repose.

The little lizards lie all day
Gray on its rocks of lichen-gray;
And, insect-Ariels of the sun,
The butterflies make bright its way,
Its path where chipmunks run.

A lyric there the redbird lifts,
While, twittering, the swallow drifts
'Neath wandering clouds of sleepy cream,-
In which the wind makes azure rifts,-
O'er dells where wood-doves dream.

The brown grasshoppers rasp and bound
Mid weeds and briers that hedge it round;
And in its grass-grown ruts,-where stirs
The harmless snake,-mole-crickets sound
Their faery dulcimers.

At evening, when the sad west turns
To lonely night a cheek that burns,
The tree-toads in the wild-plum sing;
And ghosts of long-dead flowers and ferns
The winds wake, whispering.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Old Creek

The frogs still cry, 'Knee-deep! knee-deep!'
Among its starlit pools,
When dark the woodland lies asleep,
And dusk its water cools:
The fireflies round its bank of ferns
Hang will-o'-wisps for lamps,
Where in a place no eye discerns
Enchantment's host encamps.

The bats above it go and come
In reeling rigadoons,
While Elfland beats a beetle-drum,
Or cricket-fiddle tunes;
And in and out, and all about,
The pixy people dance
To katydid song and green-frog gong
That hold the woods in trance.

The moon looks, listening, through its trees
As if to hear its calls,
Or with long arms of light to seize
Its twinkling waterfalls
With Witchcraft who, a foam-white hand,
Its glimmering banks between,
Beckons from sand to riffled sand,
To something far, unseen.

A ghost, that leans beside it still;
The phantom of a boy,
Who followed once its wildwood will
With barefoot troops of joy:
The soul of him who yearns afar
To see, in dusk and dew,
If still it dances with the star
That once his boyhood knew.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Old Dreamer

COME, let's climb into our attic,
In our house that's old and gray!
Life, you're old and I'm rheumatic,
And — it's close of day.
Lay aside your rags and tatters,
Shirt and shoes so soiled with clay!
They're no use now. Nothing matters—
It is close of day.
Let's to bed. It's cold. No fire.
And no lamp to make a ray.—
Where's our servant, young Desire?—
Gone at close of day.
Oft she served us with fine glances,
Helped us out at work and play:
She is gone now; better chances;
And it's close of day.
Where is Hope, who flaunted scarlet?
Hope, who led us oft astray?
Has she proved herself a harlot
At the close of day?
What's become of Dream and Vision?
Friends we thought were here to stay?
Has life clapped the two in prison
At the close of day?
They are gone; and how we miss them!
They who made our garret gay.
How we used to hug and kiss them! —
But —'tis close of day.
Where's friend Love now? — Who supposes? —
Has he flung himself away?
Left us for a wreath of roses
At the close of day?
And where's Song? the soul elected —
Has he quit us too for aye? —
Was it poverty he suspected
Near the close of day?
How our attic rang their laughter!
How it echoed laugh and lay!
None may take their place hereafter? —

It is close of day.
We have done the best we could do.
Let us kneel awhile and pray.
Now, no matter what we would do,
It is close of day.
Let's to bed then! It's December.
Long enough since it was May! —
Let's forget it, and remember
Now 'tis close of day.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Old Farm

Dormered and verandaed, cool,
Locust-girdled, on the hill;
Stained with weather-wear, and dull-
Streak'd with lichens; every sill
Thresholding the beautiful;

I can see it standing there,
Brown above the woodland deep,
Wrapped in lights of lavender,
By the warm wind rocked asleep,
Violet shadows everywhere.

I remember how the Spring,
Liberal-lapped, bewildered its
Acres orchards, murmuring,
Kissed to blossom; budded bits
Where the wood-thrush came to sing.

Barefoot Spring, at first who trod,
Like a beggermaid, adown
The wet woodland; where the god,
With the bright sun for a crown
And the firmament for rod,

Met her; clothed her; wedded her;
Her Cophetua: when, lo!
All the hill, one breathing blur,
Burst in beauty; gleam and glow
Blent with pearl and lavender.

Seckel, blackheart, palpitant
Rained their bleaching strays; and white
Snowed the damson, bent aslant;
Rambow-tree and romanite
Seemed beneath deep drifts to pant.

And it stood there, brown and gray,
In the bee-boom and the bloom,
In the shadow and the ray,

In the passion and perfume,
Grave as age among the gay.

Wild with laughter romped the clear
Boyish voices round its walls;
Rare wild-roses were the dear
Girlish faces in its halls,
Music-haunted all the year.

Far before it meadows full
Of green pennyroyal sank;
Clover-dotted as with wool
Here and there; with now a bank
Hot of color; and the cool

Dark-blue shadows unconfined
Of the clouds rolled overhead:
Clouds, from which the summer wind
Blew with rain, and freshly shed
Dew upon the flowerkind.

Where through mint and gypsy-lily
Runs the rocky brook away,
Musical among the hilly
Solitudes,-its flashing spray
Sunlight-dashed or forest-stilly,-

Buried in deep sassafras,
Memory follows up the hill
Still some cowbell's mellow brass,
Where the ruined water-mill
Looms, half-hid in cane and grass....

Oh, the farmhouse! is it set
On the hilltop still? 'mid musk
Of the meads? where, violet,
Deepens all the dreaming dusk,
And the locust-trees hang wet.

While the sunset, far and low,
On its westward windows dashes
Primrose or pomegranate glow;

And above, in glimmering splashes,
Lilac stars the heavens sow.

Sleeps it still among its roses,-
Oldtime roses? while the choir
Of the lonesome insects dozes:
And the white moon, drifting higher,
O'er its mossy roof reposes-
Sleeps it still among its roses?

Madison Julius Cawein

The Old Garden

Spurge and sea-pink, hyssop blue,
Dragonhead of purple hue;
Catnip, frosted green and gray,
With blue butterflies a-sway,
These may point you out the way.

These and Summer's acolytes,
Crickets, singing days and nights,
Tell you the old road again;
And adown the tangled lane
Lead you to her window-pane.

Goldenrod and goldenglow
Crowd the gate in which you go;
To your arm they cling and catch,
Kiss the hand that lifts the latch,
Guide you to her garden-patch.

O'er the fence the hollyhock
Leans to greet you; and the stock
Looks as if it thought, 'I knew
You were coming. Gave the cue
To the place to welcome you.'

And the crumpled marigold
And the dahlia, big and bold,
With Sweet Williams, white and red,
Nod at you a drowsy head
From the sleepy flowerbed.

Where all day the brown bees croon,
Honey-drunk; and stars and moon
All night long lean down to hear,
In the silence far and near,
Whippoorwills a-calling clear.

While adown the dewy dark
Flits a flame, a firefly spark,
Leading to a place of myrrh,

Where, in lace and lavender,
Waits the Loveliness of her.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Old Gate Made Of Pickets

There was moonlight in the garden and the chirr and chirp of crickets;
There was scent of pink and peony and deep syringa thickets,
When adown the pathway whitely, where the firefly glimmered brightly,
She came stepping, oh, so lightly,
To the old gate made of pickets.

II.

There were dew and musk and murmur and a voice that hummed odd snatches
Of a song while there she hurried, through the moonlight's silvery patches,
To the rose-grown gate, above her and her softly-singing lover,
With its blossom-tangled cover
And its weight and wooden latches.

III.

Whom she met there, whom she kissed there, mid the moonlight and the roses,
With his arms who there enclosed her, as a tiger-lily encloses
Some white moth that frailly settles on its gold and crimson petals,
Where the garden runs to nettles,
No one knows now or supposes.

IV.

Years have passed since that last meeting; loves have come and loves departed:
Still the garden blooms unchanging; there is nothing broken-hearted
In its beauty, where the hours lounge with sun and moon and showers,
Mid the perfume and the flowers
As in days when those two parted.

V.

Yet the garden and the flowers and the cheerily chirring crickets,
And the moonlight and the fragrance, and the wind that waves the thickets,
They remember what was spoken, and the rose that was a token,
And the gentle heart there broken
By the old gate made of pickets.

The Old Herb-Man

On the barren hillside lone he sat;
On his head he wore a tattered hat;
In his hand he bore a crooked staff;
Never heard I laughter like his laugh,
On the barren hillside, thistle-hoar.

Cracked his laughter sounded, harsh as woe,
As the croaking, thinned, of a crow:
At his back hung, pinned, a wallet old,
Bulged with roots and simples caked with mould:
On the barren hillside in the wind.

Roots of twisted twin-leaf; sassafras;
Bloodroot, tightly whipped 'round with grass;
Adder's-tongue; and, tipped brown and black,
Yellowroot and snakeroot filled his pack,
On the barren hillside, winter-stripped.

There is nothing sadder than old age;
Nothing saddens more than that stage
When, forlornly poor, bent with toil,
One must starve or wring life from the soil,
From the barren hillside, wild and hoar.

Down the barren hillside slow he went,
Cursing at the cold, bowed and bent;
With his bag of mould, herbs and roots,
In his clay-stained garments, clay-caked boots,
Down the barren hillside, poor and old.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Old Home

An old lane, an old gate, an old house by a tree;
A wild wood, a wild brook they will not let me be:
In boyhood I knew them, and still they call to me.

Down deep in my heart's core I hear them and my eyes
Through tear-mists behold them beneath the oldtime skies,
'Mid bee-boom and rose-bloom and orchardlands arise.

I hear them; and heartsick with longing is my soul,
To walk there, to dream there, beneath the sky's blue bowl;
Around me, within me, the weary world made whole.

To talk with the wild brook of all the long-ago;
To whisper the wood-wind of things we used to know
When we were old companions, before my heart knew woe.

To walk with the morning and watch its rose unfold;
To drowse with the noontide lulled on its heart of gold;
To lie with the night-time and dream the dreams of old.

To tell to the old trees, and to each listening leaf,
The longing, the yearning, as in my boyhood brief,
The old hope, the old love, would ease me of my grief.

The old lane, the old gate, the old house by the tree,
The wild wood, the wild brook they will not let me be:
In boyhood I knew them, and still they call to me.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Old Home II

They've torn the old house down, that stood,
Like some kind mother, in this place,
Hugged by its orchard and its wood,
Two sturdy children, strong of race.

This formal place makes no appeal.
I miss the old time happiness
And peace, which often here did heal
The cares of life, the heart's distress.

The shrubs, which snowed their blossoms on
The walks, wide-stretching from the doors
Like friendly arms, are dead and gone,
And over all a grand house soars.

Within its front no welcome lies,
But pride's aloofness; wealth, that stares
From windows, cold as haughty eyes,
The arrogance of new-made heirs.

Its very flowers breathe of cast;
And even the Springtide seems estranged,
In that stiff garden, caught, held fast,
All her wild beauty clipped and changed.

'T is not the Spring, that once I knew,
Who made a glory of her face,
And robed in shimmering light and dew
Moved to wild music in this place.

How fair she walked here with her Hours,
Pouring forth colors and perfumes,
And with her bosom heaped with flowers
Climbed by the rose-vines to its rooms.

Or round the old porch, 'mid the trees,
Fluttered a flute of bluebird-song;
Or murmuring with a myriad bees
Drowsed in the garden all day long.

How Summer, with her apron full
Of manna, shook the red peach down;
Or, stretched among the shadows cool,
Wove for her hair a daisy crown.

Or with her crickets, night and day,
Gossiped of many a faery thing,
Her sweet breath warm with scents of hay
And honey, purple-blossoming.

How Autumn, trailing tattered gold
And scarlet, in the orchard mused,
And of the old trees taking hold
Upon the sward their ripeness bruised.

Or, past its sunset window-panes,
Like thoughts that drift before old eyes,
Whirled red leaves and the ragged rains,
And crows, black-blown, about the skies.

How Winter, huddled in her hood
Of snow and sleet, crouched by its flues;
Or, rushing from the stormy wood,
Rapped at its doors with windy news.

Or in the firelight, through the pane,
Watched Comfort crown with cheer the hearth,
Or Love lead in his Yuletide train
Of hospitality and mirth. . . .

It lived. The house was part of us.
It was not merely wood and stone,
But had a soul, a heart, that thus
Grappled and made us all its own.

The lives that with its life were knit,
In some strange way, beyond the sense,
Had gradually given to it
A look of old experience.

A look, which I shall not forget,

No matter where my ways may roam.
I close my eyes: I see it yet
The old house that was once my home.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Old House In The Wood

Weeds and dead leaves, and leaves the Autumn stains
With hues of rust and rose whence moisture weeps;
Gnarl'd thorns, from which the knotted haw-fruit rains
On paths the gray moss heaps.

One golden flower, like a dreamy thought
In the sad mind of Age, makes bright the wood;
And near it, like a fancy Childhood-fraught,
The toadstool's jaunty hood.

Webs, in whose snares the nimble spiders crouch,
Waiting the prey that comes, moon-winged, with night:
Slugs and the snail which trails the mushroom's pouch,
That marks the wood with white.

An old gaunt house, round which the trees decay,
Its porches fallen and its windows gone,
Starts out at you as if to bar the way,
Or bid you hurry on.

A picket fence, grim as a skeleton arm,
Is flung around a weed-wild garden place;
The gate, o'er which the rose once hung its charm,
Gapes in an empty space.

Here nothing that was beauty's now remains:
Old death and sorrow have made all their own,
And life and love, who wrought here, for their pains
Have nothingness alone.

I stand before the shattered fence and gaze:
All, all is silent now where once was noise
Of household duties, gossip of kind days,
And little children's joys.

Then suddenly I see a shadow slip
From out the house: A ghost of bygone years;
One finger lifted to its pallid lip,
It passes me with tears.

It passes me 'mid whirling leaves and rain.
Between the trees I see it gleam and glide.
I know it for the dream which once in vain
My heart had made its guide.

Was it for this that I had come the blind
Old ways of life back to Love's house again?
The house of Memory, there again to find
The dream that proved in vain?

A will-o'-wisp; a faery fire; a spark,
That led me where I knew not; and at last
Would leave me, lost within the woodland dark,
'Mid shadows of the past.

Again I followed; and again it failed.
And night came on. And then once more it seemed
That all was lost; that nothing more availed
Wen, lo! a window gleamed,

And I was home. . . . Thank God for love! and light,
Set in the window of the days that were!
And for the dream, though vain, that through the night
Leads back to home and her!

Madison Julius Cawein

The Old Inn

Red-Winding from the sleepy town,
One takes the lone, forgotten lane
Straight through the hills. A brush-bird brown
Bubbles in thorn-flowers, sweet with rain,
Where breezes bend the gleaming grain,
And cautious drip of higher leaves
The lower dips that drip again.
Above the tangled trees it heaves
Its gables and its haunted eaves.

One creeper, gnarled and blossomless,
O'erforests all its eastern wall;
The sighing cedars rake and press
Dark boughs along the panes they sprawl;
While, where the sun beats, drone and drawl
The mud-wasps; and one bushy bee,
Gold-dusty, hurls along the hall
To buzz into a crack. To me
The shadows seem too seared to flee.

Of ragged chimneys martins make
Huge pipes of music; twittering, here
They build and roost. My footfalls wake
Strange stealing echoes, till I fear
I'll see my pale self drawing near,
My phantom face as in a glass;
Or one, men murdered, buried where?
Dim in gray stealthy glimmer, pass
With lips that seem to moan 'Alas.'

Madison Julius Cawein

The Old Lane

An old, lost lane; where can it lead?
To stony pastures, where the weed
Purples its plume, or sails its seed:
And from one knoll, the vetch makes green,
Trailing its glimmering ribbon on,
Under deep boughs, a creek is seen,
Flecked with the silver of the dawn.

An old, green lane; where can it go?
Into the valley-land below,
Where red the wilding lilies blow:
Where, under willows, shadowy grey,
The blue-crane wades, the heron glides;
And in each pool the minnows sway,
Twinkling their slim and silvery sides.

An old, railed lane; where does it end?
Beyond the log-bridge at the bend,
Towards which our young feet used to wend:
Where, 'neath a dappled sycamore,
The old mill thrashed its foaming wheel,
And, smiling, at its corn-strewn door
The miller leant all white with meal.

An old, wild lane; I know it well:
The creek, the bridge across the dell:
The old house on the orchard-swell:
The pine-board porch above the creek,
Where oft we used to sit and dream,
Two children, fair of hair and cheek,
Dropping our flowers in the stream.

An old, old lane; I follow it
In fancy; and, where branches knit,
Behold a boy and girl who sit
Beside the mill-dam near the mill;
Or in a flat-boat, old and worn,
Oar lilyward. I see them still
Her dress is rent, his trousers torn.

An old, lost lane. Come, let us find,
As here I have it in my mind,
As boyhood left it far behind!
Yes; let us follow it again,
And meet her, wild of foot and hair,
The tomboy, sweet as sun and rain,
Whom once we worshipped to despair.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Old Remain, The Young Are Gone

The old remain, the young are gone.
The farm dreams lonely on the hill:
From early eve to early dawn
A cry goes with the whippoorwill
'The old remain, the young are gone.'

Where run the roads they wander on?
The young, whose hearts romped shouting here:
Whose feet thrilled rapture through this lawn,
Where sadness walks now all the year.
The old remain, the young are gone.

To what far glory are they drawn?
And do they weary of the quest?
And serve they now a king or pawn
There in the cities of unrest?
The old remain, the young are gone.

They found the life here gray and wan,
Too kind, too poor, too full of peace:
The great mad world of brain and brawn
Called to their young hearts without cease.
The old remain, the young are gone.

They left us to our Avalon,
The ancient fields, the house and trees,
Where we at sunset and at dawn
May sit with dreams and memories.
The old remain, the young are gone.

Dear Heart, draw near and lean upon
My heart, and gaze no more through tears:
We have our love; our work well done,
To help us face the wistful years.
The old remain, the young are gone.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Old Spring

I

Under rocks whereon the rose
Like a streak of morning glows;
Where the azure-throated newt
Drowns on the twisted root;
And the brown bees, humming homeward,
Stop to suck the honeydew;
Fern- and leaf-hid, gleaming gloamward,
Drips the wildwood spring I knew,
Drips the spring my boyhood knew.

II

Myrrh and music everywhere
Haunt its cascades-like the hair
That a Naiad tosses cool,
Swimming strangely beautiful,
With white fragrance for her bosom,
And her mouth a breath of song-
Under leaf and branch and blossom
Flows the woodland spring along,
Sparkling, singing flows along.

III

Still the wet wan mornings touch
Its gray rocks, perhaps; and such
Slender stars as dusk may have
Pierce the rose that roofs its wave;
Still the thrush may call at noontide
And the whippoorwill at night;
Nevermore, by sun or moontide,
Shall I see it gliding white,
Falling, flowing, wild and white.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Old Water Mill

Wild ridge on ridge the wooded hills arise,
Between whose breezy vistas gulfs of skies
Pilot great clouds like towering argosies,
And hawk and buzzard breast the azure breeze.
With many a foaming fall and glimmering reach
Of placid murmur, under elm and beech,
The creek goes twinkling through long gleams and glooms
Of woodland quiet, summered with perfumes:
The creek, in whose clear shallows minnow-schools
Glitter or dart; and by whose deeper pools
The blue kingfishers and the herons haunt;
That, often startled from the freckled flaunt
Of blackberry-lilies-where they feed or hide-
Trail a lank flight along the forestside
With eery clangor. Here a sycamore
Smooth, wave-uprooted, builds from shore to shore
A headlong bridge; and there, a storm-hurled oak
Lays a long dam, where sand and gravel choke
The water's lazy way. Here mistflower blurs
Its bit of heaven; there the ox-eye stirs
Its gloaming hues of pearl and gold; and here,
A gray, cool stain, like dawn's own atmosphere,
The dim wild carrot lifts its crumpled crest:
And over all, at slender flight or rest,
The dragonflies, like coruscating rays
Of lapis-lazuli and chrysoprase,
Drowsily sparkle through the summer days:
And, dewlap-deep, here from the noontide heat
The bell-hung cattle find a cool retreat;
And through the willows girdling the hill,
Now far, now near, borne as the soft winds will,
Comes the low rushing of the water-mill.

Ah, lovely to me from a little child,
How changed the place! wherein once, undefiled,
The glad communion of the sky and stream
Went with me like a presence and a dream.
Where once the brambled meads and orchardlands,
Poured ripe abundance down with mellow hands

Of summer; and the birds of field and wood
Called to me in a tongue I understood;
And in the tangles of the old rail-fence
Even the insect tumult had some sense,
And every sound a happy eloquence:
And more to me than wisest books can teach
The wind and water said; whose words did reach
My soul, addressing their magnificent speech,-
Raucous and rushing,-from the old mill-wheel,
That made the rolling mill-cogs snore and reel,
Like some old ogre in a faerytale
Nodding above his meat and mug of ale.

How memory takes me back the ways that lead-
As when a boy-through woodland and through mead!
To orchards fruited; or to fields in bloom;
Or briery fallows, like a mighty room,
Through which the winds swing censers of perfume,
And where deep blackberries spread miles of fruit;-
A wildwood feast, that stayed the plowboy's foot
When to the tasseling acres of the corn
He drove his team, fresh in the primrose morn;
And from the liberal banquet, nature lent,
Plucked dewy handfuls as he whistling went.-

A boy once more, I stand with sunburnt feet
And watch the harvester sweep down the wheat;
Or laze with warm limbs in the unstacked straw
Near by the thresher, whose insatiate maw
Devours the sheaves, hot-drawling out its hum-
Like some great sleepy bee, above a bloom,
Made drunk with honey-while, grown big with grain,
The bulging sacks receive the golden rain.
Again I tread the valley, sweet with hay,
And hear the bobwhite calling far away,
Or wood-dove cooing in the elder-brake;
Or see the sassafras bushes madly shake
As swift, a rufous instant, in the glen
The red fox leaps and gallops to his den:
Or, standing in the violet-colored gloam,
Hear roadways sound with holiday riding home
From church or fair, or country barbecue,

Which half the county to some village drew.

How spilled with berries were its summer hills,
And strewn with walnuts all its autumn rills!-
And chestnuts too! burred from the spring's long flowers;
June's, when their tree-tops streamed delirious showers
Of blossoming silver, cool, crepuscular,
And like a nebulous radiance shone afar.-
And maples! how their sappy hearts would pour
Rude troughs of syrup, when the winter hoar
Steamed with the sugar-kettle, day and night,
And, red, the snow was streaked with firelight.
Then it was glorious! the mill-dam's edge
One slope of frosty crystal, laid a ledge
Of pearl across; above which, sleeted trees
Tossed arms of ice, that, clashing in the breeze,
Tinkled the ringing creek with icicles,
Thin as the peal of far-off elfin bells:
A sound that in my city dreams I hear,
That brings before me, under skies that clear,
The old mill in its winter garb of snow,
Its frozen wheel like a hoar beard below,
And its west windows, two deep eyes aglow.

Ah, ancient mill, still do I picture o'er
Thy cobwebbed stairs and loft and grain-strewn floor;
Thy door,-like some brown, honest hand of toil,
And honorable with service of the soil,-
Forever open; to which, on his back
The prosperous farmer bears his bursting sack,
And while the miller measures out his toll,
Again I hear, above the cogs' loud roll,-
That makes stout joist and rafter groan and sway,-
The harmless gossip of the passing day:
Good country talk, that says how so-and-so
Lived, died, or wedded: how curculio
And codling-moth play havoc with the fruit,
Smut ruins the corn and blight the grapes to boot:
Or what is news from town: next county fair:
How well the crops are looking everywhere:-
Now this, now that, on which their interests fix,
Prospects for rain or frost, and politics.

While, all around, the sweet smell of the meal
Filters, warm-pouring from the rolling wheel
Into the bin; beside which, mealy white,
The miller looms, dim in the dusty light.

Again I see the miller's home between
The crinkling creek and hills of beechen green:
Again the miller greets me, gaunt and brown,
Who oft o'erawed my boyhood with his frown
And gray-browed mien: again he tries to reach
My youthful soul with fervid scriptural speech.-
For he, of all the countryside confessed,
The most religious was and goodliest;
A Methodist, who at all meetings led;
Prayed with his family ere they went to bed.
No books except the Bible had he read-
At least so seemed it to my younger head.-
All things of Heaven and Earth he'd prove by this,
Be it a fact or mere hypothesis:
For to his simple wisdom, reverent,

'The Bible says'
was all of argument.-
God keep his soul! his bones were long since laid
Among the sunken gravestones in the shade
Of those dark-lichened rocks, that wall around
The family burying-ground with cedars crowned:
Where bristling teasel and the brier combine
With clambering wood-rose and the wildgrape-vine
To hide the stone whereon his name and dates
Neglect, with mossy hand, obliterates.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Other Woman

You have shut me out from your tears and grief
Over the man laid low and hoary.
Listen to me now: I am no thief!
You have shut me out from your tears and grief,
Listen to me, I will tell my story.

The love of a man is transitory.
What do you know of his past? the years
He gave to another his manhood's glory?
The love of a man is transitory.
Listen to me now: open your ears.

Over the dead have done with tears!
Over the man who loved to madness
Me the woman you met with sneers,
Over the dead have done with tears!
Me the woman so sunk in badness.

He loved me ever, and that is gladness!
There by the dead now tell her so;
There by the dead where she bows in sadness.
He loved me ever, and that is gladness!
Mine the gladness and hers the woe.

The best of his life was mine. Now go,
Tell her this that her pride may perish,
Her with his name, his wife, you know!
The best of his life was mine. Now go,
Tell her this so she cease to cherish.

Bury him then with pomp and flourish!
Bury him now without my kiss!
Here is a thing for your hearts to nourish,
Bury him then with pomp and flourish!
Bury him now I have told you this.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Owl

Here is a tale for ladies with romances:
There was an owl; composer and musician,
Who looked as wise as if he had a mission,
And at all art cast supercilious glances.
People proclaimed him great because he said it;
And, like the great, he never played, nor printed
His compositions, 'though 'twas whispered, hinted
He'd written something but no one had read it.
Owl-eyed he posed at functions of position,
Hirsute, and eye-glassed, looking analytic,
Opening his mouth to worshipping female knowledge:
And then he married. A woman of ambition.
A singer, teacher, and a musical critic.
Just what he wanted. He became a college.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Owlet

I

When dusk is drowned in drowsy dreams,
And slow the hues of sunset die;
When firefly and moth go by,
And in still streams the new moon seems
Another moon and sky:
Then from the hills there comes a cry,
The owlet's cry:
A shivering voice that sobs and screams,
With terror screams:-

'Who is it, who is it, who-o-o?
Who rides through the dusk and dew,
With a pair of horns,
As thin as thorns,
And face a bubble-blue?-
Who, who, who!
Who is it, who is it, who-o-o?'

II

When night has dulled the lily's white,
And opened wide the moonflower's eyes;
When pale mists rise and veil the skies,
And round the height in whispering flight
The night-wind sounds and sighs:
Then in the wood again it cries,
The owlet cries:
A shivering voice that calls in fright,
In maundering fright:-

'Who is it, who is it, who-o-o?
Who walks with a shuffling shoe
'Mid the gusty trees,
With a face none sees,
And a form as ghostly, too?-
Who, who, who!
Who is it, who is it, who-o-o?'

III

When midnight leans a listening ear
And tinkles on her insect lutes;
When 'mid the roots the cricket flutes,
And marsh and mere, now far, now near,
A jack-o'-lantern foots:
Then o'er the pool again it hoots,
The owlet hoots:
A voice that shivers as with fear,
That cries with fear:-

'Who is it, who is it, who-o-o?
Who creeps with his glowworm crew
Above the mire
With a corpse-light fire,
As only dead men do?-
Who, who, who!
Who is it, who is it, who-o-o?'

Madison Julius Cawein

The Ox

Here is a tale for farmer and for peasant:
There was an ox, who might have ploughed for Jason,
So strong was he, his huge head like a bason,
A Gothic helmet with enormous crescent.
Stolid of look and slow of hoof and steady,
Meek was the beast and born but to be driven,
Unmindful of the yoke which toil had given,
Toil with his goad and lash for ever ready.
One day a bull, who was the bullock's neighbor,
Proud as a sultan haremed with his women,
Lowd to the ox who had received a beating:
'You are a fool! What have you for your labour?
Blows and bad food! Go to. Why don't you show men?'
The ox was but an ox and went on eating.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Paphian Venus

With anxious eyes and dry, expectant lips,
Within the sculptured stoa by the sea,
All day she waited while, like ghostly ships,
Long clouds rolled over Paphos: the wild bee
Hung in the sultry poppy, half asleep,
Beside the shepherd and his drowsy sheep.

White-robed she waited day by day; alone
With the white temple's shrined concupiscence,
The Paphian goddess on her obscene throne,
Binding all chastity to violence,
All innocence to lust that feels no shame-
Venus Mylitta born of filth and flame.

So must they haunt her marble portico,
The devotees of Paphos, passion-pale
As moonlight streaming through the stormy snow;
Dark eyes desirous of the stranger sail,
The gods shall bring across the Cyprian Sea,
With him elected to their mastery.

A priestess of the temple came, when eve
Blazed, like a satrap's triumph, in the west;

And watched her listening to the ocean's heave,
Dusk's golden glory on her face and breast,
And in her hair the rosy wind's caress,-
Pitying her dedicated tenderness.

When out of darkness night persuades the stars,
A dream shall bend above her saying, 'Soon
A barque shall come with purple sails and spars,
Sailing from Tarsus 'neath a low white moon;
And thou shalt see one in a robe of Tyre
Facing toward thee like the god Desire.

'Rise then! as, clad in starlight, riseth Night-
Thy nakedness clad on with loveliness!
So shalt thou see him, like the god Delight,

Breast through the foam and climb the cliff to press
Hot lips to thine and lead thee in before
Love's awful presence where ye shall adore.'

Thus at her heart the vision entered in,
With lips of lust the lips of song had kissed,
And eyes of passion laughing with sweet sin,
A shimmering splendor robed in amethyst,-
Seen like that star set in the glittering gloam,-
Venus Mylitta born of fire and foam.

So shall she dream until, near middle night,-
When on the blackness of the ocean's rim
The moon, like some war-galleon all alight
With blazing battle, from the sea shall swim,-
A shadow, with inviolate lips and eyes,
Shall rise before her speaking in this wise:

'So hast thou heard the promises of one,-
Of her, with whom the God of gods is wroth,-
For whom was prophesied at Babylon
The second death-Chaldaean Mylidoth!
Whose feet take hold on darkness and despair,
Hissing destruction in her heart and hair.

'Wouldst thou behold the vessel she would bring?-
A wreck! ten hundred years have smeared with slime:
A hulk! where all abominations cling,
The spawn and vermin of the seas of time:
Wild waves have rotted it; fierce suns have scorched;
Mad winds have tossed and stormy stars have torched.

'Can lust give birth to love? The vile and foul
Be mother to beauty? Lo! can this thing be?-
A monster like a man shall rise and howl
Upon the wreck across the crawling sea,
Then plunge; and swim unto thee; like an ape,
A beast all belly.-Thou canst not escape!'

Gone was the shadow with the suffering brow;
And in the temple's porch she lay and wept,
Alone with night, the ocean, and her vow.-

Then up the east the moon's full splendor swept,
And dark between it-wreck or argosy?-
A sudden vessel far away at sea.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Parting

She passed the thorn-trees, whose gaunt branches tossed
Their spider-shadows round her; and the breeze,
Beneath the ashen moon, was full of frost,
And mouthed and mumbled to the sickly trees,
Like some starved hag who sees her children freeze.

Dry-eyed she waited by the sycamore.
Some stars made misty blotches in the sky.
And all the wretched willows on the shore
Looked faded as a jaundiced cheek or eye.
She felt their pity and could only sigh.

And then his skiff ground on the river rocks.
Whistling he came into the shadow made
By that dead tree. He kissed her dark brown locks;
And round her form his eager arms were laid.
Passive she stood, her secret unbetrayed.

And then she spoke, while still his greeting kiss
Ached in her hair. She did not dare to lift
Her eyes to his-her anguished eyes to his,
While tears smote crystal in her throat. One rift
Of weakness humored might set all adrift.

Fields over which a path, overwhelmed with burrs
And ragweeds, noisy with the grasshoppers,
Leads,-lost, irresolute as paths the cows
Wear through the woods,-unto a woodshed; then,
With wrecks of windows, to a huddled house,
Where men have murdered men.

A house, whose tottering chimney, clay and rock,
Is seamed and crannied; whose lame door and lock
Are bullet-bored; around which, there and here,
Are sinister stains.-One dreads to look around.-
The place seems thinking of that time of fear
And dares not breathe a sound.

Within is emptiness: The sunlight falls

On faded journals papering the walls;
On advertisement chromos, torn with time,
Around a hearth where wasps and spiders build.-
The house is dead: meseems that night of crime
It, too, was shot and killed.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Passing Glory

Slow sinks the sun, a great carbuncle ball
Red in the cavern of a sombre cloud,
And in her garden, where the dense weeds crowd,
Among her dying asters stands the Fall,
Like some lone woman in a ruined hall,
Dreaming of desolation and the shroud;
Or through decaying woodlands goes, down-bowed,
Hugging the tatters of her gipsy shawl.
The gaunt wind rises, like an angry hand,
And sweeps the sprawling spider from its web,
Smites frantic music in the twilight's ear;
And all around, like melancholy sand,
Rains dead leaves down wild leaves, that mark the ebb,
In Earth's dark hour-glass, of another year.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Path By The Creek

There is a path that leads
Through purple iron-weeds,
By button-bush and mallow
Along a creek;
A path that wildflowers hallow,
That wild birds seek;
Roofed thick with eglantine
And grape and trumpet-vine.

This side, blackberries sweet
Glow cobalt in the heat;
That side, a creamy yellow,
In summertime
The pawpaws slowly mellow;
And autumn's prime
Strews red the Chickasaw,
Persimmon brown and haw.

The glittering dragon-fly,
A wingéd flash, goes by;
And tawny wasp and hornet
Seem gleams that drone;
The beetle, like a garnet,
Slips from the stone;
And butterflies float there,
Spangling with gold the air.

Here the brown thrashers hide,
The chat and cat-bird chide;
The blue kingfisher houses
Above the stream,
And here the heron drowns
Lost in his dream;
The vireo's flitting note
Haunts all the wild remote.

And now a cow's slow bell
Tinkles along the dell;
Where breeze-dropped petals winnow

From blossomy limbs
On waters, where the minnow,
Faint-twinkling, swims;
Where, in the root-arched shade,
Slim prisms of light are laid.

When in the tangled thorn
The new-moon hangs a horn,
Or, 'mid the sunset's islands,
Guides a canoe,
The brown owl in the silence
Calls, and the dew
Beads here its orbs of damp,
Each one a firefly lamp.

Then when the night is still
Here sings the whippoorwill;
And stealthy sounds of crickets,
And winds that pass,
Whispering, through bramble thickets
Along the grass,
Faint with far scents of hay,
Seem feet of dreams astray.

And where the water shines
Dark through tree-twisted vines,
Some water-spirit, dreaming,
Braids in her hair
A star's reflection; seeming
A jewel there;
While all the sweet night long
Ripples her quiet song....

Would I could imitate,
O path, thy happy state!
Making my life all beauty,
All bloom and beam;
Knowing no other duty
Than just to dream,
And far from pain and woe
Lead feet that come and go.

Leading to calm content,
O'er ways the Master went,
Through lowly things and humble,
To peace and love;
Teaching the lives that stumble
To look above,
Forget the world of toil
And all its sad turmoil.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Path Of Faery

I

When dusk falls cool as a rained-on rose,
And a tawny tower the twilight shows,
With the crescent moon, the silver moon, the curved
new moon in a space that glows,
A turret window that grows alight;
There is a path that my Fancy knows,
A glimmering, shimmering path of night,
That far as the Land of Faery goes.

II

And I follow the path, as Fancy leads,
Over the mountains, into the meads,
Where the firefly cities, the glowworm cities, the faery
cities are strung like beads,
Each city a twinkling star:
And I live a life of valorous deeds,
And march with the Faery King to war,
And ride with his knights on milk-white steeds.

III

Or it's there in the whirl of their life I sit,
Or dance in their houses with starlight lit,
Their blossom houses, their flower houses, their elfin
houses, of fern leaves knit,
With fronded spires and domes:
And there it is that my lost dreams flit,
And the ghost of my childhood, smiling, roams
With the faery children so dear to it.

IV

And it's there I hear that they all come true,
The faery stories, whatever they do-
Elf and goblin, dear elf and goblin, loved elf and goblin,
and all the crew

Of witch and wizard and gnome and fay,
And prince and princess, that wander through
The storybooks we have put away,
The faerytales that we loved and knew.

V

The face of Adventure lures you there,
And the eyes of Danger bid you dare,
While ever the bugles, the silver bugles, the far-off
bugles of Elfland blare,
The faery trumpets to battle blow;
And you feel their thrill in your heart and hair,
And you fain would follow and mount and go
And march with the Faeries anywhere.

VI

And she-she rides at your side again,
Your little sweetheart whose age is ten:
She is the princess, the faery princess, the princess fair
that you worshiped when
You were a prince in a faerytale;
And you do great deeds as you did them then,
With your magic spear, and enchanted mail,
Braving the dragon in his den.

VII

And you ask again, -'Oh, where shall we ride,
Now that the monster is slain, my bride?'-
'Back to the cities, the firefly cities, the glowworm
cities where we can hide,
The beautiful cities of Faeryland.
And the light of my eyes shall be your guide,
The light of my eyes and my snow-white hand-
And there forever we two will abide.'

Madison Julius Cawein

The Path To The Woods

ITS friendship and its carelessness
Did lead me many a mile,
Through goat's-rue, with its dim caress,
And pink and pearl-white smile;
Through crowfoot, with its golden lure,
And promise of far things,
And sorrel with its glance demure
And wide-eyed wonderings.

It led me with its innocence,
As childhood leads the wise,
With elbows here of tattered fence,
And blue of wildflower eyes;
With whispers low of leafy speech,
And brook-sweet utterance;
With bird-like words of oak and beech, 1
And whisperings clear as Pan's.

It led me with its childlike charm,
As candor leads desire,
Now with a clasp of blossomy arm,
A butterfly kiss of fire;
Now with a toss of tousled gold,
A barefoot sound of green,
A breath of musk, of mossy mold,
With vague allurements keen.

It led me with remembered things
Into an old-time vale,
Peopled with faëry glimmerings,
And flower-like fancies pale;
Where fungous forms stood, gold and gray,
Each in its mushroom gown,
And, roofed with red, glimpsed far away,
A little toadstool town.

It led me with an idle ease,
A vagabond look and air,
A sense of ragged arms and knees

In weeds grown everywhere;
It led me, as a gypsy leads,
To dingles no one knows,
With beauty burred with thorny seeds,
And tangled wild with rose.

It led me as simplicity
Leads age and its demands,
With bee-beat of its ecstasy,
And berry-stained touch of hands;
With round revealments, puff-ball white,
Through rents of weedy brown,
And petaled movements of delight
In roseleaf limb and gown.

It led me on and on and on,
Beyond the Far Away,
Into a world long dead and gone,—
The world of Yesterday:
A faëry world of memory,
Old with its hills and streams,
Wherein the child I used to be
Still wanders with his dreams.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Pessimist

Here is a tale for uncles and old aunties:
There was a man once who denied the Devil,
Yet in the world saw nothing else but evil;
A pessimist, with face as sour as Dante's.
Still people praised him; men he loathed and hated,
And cursed beneath his breath for wretched sinners,
While still he drank with them and ate their dinners,
And listened to their talk and tolerated.
At last he wrote a book, full of invective
And vile abuse of earth and all its nations,
Denying God and Devil, Heaven and Hades.
Fame followed this. 'His was the right perspective!'
'A great philosopher!' He lost all patience.
But still went out to dine with Lords and Ladies.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Picture

Above her, pearl and rose the heavens lay:
Around her, flowers flattered earth with gold,
Or down the path in insolence held sway-
Like cavaliers who ride the king's highway-
Scarlet and buff, within a garden old.

Beyond the hills, faint-heard through belts of wood,
Bells, Sabbath-sweet, swooned from some far-off town:
Gamboge and gold, broad sunset colors strewed
The purple west as if, with God imbued,
Her mighty palette Nature there laid down.

Amid such flowers, underneath such skies,
Embodying all life knows of sweet and fair,
She stood; love's dreams in girlhood's face and eyes,
Fair as a star that comes to emphasize
The mingled beauty of the earth and air.

Behind her, seen through vines and orchard trees,
Gray with its twinkling windows-like the face
Of calm old age that sits and dreams at ease-
Porched with old roses, haunts of honeybees,
The homestead loomed within a lilled space.

For whom she waited in the afterglow,
Star-eyed and golden 'mid the poppy and rose,
I do not know; I do not care to know,-
It is enough I keep her picture so,
Hung up, like poetry, in my life's dull prose.

A fragrant picture, where I still may find
Her face untouched of sorrow or regret,
Unspoiled of contact; ever young and kind;
The spiritual sweetheart of my soul and mind,
She had not been, perhaps, if we had met.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Place

Wherein is it so beautiful?
In all things dim and all things cool:
In silence, that is built of leaves
And wind and spray of waterfall;
And, golden as the half-ripe sheaves,
In light that is not light at all.

II.

Wherein is it like joy and spring?
In petaled musk and singing wing:
In dreams, that come like butterflies
And moths, dim-winged with downy grey;
And myths, that watch with bark-brown eyes
Beauty who sleeps beside the way.

III.

Wherein, heart, is it all in all?
In what to me did there befall:
The echo of a word once said,
That haunts it still like some sweet ghost;
Youth's rapture, bright and gold of head,
And the wild love there found and lost.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Ploughboy

A lilac mist mazes warm the hills,
And silvery through it threads m:
The redbird's cadence throbs and thrills,
The jaybirds scream.
The bluets' stars begin to gleam,
And 'mid them, whispering with the rills,
The morning-hours dream.

The ploughboy Spring drives out his plough,
A robin's whistle on his lips;
And as he goes with lifted brow,
And snaps and whips
His lash of wind, a sunbeam tips,
The wildflowers laugh, and on the bough
The blossom skips.

The scent of winter-mellowed loam
And greenwood buds is blown from him,
As blithe he takes his young way home,
Large, strong of limb,
Along the hilltop's sunset brim,
Whistling; the first star, white as foam,
In his hat's blue rim.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Poet

He stands above all worldly schism,
And, gazing over life's abysm
Beholds within the starry range
Of heaven laws of death and change,
That, through his soul's prophetic prism,
Are turned to rainbows wild and strange.

Through nature is his hope made surer
Of that ideal, his allurer,
By whom his life is upward drawn
To mount pale pinnacles of dawn,
'Mid which all that is fairer, purer
Of love and lore it come upon.

An alkahest, that makes gold metal
Of dross, his mind is where one petal
Of one wild-rose will all outweigh
The piled-up facts of everyday
Where commonplaces, there that settle,
Are changed to things of heavenly ray.

He climbs by steps of stars and flowers,
Companioned of the dreaming hours,
And sets his feet in pastures where
No merely mortal feet may fare;
And higher than the stars he towers
Though lowlier than the flowers there.

His comrades are his own high fancies
And thoughts in which his soul romances;
And every part of heaven or earth
He visits, lo, assumes new worth;
And touched with loftier traits and trances
Re-shines as with a lovelier birth.

He is the play, likewise the player;
The word that's said, also the sayer;
And in the books of heart and head
There is no thing he has not read;

Of time and tears he is the weigher,
And mouthpiece 'twixt the quick and dead.

He dies: but, mountain ever higher,
Wings Phoenix-like from out his pyre
Above our mortal day and night,
Clothed on with semipiternal light;
And raimented in thought's far fire
Flames on in everlasting flight.

Unseen, yet seen, on heights of visions,
Above all praise and world derisions,
His spirit and his deathless brood
Of dreams fare on, a multitude,
While on the pillar of great missions
His name and place are granite-hewed.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Pond

And I told the boy next door
What Jack Frost had done; and he
Said, 'Ah shucks! that's nothing; see?
I have seen all that before.
You just come along with me;
I will show you something more.'
And he took me to a lot
Where there was a shallow pool;
And this pool was frozen; full
Of the slickest ice. I got
On it, but he said, 'You fool!
It will break. You'd better not.'
And right then it broke. O my!
In I went above my knees.
Thought that I would surely freeze.
Old Jack Frost just caught me by
Both my legs; began to squeeze;
And then I began to cry.
I just helloed, and the boy
Helloed too; until a man,
With a dinner-pail or can,
Heard us, and cried out, 'Ahoy!
What 've you run into?' Then ran
Till he got there, to our joy.
He just took me round the waist,
Lifted me as easy; so;
Then he said, 'I think, by Joe!
You two boys were both in haste
To go skating, don't you know?
Better wait till summer's chased.
'Where you live, eh?' And I told.
'Well, we'll have to hurry. Come.
Old Jack Frost has nipped my thumb.
I shall have an awful cold;
And suppose that you'll have some.
Can't be helped. Hope Ma won't scold.
'My! but you're a mighty fine
Little boy! Remind me of
One at home my own I love.

Eyes just like yours clear as wine.
There now! I have lost my glove.
You're just like that boy of mine.
'Wish he knew you. Got blue eyes
Same as yours and same brown hair.
But he's crippled. Has a chair
Where he sits all day, or lies.
'He's our only love and care'
So his mother says, then cries.
'Here's your street and here's your home.
Run 'long to your mother. Then
I'll be seeing you again.
So long. Hope the day will come
My boy'll be like you young men,
Straight and strong and mettlesome.'
Then he went and, man alive!
I felt sorrier for that man
With his battered dinner-can,
And his crippled boy, than I've
Ever felt. And I began
Crying; and then made a dive
For the back-door. Won't forget
All the fuss there: first they told
Mother, and how she did scold!
Father said, 'This getting wet
Will, I'm sure, give you a cold.'
But I have n't had it yet.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Poppet-Show

Once I gave a 'poppa-show':
And I had the greatest fun!
Every boy and girl I know
That is, nearly every one,
Came to see it: I just put
Some old toys into a box;
Paper things that I had cut,
On a stage made out of blocks;
And the children came in flocks
When I called out, 'Yo, ho, oh!
Pin to see the 'poppa-show.'"

Boy who lives next door, he came;
Took a peep and said, 'That clown
'S worth the money, just the same
As most any show in town.'
Then he went away and brought
Lot of girls and boys to see;
Brought so many that they fought,
And were bad as they could be:
It was like a Christmas-tree:
While I stood there shouting, 'Ho!
Pin to see the 'poppa-show.'"

Some just laughed; and one or two
Said it was n't worth a pin:
And another said, 'He knew
When he had been taken in.'
And a little girl, who paid
A gold pin right out her dress,
Cried and said she was afraid
She'd be spanked at home unless
She received it back. I guess
She was spanked. I said, 'You know,
Pin to see the 'poppa-show.'"

One boy tried to hit me then,
But the boy who lives next door
He got madder than a hen,

Knocked him down, right on the floor,
And then pulled him out and I
Helped him pull him. Then a girl
Laughed and one began to cry,
For, a boy, he pulled her curl:
Then the whole room was a whirl
While I shouted, 'Oh, yo, ho!
Pin to see the 'poppa-show."

Then a big boy grabbed my box,
Threw it in the midst of all;
All the paper-dolls and blocks
Clattered on the floor or wall,
Made a mighty rumpus: one
Hit me on the head a slap,
And I yelled. But it was fun;
Did n't care a cent or rap.
Suddenly there came a tap
At the door, and I cried, 'Ho!
Pin to see the 'poppa-show."

Then my mother and my nurse
Entered; and she said, 'What boys!
Girls too! Could n't be much worse.
Making such a lot of noise.
You should all be sent to bed,
Or be whipped. I never knew
Children that were so ill-bred,
Nor a wilder, rowdier crew.
Wonder what'll become of you!
Now just pack yourselves and go!
No more pins or 'poppa-show."

And they went, and mother, she,
When the last of them was gone,
Left me in the nursery,
Made me put my night-clothes on:
And she took my pins away,
And I cried just fit to kill
But she gave them back next day,
When I promised I'd be still,
And not play like Jack and Jill,

Tumbling round and to and fro
With a noisy 'poppa-show.'

Madison Julius Cawein

The Portrait

In some quaint Nurnberg
maler-atelier

Uprummaged. When and where was never clear
Nor yet how he obtained it. When, by whom
'Twas painted-who shall say? itself a gloom
Resisting inquisition. I opine
It is a Duerer. Mark that touch, this line;
Are they deniable?-Distinguished grace
Of the pure oval of the noble face
Tarnished in color badly. Half in light
Extend it so. Incline. The exquisite
Expression leaps abruptly: piercing scorn;
Imperial beauty; each, an icy thorn
Of light, disdainful eyes and... well! no use!
Effaced and but beheld! a sad abuse
Of patience.-Often, vaguely visible,
The portrait fills each feature, making swell
The heart with hope: avoiding face and hair
Start out in living hues; astonished, 'There!-
The picture lives!' your soul exults, when, lo!
You hold a blur; an undetermined glow
Dislimns a daub.-'Restore?'-Ah, I have tried
Our best restorers, and it has defied.

Storied, mysterious, say, perhaps a ghost
Lives in the canvas; hers, some artist lost;
A duchess', haply. Her he worshiped; dared
Not tell he worshiped. From his window stared
Of Nuremberg one sunny morn when she
Passed paged to court. Her cold nobility
Loved, lived for like a purpose. Seized and plied
A feverish brush-her face!-Despaired and died.

The narrow Judengasse: gables frown
Around a humpbacked usurer's, where brown,
Neglected in a corner, long it lay,
Heaped in a pile of riff-raff, such as-say,
Retables done in tempera and old

Panels by Wohlgemuth; stiff paintings cold
Of martyrs and apostles,-names forgot,-
Holbeins and Duerers, say; a haloed lot
Of praying saints, madonnas: these, perchance,
'Mid wine-stained purples, mothed; an old romance;
A crucifix and rosary; inlaid
Arms, Saracen-elaborate; a strayed
Niello of Byzantium; rich work,
In bronze, of Florence: here a murderous dirk,
There holy patens.
So.-My ancestor,
The first De Herancour, esteemed by far
This piece most precious, most desirable;

Purchased and brought to Paris. It looked well
In the dark paneling above the old
Hearth of the room. The head's religious gold,
The soft severity of the nun face,
Made of the room an apostolic place
Revered and feared.-
Like some lived scene I see
That Gothic room: its Flemish tapestry;
Embossed within the marble hearth a shield,
Carved 'round with thistles; in its argent field
Three sable mallets-arms of Herancour-
Topped with the crest, a helm and hands that bore,
Outstretched, two mallets. On a lectern laid,-
Between two casements, lozenge-paned, embayed,-
A vellum volume of black-lettered text.
Near by a taper, winking as if vexed
With silken gusts a nervous curtain sends,
Behind which, haply, daggered Murder bends.

And then I seem to see again the hall;
The stairway leading to that room.-Then all
The terror of that night of blood and crime
Passes before me.-
It is Catherine's time:
The house De Herancour's. On floors, splashed red,
Torchlight of Medicean wrath is shed.
Down carven corridors and rooms,-where couch
And chairs lie shattered and black shadows crouch

Torch-pierced with fear,-a sound of swords draws near-
The stir of searching steel.
What find they here,
Torch-bearer, swordsman, and fierce halberdier,
On St. Bartholomew's?-A Huguenot!
Dead in his chair! Eyes, violently shot
With horror, glaring at the portrait there:
Coiling his neck a blood line, like a hair
Of finest fire. The portrait, like a fiend,-
Looking exalted visitation,-leaned
From its black panel; in its eyes a hate
Satanic; hair-a glowing auburn; late
A dull, enduring golden.
'Just one thread
Of the fierce hair around his throat,' they said,
'Twisting a burning ray; he-staring dead.'

Madison Julius Cawein

The Puritans' Christmas

Their only thought religion,
What Christmas joys had they,
The stern, staunch Pilgrim Fathers who
Knew naught of holiday?

A log-church in the clearing
'Mid solitudes of snow,
The wild-beast and the wilderness,
And lurking Indian foe.

No time had they for pleasure,
Whom God had put to school;
A sermon was their Christmas cheer,
A psalm their only Yule.

They deemed it joy sufficient,-
Nor would Christ take it ill,-
That service to Himself and God
Employed their spirits still.

And so through faith and prayer
Their powers were renewed,
And souls made strong to shape a World,
And tame a solitude.

A type of revolution,
Wrought from an iron plan,
In the largest mold of liberty
God cast the Puritan.

A better land they founded,
That Freedom had for bride,
The shackles of old despotism
Struck from her limbs and side.

With faith within to guide them,
And courage to perform,
A nation, from a wilderness,
They hewed with their strong arm.

For liberty to worship,
And right to do and dare,
They faced the savage and the storm
With voices raised in prayer.

For God it was who summoned,
And God it was who led,
And God would not forsake the love
That must be clothed and fed.

Great need had they of courage!
Great need of faith had they!
And lacking these-how otherwise
For us had been this day!

Madison Julius Cawein

The Purple Valleys

Far in the purple valleys of illusion
I see her waiting, like the soul of music,
With deep eyes, lovelier than cerulean pansies,
Shadow and fire, yet merciless as poison;
With red lips, sweeter than Arabian storax,
Yet bitterer than myrrh.-O tears and kisses!
O eyes and lips, that haunt my soul forever!

Again Spring walks transcendent on the mountains:
The woods are hushed: the vales are blue with shadows:
Above the heights, steeped in a thousand splendors,
Like some vast canvas of the gods, hangs burning
The sunset's wild sciography: and slowly
The moon treads heaven's proscenium,-night's stately
White queen of love and tragedy and madness.

Again I know forgotten dreams and longings;
Ideals lost; desires dead and buried
Beside the altar sacrifice erected
Within the heart's high sanctuary. Strangely
Again I know the horror and the rapture,
The utterless awe, the joy akin to anguish,
The terror and the worship of the spirit.

Again I feel her eyes pierce through and through me;
Her deep eyes, lovelier than imperial pansies,
Velvet and flame, through which her fierce will holds me,
Powerless and tame, and draws me on and onward
To sad, unsatisfied and animal yearnings,
Wild, unrestrained-the brute within the human
To fling me panting on her mouth and bosom.

Again I feel her lips like ice and fire,
Her red lips, odorous as Arabian storax,
Fragrance and fire, within whose kiss destruction
Lies serpent-like. Intoxicating languors
Resistlessly embrace me, soul and body;
And we go drifting, drifting-she is laughing
Outcasts of God, into the deep's abysm.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Quest

First I asked the honeybee,
Busy in the balmy bowers;
Saying, 'Sweetheart, tell it me:
Have you seen her, honeybee?
She is cousin to the flowers
All the sweetness of the south
In her wild-rose face and mouth.'
But the bee passed silently.

II

Then I asked the forest bird,
Warbling by the woodland waters;
Saying, 'Dearest, have you heard?
Have you heard her, forest bird?
She is one of music's daughters
Never song so sweet by half
As the music of her laugh.'
But the bird said not a word.

III

Next I asked the evening sky,
Hanging out its lamps of fire;
Saying, 'Loved one, passed she by?
Tell me, tell me, evening sky!
She, the star of my desire
Sister whom the Pleiads lost,
And my soul's high pentecost.'
But the sky made no reply.

IV

Where is she? ah, where is she?
She to whom both love and duty
Bind me, yea, immortally.
Where is she? ah, where is she?
Symbol of the Earth-Soul's beauty.
I have lost her. Help my heart

Find her! her, who is a part
Of the pagan soul of me.

Madison Julius Cawein

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Madison Julius Cawein

The Rag-Picker

A pond of filth a sewer flows into,
Around whose edge the evil ragweeds crowd,
Poison in every breath; and, cloud on cloud,
Insects that sing and sting, the pool's fierce spew:
All hideousness, from every street and stew,
And every stench weaves for the place a shroud;
And in its midst a figure, bent and bowed,
A woman who no girlhood ever knew.
Some offal of humanity she seems;
One with the rags she picks and scrapes among;
More soiled, in soul: the veriest rag
Of womankind, whose squalor looks and dreams
Of nothing higher than the cart that flung
Its last load here from which she crams her bag.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Raid

Rain and black night. Beneath the covered bridge
The rushing Fork that roars among its rocks.
Nothing is out. Nothing? What's that which blocks
The long grey road upon the rain-swept ridge?
A horseman! No! A mask! As hewn from jet
With ready gun he waits and sentinels
The open way. Far off he hears wild bells;
And now a signal shrills through wind and wet.
Was that the thunder, or the rushing stream?
The tunnel of the bridge throbs with mad hoofs;
Now its black throat pours out a midnight cloud
Riders! behind whom steadily a gleam
Grows to a glare that silhouettes dark roofs,
Whence armed Pursuit gathers and gallops loud.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Rain-Crow

I

Can freckled August,-drowsing warm and blond
Beside a wheat-shock in the white-topped mead,
In her hot hair the yellow daisies wound,-
O bird of rain, lend aught but sleepy heed
To thee? when no plumed weed, no feathered seed
Blows by her; and no ripple breaks the pond,
That gleams like flint within its rim of grasses,
Through which the dragonfly forever passes
Like splintered diamond.

II

Drouth weights the trees; and from the farmhouse eaves
The locust, pulse-beat of the summer day,
Throbs; and the lane, that shambles under leaves
Limp with the heat-a league of ruddy way-
Is lost in dust; and sultry scents of hay
Breathe from the panting meadows heaped with sheaves-
Now, now, O bird, what hint is there of rain,
In thirsty meadow or on burning plain,
That thy keen eye perceives?

III

But thou art right. Thou prophesiest true.
For hardly hast thou ceased thy forecasting,
When, up the western fierceness of scorched blue,
Great water-carrier winds their buckets bring
Brimming with freshness. How their dippers ring
And flash and rumble! lavishing large dew
On corn and forest land, that, streaming wet,
Their hilly backs against the downpour set,
Like giants, loom in view.

IV

The butterfly, safe under leaf and flower,

Has found a roof, knowing how true thou art;
The bumblebee, within the last half-hour,
Has ceased to hug the honey to its heart;
While in the barnyard, under shed and cart,
Brood-hens have housed.-But I, who scorned thy power,
Barometer of birds,-like August there,-
Beneath a beech, dripping from foot to hair,
Like some drenched truant, cower.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Redbird

From 'Wild Thorn and Lily'

Among the white haw-blossoms, where the creek
Droned under drifts of dogwood and of haw,
The redbird, like a crimson blossom blown
Against the snow-white bosom of the Spring,
The chaste confusion of her lawny breast,
Sang on, prophetic of serener days,
As confident as June's completer hours.
And I stood listening like a hind, who hears
A wood nymph breathing in a forest flute
Among the beech-boles of myth-haunted ways:
And when it ceased, the memory of the air
Blew like a syrinx in my brain: I made
A lyric of the notes that men might know:

He flies with flirt and fluting-
As flies a crimson star
From flaming star-beds shooting-
From where the roses are.

Wings past and sings; and seven
Notes, wild as fragrance is,-
That turn to flame in heaven,-
Float round him full of bliss.

He sings; each burning feather
Thrills, throbbing at his throat;
A song of firefly weather,
And of a glowworm boat:

Of Elfland and a princess
Who, born of a perfume,
His music rocks,-where winces
That rosebud's cradled bloom.

No bird sings half so airy,
No bird of dusk or dawn,
Thou masking King of Faery!

Thou red-crowned Oberon!

Madison Julius Cawein

The Rendezvous

A lonely barn, lost in a field of weeds;
A fallen fence, where partly hangs a gate:
The skies are darkening and the hour is late;
The Indian dusk comes, red in rainy beads.
Along a path, which from a woodland leads,
Horsemen come riding who dismount and wait:
Here Anarchy conspires with Crime and Hate,
And Madness masks and on its business speeds.
Another Kuklux in another war
Of blacker outrage down the night they ride,
Brandishing a torch and gun before each farm.
Is Law asleep then? Does she fear? Where are
The servants of her strength, the Commonwealth's pride?
And where the steel of her restraining arm?

Madison Julius Cawein

The Republic

Not they the great
Who build authority around a State,
And firm on calumny and party hate
Base their ambition. Nor the great are they
Who with disturbance make their way,
Mindful of but to-day
And individual ends that so compel
They know not what they do, yet do it well.
But they the great.
Who sacrifice their honor for the State
And set their seal
Upon the writing, consecrate,
Of time and fate,
That says, 'He suffered for a People's weal:
Or, calm of soul and eye,
Helped to eliminate
The Madness that makes Progress its wild cry,
And for its policy
Self, a divinity,
That on illusions thrives,
And knows not whither its desire drives
Till on the rocks its headlong vessel rives.'

II.

God of the wise,
On whom the People wait,
And who at last all evils wilt abate,
Make Thou more keen men's eyes:
Let them behold how Thou at length wilt bring,
From turmoil and confusion now that cling
About the Nation's feet,
Order and calm and peace
With harmony of purpose, wing to wing
As out of Chaos sprang
Light and its co-mate, Law, when loud Thy summons rang
High instruments of power never to cease,
Spirits of destiny,
Who from their lofty seat

Shall put down hate and strife's insanity,
And all contentions old that eat
The country to the quick:
And Common-Sense, the Lion-Heart now sick,
Forth from his dungeon cell
Go free,
With Song, his bold Blondél;
And, stretching forth a stalwart arm
To laboring land and sea,
With his glad coming warm
The land to one accord, one sympathy
Of soul; whose strength shall stand
For something more than gold to all the land,
Making more sure the ties
Of freedom and equality
And Progress; who, unto the watchful skies,
Unfurls his banner and, with challenging hand,
Leads on the world's emprise.

III.

God of the just and wise,
Behold! why is it that our mortal eyes
Are not more open to the good that lies
Around our feet? the blessings in disguise
That go with us about our daily deeds
Attending all our needs?
Why is it that, so rich and prodigal,
We will complain
Of Nature her whose liberal hand,
Summer and spring and fall,
Pours out abundance on the Land?
Cotton and oil and grain
O God, make men more sane!
Help them to understand
And trust in her who never failed her due;
Who never camped with Famine and his crew
Or made ally
Of the wild House of old Calamity!
But always faithfully,
Year after generous year,
From forth her barque of plenty, stanch of sail,

Poured big abundance. What did lies avail,
Or what did fear
To make her largess fail? They who descry,
Raising a hue and cry,
Disaster's Harpies darkening the sky
Each month that comes and goes, are they not less
Of insight than the beasts of hill and field,
Who take no worry, knowing Earth will yield
Her usual harvest a sufficiency
For all and more; yea, even enough to bless
The sons of Greed, who make a market of lies
And blacken blessings unto credulous eyes,
Turning them curses, till on every hand
They see, as Speculation sees,
God's benefactions rain, and sun, and snow
Working destruction in the land,
The camping-ground of old hostilities,
Changing all joy to woe
With visitations of her wrath withal,
Proclaiming her, our mother Nature, foe
Undeviating, to our hopes below
Nature, who never yet has failed to bless us all.

IV.

By the long leagues of cotton Texas rolls,
And Mississippi bolls;
By the wide seas of wheat
The far Dakotas beat
Against the barriers of the mountainland:
And by the miles of maize
Nebraska lays
Like a vast carpet in
Her House of Nights and Days,
Where, glittering, in council meet
The Spirits of the Cold and Heat,
With old Fertility whose heart they win:
By all the wealth replete
Within our scan,
From Florida to where the snows begin,
Made manifest of Nature unto Man
Behold!

The Land is as a mighty scroll unrolled,
Whereon God writes His name
In harvest: green and gold
And russet making fair as oft of old
Each dædal part He decorates the same
With splendors manifold
Of mountains and of rivers, fruits and flowers;
Sealing each passage of the rubric Hours
With esoteric powers
Of life and love, and all their mystery,
Through which men yet may see
The truth that shall refute the fool that cries,
'God has forgot us and our great emprise!'

V.

Of elemental mold
God made our Country, wombing her with gold
And veining her with copper, iron, and coal.
Making her strong for her appointed goal.
High on her eagled peaks His rainbow gleams
Its mighty message: in her mountain streams
His voice is heard: and on the wind and rain
Ride Potencies
And Portents of His purpose, while she dreams
Of great achievements, great activities,
And, weariless of brain,
From plain to busy plain,
And peak to plateau, with unresting hand,
Along the laboring land,
She speeds swift train on train,
Feeling the urge in her of energies,
That bear her business on
From jubilant dawn to dawn,
From where the snow makes dumb
Alaskan heights, to where, like hives of bees,
The prairies hum
With cities; while around her girdling seas
Ships go and come,
Servants and slaves of her vast industries.

VI.

And He, who sits above,
And, watching, sees
Her dreams become great actualities,
Out of His love
Will He continue to bestow
Blessings upon her, even more and more,
Until their store
Shall pass the count of all the dreams we know?
Why heed
The sordid souls that worship Greed?
The vampire lives that feed,
Feast and grow fat
On what they name the Proletariat;
Wringing with blood and sweat,
From forth the nation's muscle, heart, and brain,
The strength that keeps her sane:
They, too, shall have their day and cease to be.
Ignoble souls, who, for a market, set
Before the People's eyes
A scarecrow train
Of fabrications, rumors, antic lies
Of havoc and calamity,
Panic appearances of Famine, War,
That for the moment bar
The path of Truth and work their selfish gain.

VII.

God of the simple and the wise,
Grant us more light; and lead
The great adventure to its mighty end!
From Thy o'erarching skies
Still give us heed,
And make more clear the way that onward lies.
Not wealth now is her need,
The great Republic's, Wealth, the child of Greed,
Nay, nay! O God, but for the dream we plead,
The dream as well as deed,
The Dream of Beauty which shall so descend
From Thee, and with her inmost being blend,
That it shall help her cause

More than all temporal laws. . . .

VIII.

Now, for her soul's increase,
And spirit's peace,
Curb the bright dæmon Speed;
Grant her release
From strife; and let the joy that springs
From love of lowly things
Possess her soul and plead
For work that counts for something to the heart,
And grows immortal part
Of life the work called Art;
And let Love lead
Her softly all her days; with quiet hand
Sowing the fruitful land
With spiritual seed
Of wisdom from which blossoms shall expand
Of vital beauty, and her fame increase
More than the wealth of all the centuries.

IX.

God of the wise,
The meek and humble, who still look to Thee,
Holding to sanity
And truth and purpose of the great emprise,
Keep her secure,
And beautiful and pure
As when in ages past Thou didst devise,
Saying within Thy heart, 'She shall endure!
A great Republic!' Let her course be sure,
O God, and, in detraction's spite,
Unquestionably right;
And in the night,
If night there must be, light a beacon light
To guide her safely through the strife,
The conflict of her soul, with passions rife.
Oh, raise some man of might,
Whose mind shall put down storm and stress of life,
And kindle anew the lamp whose light shall burn,

A Pharos, in the storms,
That shall arise and with confusion shake
Foundations of the walls of Civilization:
A pillar of flame, behold,
Like that of old,
Which Israel followed and its bondage brake,
Leading each night-lost Nation
To refuge in her arms,
Freedom's, away from all the Tyrannies
Of all the Centuries,
Safe on her heart to learn
To hush its heart's alarms.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Ribbon

Those were the days of doubt. How clear
It all comes back! This ribbon, see?
Brings that far past so very near
I lose my own identity,
And seem two beings: one that's here,
And one back in that century
Of cowardice and fear,
Wherein I met with love and her,
When I was but a wanderer.
Those were the days of doubt, I said:
I doubted all things; even God.
Within my heart there was no dread
Of Hell or Heaven. Never a rod
Was there to smite; no mercy led:
And man's reward was death: a clod
He was, alive or dead.
Those were the days of doubt; and so
I scoffed at all things, high and low.
And then I met her. Fair and frail,
A girl whose soul was as a flame
That burns within the Holy Grael;
And through her eyes shone clear the same
Fanatic fire, pure and pale,
That once put Sisera to shame
In the dark eyes of Jael,
When, leading him into her tent,
She used the nail as argument.
There was no argument of grace
She did not use; no dogma, wrought
Of sophistry, she did not place
Before me, leading up my thought
To Heaven from the fearful maze
Of Hell, wherein God's angels fought
With fiends, on darkling ways.
I listened but in her young look
Was more for me than in God's Book.
She seemed a priestess. Heaven to be
Was in her face. A ribbon bound
Her hair like a phylactery.

This is the band. I took it; wound
And laid it on my heart. Ah me!
No other argument I found
As good as that. Convincingly
It held me sane and sound.
And I have kept it here always
Since first she gave it me that day.
'Where is she now?' I do not know.
She is the wife of one whose hand,
Stretched forth to aid me long-ago,
Took from me more than all this land
In her own self, and gave me woe
To take her place. As here I stand
I stood and took the blow,
While in my heart I looked and saw
The love that filled my soul with awe.
And did she love me? Am I sure?
Ah, while I heard angelic hosts
Of Heaven singing love, there were
Black wings about me: all the ghosts
Of all my doubts. I heard them stir,
And so drew back from those bright coasts
Of happiness with her.
Despite the love within my heart
Doubt entered, and began its part.
Make no mistake. I loved her; ay!
And she loved me as women love
The thing they save. I spoke my lie,
That by my lie I so might prove
Her love, and with the proof defy
The doubt, whose shadow hung above,
Watching with jealous eye.
So I denied love. Played a part
And, playing it, broke my own heart.
The better part of me then died;
I killed her love, not mine. You see
I keep this ribbon here, she tied
My heart to hers with. Silkenly
It says, 'She is another's bride.
Through me now keep in memory
Your doubt was justified.
She did not love you. She could change.'

I keep the ribbon. Is it strange?

Madison Julius Cawein

The Rising Of The Moon

THE Day brims high its ewer
Of blue with starry light,
And crowns as King that hewer
Of clouds (which take their flight
Across the sky) old Night.
And Tempest there, who houses
Within them, like a cave,
Lies down and dreams and drowzes
Upon the Earth's huge grave,
With wandering wind and wave.
The storm moves on; and winging
From out the east — a bird,
The moon drifts, calmly bringing
A message and a word
Of peace, in Heaven it heard.
Of peace and times called golden,
Whose beauty makes it glow
With love, like that of olden,
Which mortals used to know
There in the long-ago.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Road

Along the road I smelt the rose,
The wild-rose in its veil of rain;
And how it was, God only knows,
But with its scent I saw again
A girl's face at a window-pane,
Gazing through tears that fell like rain.

'Tis twelve years now, so I suppose.
Twelve years ago. 'Twas then I thought,
'Love is a burden bitter-sweet.
And he who runs must not be fraught:
Free must his heart be as his feet.'

Again I heard myself repeat,
'Love is a burden bitter-sweet.'
Yet all my aims had come to nought.
I smelt the rose; I felt the rain
Lonely I stood upon the road.

Of one thing only was I fain
To be delivered of my load.
A moment more and on I strode.
I cared not whither led the road
That led not back to her again.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Road Back

Come, walk with me and Memory;
And let us see what we shall see:
A wild green lane of stones and weeds
That to a wilder woodland leads.
An old board gate, the lichens crust,
Whose ancient hinges croak with rust.
A vale; a creek; and a bridge of planks,
And the wild sunflowers that wall its banks:
A path that winds through shine and shade
To a ferned and wildflowered forest glade;
Where, out of a grotto, a voice replies
With a faint hollo to your voice that cries:
And every wind that passes seems
A foot that follows from Lands o' Dreams.
A voice, a foot, and a shadow, too,
That whispers of things your childhood knew:
A girl that waited, a boy that came,
And an old beech tree where he carved her name;
Where still he sees her, whom still he hears
Bidding him come through the long-gone years. . . .
How oft she beckons your heart and mine
From the farmhouse window trailed deep with vine,
And porched with roses! where all must know
She used to live in the long-ago.
The farmhouse there at the end o' the lane,
With the sunset twinkling its windowpane;
Where she smiles as she smiled in the Long-ago,
The farmer's daughter you used to know,
Who has not changed to your heart for years,
Though her face you often see through tears:
Who wears her youth, as she did of old,
As a princess weareth a crown of gold.
The little sweetheart, you know for truth,
Who lives for aye in the Land of Youth;
Who never dies; who is always fair,
With eyes of mischief and tomboy hair:
Whom your heart still follows and worships, it seems,
Forever and aye in the Land o' Dreams.

The Road Home

Over the hills, as the pewee flies,
Under the blue of the Southern skies;
Over the hills, where the red-bird wings
Like a scarlet blossom, or sits and sings:

Under the shadow of rock and tree,
Where the warm wind drones with the honey-bee;
And the tall wild-carrots around you sway
Their lace-like flowers of cloudy gray:

By the black-cohosh with its pearly plume
A-nod in the woodland's odorous gloom;
By the old rail-fence, in the elder's shade,
That the myriad hosts of the weeds invade:

Where the butterfly-weed, like a coal of fire,
Blurs orange-red through bush and brier;
Where the pennyroyal and mint smell sweet,
And blackberries tangle the summer heat,

The old road leads; then crosses the creek,
Where the minnow dartles, a silvery streak;
Where the cows wade deep through the blue-eyed grass,
And the flickering dragonflies gleaming pass.

That road is easy, however long,
Which wends with beauty as toil with song;
And the road we follow shall lead us straight
Past creek and wood to a farmhouse gate.

Past hill and hollow, whence scents are blown
Of dew-wet clover that scythes have mown;
To a house that stands with porches wide
And gray low roof on the green hill-side.

Colonial, stately; 'mid shade and shine
Of the locust-tree and the Southern pine;
With its orchard acres and meadowlands
Stretched out before it like welcoming hands.

And gardens, where, in the myrrh-sweet June,
Magnolias blossom with many a moon
Of fragrance; and, in the feldspar light
Of August, roses bloom red and white.

In a woodbine arbor, a perfumed place,
A slim girl sits with a happy face;
Her bonnet by her, a sunbeam lies
On her lovely hair, in her earnest eyes.

Her eyes, as blue as the distant deeps
Of the heavens above where the high hawk sleeps;
A book beside her, wherein she read
Till she saw him coming, she heard his tread.

Come home at last; come back from the war;
In his eyes a smile, on his brow a scar:
To the South come back who wakes from her dream
To the love and peace of a new regime.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Rose

You have forgot: it once was red
With life, this rose, to which you said,
When, there in happy days gone by,
You plucked it, on my breast to lie,
'Sleep there, O rose! how sweet a bed
Is thine!-And, heart, be comforted;
For, though we part and roses shed
Their leaves and fade, love cannot die.-'
You have forgot.

So by those words of yours I'm led
To send it you this day you wed.
Look well upon it. You, as I,
Should ask it now, without a sigh,
If love can lie as it lies dead.
You have forgot.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Rose Of Hope

The rose of Hope, how rich and red
It blooms, and will bloom on, 't is said,
Since Eve, in Eden days gone by,
Plucked it on Adam's heart to lie,
When out of Paradise they fled,
With Sorrow and o'erwhelming Dread,
It was this flower that comforted,
This Rose of Hope, that can not die.

God's Rose of Hope.

When darkness comes, and you are led
To think that Hope at last is dead,
Take down your Bible; read; and try
To see the light; and by and by
Hope's rose will lift again its head
God's Rose of Hope.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Rose's Secret

When down the west the new moon slipped,
A curved canoe that dipped and tipped,
When from the rose the dewdropp dripped,
As if it shed its heart's blood slow;
As softly silent as a star
I climbed a lattice that I know,
A window lattice, held ajar
By one slim hand as white as snow:
The hand of her who set me here,
A rose, to bloom from year to year.

I, who have heard the bird of June
Sing all night long beneath the moon;
I, who have heard the zephyr croon
Soft music 'mid spring's avenues,
Heard then a sweeter sound than these,
Among the shadows and the dews
A heart that beat like any bee's,
Sweet with a name and I know whose:
Her heart that, leaning, pressed on me,
A rose, she never looked to see.

O star and moon! O wind and bird!
Ye hearkened, too, but never heard
The secret sweet, the whispered word
I heard, when by her lips his name
Was murmured. Then she saw me there!
But that I heard was I to blame?
Whom in the darkness of her hair
She thrust since I had heard the same:
Condemned within its deeps to lie,
A rose, imprisoned till I die.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Rosicrucian

I

The tripod flared with a purple spark,
And the mist hung emerald in the dark:
Now he stooped to the lilac flame
Over the glare of the amber embers,
Thrice to utter no earthly name;
Thrice, like a mind that half remembers;
Bathing his face in the magic mist
Where the brilliance burned like an amethyst.

II

'Sylph, whose soul was born of mine,
Born of the love that made me thine,
Once more flash on my eyes! Again
Be the loved caresses taken!
Lip to lip let our forms remain!-
Here in the circle sense, awaken!
Ere spirit meet spirit, the flesh laid by,
Let me touch thee, and let me die.'

III

Sunset heavens may burn, but never
Know such splendor! There bloomed an ever
Opaline orb, where the sylphid rose
A shape of luminous white; diviner
White than the essence of light that sows
The moons and suns through space; and finer
Than radiance born of a shooting-star,
Or the wild Aurora that streams afar.

IV

'Look on the face of the soul to whom
Thou givest thy soul like added perfume!
Thou, who heard'st me, who long had prayed,
Waiting alone at morning's portal!-

Thus on thy lips let my lips be laid,
Love, who hast made me all immortal!
Give me thine arms now! Come and rest
Weariness out on my beaming breast!

V

Was it her soul? or the sapphire fire
That sang like the note of a seraph's lyre?
Out of her mouth there fell no word-
She spake with her soul, as a flower speaketh.

Fragrant messages none hath heard,
Which the sense divines when the spirit seeketh....
And he seemed alone in a place so dim
That the spirit's face, who was gazing at him,
For its burning eyes he could not see:
Then he knew he had died; that she and he
Were one; and he saw that this was she.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Rue-Anemone

Under an oak-tree in a woodland, where
The dreaming Spring had dropped it from her hair,
I found a flower, through which I seemed to gaze
Beyond the world and see what no man dare
Behold and live the myths of bygone days
Diana and Endymion, and the bare
Slim beauty of the boy whom Echo wooed;
And Hyacinthus whom Apollo dewed
With love and death: and Daphne, ever fair;
And that reed-slender girl whom Pan pursued.

I stood and gazed and through it seemed to see
The Dryad dancing by the forest tree,
Her hair wild blown: the Faun with listening ear,
Deep in the boscage, kneeling on one knee,
Watching the wandered Oread draw near,
Her wild heart beating like a honey-bee
Within a rose. All, all the myths of old,
All, all the bright shapes of the Age of Gold,
Peopling the wonder-worlds of Poetry,
Through it I seemed in fancy to behold.

What other flower, that, fashioned like a star,
Draws its frail life from earth and braves the war
Of all the heavens, can suggest the dreams
That this suggests? in which no trace of mar
Or soil exists: where stainless innocence seems
Enshrined; and where, beyond our vision far,
That inaccessible beauty, which the heart
Worships as truth and holiness and art,
Is symbolized; wherein embodied are
The things that make the soul's immortal part.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Scarecrow

Here is a tale for prelates and for parsons:
There was a scarecrow once, a thing of tatters
And sticks and straw, to whom men trusted matters
Of weighty moment murders, thefts and arsons.
None saw he was a scarecrow. Every worship
And honour his. Men set him in high places,
And ladies primped their bodies, tinged their faces,
And kneeled to him as slaves to some great Sirship.
One night a storm, none knew it, blew to pieces
Our jackstraw friend, and the sweet air of heaven
Knew him no more, and was no longer tainted.
Then learned doctors put him in their theses:
The State set up his statue: and thought, even
As thought the Church, perhaps he should be sainted.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Scarecrow Ii

More than cakes or anything
I like tales of shivering.
Once a scarecrow on a hill
Tossed his ragged arms at me
That was when I went to see
Folks that live at Fisherville.

And my father said, 'You know,
When it's dark that old scarecrow
Gets down, rags and sticks and all,
And, like some old tramp, he goes,
Straw-wisps sticking from his toes,
Down the road, right past this wall.

'Wobble-legged and loose of arm,
Slow he shambles by the farm:
And if children are not good,
Snug in bed at eight o'clock,
On the window he will knock
With long knuckled hands of wood.

'Then his empty face pressed flat
To the pane, his tattered hat
Flopping in the wind, he'll shake
His gaunt finger at them; and
Threaten them with head and hand,
And with teeth, too, like a rake.

'Then into the night he'll pack,
There to meet with bogie Jack,
Jack-o'-Lantern; and the two,
Arm in arm, will wander on,
Scaring folks until it's dawn,
As all goblin people do.

'You may see them through the pane
Passing in the night and rain:
When you hear the watch-dogs bark.
Then along the weedy side

Of some garden dim they glide,
Where they grab you in the dark.'

Sometime, when I can, for fun
I am going to take my gun;
Creep up on that hill and blow
That old scarecrow into bits
Then he can't scare into fits
Any children more, I know.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Screech-Owl

When, one by one, the stars have trembled through
Eve's shadowy hues of violet, rose, and fire
As on a pansy-bloom the limpid dew
Orbs its bright beads; and, one by one, the choir
Of insects wakes on nodding bush and brier:
Then through the woods where wandering winds pursue
A ceaseless whisper like an eery lyre
Struck in the Erl-king's halls, where ghosts and dreams
Hold revelry, your goblin music screams,
Shivering and strange as some strange thought come true.

Brown as the agaric that frills dead trees,
Or those fantastic fungi of the woods
That crowd the dampness are you kin to these
In some mysterious way that still eludes
My fancy? you, who haunt the solitudes
With witch-like wailings? voice, that seems to freeze
Out of the darkness, like the scent which broods,
Rank and rain-sodden, over autumn nooks,
That, to the mind, might well suggest such looks,
Ghastly and gray, as pale clairvoyance sees.

You people night with weirdness: lone and drear,
Beneath the stars, you cry your wizard runes;
And in the haggard silence, filled with fear,
Your shuddering hoot seems some bleak grief that croons
Mockery and terror; or, beneath the moon's
Cloud-hurrying glimmer, to the startled ear,
Crazed, madman snatches of old, perished tunes,
The witless wit of outcast Edgar there
In the wild night; or, wan with all despair,
The mirthless laughter of the Fool in Lear.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Sea Faery

She was strange as the orchids that blossom
And glimmer and shower their balm
And bloom on the tropical ocean,
That crystals round islands of palm:
And she sang to and beckoned and bound me
With beauty immortal and calm.

She was wild as the spirits that banner,
Auroral, the ends of the Earth,
With polar processions, that battle
With Darkness; or, breathing, give birth
To Silence; and herd from the mountains
The icebergs, gigantic of girth.

She was silver as sylphids who blend with
The morning the pearl of their cheeks:
And rosy as spirits whose tresses
Trail golden the sunset with streaks:
An opaline presence that beckoned
And spake as the sea-rapture speaks:

'Come with me! come down in the ocean!
Yea, leave this dark region with me!
Come! leave it! forget it in thunder
And roll of the infinite sea!
Come with me! No mortal bliss equals
The bliss I shall give unto thee.' . . .

And so it was then that she bound me
With witchcraft no mortal divines,
While softly with kisses she drew me,
As the moon draws a dream from the pines,
Down, down to her cavern of coral,
Where ever the sea-serpent twines.

And ever the creatures, whose shadows
Bulk huge as an isle on the sight,
Swim cloud-like and vast, without number,
Around her who leans, like a light,

And smiles at me sleeping, pale-sleeping,
Wrapped deep in her mermaiden might.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Sea Spirit

Ah me! I shall not waken soon
From dreams of such divinity!
A spirit singing 'neath the moon
To me.

Wild sea-spray driven of the storm
Is not so wildly white as she,
Who beckoned with a foam-white arm
To me.

With eyes dark green, and golden-green
Long locks that rippled drippingly,
Out of the green wave she did lean
To me.

And sang; till Earth and Heaven seemed
A far, forgotten memory,
And more than Heaven in her who gleamed
On me.

Sleep, sweeter than love's face or home;
And death's immutability;
And music of the plangent foam,
For me!

Sweep over her! with all thy ships,
With all thy stormy tides, O sea!-
The memory of immortal lips
For me!

Madison Julius Cawein

The Shadow

A SHADOW glided down the way
Where sunset groped among the trees,
And all the woodland bower, asway
With trouble of the evening breeze.
A shape, it moved with head held down;
I knew it not, yet seemed to know
Its form, its carriage of a clown,
Its raiment of the long-ago.
It never turned or spoke a word,
But fixed its gaze on something far,
As if within its heart it heard
The summons of the evening star.
I turned to it and tried to speak;
To ask it of the thing it saw,
Or heard, beyond Earth's outmost peak —
The dream, the splendor, and the awe.
What beauty or what terror there
Still bade its purpose to ascend
Above the sunset's sombre glare,
The twilight and the long day's end.
It looked at me but said no word:
Then suddenly I saw the truth: —
This was the call that once I heard
And failed to follow in my youth.
Now well I saw that this was I —
My own dead self who walked with me,
Who died in that dark hour gone by
With all the dreams that used to be.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Shadow

Mother, mother, what is that gazing through the darkness?
What is that that looks at me with its awful eyes?
Tell me, mother, what it is, freezing me to starkness?
Through the house it seems to go with its icy sighs,
What is that, oh, what is that, mother, in the darkness?

II

Child, my child! my little child! 'tis a waving willow,
That the night wind bows and sways near the window-pane:
Here's my breast, my little son. Let it be your pillow.
Have no fear, love, in my arms. Go to sleep again.
Go to sleep and turn your face from the windy willow.

III

Mother, mother, what is that? going round and round there?
Round the house and at the door stops and turns the knob.
Hold me close, O mother love! keep me from that sound there!
Hear it how it's knocking now? Don't you hear it sob?
Guard me from the ghostly thing that goes round and round there.

IV

Child, my child! my little child! 'tis the wind that wanders:
'Tis the wandering wind that knocks, crying at the door.
Hark no more and heed no more what the night wind maunders.
Rest your head on mother's heart, list its faery lore.
Go to sleep and have no fear of the wind that wanders.

V

Mother, mother, look and see! what is that that stands there?
With its lantern face and limbs, mantled all in black!
Gaunt and grim and horrible with its knuckled hands there!
Now before me! now beside me! now behind my back!
Mother! mother! face it now! ask it why it stands there!

VI

Child, my child! my little child! 'tis a shadow only!
Shadow of the lamp-shade here near your little bed!
No! it will not come again when the night lies lonely.
Sleep, oh, sleep, my little son. See! the thing is fled.
Mother will not leave her boy with that shadow only....

VII

Will he live? or will he die? Answer; fearful Shadow!
O thou Death who hoverest near, hold thy hands away!
Oh, that night were past and light lay on hill and meadow!
Does he sleep? or is he dead? God! that it were day!
Light to help my love to fight with that crouching shadow!

Madison Julius Cawein

The Shadow II

A shadow glided down the way
Where sunset groped among the trees,
And all the woodland bower, asway
With trouble of the evening breeze.

A shape, it moved with head held down;
I knew it not, yet seemed to know
Its form, its carriage of a clown,
Its raiment of the long-ago.

It never turned or spoke a word,
But fixed its gaze on something far,
As if within its heart it heard
The summons of the evening star.

I turned to it and tried to speak;
To ask it of the thing it saw,
Or heard, beyond Earth's outmost peak
The dream, the splendor, and the awe.

What beauty or what terror there
Still bade its purpose to ascend
Above the sunset's sombre glare,
The twilight and the long day's end.

It looked at me but said no word:
Then suddenly I saw the truth:
This was the call that once I heard
And failed to follow in my youth.

Now well I saw that this was I
My own dead self who walked with me,
Who died in that dark hour gone by
With all the dreams that used to be.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Slave

He waited till within her tower
Her taper signalled him the hour.

He was a prince both fair and brave.
What hope that he would love her slave!

He of the Persian dynasty;
And she a Queen of Araby!

No Peri singing to a star
Upon the sea were lovelier....

I helped her dropp the silken rope.
He clomb, aflame with love and hope.

I drew the dagger from my gown
And cut the ladder, leaning down.

Oh, wild his face, and wild the fall:
Her cry was wilder than them all.

I heard her cry; I heard him moan;
And stood as merciless as stone.

The eunuchs came: fierce scimitars
Stirred in the torch-lit corridors.

She spoke like one who speaks in sleep,
And bade me strike or she would leap.

I bade her leap: the time was short:
And kept the dagger for my heart.

She leapt.... I put their blades aside,
And smiling in their faces - died.

Madison Julius Cawein

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And kept the dagger for my heart.

She leapt.... I put their blades aside,
And smiling in their faces-died.

The Solitary

Upon the mossed rock by the spring
She sits, forgetful of her pail,
Lost in remote remembering
Of that which may no more avail.

Her thin, pale hair is dimly dressed
Above a brow lined deep with care,
The color of a leaf long pressed,
A faded leaf that once was fair.

You may not know her from the stone
So still she sits who does not stir,
Thinking of this one thing alone-
The love that never came to her.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Song Of Songs

I HEARD a Spirit singing as, beyond the morning winging,
Its radiant form went swinging like a star:
In its song prophetic voices mixed their sounds with trumpet-noises,
As when, loud, the World rejoices after war.

And it said:

I

Hear me!

Above the roar of cities,
The clamor and conflict of trade,
The frenzy and fury of commercialism,
Is heard my voice, chanting, intoning.—
Down the long corridors of time it comes,
Bearing my message, bidding the soul of man arise
To the realization of his dream.

Now and then discords seem to intrude,
And tones that are false and feeble —
Beginnings of the perfect chord
From which is evolved the ideal, the unattainable.

Hear me!

Ever and ever,
Above the tumult of the years,
The blatant cacophonies of war,
The wrangling of politics,
Demons and spirits of unrest,
My song persists,
Addressing the soul
With the urge of an astral something,
Supernal,
Elemental,
Promethean,
Instinct with an everlasting fire.

II

Hear me!

I am the expression of the subconscious,
The utterance of the intellect,
The voice of mind,
That stands for civilization.
Out of my singing sprang, Minerva-like,
Full-armed and fearless,

Liberty,
Subduer of tyrants, who feed on the strength of Nations.
Out of my chanting arose,
As Aphrodite arose from the foam of the ocean,
The Dream of Spiritual Desire,
Mother of Knowledge,
Victor o'er Hate and Oppression,—
Ancient and elemental dæmons,
Who, with Ignorance and Evil, their consorts,
Have ruled for eons of years.

III

Hear me!
Should my chanting cease,
My music utterly fail you,
Behold!
Out of the hoary Past, most swiftly, surely,
Would gather the Evils of Earth,
The Hydras and Harpies, forgotten,
And buried in darkness:
Amorphous of form,
Tyrannies and Superstitions
Torturing body and soul:
And with them,
Gargoyls of dreams that groaned in the Middle Ages —
Aspects of darkness and death and hollow idolons,
Cruel, inhuman,
Wearing the faces and forms of all the wrongs of the world.
Barbarian hordes whose shapes make hideous
The cycles of error and crime:
Grendels of darkness,
Devouring the manhood of Nations:
Demogorgons of War and Misrule,
Blackening the world with blood and the lust of destruction.
Hear me!—
Out of my song have grown
Beauty and joy,
And with them
The triumph of Reason;
The confirmation of Hope,
Of Faith and Endeavor:
The Dream that's immortal,
To whose creation Thought gives concrete form,

And of which Vision makes permanent substance.

IV

Fragmentary,
Out of the Past,
Down the long aisles of the Centuries,
Uncertain at first and uneasy,
Hesitant, harsh of expression,
My song was heard,
Stammering, appealing,
A murmur merely:
Coherent then,
Singing into form,
Assertive,
Ecstatic,
Louder, lovelier, and more insistent,
Sonorous, proclaiming;
Clearer and surer and stronger,
Attaining expression, evermore truer and clearer:
Masterful, mighty at last,
Committed to conquest,
And with Beauty coeval;
Part of the wonder of life,
The triumph of light over darkness:
Taking the form of Art —
Art, that is voice and vision of the soul of man.—
Hear me!

Confident ever,
One with the Loveliness song shall evolve,
My voice is become as an army of banners,
Marching irresistibly forward,
With the roll of the drums of attainment,
The blare of the bugles of fame:
Tramping, tramping, evermore advancing,
Till the last redoubt of prejudice is down,
And the Eagles and Fasces of Learning
Make glorious the van o' the world.

V

They who are deaf to my singing,
Who disregard me,—
Let them beware lest the splendor escape them,
The glory of light that is back o' the darkness of life,
And with it —

The blindness of spirit o'erwhelm them.—
They who reject me,
Reject the gleam
That goes to the making of Beauty;
And put away
The loftier impulses of heart and of mind.
They shall not possess the dream, the ideal,
Of ultimate worlds,
That is part of the soul that aspires;
That sits with the Spirit of Thought,
The radiant presence who weaves,
Directed of Destiny,
There in the Universe,
At its infinite pattern of stars.
They shall not know,
Not they,
The exaltations that make enduring here on the Earth
The ponderable curtain of flesh.
Not they! Not they!

VI

Hear me!
I control, and direct;
I wound and heal,
Elevate and subdue
The vaulting energies of Man.
I am part of the cosmic strain o' the Universe:
I captain the thoughts that grow to deeds,
Material and spiritual facts,
Pointing the world to greater and nobler things.—
Hear me!
My dædal expression peoples the Past and Present
With forms of ethereal thought
That symbolize Beauty:
The Beauty expressing itself now,
As Poetry,
As Philosophy:
As Truth and Religion now,
And now,
As science and Law,
Vaunt couriers of Civilization.

The Soul

A heritage of hopes and fears
And dreams and memory,
And vices of ten thousand years
God gives to thee.

A house of clay, the home of Fate,
Haunted of Love and Sin,
Where Death stands knocking at the gate
To let him in.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Speckled Trout

With rod and line I took my way
That led me through the gossip trees,
Where all the forest was asway
With hurry of the running breeze.

I took my hat off to a flower
That nodded welcome as I passed;
And, pelted by a morning shower,
Unto its heart a bee held fast.

A head of gold one great weed tossed,
And leaned to look when I went by;
And where the brook the roadway crossed
The daisy kept on me its eye.

And when I stopped to bathe my face,
And seat me at a great tree's foot,
I heard the stream say, 'Mark the place:
And undermine it rock and root.'

And o'er the whirling water there
A dragonfly its shuttle plied,
Where wild a fern let down its hair,
And leaned to see the water's pride -

A speckled trout. The spotted elf,
Whom I had come so far to see,
Stretched out above a rocky shelf,
A shadow sleeping mockingly.

.

And I have sat here half the day
Regarding it, It has not stirred.
I heard the running water say -
'He does not know the magic word.

'The word that changes everything,
And brings all Nature to his hand:

That makes of this great trout a king,
And opes the way to Faeryland.'

Madison Julius Cawein

The Spell

'We have the receipt of fern seed: we walk invisible.'

-HENRY IV

And we have met but twice or thrice!-
Three times enough to make me love!-
I praised your hair once; then your glove;
Your eyes; your gown;-you were like ice;
And yet this might suffice, my love,
And yet this might suffice.

St. John hath told me what to do:
To search and find the ferns that grow
The fern seed that the faeries know;
Then sprinkle fern seed in my shoe,
And haunt the steps of you, my dear,
And haunt the steps of you.

You'll see the poppy pods dip here;
The blow-ball of the thistle slip,
And no wind breathing-but my lip
Next to your anxious cheek and ear,
To tell you I am near, my love,
To tell you I am near.

On wood-ways I shall tread your gown-
You'll know it is no brier!-then
I'll whisper words of love again,
And smile to see your quick face frown:
And then I'll kiss it down, my dear,
And then I'll kiss it down.

And when at home you read or knit,-
Who'll know it was my hands that blotted
The page?-or all your needles knotted?
When in your rage you cry a bit:
And loud I laugh at it, my love,
And loud I laugh at it.

The secrets that you say in prayer
Right so I'll hear: and, when you sing,
The name you speak; and whispering
I'll bend and kiss your mouth and hair,
And tell you I am there, my dear,
And tell you I am there.

Would it were true what people say!-
Would I
could
find that elfin seed!
Then should I win your love, indeed,
By being near you night and day-
There is no other way, my love,
There is no other way.

Meantime the truth in this is said:
It is my soul that follows you;
It needs no fern seed in the shoe,-
While in the heart love pulses red,
To win you and to wed, my dear,
To win you and to wed.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Spirit Of The Forest Spring

Over the rocks she trails her locks,
Her mossy locks that drip, drip, drip:
Her sparkling eyes smile at the skies
In friendship-wise and fellowship:
While the gleam and glance of her countenance
Lull into trance the woodland places,
As over the rocks she trails her locks,
Her dripping locks that the long fern graces.

She pours clear ooze from her heart's cool cruse,
Its crystal cruse that drips, drips, drips:
And all the day its limpid spray
Is heard to play from her finger tips:
And the slight, soft sound makes haunted ground
Of the woods around that the sunlight laces,
As she pours clear ooze from her heart's cool cruse,
Its dripping cruse that no man traces.

She swims and swims with glimmering limbs,
With lucid limbs that drip, drip, drip:
Where beechen boughs build a leafy house,
Where her eyes may drowse or her beauty trip:
And the liquid beat of her rippling feet
Makes three times sweet the forest mazes,
As she swims and swims with glimmering limbs,
With dripping limbs through the twilight hazes.

Then wrapped in deeps of the wild she sleeps,
She whispering sleeps and drips, drips, drips:
Where moon and mist wreath neck and wrist,
And, starry-whist, through the dark she slips:
While the heavenly dream of her soul makes gleam
The falls that stream and the foam that races,
As wrapped in the deeps of the wild she sleeps,
She dripping sleeps or starward gazes.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Stars

These-the bright symbols of man's hope and fame,
In which he reads his blessing or his curse-
Are syllables with which God speaks His name
In the vast utterance of the universe

Madison Julius Cawein

The Swashbuckler

Squat-nosed and broad, of big and pompous port;
A tavern visage, apoplexy haunts,
All pimple-puffed: the Falstaff-like resort
Of fat debauchery, whose veined cheek flaunts
A flabby purple: rusty-spurred he stands
In rakehell boots and belt, and hanger that
Claps when, with greasy gauntlets on his hands,
He swaggers past in cloak and slouch-plumed hat.
Aggression marches armies in his words;
And in his oaths great deeds ride cap-à-pie;
His looks, his gestures breathe the breath of swords;
And in his carriage camp all wars to be:
With him, of battles there shall be no lack
While buxom wenches are and stoops of sack.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Thorn Tree

The night is sad with silver and the day is glad with gold,
And the woodland silence listens to a legend never old,
Of the Lady of the Fountain, whom the faery people know,
With her limbs of samite whiteness and her hair of golden glow,
Whom the boyish South Wind seeks for and the girlish-stepping Rain;
Whom the sleepy leaves still whisper men shall never see again:
She whose Vivien charms were mistress of the magic Merlin knew,
That could change the dew to glowworms and the glowworms into dew.
There's a thorn tree in the forest, and the faeries know the tree,
With its branches gnarled and wrinkled as a face with sorcery;
But the Maytime brings it clusters of a rainy fragrant white,
Like the bloom-bright brows of beauty or a hand of lifted light.
And all day the silence whispers to the sun-ray of the morn
How the bloom is lovely Vivien and how Merlin is the thorn:
How she won the doting wizard with her naked loveliness
Till he told her daemon secrets that must make his magic less.
How she charmed him and enchanted in the thorn-tree's thorns to lie
Forever with his passion that should never dim or die:
And with wicked laughter looking on this thing which she had done,
Like a visible aroma lingered sparkling in the sun:
How she stooped to kiss the pathos of an elf-lock of his beard,
In a mockery of parting and mock pity of his weird:
But her magic had forgotten that 'who bends to give a kiss
Will but bring the curse upon them of the person whose it is':
So the silence tells the secret. And at night the faeries see
How the tossing bloom is Vivien, who is struggling to be free,
In the thorny arms of Merlin, who forever is the tree.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Three Elements

They come as couriers of Heaven: their feet
Sonorous-sandalled with majestic awe;
In raiment of swift foam and wind and heat,
Blowing the trumpets of God's wrath and law.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Toad

Here is a tale to tell to rich relations:
There was a toad, a Calibanic monster,
In whose squat head ambition had ensconced her
Most bloated jewel, dear to highest stations.
He was received, though mottled as a lichen
In coat and character, because the creature
Croaked as the devil prompted him, or nature,
And said the right thing both in hall and kitchen.
To each he sang according to their liking,
And purred his flattery in the ear of Leisure,
Cringing attendance on the proud and wealthy.
One day a crane, with features of a Viking,
Swallowed him whole and did it with great pleasure:
His system needed such; toads kept him healthy.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Tollman's Daughter

She stood waist-deep among the briers:
Above in twisted lengths were rolled
The sunset's tangled whorls of gold,
Blown from the west's cloud-pillared fires.

And in the hush no sound did mar,
You almost heard o'er hill and dell,
Deep, bubbling over, star on star,
The night's blue cisterns slowly well.

A crane, like some dark crescent, crossed
The sunset, winging towards the west;
While up the east her silver breast
Of light the moon brought, white as frost.

So have I painted her, you see,
The tollman's daughter. What an arm
And throat was hers! and what a form!
Art dreams of such divinity.

What braids of night to hold and kiss!
There is no pigment anywhere
A man might use to picture this
The splendour of her raven hair.

A face as beautiful and bright,
As rosy fair as twilight skies,
Lit with the stars of hazel eyes
And eyebrowed black with pencilled night.

For her, I know, where'er she trod
Each dewdropp raised a looking-glass
To flash her beauty from the grass;
That wild-flowers bloomed along the sod,

And whispered perfume when she smiled;
The wood-bird hushed to hear her song,
Or, all enamoured, tame, not wild,
Before her feet flew fluttering long.

The brook went mad with melody,
Eddied in laughter when she kissed
With naked feet its amethyst
And I I fell in love; ah me!

Madison Julius Cawein

The Torrent

Here is a tale for workmen and their masters:
There was a torrent once that down a mountain
Flashed its resistless way; a foaming fountain,
Basaltic-built, 'twixt cataract-hewn pilasters.
Down from its eagle eyrie nearer, nearer,
Its savage beauty born mid rocks and cedars,
Swept free as tempest, wild as mountain leaders,
Of stars and storms the swiftly moving mirror.
Men found it out; and set to work to tame it;
Put it to pounding rock and rafting lumber;
Made it a carrier of the filth of cities:
Harnessed its joy to engines; tried to shame it;
Saying, ' Be civilized!' and piled their cumber
Upon it; bound it. God of all the Pities!

Madison Julius Cawein

The Town Witch

Crab-Faced, crab-tongued, with deep-set eyes that glared,
Unfriendly and unfriended lived the crone
Upon the common in her hut, alone,
Past which but seldom any villager fared.
Some said she was a witch and rode, wild-haired,
To devils' revels: on her hearth's rough stone
A fiend sat ever with gaunt eyes that shone
A shaggy hound whose fangs at all were bared.
So one day, when a neighbour's cow had died
And some one's infant sickened, good men shut
The crone in prison: dragged to court and tried:
Then hung her for a witch and burnt her hut.
Days after, on her grave, all skin and bones
They found the dog, and him they killed with stones.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Tree-Toad

I

Secluded, solitary on some underbough,
Or cradled in a leaf, 'mid glimmering light,
Like Puck thou crouchest: Haply watching how
The slow toadstool comes bulging, moony white,
Through loosening loam; or how, against the night,
The glowworm gathers silver to endow
The darkness with; or how the dew conspires
To hang, at dusk, with lamps of chilly fires
Each blade that shrivels now.

II

O vague confederate of the whippoorwill,
Of owl and cricket and the katydid!
Thou gatherest up the silence in one shrill
Vibrating note and send'st it where, half hid
In cedars, twilight sleeps-each azure lid
Drooping a line of golden eyeball still.-
Afar, yet near, I hear thy dewy voice
Within the Garden of the Hours apoise
On dusk's deep daffodil.

III

Minstrel of moisture! silent when high noon
Shows her tanned face among the thirsting clover
And parching meadows, thy tenebrious tune
Wakes with the dew or when the rain is over.
Thou troubadour of wetness and damp lover
Of all cool things! admitted comrade boon
Of twilight's hush, and little intimate
Of eve's first fluttering star and delicate
Round rim of rainy moon!

IV

Art trumpeter of Dwarfland? does thy horn

Inform the gnomes and goblins of the hour
When they may gambol under haw and thorn,
Straddling each winking web and twinkling flower?
Or bell-ringer of Elfland? whose tall tower
The liriodendron is? from whence is borne
The elfin music of thy bell's deep bass,
To summon Faeries to their starlit maze,
To summon them or warn.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Troubadour Of Trebizend

NIGHT, they say, is no man's friend:
And at night he met his end
In the woods of Trebizend.
Hate crouched near him as he strode
Through the blackness of the road,
Where my Lord seemed some huge toad.
Eyes of murder glared and burned
At each bend of road he turned,
And where wild the torrent churned.
And with Death we stood and stared
From the bush as by he fared,—
But he never looked or cared.
He went singing; and a rose
Lay upon his heart's repose —
With what thought of her —who knows?
He had done no other wrong
Save to sing a simple song,
'I have loved you — loved you long.'
And my lady smiled and sighed;
Gave a rose and looked moist eyed,
And forgot she was a bride.
My sweet lady, Jehan de Grace,
With the pale Madonna face,
He had brought to his embrace.
And my Lord saw: gave commands:
I was of his bandit bands.—
Love should perish at our hands.
Young the Knight was. He should sing
Nevermore of love or spring,
Or of any gentle thing.
When he stole at midnight's hour,
To my Lady's forest bower,
We were hidden near the tower.
In the woods of Trebizend
There he met an evil end.—
Night, you know, is no man's friend.
He has fought in fort and field;
Borne for years a stainless shield,
And in strength to none would yield.

But we seized him unaware,
Bound and hung him; stripped him bare,
Left him to the wild boars there.
Never has my Lady known.—
But she often sits alone,
Weeping when my Lord is gone....
Night, they say, is no man's friend.—
In the woods of Trebizend
There he met an evil end.
Now my old Lord sleeps in peace,
While my Lady — each one sees —
Waits, and keeps her memories.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Troubadour, Pons De Capdeuil

The gray dawn finds me thinking still
Of thee who hadst my thoughts all night;
Of thee, who art my lute's sweet skill,
And of my soul the only light;
My star of song to whom I turn
My face and for whose love I yearn.

Thou dost not know thy troubadour
Lies sick to death; no longer sings:
That this alone may work his cure
To feel thy white hand, weighed with rings,
Smoothed softly through his heavy hair,
Or resting with the old love there.

To feel thy warm cheek laid to his;
Thy bosom fluttering with love;
Then on his eyes and lips thy kiss
Thy kiss alone were all enough
To heal his heart, to cure his soul,
And make his mind and body whole.

The drought, these three months past, hath slain
All green things in this weary land,
As in my life thy high disdain
Hath killed ambition: yea, my hand
Forgets its cunning; and my heart,
Sick to stagnation, all its art.

Once to my castle there at Puy,
In honor of thy beauty, came
The Angevin nobility,
To hear me sing of thee, whose fame
Was high as Helen's. Azalis,
Hast thou forgot? Forget'st thou this?

And in the lists how often there
I broke a spear for thee? and placed
The crown of beauty on thy hair,
While thou sat'st, like the fair moon faced,

Amid the human firmament
Of faces that toward thee bent.

I take my hawk, my peregrine
No falconer or page beside
And ride from morn till eve begin;
I ride forgetting that I ride,
And all save this: that thou no more
Dost ride beside me as of yore.

A heron sweeps above me: I
Remember then how oft were cast
Thy hawk and mine at such: and sigh
Thinking of thee and days long past,
When through the Anjou fields and bowers
We used to hawk and hunt for hours.

And when, unhappy, I return,
And take my lute and seek again
The terrace where, beside some urn,
The castle gathers, while the stain
Of sunset crimsons all the sea,
And sing old songs once loved of thee:

The soul within me overflows
With longing; and I seem to hear
Thy voice through fountains and the rose
Calling afar, while, wildly near,
The rossignol makes mute my tongue
With memories of things long sung.

Here in Provence I pine for thee;
And there in Anjou dost forget!
All beauty here is less to me
Than is the ribbon lightly set
At thy white throat; or, on thy foot,
The shoe that I have loved to lute.

Thy foot, that I have loved to kiss;
To kiss and sing of! Song hath died
In me since then, my Azalis;
Since to my soul e'en that 's denied:

Thy kiss, that now alone could cure
The sick heart of thy Troubadour.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Unimaginative

Each form of beauty's but the new disguise
Of thoughts more beautiful than forms can be:
Sceptics, who search with unanointed eyes,
Never the Earth's wild fairy-dance shall see.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Universal Wind

Wild son of Heav'n, with laughter and alarm,
Now East, now West, now North, now South he goes,
Bearing in one harsh hand dark death and storm,
And in the other, sunshine and a rose.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Vale Of Tempe

All night I lay upon the rocks:
And now the dawn comes up this way,
One great star trembling in her locks
Of rosy ray.

I can not tell the things I've seen;
The things I've heard I dare not speak.
The dawn is breaking gold and green
O'er vale and peak.

My soul hath kept its tryst again
With her as once in ages past,
In that lost life, I know not when,
Which was my last.

When she was Dryad, I was Faun,
And lone we loved in Tempe's Vale,
Where once we saw Endymion
Pass passion-pale:

Where once we saw him clasp and meet
Among the pines, with kiss on kiss,
Moon-breasted and most heavenly sweet,
White Artemis.

Where often, Bacchus-borne, we heard
The Mænad shout, wild-revelling;
And filled with witchcraft, past all word,
The Limnad sing.

Bloom-bodied 'mid the twilight trees
We saw the Oread, who shone
Fair as a form Praxiteles
Carved out of stone.

And oft, goat-footed, in a glade
We marked the Satyrs dance: and great,
Man-muscled, like the oaks that shade
Dodona's gate.

Fierce Centaurs hoof the torrent's bank
With wind-swept manes, or leap the crag,
While swift, the arrow in its flank,
Swept by the stag.

And, minnow-white, the Naiad there
We watched, foam-shouldered, in her stream
Wringing the moisture from her hair
Of emerald gleam.

We saw the oak unclose and, brown,
Sap-scented, from its door of bark
The Hamadryad's form step down:
Or, crouching dark.

Within the oak's deep heart, we felt
Her eyes that pierced the fibrous gloom;
Her breath, that was the nard we smelt,
The wild perfume.

There is no flower, that opens glad
Soft eyes of dawn and sunset hue,
As fair as the Limoniad
We saw there too:

That flow'r-divinity, rose-born,
Of sunlight and white dew, whose blood
Is fragrance, and whose heart of morn
A crimson bud.

There is no star, that rises white
To tip-toe down the deeps of dusk,
Sweet as the moony Nymphs of Night
With breasts of musk.

We met among the mystery
And hush of forests, where, afar,
We watched their hearts beat glimmeringly,
Each heart a star.

There is no beam, that rays the marge

Of mist that trails from cape to cape,
From panther-haunted gorge to gorge,
Bright as the shape.

Of her, the one Auloniad,
That, born of wind and grassy gleams,
Silvered upon our sight, dim-clad
In foam of streams.

All, all of these I saw again,
Or dreamed I saw, as there, ah me!
Upon the cliffs, above the plain,
In Thessaly.

I lay, while Mount Olympus helmed
Its brow with moon-effulgence deep,
And, far below, vague, overwhelmed
With reedy sleep.

Peneus flowed, and, murmuring, sighed,
Meseemed, for its dead gods, whose ghosts
Through its dark forests seemed to glide
In shadowy hosts.

'Mid whose pale shapes again I spoke
With her, my soul, as I divine,
Dim 'neath some gnarled Olympian oak,
Or Ossan pine.

Till down the slopes of heaven came
Those daughters of the dawn, the Hours,
Clothed on with raiment blue of flame,
And crowned with flowers;

When she, with whom my soul once more
Had trysted limbed of light and air
Whom to my breast, (as oft of yore
In Tempe there.

When she was Dryad, I was Faun,)
I clasped and held, and pressed and kissed,
Within my arms, as broke the dawn,

Became a mist.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Vale Of Tempe - The Hylas

I Heard the hylas in the bottomlands
Piping a reed-note in the praise of Spring:
The South-wind brought the music on its wing,
As 't were a hundred strands
Of guttural gold smitten of elfin hands;
Or of sonorous silver, struck by bands,
Anviled within the earth,
Of laboring gnomes shaping some gem of worth.

Sounds that seemed to bid
The wildflowers wake;
Unclose each dewy lid,
And starrily shake
Sleep from their airy eyes
Beneath the loam,
And, robed in dædal dyes,
Frail as the fluttering foam,
In countless myriads rise.
And in my city home
I, too, who heard
Their reedy word,
Awoke, and, with my soul, went forth to roam.

II.

And under glimpses of the cloud-white sky
My soul and I
Beheld her seated, Spring among the woods
With bright attendants,
Two radiant maidens,
The Wind and Sun: one robed in cadence,
And one in white resplendence,
Working wild wonders with the solitudes.

And thus it was,
So it seemed to me,
Where she sat apart
Fondling a bee,
By some strange art,

As in a glass,
Down in her heart
My eyes could see
What would come to pass:
How in each tree,
Each blade of grass,
Dead though it seemed,
Still lived and dreamed
Life and perfume,
Color and bloom,
Housed from the North
Like golden mirth,
That she with jubilation would bring forth,
Astonishing Earth.

III.

And thus it was I knew
That though the trees were barren of all buds,
And all the woods
Of blossoms now, still, still their hoods
And heads of blue and gold,
And pink and pearl lay hidden in the mould;
And in a day or two,
When Spring's fair feet came twinkling through
The trees, their gold and blue,
And pearl and pink in countless bands would rise,
Invading all these ways
With loveliness; and to the skies,
In radiant rapture raise
The fragile sweetness of a thousand eyes.

When every foot of soil would boast
An ambushade
Of blossoms; each green rood parade
Its flowery host;
And every acre of the woods,
With little bird-like beaks of leaves and buds,
Brag of its beauty; making bankrupts of
Our hearts of praise, and beggar us of love.

IV.

Here, when the snow was flying,
And barren boughs were sighing,
In icy January,
I stood, like some gray tree, lonely and solitary.
Now every spine and splinter
Of wood, washed clean of winter,
By hill and canyon
Makes of itself an intimate companion,
A confidant, who whispers me the dreams
That haunt its heart, and clothe it as with gleams.
And lonely now no more
I walk the mossy floor
Of woodlands where each bourgeoning leaf is matched,
Mated with music; triumphed o'er
Of building love and nestling song just hatched.

V.

Washed of the early rains,
And rosed with ruddy stains,
The boughs and branches now make ready for
Their raiment green of leaves and musk and myrrh.
As if to greet her pomp,
The heralds of her state,
As 't were with many a silvery trump,
The birds are singing, singing,
And all the world's elate,
As o'er the hills, as 't were from Heaven's gate,
With garments, dewy-clinging,
Comes Spring, around whose way the budded woods are ringing
With redbird and with bluebird and with thrush;
While, overhead, on happy wings is swinging
The swallow through the heaven's azure hush:
And wren and sparrow, vireo and crow
Are busy with their nests, or high or low,
In every tree, it seems, and every bush.
The loamy odor of the turfy heat,
Breathed warm from every field and wood retreat,
Is as if spirits passed on flowery feet
That indescribable
Aroma of the woods one knows so well,

Reminding one of sylvan presences,
Clad on with lichen and with moss,
That haunt and trail across
The woods' dim dales and dells; their airy essences
Of racy nard and musk
Rapping at gummy husk
And honeyed sheath of every leaf and flower,
That open to their knock, each at the appointed hour:
And, lo!
Where'er they go
Behold a miracle
Too beautiful to tell!
Where late the woods were bare
The red-bud shakes its hair
Of flowering flame; the dogwood and the haw
Dazzle with pearl the shaw;
And the broad maple crimsons, sunset-red,
Through firmaments of forest overhead:
And of its boughs the wild-crab makes a lair,
A rosy cloud of blossoms, for the bees,
Bewildered there,
To revel in; lulling itself with these.
And in the whispering woods
The wildflower multitudes
Rise, star, and bell, and bugle, all amorn
To everything save their own loveliness
And the soft wind's caress,
The wind that tip-toes through them: liverwort,
Spring-beauty, windflower and the bleedingheart,
And bloodroot, holding low
Its cups of stainless snow;
Sorrel and trillturn and the twin-leaf, too,
Twinkling, like stars, through dew:
And patches, as it were, of saffron skies,
Ranunculus; and golden eyes
Of adder's-tongue; and mines,
It seems, of grottoed gold, the poppy-celandines;
And, sapphire-spilled,
Bluets and violets,
Dark pansy-violets and columbines,
With rainy radiance filled;
And many more whose names my mind forgets,

But not my heart:
The Nations of the Flowers, making gay
In every place and part,
With pomp and pageantry
Of absolute Beauty, all the worlds of woods,
In congregated multitudes,
Assembled where
Unearthly colors all the oaks put on,
Velvet and silk and vair,
Vermeil and mauve and fawn,
Dim and auroral as the hues of dawn.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Vampire

A lily in a twilight place?
A moonflow'r in the lonely night?—
Strange beauty of a woman's face
Of wildflow'r-white!

The rain that hangs a star's green ray
Slim on a leaf-point's restlessness,
Is not so glimmering green and gray
As was her dress.

I drew her dark hair from her eyes,
And in their deeps beheld a while
Such shadowy moonlight as the skies
Of Hell may smile.

She held her mouth up redly wan,
And burning cold,—I bent and kissed
Such rosy snow as some wild dawn
Makes of a mist.

God shall not take from me that hour,
When round my neck her white arms clung!
When 'neath my lips, like some fierce flower,
Her white throat swung!

Or words she murmured while she leaned!
Witch-words, she holds me softly by,—
The spell that binds me to a fiend
Until I die.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Vikings

Far to the South a star,
Bright-shining over all;
And a sound of voices singing,
'Round a Babe in an ox's-stall.

Three Kings a-riding, riding,
With gifts of myrrh and gold,
Far, far from the wild North Ocean,
Of which this tale is told:

By the sea, in the Hall of Beele,
Were Yule and joy and feast,
Outside was the noise of the ocean
And storm, like a howling beast.

The King sate at the banquet
With his Jarls and Berserks hale,
Quaffing to Thor and Odin
Huge horns of mead and ale.

Unheeded howled the winter
'Round the oak walls of the King,
For a mighty skald with a runic harp
Made the hall re-echoing ring.

Loud laughed the blonde Norse maidens
As they brimmed the barmy cup,
Where the torches flickered the war-blades
And the bucklers hanging up.

But out by the thundering North Sea
Ten shattered dragons lie,
Vessels, like great sea-monsters,
To the billows heaving high.

And pale and hacked with gashes,
'Mid his battered arms lies low
The red-haired Viking, Hareck,
Half-buried in the snow.

And wan, where the waves beat sullen,
Lies his brother, one-eyed Hulf,
Above whose mailéd visage
Snarls the winter-famished wolf.

And where is seen the glimmer
Of arms on dune and shore,
Their warriors, fierce and long-haired,
Lie frozen in their gore.

For Hulf and red-haired Hareck
To Sogn did harrying sail,
But Beele and his Berserkers
Did give them welcome hale.

On the shore of the wild North Ocean,
In the wild mist and the spray,
In the spindrift and the tempest
The battle clanged all day.

On the shore of the wild North Ocean,
When fell the wilder night,
The Vikings, Hulf and Hareck,
As the snow lay cold and white.

Not for long in their shattered armor,
By the billow-booming deep,
Were left the terrible warriors
In their eternal sleep.

For Odin from Valhala
Saw the Vikings fight and fall,
And bade the Valkyrs summon
The heroes to his Hall.

They came. The ghosts of the Vikings
Stood dark-browed on the field,
Moody within the tempest,
Each leaning on his shield.

In his great-horned helm loomed Hareck,

His face like some wild moon
That looks upon the havoc
Of a field with battle strewn.

Like a dark star, dim and misty,
Faint-seen through scud-blown air,
Hulf's-face on the Maids of Odin
Shone in its wind-tossed hair.

And with them, lo! another,
Whose face was mild and sad
Unarmed, no Viking warrior,
A Man in whiteness clad.

Through snow and the foam of the ocean
Glittered the Valkyries,
And the sound of their trumpet voices
Was like to the stormy sea's.

'Behold, ' they cried, 'Valhala
Awaits! And Odin sent!
The polished skulls are brimmed with mead
And ready the tournament!

'And Thor and Brage and Balder,
And many an Aza fair,
On the pleasant plain of Ida,
Await your coming there!'

And they stretched their glittering gauntlets
To the Vikings standing pale,
And joy lit up their lowering brows
Like moonlight in a gale.

And then the other murmured,
And His voice was soft and low,
And a scent as of myrrh and lilies
Swept through the storm and snow:

'Come to Me, ye who labor,
And ye who are distressed!
All, all whose hearts are burdened,

And I will give you rest.

'I bring a different message
From that just brought of these,
A message of love and forgiveness
From My Father the King of Peace.

'Now ends the reign of Odin,
And My Father's rule begins!
Peace and good-will, good-will and peace,
And forgiveness of all sins!'

And He stretched His arms toward them,
And hushed were the howling gales:
And they saw that His brow was crowned with thorns,
And His hands were pierced with nails.

And there in the Hall of Beele
The sound of Yule died low,
And all was hushed as the Word of Christ
Pealed far through the wind and snow.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Village Miser

The dogs made way for him and snarled and ran;
And little children to their parents clung,
Big-eyed with fear, when, gruff of look and tongue,
Bent-backed he passed who had the village ban.
In old drab coat and trousers, shoes of tan,
And scarecrow hat, from some odd fashion sprung,
A threadbare cloak about his shoulders flung,
Grasping a crooked stick, limped by this man.
Unspeaking and unspoken to, but oft
Cursed after for a miser as he passed,
Or barked at by the dogs who feared his cane.
One day they found him dead; killed in his loft.
Among his books, the hoard which he had massed.
And then they laughed and swore he was insane.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Voice Of Ocean

A cry went through the darkness; and the moon,
Hurrying through storm, gazed with a ghastly face,
Then cloaked herself in scud: the merman race
Of surges ceased; and then th' Aeolian croon
Of the wild siren, Wind, within the shrouds
Sunk to a sigh. The ocean in that place
Seemed listening; haunted, for a moment's space,
By something dread that cried against the clouds.
Mystery and night; and with them fog and rain:
And then that cry again as if the deep
Uttered its loneliness in one dark word:
Her horror of herself; her Titan pain;
Her monsters; and the dead that she must keep,
Has kept, alone, for centuries, unheard.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Wanderer

Between the death of day and birth of night,
By War's red light,
I met with one in trailing sorrows clad,
Whose features had
The look of Him who died to set men right.
Around him many horrors, like great worms,
Terrific forms,
Crawled, helmed like hippogriff and rosmarine, —
Gaunt and obscene,
Urged on to battle with a thousand arms.
Columns of steel, and iron belching flame,
Before them came:
And cities crumbled; and amid them trod
Havoc, their god,
With Desolation that no tongue may name.
And out of Heaven came a burning breath,
And on it Death,
Riding: before him, huge and bellowing herds
Of beasts, like birds,
Bat-winged and demon, nothing conquereth.
Hag-lights went by, and Fear that shrieks and dies;
And mouths, with cries
Of famine; and the madness of Despair;
And everywhere
Curses, like kings, with ever-burning eyes.
And, lo! the shadow shook and cried a name,
That grew a flame
Above the world, and said, 'Give heed! give heed!
See how they bleed!
My wounds! my wounds! — Was it for this I came?
'Where is the love for which I shed my blood?
And where the good
I preached and died for? — Lo! ye have denied
And crucified
Me here again, who swore me brotherhood!
Then overhead the vault of night was rent:
The firmament
Winged thunder over of aerial craft;
And Battle laughed

Titanic laughter as its way it went.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Waning Year

A Sense of something that is sad and strange;
Of something that is felt as death is felt,
As shadows, phantoms, in a haunted grange,
Around me seems to melt.

It rises, so it seems, from the decay
Of the dim woods; from withered leaves and weeds,
And dead flowers hanging by the woodland way
Sad, hoary heads of seeds.

And from the cricket's song, so feeble now
'T is like a sound heard in the heart, a call
Dreamier than dreams; and from the shaken bough,
From which the acorns fall.

From scents and sounds it rises, sadly slow,
This presence, that hath neither face nor form;
That in the woods sits like demented woe,
Whispering of wreck and storm.

A presence wrought of melancholy grief,
And dreams that die; that, in the streaming night,
I shall behold, like some fantastic leaf,
Beat at my window's light.

That I shall hear, outside my storm-lashed door,
Moan like the wind in some rain-tortured tree;
Or 'round my roof and down my chimney roar
All the wild night to me.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Watcher On The Tower

I

The Voice of a Man

WHAT of the Night, O Watcher?

The Voice of a Woman

Yea, what of it?

The Watcher

A star has risen; and a wind blows strong.

Voice of the Man

The Night is dark.

The Watcher

But God is there above it.

Voice of the Woman

The Night is dark; the Night is dark and long.

II

Voice of the Man

What of the Night, O Watcher?

Voice of the Woman

Night of sorrow!

The Watcher

Out of the East there comes a sound, like song.

Voice of the Man

The Night is dark.

The Watcher

Have courage! There's To-morrow!

Voice of the Woman

The Night is dark; the Night is dark and long.

III

Voice of the Man

What of the Night, O Watcher?

Voice of the Woman

Is it other?

The Watcher

I see a gleam; a thorn of light; a thong.

Voice of the Man

The Night is dark.

The Watcher

The Morning comes, my Brother.

Voice of the Woman

The Night is dark; the Night is dark and long.

IV

Voice of the Man

What now, what now, O Watcher?

The Watcher

Red as slaughter
The Darkness dies. The Light comes swift and strong.

Voice of the Man

The Night was long.—What sayest thou, my Daughter?

Voice of the Woman

The Night was dark; the Night was dark and long.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Whippoorwill

I

Above lone woodland ways that led
To dells the stealthy twilights tread
The west was hot geranium red;
And still, and still,
Along old lanes the locusts sow
With clustered pearls the Maytimes know,
Deep in the crimson afterglow,
We heard the homeward cattle low,
And then the far-off, far-off woe
Of 'whippoorwill!' of 'whippoorwill!'

II

Beneath the idle beechen boughs
We heard the far bells of the cows
Come slowly jangling towards the house;
And still, and still,
Beyond the light that would not die
Out of the scarlet-haunted sky;
Beyond the evening-star's white eye
Of glittering chalcedony,
Drained out of dusk the plaintive cry
Of 'whippoorwill,' of 'whippoorwill.'

III

And in the city oft, when swims
The pale moon o'er the smoke that dims
Its disc, I dream of wildwood limbs;
And still, and still,
I seem to hear, where shadows grope
Mid ferns and flowers that dewdrops rope,-
Lost in faint deeps of heliotrope
Above the clover-sweetened slope,-
Retreat, despairing, past all hope,
The whippoorwill, the whippoorwill.

The Wild Iris

That day we wandered 'mid the hills,-so lone
Clouds are not lonelier, the forest lay
In emerald darkness round us. Many a stone
And gnarly root, gray-mossed, made wild our way:
And many a bird the glimmering light along
Showered the golden bubbles of its song.

Then in the valley, where the brook went by,
Silvering the ledges that it rippled from,-
An isolated slip of fallen sky,
Epitomizing heaven in its sum,-
An iris bloomed-blue, as if, flower-disguised,
The gaze of Spring had there materialized.

I have forgotten many things since then-
Much beauty and much happiness and grief;
And toiled and dreamed among my fellow-men,
Rejoicing in the knowledge life is brief.
'Tis winter now,' so says each barren bough;
And face and hair proclaim 'tis winter now.

I would forget the gladness of that spring!
I would forget that day when she and I,
Between the bird-song and the blossoming,
Went hand in hand beneath the soft May sky!-
Much is forgotten, yea-and yet, and yet,
The things we would we never can forget.

Nor I how May then minted treasures
Of crowfoot gold; and molded out of light
The sorrel's cups, whose elfin chalices
Of limpid spar were streaked with rosy white:
Nor all the stars of twinkling spiderwort,
And mandrake moons with which her brows were girt.

But most of all, yea, it were well for me,
Me and my heart, that I forget that flower,
The blue wild iris, azure fleur-de-lis,
That she and I together found that hour.

Its recollection can but emphasize
The pain of loss, remindful of her eyes.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Willow Water

Deep in the hollow wood he found a way
Winding unto a water, dim and gray,
Grayer and dimmer than the break of day;
By which a wildrose blossomed; flower on flower
Leaning above its image hour on hour,
Musing, it seemed, on its own loveliness,
And longing with sweet longing to express
Some thought to its reflection.

Dropping now
Bee-shaken pollen from th' o'erburdened bough,
And now a petal, delicate as a blush,
It seemed to sigh or whisper to the hush
The dreams, the myths and marvels it had seen
Tip-toeing dimly through the woodland green:
Faint shapes of fragrance; forms like flowers, that go
Footing the moss; or, shouldered with moonbeam glow,
Through starlit waves oaring an arm of snow.

He sat him down and gazed into the pool:
And as he gazed, two petals, silken cool,
Fell, soft as starbeams fall that arrow through
The fern-hung trembling of a dropp of dew;
And, pearly-placid, on the water lay,
Two curves of languid ruby, where, rose-gray,
The shadow of a willow dimmed the stream.

And suddenly he saw or did he dream
He saw? the rose-leaves change to rosy lips,
A laughing crimson. And, with silvery hips,
And eyes of luminous emerald, full of sleep
And all the stillness of the under deep,
The shadow of the tree become a girl,
A shadowy girl, who shook from many a curl
Faint, tangled glimmerings of shell and pearl.

A girl who called him, beckoned him to come,
Waving a hand whiter than moonlit foam,
And pointing, minnowy fingered, to her home

A bubble, rainbow-built, beneath the wave,
Dim-domed, and murmurous as the deep-sea cave,
Columned of coral and of grottoed foam,
Where the pale mermaids never cease to comb
Their weed-green hair with fingers crystal-cold,
Sighing forever 'round the Sea King old
Throned. on his throne of shell and ribbéd gold.

Laughing, she lured him, lipped like some wild rose;
Bidding him follow; come to her; repose
Upon her bosom and forever dream
Lulled by the wandering whisper of the stream.
But him mortality weighed heavily on
And earthly love: and, sorrowful and wan,
He shook his head, motioning, 'I cannot rise';

But still he felt the magic of her eyes
Drawing him to her; felt her hands of foam
Around his heart; her lips, that bade him come
With smiling witchery, and with laughing looks
Like those that lured us in the fairy books
Our childhood dreamed on.

Then, as suddenly,
A wind, it seemed, from no where he could see,
Wrinkled the water; ruffled its smooth glass;
And there again, behold! when it did pass
The rose-leaves lay and shadow, dimly seen;
The willow's shadow, and no thing between.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Wind In The Pines

When winds go organing through the pines
On hill and headland, darkly gleaming,
Meseems I hear sonorous lines
Of Iliads that the woods are dreaming.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Wind Of Spring

The wind that breathes of columbines
And celandines that crowd the rocks;
That shakes the balsam of the pines
With laughter from his airy locks,
Stops at my city door and knocks.

He calls me far a-forest, where
The twin-leaf and the blood-root bloom;
And, circled by the amber air,
Life sits with beauty and perfume
Weaving the new web of her loom.

He calls me where the waters run
Through fronding ferns where wades the henn;
And, sparkling in the equal sun,
Song leans above her brimming urn,
And dreams the dreams that love shall learn.

The wind has summoned, and I go:
To read God's meaning in each line
The wildflowers write; and, walking slow,
God's purpose, of which song is sign,-
The wind's great, gusty hand in mine.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Wind Of Summer

From the hills and far away
All the long, warm summer day
Comes the wind and seems to say:

'Come, oh, come! and let us go
Where the meadows bend and blow,
Waving with the white-tops' snow.

"Neath the hyssop-colored sky
'Mid the meadows we will lie
Watching the white clouds roll by;

'While your hair my hands shall press
With a cooling tenderness
Till your grief grows less and less.

'Come, oh, come! and let us roam
Where the rock-cut waters comb
Flowing crystal into foam.

" Under trees whose trunks are brown,
On the banks that violets crown,
We will watch the fish flash down;

'While your ear my voice shall soothe
With a whisper soft and smooth
Till your care shall wax uncouth.

'Come! where forests, line on line,
Armies of the oak and pine,
Scale the hills and shout and shine.

'We will wander, hand in hand,
Ways where tall the toadstools stand,
Mile-stones white of Fairyland.

'While your eyes my lips shall kiss,
Dewy as a wild rose is,
Till they gaze on naught but bliss.

'On the meadows you will hear,
Leaning low your spirit ear,
Cautious footsteps drawing near.

'You will deem it but a bee,
Murmuring soft and sleepily,
Till your inner sight shall see.

'Tis a presence passing slow,
All its shining hair ablow,
Through the white-tops' tossing snow.

'By the waters, if you will,
And your inmost soul be still,
Melody your ears shall fill.

'You will deem it but the stream
Rippling onward in a dream,
Till upon your gaze shall gleam.

'Arm of spray and throat of foam
'Tis a spirit there aroam
Where the radiant waters comb.

'In the forest, if you heed,
You shall hear a magic reed
Sow sweet notes like silver seed.

'You will deem your ears have heard
Stir of tree or song of bird,
Till your startled eyes are blurred.

'By a vision, instant seen,
Naked gold and beryl green,
Glimmering bright the boughs between.

'Follow me! and you shall see
Wonder-worlds of mystery
That are only known to me!'

Thus outside my city door

Speaks the Wind its wildwood lore,
Speaks and lo! I go once more.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Wind Of Winter

The Winter Wind, the wind of death,
Who knocked upon my door,
Now through the keyhole entereth,
Invisible and hoar:
He breathes around his icy breath
And treads the flickering floor.

I heard him, wandering in the night,
Tap at my windowpane;
With ghostly fingers, snowy white,
I heard him tug in vain,
Until the shuddering candlelight
Did cringe with fear and strain.

The fire, awakened by his voice,
Leapt up with frantic arms,
Like some wild babe that greets with noise
Its father home who storms,
With rosy gestures that rejoice,
And crimson kiss that warms.

Now in the hearth he sits and, drowned
Among the ashes, blows;
Or through the room goes stealing round
On cautious-creeping toes,
Deep-mantled in the drowsy sound
Of night that sleets and snows.

And oft, like some thin faery-thing,
The stormy hush amid,
I hear his captive trebles sing
Beneath the kettle's lid;
Or now a harp of elfland string
In some dark cranny hid.

Again I hear him, implike, whine,
Cramped in the gusty flue;
Or knotted in the resinous pine
Raise goblin cry and hue,

While through the smoke his eyeballs shine,
A sooty red and blue.

At last I hear him, nearing dawn,
Take up his roaring broom,
And sweep wild leaves from wood and lawn,
And from the heavens the gloom,
To show the gaunt world lying wan,
And morn's cold rose a-bloom.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Wind Witch

THE wind that met her in the park,
Came hurrying to my side—
It ran to me, it leapt to me,
And nowhere would abide.
It whispered in my ear a word,
So sweet a word, I swear,
It smelt of honey and the kiss
It'd stolen from her hair.
Then shouted me the flowery way
Whereon she walked with dreams,
And bade me wait and watch her pass
Among the glooms and gleams.
It ran to meet her as she came
And clasped her to its breast;
It kissed her throat, her chin, her mouth,
And laughed its merriest.
Then to my side it leapt again,
And took me by surprise:
The kiss it'd stolen from her lips
It blew into my eyes.
Since then, it seems, I have grown blind
To every face but hers:
It haunts me sleeping or awake,
And is become my curse.
The spell, that kiss has laid on me,
Shall hold my eyes the same,
Until I give it back again
To lips from which it came.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Window On The Hill

Among the fields the camomile
Seems blown mist in the lightning's glare:
Cool, rainy odors drench the air;
Night speaks above; the angry smile
Of storm within her stare.

The way that I shall take to-night
Is through the wood whose branches fill
The road with double darkness, till,
Between the boughs, a window's light
Shines out upon the hill.

The fence; and then the path that goes
Around a trailer-tangled rock,
Through puckered pink and hollyhock,
Unto a latch-gate's unkempt rose,
And door whereat I knock.

Bright on the oldtime flower place
The lamp streams through the foggy pane;
The door is opened to the rain:
And in the door-her happy face
And outstretched arms again.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Winds

Those hewers of the clouds, the Winds,-that lair
At the four compass-points,-are out to-night;
I hear their sandals trample on the height,
I hear their voices trumpet through the air:
Builders of storm, God's workmen, now they bear,
Up the steep stair of sky, on backs of might,
Huge tempest bulks, while,-sweat that blinds heir sight,-
The rain is shaken from tumultuous hair:
Now, sweepers of the firmament, they broom,
Like gathered dust, the rolling mists along
Heaven's floors of sapphire; all the beautiful blue
Of skyey corridor and celestial room
Preparing, with large laughter and loud song,
For the white moon and stars to wander through.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Woman

WITH her fair face she made my heaven,
Beneath whose stars and moon and sun
I worshiped, praying, having striven,
For wealth through which she might be won.
And yet she had no soul: A woman
As fair and cruel as a god;
Who played with hearts as nothing human,
And tossed them by and on them trod.
She killed a soul; she did it nightly;
Luring it forth from peace and prayer,
To strangle it, and laughing lightly,
Cast it into the gutter there.
And yet, not for a purer vision
Would I exchange; or Paradise
Possess instead of Hell, my prison,
Where burns the passion of her eyes.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Woman Speaks

Why have you come? to see me in my shame?
A thing to spit on, to despise and scorn?
And then to ask me! You, by whom was torn
And then cast by, like some vile rag, my name!
What shelter could you give me, now, that blame
And loathing would not share? that wolves of vice
Would not besiege with eyes of glaring ice?
Wherein Sin sat not with her face of flame?
'You love me'? God! If yours be love, for lust
Hell must invent another synonym!
If yours be love, then hatred is the way
To Heaven and God! and not with soul but dust
Must burn the faces of the Cherubim,
O lie of lies, if yours be love, I say!

Madison Julius Cawein

The Wood Anemone

The thorn-tree waved a bough of May
And all its branches bent
To indicate the wildwood way
The Wind and Sunbeam went.

A wildrose here, a wildrose there
Lifted appealing eyes,
And looked the path they did not dare
Reveal in other wise.

Wild parsley tossed a plume of gold
And breathed so sweet a sigh,
I guessed the way, it never told,
Which they had hastened by.

I traced the Beam, so swift and white,
In many a woodland place
By wildflower footprints of its flight
And gleamings of its grace.

I knew its joy had filled with song
The high heart of the bird,
That rippled, rippled all day long
In dells that hushed and heard.

I knew the Wind with flashing feet
Had charmed the brook withal,
Who in its cascades did repeat
The music of that call.

All were in league to help me find,
Or tell to me the way,
Which now before me, now behind,
These two had gone in play.

I could not understand how these
Could hide so near to me,
When by the whispering of the trees
I knew the wood could see.

Until, all breathless with its joy,
The Wind, that could not rest,
Ran past me, like a romping boy,
And bade me look my best.

And there I saw them clasped in bliss
Beneath an old beech tree:
And-here's the flower born of their kiss
This wild anemone.

'Revels the Moon did light.'

Madison Julius Cawein

The Wood Brook

Like some wild child that laughs and weeps,
Impatient of its mother's arms,
The wood brook from the hillside leaps,
Eager to reach the neighboring farms:
Complaining crystal in its throat
It whimpers a protesting note.

The wildflowers that the forest weaves
To deck it with are thrust aside;
And all the little happy leaves,
That would detain it, are denied:
It must be gone; it does not care;
Away, away, no matter where.

Ah, if it knew what work awaits
Beyond the woodland's peaceful breast!
What toil and soil of man's estates!
What contact with life's sorriest,
A different mind it then might keep,
And hush its frenzy into sleep.

Make of its trouble there a pool,
A dim circumference filled with sky
And trees, wherein the beautiful
Contemplates silence with a sigh,
As mind communicates with mind
Of intimate things they have in kind.

Encircled of the wood's repose,
Contentment then to it would give
The peace of lily and of rose,
And love of all wild things that live;
And let it serve as looking-glass
For myths and dreams the wildwood has.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Wood God

I Heard his step upon the moss;
I glimpsed his shadow in the stream;
And thrice I saw the brambles toss
Wherein he vanished like a dream.

A great beech aimed a giant stroke
At my bent head, in mad alarm;
And then a chestnut and an oak
Struck at me with a knotted arm.

The brambles clutched at me; and fear
For one swift instant held me fast
Just long enough to let me hear
His windlike footsteps vanish past.

The brushwood made itself more dense,
And looped my feet with green delay;
And, threatening every violence,
The rocks and thorns opposed my way.

But still I followed; strove and strained
In spite of all the wood devised
To hold me back, and on him gained
The deity I had surprised.

The genius of the wood, whose flute
Had led me far; at first, to see
The imprint of his form and foot
Upon the moss beneath the tree.

A bird piped warning and he fled:
I saw a gleam of gold and green:
The woodland held its breath for dread
That its great godhead would be seen.

Could I but speak him face to face,
And for a while his joy behold,
What visions there might then take place,
What myst'ries of the woods be told!

And well I knew that he was near
By that soft sound the water made
Upon its rock; and by the fear
The wind unto the leaves betrayed.

And by the sign bough made to bough,
The secret signal, brusque and brief,
That said, 'On guard! He's looking now!'
And pointed at me every leaf.

Then suddenly the way lay wide;
The brambles ceased to clutch and tear;
And even the grim trees shrunk aside,
And motioned me, 'He's there! he's there!'

A ruse! I knew it for a ruse,
To thwart my search at last. But I
Had been a fool to follow clues,
And let the god himself pass by.

And then the wood in mighty mirth
Laughed at me, all its bulk a-swing;
It roared and bent its giant girth
As if it'd done a clever thing.

But I, on whom its scorn was spent,
Said not a word, but turned away:
To me this truth was evident
No man may see the gods to-day.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Wood Thrush

Bird, with the voice of gold,
Dropping wild bar on bar,
To which the flowers unfold,
Star upon gleaming star,
Here in the forest old:

Bird, with the note as clear,
Cool as a bead of dew,
To which the buds, that hear,
Open deep eyes of blue,
Prick up a rosy ear:

Shut in your house of leaves,
Bubbles of song you blow,
Showered whence none perceives,
Taking the wood below
Till its green bosom heaves.

Music of necromance,
Circles of silvering sound,
Wherein the fairies dance,
Weaving an elfin round,
Till the whole wood's a-trance.

Till, with the soul, one hears
Footsteps of mythic things:
Fauns, with their pointed ears,
Piping to haunted springs,
And the white nymph that nears.

Dryads, that rustle from
Trunks of unclosing trees,
Glimmering shapes that come
Clothed on with bloom and breeze,
Stealthily venturesome.

Spirits of light and air,
Bodied of dawn and dusk,
Peeping from blossoms there,

Windows of dew and musk,
Starry with firefly hair.

Moth-winged and bee-like forms,
Rippling with flower-tints,
Waving their irised arms,
Weaving of twilight glints
Wonders and wildwood charms.

Myths of the falling foam,
Tossing their hair of spray,
Driving the minnows home,
Shepherding them the way,
Safe from the water-gnome.

Or from the streaming stone
Drawing with liquid strokes
Many a crystal tone,
Music their joy evokes,
Filling the forest lone.

Art thou a voice or bird,
Lost in the world of trees?
Or but a dream that's heard
Telling of mysteries,
Saying an unknown word?

Art thou a sprite? or sound
Blown on a flute of fays?
Going thy wildwood round,
Haunting the woodland ways,
Making them holy ground.

Art thou a dream that Spring
Utters? a hope, her soul
Voices? whose pulses sing
On to some fairer goal,
Wild as a heart or wing.

Art thou the gold and green
Voice of the ancient wood?
Syllabbling soft, between

Silence and solitude,
All that it dreams unseen...

Bird, like a wisp, a gleam,
Lo! you have led me far
Would I were what you seem,
Or what you really are,
Bird with the voice of dream!

Madison Julius Cawein

The Wood Water

An evil, stealthy water, dark as hate,
Sunk from the light of day,
'Thwart which is hung a ruined water-gate,
Creeps on its stagnant way.

Moss and the spawny duckweed, dim as air,
And green as copperas,
Choke its dull current; and, like hideous hair,
Tangles of twisted grass.

Above it sinister trees, as crouched and gaunt
As huddled Terror, lean;
Guarding some secret in that nightmare haunt,
Some horror they have seen.

Something the sunset points at from afar,
Spearing the sullen wood
And hag-gray water with a single bar
Of flame as red as blood.

Something the stars, conspiring with the moon,
Shall look on, and remain
Frozen with fear; staring as in a swoon,
Striving to flee in vain.

Something the wisp that, wandering in the night,
Above the ghastly stream,
Haply shall find; and, filled with frantic fright,
Light with its ghostly gleam.

Something that lies there, under weed and ooze,
With wide and awful eyes
And matted hair, and limbs the waters bruise,
That strives, yet can not rise.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Wood Witch

There is a woodland witch who lies
With bloom-bright limbs and beam-bright eyes,
Among the water-flags that rank
The slow brook's heron-haunted bank.
The dragon-flies, brass-bright and blue,
Are signs she works her sorcery through;
Weird, wizard characters she weaves
Her spells by under forest leaves,
These wait her word, like imps, upon
The gray flag-pods; their wings, of lawn
And gauze; their bodies, gleaming green.
While o'er the wet sand, left between
The running water and the still,
In pansy hues and daffodil,
The fancies that she doth devise
Take on the forms of butterflies,
Rich-coloured. And 'tis she you hear,
Whose sleepy rune, hummed in the ear
Of silence, bees and beetles purr,
And the dry-droning locusts whirr;
Till, where the wood is very lone,
Vague monotone meets monotone,
And slumber is begot and born,
A faery child beneath the thorn.
There is no mortal who may scorn
The witchery she spreads around
Her din demesne, wherein is bound
The beauty of abandoned time,
As some sweet thought 'twixt rhyme and rhyme.
And through her spells you shall behold
The blue turn gray, the gray turn gold
Of hollow heaven; and the brown
Of twilight vistas twinkled down
With fireflies; and in the gloom
Feel the cool vowels of perfume
Slow-syllabled of weed and bloom.
But, in the night, at languid rest,
When like a spirit's naked breast
The moon slips from a silver mist,

With star-bound brow, and star-wreathed wrist,
If you should see her rise and wave
You welcome ah! what thing could save
You then? for evermore her slave!

Madison Julius Cawein

The Woodland Waterfall

Rock and root and fern and flower
They had led him for an hour
To the inmost forest, where,
In a hollow, green with moss,
That the deep ferns trailed across,
Fell a fall, a presence fair,
Syllabbling to the air,
Charming with cool sounds the bower.

It was she he used to know
In some land of Long Ago,
Some far land of Yesterday,
Where he listened to her words,
And she lured him, like the birds,
To her lips; and in his way
Danced a bubble or rainbow-ray,
Or a minnow's silvery bow.

Round him now her arms she flung,
And, as dripping there she clung,
In her gaze of green and gold
He beheld a beauty gleam,
And the shadow of a dream,
That to no man hath been told,
Like a Faery tale of old,
Rise up glimmering, ever young.

As his form to hers she drew
In his soul, it seemed, he knew
She was daughter of a king,
Hate-transformed into a fall
By a witch; long-held in thrall,
And condemned to sigh and sing
Till some mortal find the ring,
Charm, that would the spell undo.

In a pool of spray and foam,
With a crystal-bubble dome,
Suddenly he saw the charm:

Newt-like, coiling, there it lay
Could he seize it he would stay,
Master all! and, white and warm,
Clasp the princess in his arm,
Lead her to her palace home!
He would free her; share her crown.

So he thought; and, bare and brown,
Clove the water at a blow.
But, behold, a mottled form,
Like a newt's, stretched out an arm,
Crimson-freckled, from below;
And before his heart could know,
With wild laughter drew him down.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Word In The Wood

The acorn-oak
Sullens to sombre crimson all its leaves;
And where it hugely heaves
A giant head dark as congested blood,
The gum-tree towers, against the sky a stroke
Of purpling gold; and every blur of wood
Is color on the pallet that she drops,
The Autumn, dreaming on the hazed hilltops.

II.

And as I went
Through golden forests in a golden land,
Where Magic waved her wand
And dimmed the air with dreams my boyhood knew,
Enchantment met me; and again she bent
Her face to mine, and smiled with eyes of blue,
And kissed me on the mouth and bade me heed
Old tales again from books no man may read.

III.

And at her word
The wood became transfigured; and, behold!
With hair of wavy gold
A presence walked there; and its beauty was
The beauty not of Earth: and then I heard
Within my heart vague voices, murmurous
And multitudinous as leaves that sow
The firmament when winds of autumn blow.

IV.

And I perceived
The voices were but one voice made of sighs,
That sorrowed in this wise:
'I am the child-soul that grew up and died,
The child-soul of the world that once believed,
Believed in me, but long ago denied;

The Faery Faith it needs no more to-day,
The folk-lore Beauty long since passed away.'

Madison Julius Cawein

The World Of Faery

When in the pansy-purpled stain
Of sunset one far star is seen,
Like some bright dropp of rain,
Out of the forest, deep and green,
O'er me at Spirit seems to lean,
The fairest of her train.

II.

The Spirit, dowered with fadeless youth,
Of Lay and Legend, young as when,
Close to her side, in sooth,
She led me from the marts of men,
A child, into her world, which then
To me was true as truth.

III.

Her hair is like the silken husk
That holds the corn, and glints and glows;
Her brow is white as tusk;
Her body like a wilding rose,
And through her gossamer raiment shows
Like starlight closed in musk.

IV.

She smiles at me; she nods at me;
And by her looks I am beguiled
Into the mystery
Of ways I knew when, as a child,
She led me 'mid her blossoms wild
Of faery fantasy.

V.

The blossoms that, when night is here,
Become sweet mouths that sigh soft tales;
Or, each, a jewelled ear

Leaned to the elfin dance that trails
Down moonrayed cirques of haunted vales
To cricket song and cheer.

VI.

The blossoms that, shut fast all day,
Primrose and poppy, darkness opes,
Slowly, to free a fay,
Who, silken-soft, leaps forth and ropes
With rain each web that, starlit, slopes
Between each grassy spray.

VII.

The blossoms from which elves are born,
Sweet wombs of mingled scent and snow,
Whose deeps are cool as morn;
Wherein I oft have heard them blow
Their pixy trumpets, silvery low
As some bee's drowsy horn.

VIII.

So was it when my childhood roamed
The woodland's dim enchanted ground,
Where every mushroom domed
Its disc for them to revel 'round;
Each glow-worm forged its flame, green drowned
In hollow snow that foamed

IX.

Of lilies, for their lantern light,
To lamp their dance beneath the moon;
Each insect of the night,
That rasped its thin, vibrating tune,
And owl that raised its sleepy croon,
Made music for their flight.

X.

So is it still when twilight fills
My soul with childhood's memories
That haunt the far-off hills,
And people with dim things the trees,
With faery forms that no man sees,
And dreams that no man kills.

XI.

Then all around me sway and swing
The Puck-lights of their firefly train,
Their elfin revelling;
And in the bursting pods, that rain
Their seeds around my steps, again
I hear their footsteps ring;

XII.

Their faery feet that fall once more
Within my way; and then I see,
As oft I saw before,
Her Spirit rise, who shimmeringly
Fills all my world with poetry,
The Loveliness of Yore.

Madison Julius Cawein

The Yarrow

A Tortured tree in a huddled hollow,
On whose gnarled boughs three leaves are blowing:
A strip of path that the hunters follow,
That leads to fields of the wind's wild sowing,
And a rain-washed hill with the wild-thorn growing.

II.

And here one day, when the sky was raining,
And the wind came sharp as an Indian-arrow,
And Winter walked on the hills complaining,
I found a blossom of summer yarrow,
In the freezing wet, where the way was narrow.

III.

Its dim white umble was bravely lifted,
Defying Winter and wind and weather,
Facing the rout as they whirled and shifted,
Twisting its blossom and leaves together,
Its fern-fair leaves that were sweet as the heather.

IV.

And I thought, as I saw it there so fearless,
Facing death, that was sure to follow
When the sky and the earth with white were cheerless,
And the rabbit shivered within its hollow,
That here was a weed that was worth the swallow.

V.

Its fortitude and its strength reminded
My soul of the souls that arc like the yarrow,
That face defeat, though its blows have blinded,
And smile, and fight, in their heart an arrow,
And fall unknown in the path that is narrow.

The Yellow Puccoon

Who could describe you, child of mystery
And silence, born among these solitudes?
Within whose look there is a secrecy,
Old as these wanderingwoods,
And knowledge, cousin to the morning-star,
Beyond the things that mar,
And earth itself that on the soul intrudes.

How many eons what antiquity
Went to your making? When the world was young
You yet were old. What mighty company
Of cosmic forces swung
About you! On what wonders have you gazed
Since first your head was raised
To greet the Power that here your seed-spore flung!

The butterfly that woos you, and the bee
That quits the mandrakes' cups to whisper you,
Are in your confidence and sympathy,
As sunlight is and dew,
And the soft music of this woodland stream,
Telling the trees its dream,
That lean attentive its dim face unto.

With bluet, larkspur, and anemone
Your gold conspires to arrest the eye,
Making it prisoner unto Fantasy
And Vision, none'll deny!
That lead the mind (as children lead the blind
Homeward by ways that wind)
To certainties of love that round it lie.

The tanager, in scarlet livery,
Out-flaunts you not in bravery, amber-bright
As is the little moon of Faërie,
That glows with golden light
From out a firmament of green, as you
From out the moss and dew
Glimmer your starry disc upon my sight.

If I might know you, have you, as the bee
And butterfly, in some more intimate sense
Or, like the brook there talking to the tree,
Win to your confidence
Then might I grasp it, solve it, in some wise,
This riddle in disguise
Named Life, through you and your experience.

Madison Julius Cawein

There Are Faeries

I

There are faeries, bright of eye,
Who the wildflowers' warders are:
Ouphes, that chase the firefly;
Elves, that ride the shooting-star:
Fays, who in a cobweb lie,
Swinging on a moonbeam bar;
Or who harness bumblebees,
Grumbling on the clover leas,
To a blossom or a breeze-
That's their faery car.
If you care, you too may see
There are faeries.-Verily,
There are faeries.

II

There are faeries. I could swear
I have seen them busy, where
Roses loose their scented hair,
In the moonlight weaving, weaving,

Out of starlight and the dew,
Glinting gown and shimmering shoe;
Or, within a glowworm lair,
From the dark earth slowly heaving
Mushrooms whiter than the moon,
On whose tops they sit and croon,
With their grig-like mandolins,
To fair faery ladykins,
Leaning from the windowsill
Of a rose or daffodil,
Listening to their serenade
All of cricket-music made.
Follow me, oh, follow me!
Ho! away to Faerie!
Where your eyes like mine may see
There are faeries.-Verily,

There are faeries.

III

There are faeries. Elves that swing
In a wild and rainbow ring
Through the air; or mount the wing
Of a bat to courier news
To the faery King and Queen:
Fays, who stretch the gossamers
On which twilight hangs the dews;

Who, within the moonlight sheen,
Whisper dimly in the ears
Of the flowers words so sweet
That their hearts are turned to musk
And to honey; things that beat
In their veins of gold and blue:
Ouphes, that shepherd moths of dusk-
Soft of wing and gray of hue-
Forth to pasture on the dew.

IV

There are faeries; verily;
Verily:
For the old owl in the tree,
Hollow tree,
He who maketh melody
For them tripping merrily,
Told it me.
There are faeries.-Verily,
There are faeries.

Madison Julius Cawein

Three Things

There are three things of Earth
That help us more
Than those of heavenly birth
That all implore
Than Love or Faith or Hope,
For which we strive and grope.

The first one is Desire,
Who takes our hand
And fills our hearts with fire
None may withstand;
Through whom we're lifted far
Above both moon and star.

The second one is Dream,
Who leads our feet
By an immortal gleam
To visions sweet;
Through whom our forms put on
Dim attributes of dawn.

The last of these is Toil,
Who maketh true,
Within the world's turmoil
The other two;
Through whom we may behold
Ourselves with kings enrolled.

Madison Julius Cawein

Threnody In May

Again the earth, miraculous with May,
Unfolds its vernal arras. Yesteryear
We strolled together 'neath the greening trees,
And heard the robin tune its flute note clear,
And watched above the white cloud squadrons veer,
And saw their shifting shadows drift away
Adown the Hudson, as ships seek the seas.
The scene is still the same. The violet
Unlids its virgin eye; its amber ore
The dandelion shows, and yet, and yet,
He comes no more, no more!
He of the open and the generous heart,
The soul that sensed all flowerful loveliness,
The nature as the nature of a child;
Who found some rapture in the wind's caress,
Beauty in humble weed and mint and cress,
And sang, with his incomparable art,
The magic wonder of the wood and wild.
The little people of the reeds and grass,
Murmur their blithe, companionable lore,
The rills renew their minstrelsy. Alas,
He comes no more, no more!
And yet it seems as though he needs must come,
Albeit he has cast off mortality,
Such was his passion for the burgeoning time,
Such to his spirit was the ecstasy
The hills and valleys chorus when set free,
No music mute, no lyric instinct dumb,
But keyed to utterance of immortal rhyme.
Ah, haply in some other fairer spring
He sees bright tides sweep over slope and shore,
But here how vain is all my visioning!
He comes no more, no more!
Poet and friend, wherever you may fare
Enwrapt in dreams, I love to think of you
Wandering amid the meads of asphodel,
Holding high converse with the exalted few
Who sought and found below the elusive clue
To beauty, and in that diviner air

Bowing in worship still to its sweet spell.
Why sorrow, then, though fate unkindly lays
Upon our questioning hearts this burden sore,
And though through all our length of hastening days
He comes no more, no more!

Madison Julius Cawein

Time To Get Up

There's nothing to do in the morning but stew,
Till it's time to get up and dress;
Till my nurse comes in to button and pin,
And dress me more or less:
Then it's time to get up, get up, you see,
And I am as happy as happy can be.

II.

For there is my drum a-calling me 'Come!'
My clown a-shouting 'Hooray!'
My dishes and table and little toy-stable
Just clattering 'Come and play!'
And my little wood-soldiers, with foot to foot,
Seem ready to fire a toy-salute.

III.

And my spade and rake just seem to ache
For me to handle and use;
And the pile of sand it seems to expand
With joy when it feels my shoes.
But the gladdest of all, the maddest of all,
That leaps to my hand, is my little red ball.

IV.

I bound and run and every one
Is happy almost as I;
With my whistle and whip I hop and skip,
And make my rocking-horse fly.
I take my horn and I make it say,
'Good morning to all! It's a very fine day!'

V.

There's nothing to do in the morning but stew
Until it is time to rise;
Till my nurse comes in to button and pin,

A-rubbing the sleep from her eyes:
Then it's time to get up, and hurry, you see,
Where all of my toys are waiting for me.

Madison Julius Cawein

To A Wind-Flower

TEACH me the secret of thy loveliness,
That, being made wise, I may aspire to be
As beautiful in thought, and so express
Immortal truths to earth's mortality;
Though to my soul ability be less
Than 't is to thee, O sweet anemone.

Teach me the secret of thy innocence,
That in simplicity I may grow wise,
Asking from Art no other recompense
Than the approval of her own just eyes;
So may I rise to some fair eminence,
Though less than thine, O cousin of the skies.

Teach me these things, through whose high knowledge, I,—
When Death hath poured oblivion through my veins,
And brought me home, as all are brought, to lie
In that vast house, common to serfs and Thanes,—
I shall not die, I shall not utterly die,
For beauty born of beauty—that remains.

Madison Julius Cawein

To Fall

Sad-Hearted spirit of the solitudes,
Who comest through the ruin-wedded woods!
Gray-gowned with fog, gold-girdled with the gloom
Of tawny twilights; burdened with perfume
Of rain-wet uplands, chilly with the mist;
And all the beauty of the fire-kissed
Cold forests crimsoning thy indolent way,
Odorous of death and drowsy with decay.
I think of thee as seated 'mid the showers
Of languid leaves that cover up the flowers,
The little flower-sisterhoods, whom June
Once gave wild sweetness to, as to a tune
A singer gives her sours wild melody,
Watching the squirrel store his granary.
Or, 'mid old orchards I have pictured thee:
Thy hair's profusion blown about thy back;
One lovely shoulder bathed with gypsy black;
Upon thy palm one nestling check, and sweet
The rosy russets tumbled at thy feet.
Was it a voice lamenting for the flowers?
A heart-sick bird that sang of happier hours?
A cricket dirging days that soon must die?
Or did the ghost of Summer wander by?

Madison Julius Cawein

To My Good Friend W. T. H. Howe

Friend, for the sake of loves we hold in common,
The love of books, of paintings, rhyme and fiction;
And for the sake of that divine affliction,
The love of art, passing the love of woman;
By which all life's made nobler, superhuman,
Lifting the soul above, and, without friction
Of Time, that puts failure in his prediction,
Works to some end through hearts that dreams illumine:
To you I pour this Cup of Dreams a striver,
And dreamer too in this sad world, unwitting
Of that you do, the help that still assureth,
Lifts up the heart, struck down by that dark driver,
Despair, who, on Life's pack-horse effort sitting,
Rides down Ambition through whom Art endureth.

Madison Julius Cawein

To My Little Son Preston

You, who are four years old;
You, with the eyes of blue;
You with the age of gold
Young in the heart of you,
Boy with the eyes of blue:

You, with the face so fair,
Innocent-uttered words,
All the glad sunlight there,
Music of all the birds,
Boy, in your face and words:

Take you my sheaf of rhymes,
Sung for your childish ear;
Rhymes you have loved at times
Begged for, and sat to hear,
Lending a loving ear.

Since you have listened, sweet,
They to some worth attained;
Since in your heart's young beat
They for a while remained,
They to some worth attained.

Madison Julius Cawein

To Sorrow

O Dark-Eyed goddess of the marble brow,
Whose look is silence and whose touch is night,
Who walkest lonely through the world, O thou,
Who sittest lonely with Life's blown-out light;
Who in the hollow hours of night's noon
Criest like some lost child;
Whose anguish-fevered eyeballs seek the moon
To cool their pulses wild.
Thou who dost bend to kiss Joy's sister cheek,
Turning its rose to alabaster; yea,
Thou who art terrible and mad and meek,
Why in my heart art thou enshrined to-day?
O Sorrow say, O say!

II.

Now Spring is here and all the world is white,
I will go forth, and where the forest robes
Itself in green, and every hill and height
Crowns its fair head with blossoms, spirit globes
Of hyacinth and crocus dashed with dew,
I will forget my grief,
And thee, O Sorrow, gazing on the blue,
Beneath a last year's leaf,
Of some brief violet the south wind woos,
Or bluet, whence the west wind raked the snow;
The baby eyes of love, the darling hues
Of happiness, that thou canst never know,
O child of pain and woe.

III.

On some hoar upland, sweet with clustered thorns,
Hard by a river's windy white of waves,
I shall sit down with Spring, whose eyes are morns
Of light; whose cheeks the rose of health enslaves,
And so forget thee braiding in her hair
The snowdrop, tipped with green,
The cool-eyed primrose and the trillium fair,

And moony celandine.
Contented so to lie within her arms,
Forgetting all the sear and sad and wan,
Remembering love alone, who o'er earth's storms,
High on the mountains of perpetual dawn,
Leads the glad hours on.

IV.

Or in the peace that follows storm, when Even,
Within the west, stands dreaming lone and far,
Clad on with green and silver, and the Heaven
Is brightly brooched with one gold-glittering star.
I will lie down beside some mountain lake,
'Round which the tall pines sigh,
And breathing musk of rain from boughs that shake
Storm balsam from on high,
Make friends of Dream and Contemplation high
And Music, listening to the mocking-bird,
Who through the hush sends its melodious cry,
And so forget a while that other word,
That all loved things must die.

Madison Julius Cawein

To The Leaf-Cricket

Small twilight singer
Of dew and mist: thou ghost-gray, gossamer winger
Of dusk's dim glimmer,
How cool thy note sounds; how thy wings of shimmer
Vibrate, soft-sighing,
Meseems, for Summer that is dead or dying.

I stand and listen,
And at thy song the garden-beds, that glisten
With rose and lily,
Seem touched with sadness; and the tuberose chilly,
Breathing around its cold and colorless breath,
Fills the pale evening with wan hints of death.

II.

I see thee quaintly
Beneath the leaf; thy shell-shaped winglets faintly
As thin as spangle
Of cobwebbed rain held up at airy angle;
I hear thy tinkle,
Thy fairy notes, the silvery stillness sprinkle;

Investing wholly
The moonlight with divinest melancholy:
Until, in seeming,
I see the Spirit of the Summer dreaming
Amid her ripened orchards, apple-strewn,
Her great, grave eyes fixed on the harvest-moon.

III.

As dew-drops beady,
As mist minute, thy notes ring low and reedy:
The vaguest vapor
Of melody, now near; now, like some taper
Of sound, far fading
Thou will-o'-wisp of music aye evading.

Among the bowers,
The fog-washed stalks of Autumn's weeds and flowers,
By hill and hollow,
I hear thy murmur and in vain I follow
Thou jack-o'-lantern voice, thou elfin cry,
Thou dirge, that tellest Beauty she must die.

IV.

And when the frantic
Wild winds of Autumn with the dead leaves antic;
And walnuts scatter
The mire of lanes; and dropping acorns patter
In grove and forest,
Like some frail grief, with the rude blast thou warrest,

Sending thy slender
Far cry against the gale, that, rough, untender,
Untouched of sorrow,
Sweeps thee aside, where, haply, I to-morrow
Shall find thee lying, tiny, cold and crushed,
Thy weak wings folded and thy music hushed.

Madison Julius Cawein

To The Locust

Thou pulse of hotness, who, with reed-like breast,
Makest meridian music, long and loud,
Accentuating summer! dost thy best
To make the sunbeams fiercer, and to crowd
With lonesomeness the long, close afternoon
When Labor leans, swart-faced and beady browed,
Upon his sultry scythe thou tangible tune
Of heat, whose waves incessantly arise
Quivering and clear beneath the cloudless skies.

Thou singest, and upon his haggard hills
Drouth yawns and rubs his heavy eyes and wakes;
Brushes the hot hair from his face; and fills
The land with death as sullenly he takes
Downward his dusty way: 'midst woods and fields
At every pool his burning thirst he slakes;
No grove so deep, no bank so high it shields
A spring from him; no creek evades his eye;
He needs but look and they are withered dry.

Thou singest, and thy song is as a spell
Of somnolence to charm the land with sleep;
A thorn of sound that pierces dale and dell,
Diffusing slumber over vale and steep.
Sleepy the forest, nodding sleepy boughs;
The pastures sleepy with their sleepy sheep;
Sleepy the creek where sleepily the cows
Stand knee-deep: and the very heaven seems
Sleepy and lost in undetermined dreams.

Art thou a rattle that Monotony,
Summer's dull nurse, old sister of slow Time,
Shakes for Day's peevish pleasure, who in glee
Takes its discordant music for sweet rhyme?
Or oboe that the Summer Noontide plays,
Sitting with Ripeness 'neath the orchard-tree,
Trying repeatedly the same shrill phrase,
Until the musky peach with drowsiness
Drops, and the hum of bees grows less and less?

Madison Julius Cawein

To The Memory Of George H. Ellwanger True Friend And Lover And Interpreter Of Nature, As A Slight Token Of Esteem And Admiration

Would I could talk as the flowers talk
To my soul! and the stars, in their ceaseless walk
Through Heaven! and tell to the high and low
The things that they say, so all might know
The dreams they dream, and have told to me!
As Nature sees would I could see!
Then might I speak with authority!
I stand below and look above,
And see her busy with life and love,
And can tell the world so little thereof.
Oh, for a soul that could feel much less!
Or, feeling more, could so express
The things it feels and their tenderness:
The very essence, the soul of art,
And all the heavens and hells of heart!
Then might I rise to the very peak,
The summit of song, which poets seek,
And speak with a voice as the masters speak.

Madison Julius Cawein

Toadstools

Once when it had rained all night
And all day, the next day, why,
In our yard, a lot of white,
Dumpy toadstools grew close by
Our old peach tree: some were high,
Peak'd, like half-shut parasols;
Others round and low, like balls,
Little hollow balls; and I
Called my father to the tree:
And he said, 'I tell you what:
Fairies have been here, you see.
This is just the kind of spot
Fairies love to live in. Those
Are their houses, I suppose.

II.

'Yes, those surely are their huts!
Built of moon and mist and rain,
Such dim stuff as Elfland puts
In her buildings. Come again,
And, like castles built in Spain,
They are nowhere. But to-night,
Sliding down the moon's slim light,
Or snail-straddled, in a train
You may see the elves, perhaps,
Clad in gossamer garments, come;
Some in morning-glory caps,
And in tulip bonnets some.
If you watch, I have no doubt,
You will see them all come out.

III.

'Long of leg as grasshoppers,
Or as katydids, oh, ho!
Here they'll sit; the bachelors
By the spinsters, row on row,
Kissing when the moon is low:

You may hear their kisses sound
Faint as raindrops on the ground,
Dropped by flow'rs that overflow,
Flow'rs whose heads the rain weighs down.
Or, perhaps, to twinkling tunes,
Tiny as their tiny town,
See them dance wild rigadoons
Creaked by crickets; singing, too,
Serenades as thin as dew.

IV.

'Or hobgoblins here may rise,
Snail-faced, spider-legged, you see;
Eyed with glowworm-glowing eyes,
Lidless slits of flame. . Maybe,
Gnarled of back and knobbed of knee,
Tadpole-paunched, you'll see the gnomes
Waddle from their toadstool homes;
While the frogs industriously
Twang their big bass-violins,
And the screech-owl's bagpipes shriek:
While their eyes, like points of pins,
Glitter, great-nosed beak to beak,
Here you'll see them squat and blink
Till it'd freeze your blood, I think.'

V.

Won't have any goblins here!
With their eyes like upright slits,
Parrot-nosed and flopped of ear,
And a grin that cracks and splits
Wide their faces, never quits,
Faces all one wart or wen!
So I got a stick and then
Knocked those toadstools into bits.
And my father said, 'Well! well!
Now you've spoiled your only chance
It will never do to tell!
To behold the fairies dance,
And those grinning goblins, too.

Wonder what got into you!

Madison Julius Cawein

Tomboy

There's a little girl I know
And we call her So-and-So.
She is neither good nor bad
Good enough for me although!
Never saw a girl that had
More real life in her, or more
Of what people christen go;
Pretty too as she is poor.

So-and-So is not her name
But her nickname. She's to blame
For it being named that way:
For she often starts some game,
And, when asked what 't is we play,
She just answers, 'I don't know.
It's a good game just the same;
And I call it So-and-So.'

Other girls don't like her, no;
Just because she's So-and-So;
Call her names like Tomboy, or
Wildcat, just as girls will do
When a girl is popular
With the boys and does n't care
Much for girls, and 's pretty, too,
With blue eyes and golden hair.

I would give most anything
Just to hear her laugh and sing,
Dance, too. She is funnier
Than a circus and its ring;
And no boy can out-run her,
Or out-dare her. And, oh my!
You should see her in a swing,
Streaking it into the sky!

She's the girl that suits me; yes,
And suits all the boys, I guess:
Never backward; always in

For some picnic, more or less.
Take your top and wind and spin;
Or play marbles; fly a kite;
Or, if needs be, in a mess
She can just pitch in and fight.

Let some big boy dare to touch,
Bully some small boy or such,
She's right at him saying, 'You
Great big coward! need a crutch
By the time that I get through!'
And she's bright at school, although
She don't have to study much
As some other girls I know.

Once two weeks went by and she
Had just disappeared; you see
Had n't come to play or call:
She was sick apparently;
And we made it up that all
All the boys, or some, should go
And find out what it could be,
And report on So-and-So.

Well, what do you think! Declare,
When we rang the door-bell, there
At the door she stood as bright,
Brighter ev'n, with nice combed hair,
In an apron spotless white:
And she smiled and seemed so glad:
But about her was an air
Of importance she'd not had.

Was the same yet not the same.
And when I began to blame,
She just stopped me with a bow,
Saying, 'Boys, I've changed my name.
I've a little brother now
Baby-brother. Don't you know?
Takes the place of every game,
And I call him So-and-So.'

Topsy Turvy

Topsy Turvy is her name;
She's a curiosity:
Never sees the world the same
As it seems to you and me.

'All the world is upside down,'
So she says; then, with a frown,
'If it's not it ought to be.'
Topsy Turvy! Topsy Turvy!

Takes you to some old wood pool,
Or some well to prove she's right:
'There's the real world, you fool!
Something's wrong with people's sight.

There's the sky, the clouds, the wood.
There you see them as you should.
If you don't it's out of spite.'
Topsy Turvy! Topsy Turvy!

'You are walking on your heads,
And don't know it; but it's true.
You don't lie down in your beds,
But your beds lie down on you;

You are under them. The sun,
Moon, and stars are, every one,
Shining underneath you too.'
Topsy Turvy! Topsy Turvy!

'Seems that no one else can see
As I see it. It's a shame,
Or your own perversity.
But, good Lord! I'm not to blame.

Don't know what you miss, you don't,
By not seeing things you won't.
My! how fine they look to me!
Topsy Turvy! Topsy Turvy!

Then she runs away and hides
By a creek and looks for hours,
In the water where it slides,
At herself, the trees and flowers,

Sun and skies and clouds, and if
You just laugh, she gives a sniff,
Shakes her head and glares and glowers.
Topsy Turvy! Topsy Turvy!

Madison Julius Cawein

Touches

In heavens of riveted blue, that sunset dyes
With glaucous flame, deep in the west the Day
Stands Midas-like; or, wading on his way,
Touches with splendor all the twilight skies.
Each cloud that, like a stepping-stone, he tries
With rosy foot, transforms its sober gray
To burning gold; while, ray on crystal ray,
Within his wake the stars like bubbles rise.
So should the artist in his work accord
All things with beauty, and communicate
His soul's high magic and divinity
To all he does; and, hoping no reward,
Toil onward, making darkness aureate
With light of worlds that are and worlds to be.

Madison Julius Cawein

Touchstones

Hearts, that have cheered us ever, night and day,
With words that helped us on the rugged way,
The hard, long road of life to whom is due
More than the heart can ever hope to pay
Are they not touchstones, soul-transmuting true
All thoughts to gold, refining thus the clay?

Madison Julius Cawein

Toyland

There's a story no one knows,
But myself, about a rose
And a fairy and a star
Where the Toyland people are.
Once when I had gone to bed,
Mother said it was a dream,
From a rose above my head,
Growing by the window-beam,
Out there popped a fairy's head.

II.

And he nodded at me: smiled:
Said, 'You're fond of stories, eh?
Well, I know a star each child
Ought to know. It's far away
For your kind, but not for me.
I will take you to that star,
Where you'll hear new stories; see?
Close your eyes. It is n't far
That is, 't is n't far for me.'

III.

And he'd hardly spoken when
From the rose there came a moth;
And before you'd counted ten
We were on it, and were both
Flying to that star that made
Silver sparkles in the air.
And, though I was not afraid,
I was glad when we were there,
And the moth was stabled white
In a lily-bud, and we
Went to find the fay or sprite
Who, he said, would welcome me.

IV.

And we found her.'T was n't long
Till we heard a twittering song,
And a toy-bird with white eyes
Flew before us from the skies,
Like those in my Noah's Ark,
And we followed it; and came
To the strangest land: our park
Is just like it, just the same.
Toy-trees, squirrels, birds and brooks,
And a castle on the hill,
Just like those in story-books;
And upon its windowsill
Leaned a lovely Princess. She
Smiled at me, and that was all,
As a doll smiles; and to me
She was like a great big doll.

V.

Then, before I knew it, I
Was inside her palace, there
In the room; and everywhere
Dolls and story-books and, my!
All the dolls began to sing
Rhymes, or read; and others told
Stories just like everything:
Better stories than the old
Ones my father reads me in
Mother Goose and books like Grimm,
That he hates so to begin:
Tales for which I bother him,
Since, he says, both tales and rhymes
He has read a thousand times.

VI.

Blue Beard and the Yellow Dwarf,
And the lovely Rapunzel,
She whose hair was once a scarf
For a prince to climb by; Nell,
Little Nell, or else her twin,
Who, somehow, had happened in,

And the Sleeping Beauty, who
Seemed asleep and sat there dumb;
Hansel and sweet Grethel too,
Snow-dropp and Hop-o'-my-Thumb;
Rumpelstiltzkin, Riding Hood,
And the Babes-lost-in-the-Wood,
Met around a little table,
Where I sat beside a Queen,
Queen of Hearts, and, dressed in green,
Robin Hood, a-eating tarts,
While old Æsop told a fable,
Sitting by the King of Hearts.

VII.

And the waiters were Bo Peep,
Knave of Hearts and Marjory Daw;
Boy Blue, slow as if asleep,
And the Woman who slept on Straw.
And the little dishes all,
Though they seemed so, were not small;
Painted blue and green and gold
With the stories I'd heard told,
Pictures forming of themselves,
Of the Elf Queen and the Elves.
Never, never have I seen
Service like it. Then the talk!
All about the Fairy Queen
And the Land of Tarts and Pies,
Where those three fat brothers go,
Greedygut, with tiny eyes
Like a pig's; and Sleepyhead,
With his candle, going to bed;
And old creepy-footed Slow.
Of these three they made great talk,
And that Land where Scarecrows stalk,
And the Jack-o'-Lanterns grow,
Row on glaring goblin row.

VIII.

Suddenly, among them there,

At my back, above my chair,
Cried a Cuckoo Clock, and why!
There I was back home; and I
Was n't nowhere but in bed
And my mother standing by
Smiling at me. I could cry
When I think the things they said
That I can't remember now
Though I try and try and try.
But I know this anyhow:
I was in that star, I know,
And in Toyland. Does n't seem
Anything but true, although
Mother says it was a dream.

Madison Julius Cawein

Tramps

Oh, roses, roses everywhere but only one for me!
But one wild-rose for me, my boy, your face that's like the morn's;
My rose of roses, dear my lad, my dark-eyed Romany;
The world may keep its roses now, that gave me only thorns.

Oh, song and singing everywhere; the woods are wild with song:
One simple song I knew, my lad, you crooned it in my ears;
It cheered my way by night and day; but, oh, the way was long!
And all the hard world gave to me was evil words and sneers.

Oh, song and blossoms everywhere and nature full of love:
But one sweet look of love was mine, and that you gave, my joy:
A look of love, a look of trust they helped my heart enough;
They helped me bear the look of scorn, the world's black look, my boy.

Oh, spring and love are everywhere; soft breezes kiss and woo:
Your kiss was all I had, my son, to ease me of my woe:
But, oh, it helped me far, dear heart; how far I only knew:
But otherwise nor kiss nor smile, but only curse and blow.

But now I'm going to die, my boy; and now I'm going to rest;
The road was long, and tired am I; and only you will care:
Give me a kiss, O boy I bore! I did what I thought best:
But it was bad for me, my lad; O boy whom I did bear!

'Your father?' Ask me not of him! He was a tramp, a thief:
And I I was a country girl a wayward, so they say,
They kept too strict, perhaps, you see; and he, he brought relief:
I went with him, a woman tramp, and here I am to-day.

My dream of bliss was brief, ah me! Wild spring had played its part,
A vagabond part in vagabond blood that mates with any kind.
I woke one morn upon the straw with you upon my heart
The man was gone, my all was gone, and shame was left behind.

Since then I've tramped the road, my lad, and faced the rain and sun;
In snow and sleet I've trudged and begged, with you hugged in my arms:
Oh, few would give a wanton work, or kindly word, dear one!
A baby at her breast, you see they drove me from their farms.

Now you are big and strong, my boy; and you are twelve years young;
Oh, grasp your chance, when I am gone, and leave the past behind:
Perhaps by you, as 'tis your due, some fortune may be wrung
From what I missed in life and love, some good luck of some kind.

Now I am going to die, my boy; just lean me 'gainst that tree,
And dig my grave and lay me in and make no more delay;
Cut all the wildflowers down around, and throw them there, you see,
And bring a thorn and plant it here when I am laid away.

Perhaps you'll come again some day when you are big and grown,
And have a wife and boy yourself but do not let them know!
They might not understand it, lad; so you must come alone
And tell your mother how it goes, the one who loved you so.

'Tis birds and blossoms everywhere; and now, how strange! I see
How life and love are smiling down, O face that's like the morn's!
Come! lay me in my gipsy grave you dug beneath the tree,
Away from all the roses there and deep among the thorns.

Madison Julius Cawein

Transformation

It is the time when, by the forest falls,
The touch-me-nots hang fairy folly-caps;
When ferns and flowers fill the lichened laps
Of rocks with colour, rich as orient shawls:
And in my heart I hear a voice that calls
Me woodward, where the hamadryad wraps
Her limbs in bark, and, bubbling in the saps,
Sings the sweet Greek of Pan's old madrigals:
There is a gleam that lures me up the stream
A Naiad swimming with wet limbs of light?
Perfume that leads me on from dream to dream
An Oread's footprints fragrant with her flight?
And, lo! meseems I am a Faun again,
Part of the myths that I pursue in vain.

Madison Julius Cawein

Transmutation

To me all beauty that I see
Is melody made visible:
An earth-translated state, may be,
Of music heard in Heaven or Hell.

Out of some love-impassioned strain
Of saints, the rose evolved its bloom;
And, dreaming of it here again,
Perhaps re-lives it as perfume.

Out of some chant that demons sing
Of hate and pain, the sunset grew;
And, haply, still remembering,
Re-lives it here as some wild hue.

Madison Julius Cawein

Transposed Seasons

THE gentian and the bluebell so
Can change my calendar,
I know not how the year may go,
Or what the seasons are:
The months, in some mysterious wise,
Take their expression from her eyes.
The gentian speaks to memory
Of autumns long since gone,
When her blue eyes smiled up at me,
And heaven was flushed with dawn:
'T was autumn then and leaves were sere,
But in my heart 't was spring o' the year.
The bluebell says a message too
Of springs long passed away,
When in my eyes her eyes of blue
Gazed and 't was close of day:
Spring spread around her fragrant chart,
But it was autumn in my heart.

Madison Julius Cawein

Transubstantiation

A Sunbeam and a dropp of dew
Lay on a red rose in the South:
God took the three and made her mouth,
Her sweet, sweet mouth,
So red of hue,
The burning baptism of His kiss
Still fills my heart with heavenly bliss.

II.

A dream of truth and love come true
Slept on a star in daybreak skies:
God mingled these and made her eyes,
Her dear, dear eyes,
So gray of hue,
The high communion of His gaze
Still fills my soul with deep amaze.

Madison Julius Cawein

Treasure

Here is a tale for infants and old nurses:
There was a man who gathered rags; and peddled:
Who lived alone: with no one ever meddled:
And this old man was very fond of verses.
His house, a ruin, so the tale rehearses;
A hovel over-run of rats and vermin;
Not fit for beast to live in. (Like a sermon
Embodying misery and hell and curses.)
There, one grey dawn of rain and windy weather,
They found him dead; starved; o'er a written paper;
Beside a dim and half-expiring taper:
It was a play, the poor fool'd put together,
Of gnomes and fairies, for his own sad pleasure:
And folks destroyed it, saying, 'We seek for treasure.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Treasure Trove

We were a crew of what you please,
Men with the lust of gold gone mad;
Dutch and Yankee and Portuguese,
With a nigger or two from Trinidad,
The scum of the Caribbees:
Outbound, outbound for a treasure ground,
A pirate isle no man had found,
A long-lost isle in the Southern Seas,
An isle of the Southern Seas.

We sailed our ship by a chart we bore,
The parchment script of a buccaneer,
Whose skeleton, found on a Carib shore,
Had kept its secret for many a year,
Locked in a buckle of belt it wore.
And the dim chart told of buried gold,
A hidden harbor and pirate hold,
On an isle that seamen touched no more,
That sailors knew no more.

We were a crew of Devil-may-care,
Who staked our lives on a bit of a scrawl;
Who diced each other for lot and share
Or ever we hoisted sail at all,
Or the brine blew through our hair.
At last with a hail for calm or gale,
The wind of adventure in our sail,
We piped up anchor and did our dare,
Steered for the Island there.

From Porto Bello to Isle of France,
And thence South East our chart read plain:
We followed the route of old Romance,
The plate-ship route of the Spanish Main,
The old wild route of Chance.
Black Beard sailed it and Jean Lafitte;
And Drake and Morgan, and many a fleet
Of pillage once that led the dance,
Spain's golden-galleon dance.

Moidores, guineas, and pieces-of-eight;
Doubloons round as the gibbous moon;
All the wealth that they sacked as freight
In the good old days' of the piccaroon,
We dreamed of soon and late:
And gems of the East, of which the least
Would grace a Khan's or a Caliph's feast,
And chest on chest of Spanish plate,
Great chests of Spanish plate.

The wind blew fair from Panama;
For a month the wind blew fair and free;
We steered our ship by the gold we saw
In the far-off script of a century,
Wherein men knew no law.
We held our course, for better or worse,
Now with a song and now with a curse,
According to the lots we'd draw,
Rum or the lots we'd draw.

We had not reckoned on destiny,
And him all seamen dread, they say,
That captain, old in infamy,
Who holds to Hell till the Judgment Day,
And takes of Earth his fee.
Oh, black and black is the South Sea track
Of the skeleton Captain, Yellow Jack,
Who sweeps with his boneyard crew the sea,
The hurricane-haunted sea.

.

Six weeks we lay in the doldrums; dead;
Six weeks that rotted us with delay,
Till a gale sprang up and drove us ahead,
Out of our course, for a week and a day,
Till we deemed we were Dutchman-led.
When the gale was done, why, one by one,
The scurvy took us, every son,
And mutiny down in the hold was bred,
Mutiny then was bred.

At last on our bow we sighted shore,
A wild crag circled of cloud and sea;
Our pirate isle, where ceaselessly
The rock-fanged surf kept up its roar
Round a towering bluff and tree,
Where the chart was marked that the gold should be:
Cliffs that the seafowl clamored o'er,
With the dragging seaweed hoar.

A smudge of mist and a gleam that died,
And a muttering down below
And night was on us at a stride,
And, God! how it came to blow!
And a man went over the side:
Then fore and aft of our crazy craft
Corposants glimmered and Madness laughed,
And a voice from the Island wild replied,
A dæmon voice replied.

Three nights and days of the hurncane's rage.
What curse now held us off!
We never would win to an anchorage,
We thought, when, ho! with a scoff
The Island thundered, 'Come take your wage!'
And, lo, that night by the thin moonlight
We found our ship in a bay or bight,
That seemed a part of another age,
A far-off pirate age.

Our ship a-leak and her pumps all jammed
We won to the Harbor of Yellow Jack;
And so it was that he took command
And hoisted his skeleton flag of black,
And our decks with dead men crammed.
But we we found the treasure ground
Where some went mad and some were drowned
For the gold, you see, was damned, was damned,
The gold you see was damned.

Madison Julius Cawein

Trees

'Trees,' so he said and laid him lovingly
At a great beech-tree's root, 'are my best friends.
Upon their love it seems my life depends.
No dog or woman for me! Give me a tree!
In winter saying, ' Courage! hold to me!'
In spring, ' Look up! hope's here, and winter ends!'
In summer, 'Come! here's peace that naught transcends
In autumn, ' See! the dreams I bring to thee!'
Why, I have loved a tree until for me
It had a soul. And as the Greeks believed
So I believe: that in each dwells a life,
Lovely, ecstatic, that some man may see
Take on material form, and, so perceived,
Hold him for aye.... That's why I have no wife.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Unanointed

Upon the Siren-haunted seas, between Fate's mythic shores,
Within a world of moon and mist, where dusk and daylight wed,
I see a phantom galley and its hull is banked with oars,
With ghostly oars that move to song, a song of dreams long dead:

'Oh, we are sick of rowing here!
With toil our arms are numb;
With smiting year on weary year
Salt-furrows of the foam:
Our journey's end is never near,
And will no nearer come
Beyond our reach the shores appear
Of far Elysium.'

II.

Within a land of cataracts and mountains old and sand,
Beneath whose heavens ruins rise, o'er which the stars burn red,
I see a spectral cavalcade with crucifix in hand
And shadowy armor march and sing, a song of dreams long dead:

'Oh, we are weary marching on!
Our limbs are travel-worn;
With cross and sword from dawn to dawn
We wend with raiment torn:
The leagues to go, the leagues we've gone
Are sand and rock and thorn
The way is long to Avalon
Beyond the deeps of morn.'

III.

They are the curs'd! the souls who yearn and evermore pursue
The vision of a vain desire, a splendor far ahead;
To whom God gives the poet's dream without the grasp to do,
The artist's hope without the scope between the quick and dead:

I, too, am weary toiling where
The winds and waters beat;

When shall I ease the oar I bear
And rest my tired feet?
When will the white moons cease to glare,
The red suns veil their heat?
And from the heights blow sweet the air
Of Love's divine retreat?

Madison Julius Cawein

Unanswered

How long ago it is since we went Maying!
Since she and I went Maying long ago!-
The years have left my forehead lined, I know,
Have thinned my hair around the temples graying.
Ah, time will change us: yea, I hear it saying-
'She too grows old: the face of rose and snow
Has lost its freshness: in the hair's brown glow
Some strands of silver sadly, too, are straying.
The form you knew, whose beauty so enspelled,
Has lost the liveness of its loveliness:
And all the gladness that her blue eyes held
Tears and the world have hardened with distress.'-
'True! true!' I answer, 'O ye years that part!
These things are chanced-but is her heart, her heart?'

Madison Julius Cawein

Uncalled

As one, who, journeying westward with the sun,
Beholds at length from the up-towering hills,
Far-off, a land unspeakable beauty fills,
Circean peaks and vales of Avalon:
And, sinking weary, watches, one by one,
The big seas beat between; and knows it skills
No more to try; that now, as Heaven wills,
This is the helpless end, that all is done:
So 'tis with him, whom long a vision led
In quest of Beauty; and who finds at last
She lies beyond his effort; all the waves
Of all the world between them: while the dead,
The myriad dead, who people all the past
With failure, hail him from forgotten graves.

Madison Julius Cawein

Uncertainty

"He cometh not,' she said.'

-MARIANA

It will not be to-day and yet
I think and dream it will; and let
The slow uncertainty devise
So many sweet excuses, met
With the old doubt in hope's disguise.

The panes were sweated with the dawn;
Yet through their dimness, shriveled drawn,
The aigret of one princess-feather,
One monk's-hood tuft with oilets wan,
I glimpsed, dead in the slaying weather.

This morning, when my window's chintz
I drew, how gray the day was!-Since
I saw him, yea, all days are gray!-
I gazed out on my dripping quince,
Defruited, gnarled; then turned away

To weep, but did not weep: but felt
A colder anguish than did melt
About the tearful-visaged year!-
Then flung the lattice wide, and smelt
The autumn sorrow: Rotting near

The rain-drenched sunflowers bent and bleached,
Up which the frost-nipped gourd-vines reached
And morning-glories, seeded o'er
With ashen aiglets; whence beseeched
One last bloom, frozen to the core.

The podded hollyhocks,-that Fall
Had stripped of finery,-by the wall
Rustled their tatters; dripped and dripped,
The fog thick on them: near them, all
The tarnished, haglike zinnias tipped.

I felt the death and loved it: yea,
To have it nearer, sought the gray,
Chill, fading garth. Yet could not weep,
But wandered in an aimless way,
And sighed with weariness for sleep.

Mine were the fog, the frosty stalks;
The weak lights on the leafy walks;
The shadows shivering with the cold;
The breaking heart; the lonely talks;
The last, dim, ruined marigold.

But when to-night the moon swings low-
A great marsh-marigold of glow-
And all my garden with the sea
Moans, then, through moon and mist, I know
My love will come to comfort me.

Madison Julius Cawein

Under Arcturus

I

"I BELT the morn with ribboned mist;
With baldricked blue I gird the noon,
And dusk with purple, crimson-kissed,
White-buckled with the hunter's-moon.

"These follow me," the Season says:
"Mine is the frost-pale hand that packs
Their scrips, and speeds them on their ways,
With gypsy gold that weighs their backs."

II

A daybreak horn the Autumn blows,
As with a sun-tanned hand he parts
Wet boughs whereon the berry glows;
And at his feet the red fox starts.

The leafy leash that holds his hounds
Is loosed; and all the noonday hush
Is startled; and the hillside sounds
Behind the fox's bounding brush.

When red dusk makes the western sky
A fire-lit window through the firs,
He stoops to see the red fox die
Among the chestnut's broken burrs.

Then fanfaree and fanfaree,
His bugle sounds; the world below
Grows hushed to hear; and two or three
Soft stars dream through the afterglow.

III

Like some black host the shadows fall,
And blackness camps among the trees;
Each wildwood road, a Goblin Hall,
Grows populous with mysteries.

Night comes with brows of ragged storm,

And limbs of writhen cloud and mist;
The rain-wind hangs upon his arm
Like some wild girl who cries un-kissed.

By his gaunt hands the leaves are shed
In headlong troops and nightmare herds;
And, like a witch who calls the dead,
The hill-stream whirls with foaming words.

Then all is sudden silence and
Dark fear—like his who cannot see,
Yet hears, lost in a haunted land,
Death rattling on a gallow's-tree.

IV

The days approach again; the days
Whose mantles stream, whose sandals drag,
When in the haze by puddled ways
The gnarled thorn seems a crooked hag.

When rotting orchards reek with rain;
And woodlands crumble, leaf and log;
And in the drizzling yard again
The gourd is tagged with points of fog.

Now let me seat my soul among
The woods' dim dreams, and come in touch
With melancholy, sad of tongue
And sweet, who says so much, so much.

Madison Julius Cawein

Under The Hunter's Moon

White from her chrysalis of cloud,
The moth-like moon swings upward through the night;
And all the bee-like stars that crowd
The hollow hive of heav'n wane in her light.

Along the distance, folds of mist
Hang frost-pale, ridging all the dark with gray;
Tinting the trees with amethyst,
Touching with pearl and purple every spray.

All night the stealthy frost and fog
Conspire to slay the rich-robed weeds and flowers;
To strip of wealth the woods, and clog
With piled-up gold of leaves the creek that cowers.

I seem to see their Spirits stand,
Molded of moonlight, faint of form and face,
Now reaching high a chilly hand
To pluck some walnut from its spicy place:

Now with fine fingers, phantom-cold,
Splitting the wahoo's pods of rose, and thin
The bittersweet's balls o' gold,
To show the coal-red berries packed within:

Now on dim threads of gossamer
Stringing pale pearls of moisture; necklacing
The flow'rs; and spreading cobweb fur,
Crystaled with stardew, over everything:

While 'neath the moon, with moon-white feet,
They go and, chill, a moon-soft music draw
From wan leaf-cricket flutes the sweet,
Sad dirge of Autumn dying in the shaw.

Madison Julius Cawein

Under The Rose

He told a story to her,
A story old yet new
And was it of the Faëry Folk
That dance along the dew?

The night was hung with silence
As a room is hung with cloth,
And soundless, through the rose-sweet hush,
Swooned dim the down-white moth.

Along the east a shimmer,
A tenuous breath of flame,
From which, as from a bath of light,
Nymph-like, the girl-moon came.

And pendent in the purple
Of heaven, like fireflies,
Bubbles of gold the great stars blew
From windows of the skies.

He told a story to her,
A story full of dreams
And was it of the Elfin things
That haunt the thin moonbeams?

Upon the hill a thorn-tree,
Crooked and gnarled and gray,
Against the moon seemed some crutch'd hag
Dragging a child away.

And in the vale a runnel,
That dripped from shelf to shelf,
Seemed, in the night, a woodland witch
Who muttered to herself.

Along the land a zephyr,
Whose breath was wild perfume,
That seemed a sorceress who wove
Sweet spells of beam and bloom.

He told a story to her,
A story young yet old
And was it of the mystic things
Men's eyes shall ne'er behold?

They heard the dew drip faintly
From out the green-cupped leaf;
They heard the petals of the rose
Unfolding from their sheaf.

They saw the wind light-footing
The waters into sheen;
They saw the starlight kiss to sleep
The blossoms on the green.

They heard and saw these wonders;
These things they saw and heard;
And other things within the heart
For which there is no word.

He told a story to her,
The story men call Love,
Whose echoes fill the ages past,
And the world ne'er tires of.

Madison Julius Cawein

Unforgotten

How many things, that we would remember,
Sweet or sad, or great or small,
Do our minds forget! and how one thing only,
One little thing endures o'er all!
For many things have I forgotten,
But this one thing can never forget
The scent of a primrose, woodland-wet,
Long years ago I found in a far land;
A fragile flower that April set,
Rainy pink, in her forehead's garland.

II.

How many things by the heart are forgotten!
Sad as sweet, or little or great!
And how one thing that could mean nothing
Stays knocking still at the heart's red gate!
For many things has my heart forgotten,
But this one thing can never forget
The face of a girl, a moment met,
Who smiled in my eyes; whom I passed in pity;
A flower-like face, with weeping wet,
Flung to the streets of a mighty city.

Madison Julius Cawein

Unheard

All things are wrought of melody,
Unheard, yet full of speaking spells;
Within the rock, within the tree,
A soul of music dwells.

A mute symphonic sense that thrills
The silent frame of mortal things;
Its heart beats in the ancient hills,
In every flower sings.

To harmony all growth is set
Each seed is but a music mote,
From which each plant, each violet,
Evolves its purple note.

Compact of melody, the rose
Woos the soft wind with strain on strain
Of crimson; and the lily blows
Its white bars to the rain.

The trees are pæans; and the grass
One long green fugue beneath the sun
Song is their life; and all shall pass,
Shall cease, when song is done.

Madison Julius Cawein

Unmasked

Was it a dream,
Or a whim of the night?
Or did they gleam
Upon my sight
An instant there in the wan moonlight?
I saw them all, I think,
Under the bowers,
The faery folk, in a moonbeam wink,
Disguised as flowers.
First came the Bleeding-Hearts, that hang like bells
Or delicate shells;
Who, gowned in white and red,
Hooped skirts and furbelows,
A long procession led
Of Faery Ladies and their beaux,
Such as the Violet and Early Rose,
Into the ball-room of the flower-bed,
Where they began a Pixy minuet.
Then suddenly, from whence nobody knows,
The Johnny-Jump-Ups glimmered in that set,
Tipping about on tiny flower-toes,
All dressed in twinkling velvet, black and blue,
Faint-jeweled with the dew:
Stout sons of Faërie, Yeomen of the Night,
Glittering, each one, a rapier-ray of light:
Then, bowing two by two,
While all the Bleeding-Hearts stood by and fanned,
They, silken hand in hand,
Began a faery saraband,
That wound and interwound, and went and came again.
And then,
In ruffed and ribboned lines,
The gold-and-ruby gleaming Columbines,
Fair Maids-of-Honor to the Faery Queen,
Who still remained unseen,
Trailed twinkling into view.
And then a trumpet blew
A beetle-blast and there!
Adown a glowworm-lanthorned avenue,

Tall two by two,
With sapphire-helméd hair,
Proud Knights and minions of the moon,
The Larkspurs, to a cricket tune,
Marched with a haughty air.
And golden-cuirassed, blowing a wild fanfare
Of fragrant notes
From honey-crystaled throats,
Snapdragons, Trumpeters of the Faery King,
With pomp and glittering
Of many an elfin prince and peer,
Drew near.
And when I felt secure,
And sure
The King and Queen of Faerie would appear,
My dear,
A cockerel crew, a thwarting cockerel crew,
And, presto! whew!
The whole scene went in air,
Leaving it there,
The garden, glimmering with the moon and dew,
Looking demure
With all its flowers. But I knew,
Nay, I was sure,
It was not quite as innocent as it seemed.
It could not fool me with its looks demure.
I knew I had not dreamed.

Madison Julius Cawein

Unrequited

Passion? not hers! who held me with pure eyes:
One hand among the deep curls of her brow,
I drank the girlhood of her gaze with sighs:
She never sighed, nor gave me kiss or vow.

So have I seen a clear October pool,
Cold, liquid topaz, set within the sere
Gold of the woodland, tremorless and cool,
Reflecting all the heartbreak of the year.

Sweetheart? not she! whose voice was music-sweet;
Whose face loaned language to melodious prayer.
Sweetheart I called her.-When did she repeat
Sweet to one hope, or heart to one despair!

So have I seen a wildflower's fragrant head
Sung to and sung to by a longing bird;
And at the last, albeit the bird lay dead,
No blossom wilted, for it had not heard.

Madison Julius Cawein

Unsuccess

Not here, O belovéd! not here let us part, in the city, but there!
Out there where the storm can enfold us, on the hills, where its breast is made
bare:

Its breast, that is rainy and cool as the fern that drips by the fall
In the luminous night of' the woodland where winds to the waters call.
Not here, O belovéd! not here! but there! out there in the storm!

The rush and the reel of the heavens, the tem pest, whose rapturous arm
Shall seize us and sweep us together, resistless as passions seize men,
Through the rocking world of the woodland, with its multitude music, and then,
With the rain on our lips, belovéd! in the heart of the night's wild hell,
One last, long kiss forever, and forever and ever farewell.

II.

I am sick of the madness of men; of the boot less struggle and strife:
Of the pain and the patience of waiting; the scoff and the scorning of life:
I am sick of the shapes and the shadows; the sins and the sorrows that crowd
The gateways of heart and of brain; of the laughter, the shout that is loud
In the mouth of Success Success, that was never for me, ah me!

And all the wrong and neglect that are heaped, belovéd, on thee!
I am sick of the whining of failure; the boast and the brag of Success;
The vainness of effort and longing; the dreams and the days that oppress:
I am sick of them all; but am sickest, am sickest in body and soul,
Of the love that I bear thee, belovéd! and only thy death can make whole.

III.

Imperfect, imperfect God made us, or the power that men call God.
And I think that a Power so perfect, that made us with merely a nod,
Could have fashioned us beings less faulty; more able to wear and to bear;
Less open to mar and to fracture; less filled with the stuff of despair:
Less damned with the unavailing; less empty of all good things
The hopes and the dreams that mature not while the clay still to them clings:

I am sick of it all, belovéd! of the world and the ways of God;
The thorns that have pierced thy bosom; the shards of the paths we have trod:
I am sick of going and coming; and of love I am sickest of all:

The striving, the praying, the dreaming; and the things that never befall.
So there in the night, beloved! O fair, and O fugitive!
Out there in the storm and the darkness, thou must die so I may live!

Madison Julius Cawein

Unto What End, I Ask

Unto what end, I ask, unto what end
Is all this effort, this unrest and toil?
Work that avails not? strife and mad turmoil?
Ambitions vain that rack our hearts and rend?
Did labor but avail! did it defend
The soul from its despair, who would recoil
From sweet endeavor then? work that were oil
To still the storms that in the heart contend!
But still to see all effort valueless!
To toil in vain year after weary year
At Song! beholding every other Art
Considered more than Song's high holiness,
The difficult, the beautiful and dear!
Doth break my heart, ah God! doth break my heart!

Madison Julius Cawein

Vagabonds

It's ho, it 's ho! when hawtrees blow
Among the hills that Springtime thrills;
When huckleberries, row on row,
Hang out their blossom-bells of snow
Around the rills that music fills:
When hawtrees blow
Among the hills,
It 's ho, it 's ho! oh, let us go,
My love and I, where fancy wills.

II.

It 's hey, it's hey! when daisies sway
Among the meads where Summer speeds;
When ripeness bends each fruited spray,
And harvest wafts adown the day
The feathered seeds of golden weeds:
When daisies sway
Among the meads,
It 's hey, it 's hey! oh, let 's away,
My heart and I, where longing leads.

III.

It 's ay, it 's ay! when red leaves fly,
And strew the ways where Autumn strays;
When 'round the beech and chestnut lie
The sturdy burs, and creeks run dry,
And frosts and haze turn golds to grays:
When red leaves fly
And strew the ways,
It 's ay, it 's ay! oh, let us hie,
My love and I, where dreaming says.

IV.

Wassail! wassail! when snow and hail
Make white the lands where Winter stands;
When wild winds from the forests flail

The last dead leaves, and, in the gale,
The trees wring hands in ghostly bands:
When snow and hail
Make white the lands,
Wassail, wassail! oh, let us trail,
My heart and I, where love commands.

Madison Julius Cawein

Victory

They who take courage from their own defeat
Are victors too, no matter how much beat.

Madison Julius Cawein

Vindication

Here is a tale for gossips and chaste people:
There lived a woman once, a straight-laced lady,
Whose only love was slander. Nothing shady
Escaped her vulture eye. Like some prim steeple
Her course of life pointed to Heaven ever;
And woe unto the sinner, girl or woman,
Whom love undid. She was their fiercest foeman.
No circumstance excused. Misfortune, never....
As she had lived she died. The mourners gathered:
Parson and preacher, this one and another,
And many gossips of most proper carriage.
Her will was read. And then... a child was fathered.
Fat Lechery had his day.... She'd been a mother.
A man was heir.... There'd never been a marriage.

Madison Julius Cawein

Vine And Sycamore

Here where a tree and its wild liana,
Leaning over the streamlet, grow,
Once a nymph, like the moon'd Diana,
Sat in the ages long ago.
Sat with a mortal. with whom she had mated,
Sat and laughed with a mortal youth,
Ere he of the forest, the god who hated,
Saw and changed to a form uncouth....

II.

Once in the woods she had heard a shepherd,
Heard a reed in a golden glade;
Followed, and clad in the skin of a leopard,
Found him fluting within the shade.
Found him sitting with bare brown shoulder,
Lithe and strong as a sapling oak,
And leaning over a mossy boulder,
Love in her wildwood heart awoke.

III.

White she was as a dogwood flower,
Pinkly white as a wild-crab bloom,
Sweetly white as a hawtree bower
Full of dew and the May's perfume.
He who saw her above him burning,
Beautiful, naked, in light arrayed,
Deemed her Diana, and from her turning,
Leapt to his feet and fled afraid.

IV.

Far she followed and called and pleaded,
Ever he fled with never a look;
Fled, till he came to this spot, deep-reeded,
Came to the bank of this forest brook.
Here for a moment he stopped and listened,
Heard in her voice her heart's despair,

Saw in her eyes the love that glistened,
Sank on her-bosom and rested there.

V.

Close to her beauty she strained and pressed him,
Held and bound him with kiss on kiss;
Soft with her arms and her lips caressed him,
Sweeter of touch than a blossom is.
Spoke to his heart, and with sweet persuasion
Mastered his soul till its fear was flown;
Spoke to his soul till its mortal evasion
Vanished, and body and soul were her own.

VI.

Many a day had they met and mated,
Many a day by this woodland brook,
When he of the forest, the god who hated,
Came on their love and changed with a look.
There on the shore, while they joyed and jested,
He in the shadows, unseen, espied
Her, like the goddess Diana breasted,
Him, like Endymion by her side.

VII.

Lo! at a word, at a sign, their folded
Limbs and bodies assumed new form,
Hers to the shape of a tree were molded,
His to a vine with surrounding arm....
So they stand with their limbs enlacing,
Nymph and mortal, upon this shore,
He forever a vine embracing
Her a silvery sycamore.

Madison Julius Cawein

Voices

When blood-root blooms and trillium flowers
Unclasp their stars to sun and rain,
My heart strikes hands with winds and showers
And wanders in the woods again.

O urging impulse, born of spring,
That makes glad April of my soul,
No bird, however wild of wing,
Is more impatient of control.

Impetuous of pulse it beats
Within my blood and bears me hence;
Above the housetops and the streets
I hear its happy eloquence.

It tells me all that I would know,
Of birds and buds, of blooms and bees;
I seem to hear the blossoms blow,
And leaves unfolding on the trees.

I seem to hear the blue-bells ring
Faint purple peals of fragrance; and
The honey-throated poppies fling
Their golden laughter o'er the land.

It calls to me; it sings to me;
I hear its far voice night and day;
I can not choose but go when tree
And flower clamor, 'Come, away!'

Madison Julius Cawein

Voyagers

Where are they, that song and tale
Tell of? lands our childhood knew?
Sea-locked Faerylands that trail
Morning summits, dim with dew,
Crimson o'er a crimson sail.

Where in dreams we entered on
Wonders eyes have never seen:
Whither often we have gone,
Sailing a dream-brigantine
On from voyaging dawn to dawn.

Leons seeking lands of song;
Fabled fountains pouring spray;
Where our anchors dropped among
Corals of some tropic bay,
With its swarthy native throng.

Shoulder ax and arquebus!-
We may find it!-past yon range
Of sierras, vaporous,
Rich with gold and wild and strange
That lost region dear to us.

Yet, behold, although our zeal
Darien summits may subdue,
Our Balboa eyes reveal
But a vaster sea come to-
New endeavor for our keel.

Yet! who sails with face set hard
Westward,-while behind him lies
Unfaith,-where his dreams keep guard
Round it, in the sunset skies,
He may reach it-afterward.

Madison Julius Cawein

Wasteland

Briar and fennel and chinquapin,
And rue and ragweed everywhere;
The field seemed sick as a soul with sin,
Or dead of an old despair,
Born of an ancient care.

The cricket's cry and the locust's whirr,
And the note of a bird's distress,
With the rasping sound of a grasshopper,
Clung to the loneliness
Like burrs to a ragged dress.

So sad the field, so waste the ground,
So curst with an old despair,
A woodchuck's burrow, a blind mole's mound,
And a chipmunk's stony lair,
Seemed more than it could bear.

So solemn too, so more than sad,
So droning-lone with bees
I wondered what more could Nature add
To the sum of its miseries
And then I saw the trees.

Skeletons gaunt, that gnarled the place,
Twisted and torn they rose,
The tortured bones of a perished race
Of monsters no mortal knows.
They startled the mind's repose.

And a man stood there, as still as moss,
A lichen form that stared;
And an old blind hound, that seemed at loss,
Forever around him fared
With a snarling fang half-bared.

I looked at the man. I saw him plain.
Like a dead weed, gray and wan,
Or a breath of dust. I looked again

And man and dog were gone
Like wisps o' the graying dawn. . . .

Were they a part of the grim death'there?
Ragweed, fennel, and rue?
Or forms of the mind, an old despair,
That there into semblance grew
Out of the grief I knew?

Madison Julius Cawein

Waves

I saw the daughters of the ocean dance
With wind and tide, and heard them on the rocks:
White hands they waved me, tossing sunlit locks,
Green as the light an emerald holds in trance.
Their music bound me as with necromance
Of mermaid beauty, that for ever mocks,
And lured me as destruction lures wild flocks
Of light-led gulls and storm-tossed cormorants.
Nearer my feet they crept: I felt their lips:
Their hands of foam that caught at me, to press,
As once they pressed Leander: and, straightway,
I saw the monster-ending of their hips;
The cruelty hid in their soft caress;
The siren-passion ever more to slay.

Madison Julius Cawein

What Little Things!

From 'One Day and Another'

What little things are those
That hold our happiness!
A smile, a glance, a rose
Dropped from her hair or dress;
A word, a look, a touch,-
These are so much, so much.

An air we can't forget;
A sunset's gold that gleams;
A spray of mignonette,
Will fill the soul with dreams
More than all history says,
Or romance of old days.

For of the human heart,
Not brain, is memory;
These things it makes a part
Of its own entity;
The joys, the pains whereof
Are the very food of love.

Madison Julius Cawein

What Of It Then

Well, what of it then, if your heart be weighed with the yoke
Of the world's neglect? and the smoke
Of doubt, blown into your eyes, make night of your road?
And the sting of the goad,
The merciless goad of scorn,
And the rise and fall
Of the whip of necessity gall,
Till your heart, forlorn,
Indignant, in rage would rebel?
And your bosom fill,
And sobbingly swell,
With bitterness, yea, against God and 'gainst Fate,
Fate, and the world of men,
What of it then? . .
Let it be as it will,
If you labor and wait,
You, too, will arrive, and the end for you, too, will be well.
What of it then, say I! yea, what of it then!

II.

Well, what of it then? if the hate of the world and of men
Make wreck of your dreams again?
What of it then
If contumely and sneer,
And ignorant jibe and jeer,
Be heaped upon all that you do and dream:
And the irresistible stream
Of events overwhelm and submerge
All effort or so it may seem?
Not all, not all shall be lost,
Not all, in the merciless gurge
And pitiless surge!
Though you see it tempestuously tost,
Though you see it sink down or sweep by,
Not in vain did you strive, not in vain!
The struggle, the longing and toil
Of hand and of heart and of brain,
Not in vain was it all, say I!

For out of the wild turmoil
And seething and soil
Of Time, some part of the whole will arise,
Arise and remain,
In spite of the wrath of the skies
And the hate of men.
What of it then, say I! yea, what of it then!

Madison Julius Cawein

What The Flowers Saw

She came through shade and shine,
By scarlet trumpetvine
And fragrant buttonbush,
That heaped the wayside hush
And oh!
The orange-red of the butterfly weed,
And pink of the milkweed's plume,
Nodded as if to give her heed
As she passed through gleam and gloom, heigh-ho!
As she passed through gleam and gloom.
Marybud-gold her hair;
And deep as it was fair;
Her eyes a chicory-blue,
Two wildflowers bright with dew
And oh!
The flowers knew, as flowers know,
The one she'd come to find;
They read the secret she hid below
In her maiden heart and mind, heigh-ho!
Her maiden heart and mind.
All day with hearts elate,
They watched him from the gate,
Where in the field he mowed
At the end of the old hill-road
And oh!
They seemed to see with their petaled eyes
The thing he was thinking of,
And whispered the wind, in secret-wise,
All that they knew of love, heigh-ho!
All that they knew of love.
No matter what befell
Not one wildflower will tell;
Not one, that leaned to look
And see the kiss he took
And oh!
The things they said in the woodland there
You must ask of the wandering breeze,
Who whispers all news of earth and air,
And is gossip of the trees, heigh-ho!

Old gossip of the trees.

Madison Julius Cawein

What The Trees Said To The Little Boy

Once when the park
Was very dark
I slipped out and went walking;
And heard the trees
To the summer breeze,
And to each other talking.

II.

And I heard them say,
'We have stood all day
In one spot here, and worried
To keep the sun
From each little one
Who laughed at our feet or hurried.

III.

'Now every boy
And girl and toy
Is safe at home, my patience!
Why! I and you,
As their parents do,
Can talk of our relations.'

Madison Julius Cawein

When Lydia Smiles

When Lydia smiles, I seem to see
The walls around me fade and flee;
And, lo, in haunts of hart and hind
I seem with lovely Rosalind,
In Arden 'neath the greenwood tree:
The day is drowsy with the bee,
And one wild bird flutes dreamily,
And all the mellow air is kind,
When Lydia smiles.

Ah, me! what were this world to me
Without her smile!-What poetry,
What glad hesperian paths I find
Of love, that lead my soul and mind
To happy hills of Arcady,
When Lydia smiles!

Madison Julius Cawein

When Ships Put Out To Sea

It's 'Sweet, good-bye,' when pennants fly
And ships put out to sea;
It's a loving kiss, and a tear or two
In an eye of brown or an eye of blue;
And you'll remember me,
Sweetheart,
And you'll remember me.

II

It's 'Friend or foe?' when signals blow
And ships sight ships at sea;
It's clear for action, and man the guns,
As the battle nears or the battle runs;
And you'll remember me,
Sweetheart,
And you'll remember me.

III

It's deck to deck, and wrath and wreck
When ships meet ships at sea;
It's scream of shot and shriek of shell,
And hull and turret a roaring hell;
And you'll remember me,
Sweetheart,
And you'll remember me.

IV

It's doom and death, and pause a breath
When ships go down at sea;
It's hate is over and love begins,

And war is cruel whoever wins;
And you'll remember me,
Sweetheart,
And you'll remember me.

Madison Julius Cawein

When Spring Comes Down The Wildwood Way

When Spring comes down the wildwood way,
A crocus in her ear,
Sweet in her train, returned with May,
The Love of Yester-year
Will follow, carolling his lay,
His lyric lay,
Whose music she will hear.

The crowfoot in the grass shall glow,
And lamp his way with gold;
The snowdropp toss its bells of snow,
The bluebell's blue unfold,
To glad the path that Love shall go,
High-hearted go,
As often in the days of old.

The way he went when hope was keen,
Was high in girl and boy:
Before the sad world came between
Their young hearts and their joy:
Their hearts, that Love has still kept clean,
Kept whole and clean,
Through all the years' annoy.

How long it seems until the spring!
Until his heart shall speak
To hers again, and make it sing,
And with its great joy weak!
When on her hand he'll place the ring,
The wedding-ring,
And kiss her mouth and cheek!

Madison Julius Cawein

Where The Battle Passed

ONE blossoming rose-tree, like a beautiful thought
Nursed in a broken mind, that waits and schemes,
Survives, though shattered, and about it caught,
The strangling dodder streams.

Gaunt weeds: and here a bayonet or pouch,
Rusty and rotting where men fought and slew:
Bald, trampled paths that seem with fear to crouch,
Feeling a bloody dew.

Here nothing that was beauty's once remains.

War left the garden to its dead alone:

And Life and Love, who toiled here, for their pains
Have nothing once their own.

Death leans upon the battered door, at gaze —
The house is silent where there once was stir
Of husbandry, that led laborious days,
With Love for comforter.

Now in Love's place, Death, old and halt and blind,
Gropes, searching everywhere for what may live.—

War left it empty as his vacant mind;
It has no more to give.

Madison Julius Cawein

Whippoorwill Time

Let down the bars; drive in the cows:
The west is barred with burning rose.
Unhitch the horses from the ploughs,
And from the cart the ox that lows,
And light the lamp within the house:
The whippoorwill is calling,
'Whippoorwill, whippoorwill,'
Where the locust blooms are falling
On the hill;
The sunset's rose is dying,
And the whippoorwill is crying,
'Whippoorwill, whippoorwill';
Soft, now shrill,
The whippoorwill is crying,
'Whippoorwill.'

Unloose the watch-dog from his chain:
The first stars wink their drowsy eyes:
A sheep-bell tinkles in the lane,
And where the shadow deepest lies
A lamp makes bright the window-pane:
The whippoorwill is calling,
'Whippoorwill, whippoorwill,'
Where the berry-blooms are falling
On the rill;
The first faint stars are springing,
And the whippoorwill is singing,
'Whippoorwill, whippoorwill';
Softly still
The whippoorwill is singing,
'Whippoorwill.'

The cows are milked; the cattle fed;
The last far streaks of evening fade:
The farm-hand whistles in the shed,
And in the house the table's laid;
Its lamp streams on the garden-bed:
The whippoorwill is calling,
'Whippoorwill, whippoorwill,'

Where the dogwood blooms are falling
On the hill;
The afterglow is waning
And the whippoorwill's complaining,
'Whippoorwill, whippoorwill';
Wild and shrill,
The whippoorwill's complaining,
'Whippoorwill.'

The moon blooms out, a great white rose;
The stars wheel onward toward the west:
The barnyard-cock wakes once and crows;
The farm is wrapped in peaceful rest;
The cricket chirs; the firefly glows
The whippoorwill is calling,
'Whippoorwill, whippoorwill,'
Where the bramble-blooms are falling
On the rill;
The moon her watch is keeping
And the whippoorwill is weeping,
'Whippoorwill, whippoorwill';
Lonely still,
The whippoorwill is weeping,
'Whippoorwill.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Why Should I Pine?

Why should I pine? when there in Spain
Are eyes to woo, and not in vain;
Dark eyes, and dreamily divine:
And lips, as red as sunlit wine;

Sweet lips, that never know disdain:
And hearts, for passion over fain;
Fond, trusting hearts that know no stain
Of scorn for hearts that love like mine.-
Why should I pine?

Because all dreams I entertain
Of beauty wear thy form, Elain;
And e'en their lips and eyes are thine:
So though I gladly would resign
All love, I love, and still complain,
'Why should I pine?'

Madison Julius Cawein

Will O' The Wisps

Beyond the barley meads and hay,
What was the light that beckoned there?
That made her sweet lips smile and say
'Oh, busk me in a gown of May,
And knot red poppies in my hair.'

Over the meadow and the wood
What was the voice that filled her ears?
That sent into pale cheeks the blood,
Until each seemed a wild-brier bud
Mown down by mowing harvesters? . .

Beyond the orchard, down the hill,
The water flows, the water whirls;
And there they found her past all ill,
A plaintive face but smiling still,
The cresses caught among her curls.

At twilight in the willow glen
What sound is that the silence hears,
When all the dusk is hushed again
And homeward from the fields strong men
And women go, the harvesters?

One seeks the place where she is laid,
Where violets bloom from year to year
'O sunny head! O bird-like maid!
The orchard blossoms fall and fade
And I am lonely, lonely here.'

Two stars burn bright above the vale;
They seem to him the eyes of Ruth:
The low moon rises very pale
As if she, too, had heard the tale,
All heartbreak, of a maid and youth.

Madison Julius Cawein

Will You Forget?

In years to come, will you forget,
Dear girl, how often we have met?
And I have gazed into your eyes
And there beheld no sad regret
To cloud the gladness of their skies,
While in your heart-unheard as yet
Love slept, oblivious of my sighs?
In years to come, will you forget?

Ah, me! I only pray that when,
In other days, some man of men
Has taught those eyes to laugh and weep
With joy and sorrow, hearts must ken
When love awakens in their deep,
I only pray some memory then,
Or sad or sweet, you still will keep
Of me and love that might have been.

Madison Julius Cawein

Willow Wood

Deep in the wood of willow-trees
The summer sounds and whispering breeze
Bound me as if with glimmering arms
And spells of witchcraft, sorceries,
That filled the wood with phantom forms,
And held me with their faery charms.

II.

Within the wood they laid their snare.
The invisible web was everywhere:
I felt it clasp me with its gleams,
And mesh my soul from feet to hair
In weavings of intangible beams,
Woven with dim and delicate dreams.

III.

As dream by dream passed shadowy,
One came; an antique pageantry
Of Faeryland: it marched with pride
Of faery horns blown silverly
Around the Elf-prince and his bride,
Who rode on steeds of milk-white stride.

IV.

Then from the shadow of a pool
The water-fays rose beautiful;
I saw them wring their long green hair,
And felt their eyes gaze emerald-cool,
And from their fresh lips, everywhere,
Their rainy laughter dew the air.

V.

And through the willow-leaves I saw,
As in a crystal without flaw,
Slim limbs and faces sly of eye,

Elves, piping on gnat-flutes of straw,
Thin as the violin of a fly,
Or clashing cricket-cymbals by.

VI.

And then I saw the warted gnomes
Creep, beetle-backed, from rocky combs,
Lamped with their jewelled talismans,
Rubies that torch their caverned homes,
Green grottoes, where their treasure-clans
Intrigue and thwart our human plans.

VII.

And near them, foam-frail, flower-fair,
Sun-sylphids shook their showery hair,
And from their blossom-houses blew
Musk wood-rose kisses everywhere,
Or, prisoned in a dropp of dew,
Twinkled an eye of sapphire-blue.

VIII.

And imps, wasp-bodied; ouphs, that guard
The Courts of Oberon, their lord,
Bee-bellied, hornet-headed things,
Went by, each with his whining sword,
Fanning the heat with courier wings,
Bound on some message of the King's.

IX.

And pansy-tunicked, gowned in down,
The lords and ladies of the crown,
Beautiful and bright as butterflies,
Passed, marching to some Faery Town,
While dragoned things, mailed to the eyes,
Soldiered their way in knightly wise.

X.

Then, suddenly, the finger-tips,
Faint, moth-like, and the flower-lips
Of some one on my eye-lids pressed:
And as a moonbeam, silvering, slips
Out of a shadow, tangle-tressed
A Dream, I'd known, stood manifest.

XI.

A Dream I'd known when but a child,
That lived within my soul and smiled
Far in the world of faery lore;
By whom my heart was oft beguiled,
And who invested sea and shore
With her fair presence evermore.

XII.

She drew me in that stately band
That marched with her to Faeryland:
Again her words I understood,
Who smiling reached to me her hand,
And filled me with beatitude....
This happened in the willow wood.

Madison Julius Cawein

Winter

The flute, whence Summer's dreamy fingertips
Drew music, ripening the pinched kernels in
The burly chestnut and the chinquapin,
Red-rounding-out the oval haws and hips,
Now Winter crushes to his stormy lips,
And surly songs whistle around his chin;
Now the wild days and wilder nights begin
When, at the eaves, the crooked icicle drips.
Thy songs, O Summer, are not lost so soon!
Still dwells a memory in thy hollow flute,
Which unto Winter's masculine airs doth give
Thy own creative qualities of tune,
Through which we see each bough bend white with fruit,
Each bush with bloom, in snow commemorative.

Madison Julius Cawein

Winter Days

'These winter days,' my father says,
'When mornings blow and bite and freeze,
And hens sit cackling in the straw,
Stiff with the frost as gates that wheeze,
Remind me of my youth when, raw,
The day broke and, beneath the trees,
Wild winds would twist,
I went to work with axe and saw,
Or stopped to blow my mittened fist.

'These winter noons,' my father croons,
'When eggs, the hens have hardly laid,
Crack open with the cold; and cows
Drink through the hole a heel has made,
Some rustic in his huddled blouse,
Bring back the noons when, with a spade,
Down on the farm,
I pathed the snow from barn to house,
And beat my arms to keep me warm.

'These winter nights,' so he recites,
'With those old nights are right in tune,
When cocks crew out the hours till dawn
And all night long the owlet's croon
Quavered and quivered far withdrawn;
And cold beneath the freezing moon
The old fox-hound
Bayed where the icicles glittered wan,
And all the old house slumbered sound.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Winter Rain

Wild clouds roll up, slag-dark and slaty gray,
And in the oaks the sere wind sobs and sighs,
Weird as a word a man before he dies
Mutters beneath his breath yet fears to say:
The rain drives down; and by each forest way
Each dead leaf drips, and murmurings arise
As of fantastic footsteps, one who flies,
Whispering, the dim eidolon of the day.

Now is the wood a place where phantoms house:
Around each tree wan ghosts of flowers crowd,
And spectres of sweet weeds that once were fair,
Rustling; and through the bleakness of bare boughs
A voice is heard, now low, now stormy loud,
As if the ghosts of all the leaves were there.

Madison Julius Cawein

Witchcraft

THIS world is made a witchcraft place
With gazing on a woman's face.
Now 'tis her smile, whose sorcery
Turns all my thoughts to melody.
Now 'tis her frown, that comes and goes,
That makes my day a page of prose.
And now her laugh, or but a word,
That in my heart frees wild a bird.
Some day, perhaps, a kiss of hers,
Will lift from my dumb life the curse
Of longing, inarticulate,
That keeps me sad and celibate.

Madison Julius Cawein

Witchery

She walks the woods, when evening falls,
With spirits of the winds and leaves;
And to her side the soul she calls
Of every flower she perceives.

She walks with introspective eyes
That see not as the eyes of man,
But with the dream that in them lies,
And which no outward eyes may scan.

She sits among the sunset hills,
Or trails a silken skirt of breeze,
Then with the voice of whip-poor-wills
Summons the twilight to the trees.

Among the hollows, dim with musk,
Where wild the stream shows heels of foam,
She sows with firefly-seeds the dusk,
And leads the booming beetle home.

She blows the glow-worm lamps a-glare,
And hangs them by each way like eyes;
Then, mid the blossoms, everywhere
She rocks to sleep the butterflies.

She calls the red fox from his den,
And, hollowing to her mouth one hand,
Halloos the owlets in the glen,
And hoots awake the purple land.

The cricket knows her foot's light tread
And sings for her an elfin mass;
She puts the bumble-bee to bed,
And shakes the white moth from the grass.

And to the mud-wasps, where they top
Their cells of clay, she murmurs sleep:
She bids the toad come forth and hop,
The snail put out its horns and creep.

She taps upon the dead tree's trunk:
And 'neath the bark the worm begins;
And where the rotted wood is punk
Its twinkling web the spider spins.

She claps a night-cap of the dew
On every rosy clover-head;
And on the lily, pale of hue,
She slips a gown while still in bed.

With kisses cool of drowsy mist
She thrills each wildflower's heart with June;
And, whispering gold and amethyst,
Sighs legends to them of the moon.

She bids the black bat forth, to be
The courier of her darker moods;
She mounts the moon-imp, Mystery,
And speeds him wildly through the woods.

She crowds with ghosts the forest-walks;
And with the wind's dim words invokes
The spirit that for ever talks
Unto the congregated oaks.

She leans above the flying stream:
Her starry gaze commands it stay:
And in its lucid deeps a dream
Takes shape and glimmers on its way.

She rests upon the lichened stone,
Her moonbeam hair spread bright around:
And in the darkness, one by one,
The unborn flowers break the ground.

She lays her mouth, like some sweet word,
Against the wild-bird's nest that swings:
And in the speckled egg, that heard,
The young bird stirs its wings and sings.

In her all dreams find permanence:

All mysteries that trance the soul:
And substance, that evades the sense,
Through her wood-magic is made whole.

Oh, she is lovelier than she seems
To any one whose soul may see:
But only they who walk with dreams
Shall meet with her and know 'tis she.

Madison Julius Cawein

With The Wind

'Twas when the wind was blowing from the billow-breaking sea,
The grey and stormy sea, I heard her calling me,
And in the woods and on the ways where leaves were whirling down,
And weeds were rustling brown,
I caught a glimpse of face and feet, a glimmer of her gown.

And there between the forest and a strip of wandering sea,
Of dark and dreaming sea, I heard her laugh at me;
And, oh! her voice was bugle-wild as are the wind and rain,
And drew my heart again
With all the lures of all the past and joy more keen than pain.

Upon a fir-dark hilltop by the sunset-jewelled sea,
The old and wrinkled sea, she shook her hair at me,
And I caught a misty shimmer of her frosty gown and veil,
And her hand waved rosy pale,
And my heart was fain to follow her upon the old-time trail.

Within a ferny hollow by the mermaid-calling sea,
The far and foaming sea, she turned her face to me:
Again I saw her beauty; and again she held me fast,
As she'd held me in the past,
And let her wild heart beat to mine as beats the autumn blast.

Beside a rib of wreckage by the tempest-haunted sea,
The sad and severing sea, she bade good-bye to me:
Oh, paler than the foam her face, and wilder than the night,
When not a star gives light,
And rain and wind and winter sweep like harpies from the height.

Oh, she who joined her gipsy joy to sorrow of the sea,
The gaunt and ghostly sea, will come again to me:
When Autumn leads the wild-fowl home and lights, like wandering gleams,
The camp-fires of her dreams,
Again my heart shall hear her call upon the gale that streams.

Madison Julius Cawein

Womanhood

I

The summer takes its hue
From something opulent as fair in her,
And the bright heaven is brighter than it was;
Brighter and lovelier,
Arching its beautiful blue,
Serene and soft, as her sweet gaze, o'er us.

II

The springtime takes its moods
From something in her made of smiles and tears,
And flowery earth is flowerier than before,
And happier, it appears,
Adding new multitudes
To flowers, like thoughts, that haunt us evermore.

III

Summer and spring are wed
In her-her nature; and the glamour of
Their loveliness, their bounty, as it were,
Of life and joy and love,
Her being seems to shed,-
The magic aura of the heart of her.

Madison Julius Cawein

Woman's Love

Sweet lies! the sweetest ever heard,
To her he said:
Her heart remembers every word
Now he is dead.

I ask: 'If thus his lies can make
Your young heart grieve for his false sake,
Had he been true what had you done
For true love's sake?'

'Upon his grave there in the sun,
Avoided now of all but one,
I'd lay my heart with all its ache,
And let it break, and let it break.'

And falsehood! fairer ne'er was seen
Than he put on:
Her heart recalls each look and mien
Now he is gone.

I ask: 'If thus his treachery
Can hold your heart with lie on lie,
What had you done for manly love,
Love without lie?'

'There in the grass that grows above
His grave, where all could know thereof,
I'd lay me down without a sigh,
And gladly die, and gladly die.'

Madison Julius Cawein

Wood Dreams

About the time when bluebells swing
Their elfin belfries for the bee
And in the fragrant House of Spring
Wild Music moves; and Fantasy
Sits weaving webs of witchery:
And Beauty's self in silence leans
Above the brook and through her hair
Beholds her face reflected there,
And wonders what the vision means
About the time when bluebells swing,
I found a path of glooms and gleams,
A way that Childhood oft has gone,
That leads into the Wood of Dreams,
Where, as of old, dwell Fay and Faun,
And Faërie dances until dawn;
And Elfland calls from her blue cave,
Or, starbright, on her snow-white steed,
Rides blowing on a silver reed
That Magic follows like a slave
I found a path of glooms and gleams.

And in that Wood I came again
On old enchantments. There, behold,
I saw them pass, a kingly train,
Fable and Legend, wise and old,
In garb of glimmering green and gold:
While far away forgotten bells
And horns of Faërie made faint sound;
And all the anxious heaven around
And earth grew gossamer'd with spells,
And whirled with ouphen feet again.

And, lo, I saw the ancient Hall
Of Story rise, where Dreams conspire
With Words and Music to enthrall
The Yearning of the soul's desire,
Holding it fast with charméd fire:
Where Glamour bows in servitude;
And, Lord of Ecstasy and Awe,

Song, with his henchmen, Lore and Law,
Sits 'mid the mighty Brotherhood
Of Beauty in that twilight Hall.

Then far away the forest rang
With something more than bugle calls:
A voice, a summons wild that sang,
As if Adventure in his halls
Awoke; or Daring on the walls
Shouted to Youth to take his stand
Before the wizard-guarded tower
Where Love, within her secret bower,
Beckons him on with moon-white hand
Why was it that the forest rang?

And then I knew: It was my Sprite,
My Witch, whose spells had led me far:
Who held me with the old delight,
And drew my soul beyond the bar
Of all the real, like a star.
How long ago, how far that day,
Since first I met her in the wild!
And on my face her white face smiled,
And my child fears she soothed away!
Ay! ay! 'twas she -my airy Sprite!

And on my heart again the hour
Flashed as when first she gazed at me;
Her loveliness clothed on with power
And joy and godlike mystery,
A portion of Earth's ecstasy:
Again I felt, in ways unknown,
Down in my soul a memory waken
Of some far kiss once given and taken,
That made me hers, her very own,
Once every year for one brief hour. . . .

A Dryad laughed among the trees;
A Naiad flashed with limbs a-spark;
A Satyr reached rough arms to seize;
A Faun foot danced adown the dark
To music of rude pipes of bark:

Earth crowded all its shapes-around,
Myths, bare and beautiful of breast,
'Mid whom pursuing passion pressed,
Wild, Pan-like, leaping from the ground.
A Dryad laughed among the trees.

Then Elfdom, in a starlike rain,
To right and left rose blossoms slim;
And urged its Joy in twinkling train
Down many a flower and rainbow rim
Of moonbeam. Fancy sat with Whim:
And from the ferns gleamed glowworm eyes,
Where Faërie held its Court; and, green,
An impish spirit ran between,
With Puck-like laughter of surprise,
And firefly flickerings, wild as rain.

Then suddenly a light that grew,
And in the light my Witch! who stood,
As crystal-evident as dew,
Weaving a spell that made the wood
Take on a dream's similitude:
And, lo, through radiance and perfume
I saw Romance, crowned with a crown,
And Chivalry come riding down,
On two great steeds, all gold and gloom,
Round whom the splendor grew and grew. . . .

And of the Dream the forest dreams
Again my soul becomes a part:
Again my magic armor gleams;
Again beneath its steel my heart
Throbs all impatient for the start.
Again the towers of Time and Chance
Loom grimly, where, forever fair,
Wrapped in the glory of her hair,
Beauty lies bound by Necromance,
The Beauty that we know in dreams.

And, as before, again I smile,
Delaying still to break the spell,
Facing the gateway of old Guile,

Where hangs the slug-horn that shall knell
Defiance to the Courts of Hell.
'Then Elfdom, in a starlike rain,
To right and left rose blossom-slim.'
What though around me, torch on torch,
The eyes of Danger, glowering, wait!
What though Death heaves a sword of hate
Beneath the gate's enchanted arch!
I raise the horn again and smile.

What now, O Night, shall make me pause?
I face the darkness of the tomb,
That stirs with clank of iron claws,
And threatenings of gigantic doom,
The monster in the granite gloom.
And then full in the face of Night
I hurl my challenge, blast on blast
The drawbridge thunders; and the vast
Echoes with batlike wings in flight.
There is no thing to give me pause.

My heart sings, bounding to its quest.
I mount the stairs to where she sleeps,
A rose upon her brow and breast,
And in her long hair's golden deeps
The glory of the youth she keeps.
I kneel again; I clasp her there;
I kiss her mouth; but, lo, behold!
Her beauty crumbles into mold,
'And all the castle goes in air,
And with it all my heart's high quest. . . .

And in the wood I wake again.
The Dream is gone as is the child,
Who followed far in rapture's train,
And by a vision was beguiled,
The Witch, the Presence undefiled,
Whose call still sounds o'erholt and hollow,
An elfin bugle, in the morn;
And in the eve a faery horn,
Bidding the dreaming heart to follow,
The child in man that hears again. . . .

For what we dream is never lost.
Dreams mold the soul within the clay.
The rapture and the pentecost
Of beauty shape our lives some way:
They are the beam, the guiding ray,
That Nature dowers us with at birth,
And, like the light upon the crown
Of some dark hill, that towers down,
Point us to Heaven, not to Earth,
Above the world where dreams are lost.

Madison Julius Cawein

Wood Myths

Sylvan, they say, and nymph are gone;
And yet I saw the two last night,
When overhead the moon sailed white,
And through the mists, her light made wan,
Each bush and tree doffed its disguise,
And stood revealed to mortal eyes.

The hollow, rimmed with rocks and trees,
And massed with ferns and matted vines,
Seemed an arena mid the pines,
A theatre of mysteries,
Where oread and satyr met,
And all the myths that men forget.

The rain and frost had carved the rocks
With faces that were wild and strange,
Which Protean fancy seemed to change
Each moment in the granite blocks,
That seemed slow dreaming into form
The gods grotesque of wind and storm.

Then suddenly Diana stood,
Slim as a shaft of moonlight, there,
Immortalizing earth and air
With perfect beauty: through the wood
Her maidens went as brightness goes
Athwart a cloud at evening's close.

And then I saw a faun push through
The thorny berry; at his lip
Twinkled a pipe that seemed to drip
Dim sounds of crickets and of dew,
Things that, in strange reality,
Seemed born of his frail melody.

And then I saw the naiad rise
From out her rock; a form of spar,
In which her heart shone like a star,
And like the moon her hair and eyes;

She smiled, and at each smile, it seemed,
Some wildflower into being gleamed.

And then the dryad from her beech
Came, silver white as is its bark;
And slender through the dreaming dark
I saw her go: a whispering speech
Was hers from whose soft murmured words
Is made the language of the birds.

Then satyrs and the centaurs passed:
And then old Pan himself; and there,
Flying before him, all her hair
About her like a mist, the last
Wild nymph I saw; and as she went
The woods as with a wind were bent.

And in the hush, like some slow rose
That knows not yet that it is born,
A premonition of the morn
Bloomed; and from out its far repose,
Borne over ocean, through the wood,
A sighing swept the solitude.

Then nothing more. But I had seen
That Pan still lives and all his train,
Whatever men say: they remain
The unseen forces; they that mean
Nature; its awe and majesty,
That symbolize mythology.

Madison Julius Cawein

Wood-Ways

O roads, O paths, O ways that lead
Through woods where all the oak-trees bleed
With autumn! and the frosty reds
Of fallen leaves make whispering beds
For winds to toss and turn upon,
Like restless Care that can not sleep,
Beneath whose rustling tatters wan
The last wildflow'r is buried deep:
One way of all I love to wend,
That towards the golden sunset goes,
A way, o'er which the red leaf blows,
With an old gateway at its end,
Where Summer, that my soul o'erflows,
My summer of love, blooms like a wildwood rose.

II.

O winter ways, when spears of ice
Arm every bough! and in a vice
Of iron frost the streams are held;
When, where the deadened oak was felled
For firewood, deep the snow and sleet,
Where lone the muffled woodsmen toiled,
Are trampled down by heavy feet,
And network of the frost is spoiled,
O road I love to take again!
While gray the heaven sleets or snows,
At whose far end, at twilight's close,
Glimmers an oldtime window-pane,
Where spring, that is my heart's repose,
My spring of love, like a great fire glows.

Madison Julius Cawein

Words

I cannot tell what I would tell thee,
What I would say, what thou shouldst hear:
Words of the soul that should compell thee,
Words of the heart to draw thee near.

For when thou smilest, thou, who fillest
My life with joy, and I would speak,
'T is then my lips and tongue are stillest,
Knowing all language is too weak.

Look in my eyes: read there confession:
The truest love has least of art:
Nor needs it words for its expression
When soul speaks soul and heart speaks heart.

Madison Julius Cawein

Work

What though the heart be tired,
The heart, that long aspired,
And one high dream desired,
Beyond attainment's scope;
Beyond our grasp; above us;
The dream we would have love us,
That will know nothing of us,
But merely bids us hope.

Still it behooves us never
From love and work to sever,
To hold to one endeavor,
And make our dream our care:
For work, at dawn and even,
Shapes for the soul a heaven,
Wherein, as strong as seven,
Can enter no Despair.

Work, that blows high the fire
Of hope and heart's desire,
And sings and dreams of higher
Things than the world's regard:
Work, which to long endeavor,
And patient love, that never
Seems recompensed, forever
Gives, in its way, reward.

Madison Julius Cawein

Worship

The mornings raise
Voices of gold in the Almighty's praise;
The sunsets soar
In choral crimson from far shore to shore:
Each is a blast,
Reverberant, of color, seen as vast
Concussions, that the vocal firmament
In worship sounds o'er every continent.

II.

Not for our ears
The cosmic music of the roiling spheres,
That sweeps the skies!
Music we hear, but only with our eyes.
For all too weak
Our mortal frames to bear the words these speak,
Those detonations that we name the dawn
And sunset hues Earth's harmony puts on.

Madison Julius Cawein

Young September

With a look and a laugh where the stream was flowing,
September led me along the land;
Where the golden-rod and lobelia, glowing,
Seemed burning torches within her hand.
And faint as the thistle's or milk-weed's feather
I glimpsed her form through the sparkling weather.

II.

Now 'twas her hand and now her hair
That tossed me welcome everywhere;
That lured me onward through the stately rooms
Of forest, hung and carpeted with glooms,
And windowed wide with azure, doored with green,
Through which rich glimmers of her robe were seen
Now, like some deep marsh-mallow, rosy gold;
Now, like the great Joe-Pye-weed, fold on fold
Of heavy mauve; and now, like the intense
Massed iron-weed, a purple opulence.

III.

Along the bank in a wild procession
Of gold and sapphire the blossoms blew;
And borne on the breeze came their soft confession
In syllables musk of honey and dew;
In words unheard that their lips kept saying,
Sweet as the lips of children praying.

IV.

And so, meseemed, I heard them tell
How here her loving glance once fell
Upon this bank, and from its azure grew
The ageratum mist-flower's happy hue;
How from her kiss, as crimson as the dawn,
The cardinal-flow'r drew its vermilion;
And from her hair's blond touch th' elecampane
Evolved the glory of its golden rain;

While from her starry footsteps, redolent,
The aster pearled its flowery firmament.

Madison Julius Cawein

Youth

Morn's mystic rose is reddening on the hills,
Dawn's irised nautilus makes glad the sea;
There is a lyre of flame that throbs and fills
Far heaven and earth with hope's wild ecstasy.
With lilled field and grove,
Haunts of the turtle-dove,
Here is the land of Love.

II

The chariot of the noon makes blind the blue
As towards the goal his burning axle glares;
There is a fiery trumpet thrilling through
Wide heaven and earth with deeds of one who dares.
With peaks of splendid name,
Wrapped round with astral flame,
Here is the land of Fame.

III

The purple priesthood of the evening waits
With golden pomp within the templed skies;
There is a harp of worship at the gates
Of heaven and earth that bids the soul arise.
With columned cliffs and long
Vales, music breathes among,
Here is the land of Song.

IV

Moon-crowned, the epic of the night unrolls
Its starry utterance o'er height and deep;
There is a voice of beauty at the souls

Of heaven and earth that lulls the heart asleep.
With storied woods and streams,
Where marble glows and gleams,
Here is the land of Dreams.

Madison Julius Cawein

Zero

The gate, on ice-hoarse hinges, stiff with frost,
Croaks open; and harsh wagon-wheels are heard
Creaking through cold; the horses' breath is furred
Around their nostrils; and with snow deep mossed
The hut is barely seen, from which, uptossed,
The wood-smoke pillars the icy air unstirred;
And every sound, each axe-stroke and each word,
Comes as through crystal, then again is lost.
The sun strikes bitter on the frozen pane,
And all around there is a tingling, tense
As is a wire stretched upon a disc
Vibrating without sound: It is the strain
That Winter plays, to which each tree and fence,
It seems, is strung, as 't were of ringing bisque.

Madison Julius Cawein

Zyps Of Zirl

The Alps of the Tyrol are dark with pines,
Where, foaming under the mountain spines,
The Inn's long water sounds and shines.

Beyond, are peaks where the morning weaves
An icy rose; and the evening leaves
The glittering gold of a thousand sheaves.

Deep vines and torrents and glimmering haze,
And sheep-bells tinkling on mountain ways,
And fluting shepherds make sweet the days.

The rolling mist, like a wandering fleece,
The great round moon in a mountain crease,
And a song of love make the nights all peace.

Beneath the blue Tyrolean skies
On the banks of the Inn, that foams and flies,
The storied city of Innsbruck lies.

With its mediaeval streets, that crook,
And its gabled houses, it has the look
Of a belfried town in a fairy-book.

So wild the Tyrol that oft, 'tis said,
When the storm is out and the town in bed,
The howling of wolves sweeps overhead.

And oft the burgher, sitting here
In his walled rose-garden, hears the clear
Shrill scream of the eagle circling near.

And this is the tale that the burghers tell:
The Abbot of Wiltau stood at his cell
Where the Solstein lifts its pinnacle.

A mighty summit of bluffs and crags
That frowns on the Inn; where the forest stags
Have worn a path to the water-flags.

The Abbot of Wiltau stood below;
And he was aware of a plume and bow
On the precipice there in the morning's glow.

A chamois, he saw, from span to span
Had leapt; and after it leapt a man;
And he knew 't was the Kaiser Maxmilian.

But, see! though rash as the chamois he,
His foot less sure. And verily
If the King should miss ... 'Jesu, Marie!

'The King hath missed!'-And, look, he falls!
Rolls headlong out to the headlong walls.
What saint shall save him on whom he calls?

What saint shall save him, who struggles there
On the narrow ledge by the eagle's lair,
With hooked hands clinging 'twixt earth and air?

The Abbot, he crosses himself in dread
'Let prayers go up for the nearly dead,
And the passing-bell be tolled,' he said.

'For the House of Hapsburg totters; see,
How raveled the thread of its destiny,
Sheer hung between cloud and rock!' quoth he.

But hark! where the steeps of the peak reply,
Is it an eagle's echoing cry?
And the flitting shadow, its plumes on high?

No voice of the eagle is that which rings!
And the shadow, a wiry man who swings
Down, down where the desperate Kaiser clings.

The crampons bound to his feet, he leaps
Like a chamois now; and again he creeps
Or twists, like a snake, o'er the fearful deeps.

'By his cross-bow, baldrick, and cap's black curl,'

Quoth the Abbot below, 'I know the churl!
'T is the hunted outlaw Zyps of Zirl.

'Upon whose head, or dead or alive,
The Kaiser hath posted a price.-Saints shrive
The King!' quoth Wiltau. 'Who may contrive

'To save him now that his foe is there?'
But, listen! again through the breathless air
What words are those that the echoes bear?

'Courage, my King!-To the rescue, ho!'
The wild voice rings like a twanging bow,
And the staring Abbot stands mute below.

And, lo! the hand of the outlaw grasps
The arm of the King-and death unclasps
Its fleshless fingers from him who gasps.

And how he guides! where the clean cliffs wedge
Them flat to their faces; by chasm and ledge
He helps the King from the merciless edge.

Then up and up, past bluffs that shun
The rashest chamois; where eagles sun
Fierce wings and brood; where the mists are spun.

And safe at last stand Kaiser and churl
On the mountain path where the mosses curl
And this the revenge of Zyps of Zirl.

Madison Julius Cawein