

Classic Poetry Series

Norah M. Holland
- poems -

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Norah M. Holland(1876-1925)

Norah Mary Holland (1876-1925) was a Canadian poet.

Life

Holland was born in Collingwood, Ontario, the daughter of Elizabeth Yeats and John H. Holland. Her mother was a first cousin of the Irish poet William Butler Yeats.

In 1889 the Hollands moved to Toronto, and Norah Holland completed her education at Toronto's Parkdale Collegiate. She work for the Dominion Press Clipping Bureau for eight years, and then joined the Toronto Daily News

Her play, When Half Gods Go, was the final performance staged by Toronto's Margaret Eaton School of Literature and Expression in 1928.

Cradle Song

Little brown feet, that have grown so weary
Plodding on through the heat of day,
Mother will hold you, mother will fold you
Safe to her breast; little feet, rest;
Now is the time to cease from play.

Little brown hands, that through day's long hours
Never rested, be still at last;
Mother will rest you; come, then, and nest you
Here by her side, nestle and hide;
Creep to her heart and hold it fast.

Little brown head, on my shoulder lying,
Night is falling and day is dead;
Mother will sing you songs that shall bring you
Childhood's soft sleep, quiet and deep;
Sweet be your dreams, O dear brown head!

Norah M. Holland

Home Thoughts From Abroad

April in England—daffodils are growing
By every wayside, golden, tall and fair;
April—and all the little winds are blowing
The scents of springtime through the sunny air.
April in England—God, that we were there!

April in England—and her sons are lying
On these red fields, and dreaming of her shore;
April—we hear the thrushes' songs replying
Each unto each, above the cannons' roar;
April in England—shall we see it more?

April in England—there's the cuckoo calling
Down in her meadows where the cowslip gleams;
April—and little showers are softly falling,
Dimpling the surface of her babbling streams;
April in England—how the shrapnel screams!

April in England—blood and dust and smother,
Screaming of horses, men in agony.
April—full many of thy sons, O Mother,
Never again those dewy dawns shall see.
April in England—God, keep England free!

Norah M. Holland

My Dog And I

My dog and I, the hills we know
Where the first faint wild roses blow,
We know the shadowy paths and cool
That wind across the woodland dim,
And where the water beetles swim
Upon the surface of the pool.

My dog and I, our feet brush through
Full oft the fragrant morning dew,
Or when the summer sun is high
We linger where the river flows,
Chattering and chuckling as it goes,
Two happy tramps, my dog and I.

Or, when the winter snows are deep,
Into some fire-lit nook we creep
And, while the north wind howls outside,
See castles in the dancing blaze,
Or, dozing, dream of summer days
And woodland stretches, wild and wide.

My dog and I are friends till death,
And when the chill, dark angel's breath
Shall call him from me, still I know

Forever friends, my dog and I.

Norah M. Holland

Sea Song

I will go down to the sea again, to the waste of waters, wild and wide;
I am tired—so tired—of hill and plain and the dull tame face of the country-side.

I will go out across the bar, with a swoop like the flight of a sea-bird's wings,
To where the winds and the waters are, with their multitudinous thunderings.

My prow shall furrow the whitening sea, out into the teeth of the lashing wind,
Where a thousand billows snarl and flee and break in a smother of foam behind.

O strong and terrible Mother Sea, let me lie once more on your cool white breast,
Your winds have blown through the heart of me and called me back from the
land's dull rest.

For night by night they blow through my sleep, the voice of waves through my
slumber rings,
I feel the spell of the steadfast deep; I hear its tramlings and triumphings.

And at last when my hours of life are sped let them make me no grave by hill or
plain,
Thy waves, O Mother, shall guard my head; I will go down to my sea again.

Norah M. Holland

The King Of Erin's Daughter

THE King of Erin's Daughter had wind-blown hair and bright,
The King of Erin's Daughter, her eyes were like the sea;

(O Rose of all the roses, have you forgotten quite
The story of the days of old that once you told to me?)

The King of Erin's Daughter went up the mountain side
And who but she was singing as she went upon her way,
'O somewhere waits a King's Son and I shall be his bride,
And tall he is and fair he is and none shall say him nay.'

The King of Erin's Daughter—O fair was she and sweet—
Went laughing up the mountain without a look behind
Till on the lofty summit that lay beneath her feet
She found a King's Son waiting there, his brows with poppies twined.

O tall was he and fair was he. He looked into her face
And whispered in her ear a word un-named of mortal breath
And very still she rested, clasped close in his embrace,
The King of Erin's Daughter, for the bridegroom's name was Death.

Norah M. Holland

The Unchristened Child

Alanna! Alanna! Within the churchyard's round
There's many graves of childer there; they lie in holy ground.
But yours is on the mountain side beneath the hawthorn tree,
O sweet one, my fleet one, that's gone so far from me.

Alanna! Alanna! When that small mound was made
No mass was sung, no bell was rung, no priest above it prayed;
Unchristened childer's souls they say may ne'er see Heaven's light—
O lone one, my own one, where strays your soul to-night?

Alanna! Alanna! This life's a weary one,
And there's little time for thinkin' when the hours of work are done,
And the others have forgotten, but there's times I sit apart,
O fair one, my dear one, and hold you in my heart.

Alanna! Alanna ! If I were Mary mild
And heard outside the gates of Heaven a little cryin' child,
What though its brow the chrisom lacked, I'd lift the golden pin,
O bright one, my white one, and bid you enter in.

Alanna! Alanna! The mountain side is bare,
And the winds they do be blowing and the snows be lying there,
And unchristened childer's souls, they say, may ne'er see Heaven's light,
O lone one, my own one, where strays your soul to-night?

Norah M. Holland

To W. B. Yeats

A wind of dreams comes singing over sea,
From where the white waves kiss the coasts of home,
Bringing upon its rainbow wings to me
Glimpses of days gone by,
Of wastes of water, where the sea-gulls cry
Above the sounding foam.

Or through the mists do Finn and Usheen ride
With all their men along some faery shore,
While Bran and Sgeolan follow at their side,
Adown the shadowy track,
Till in the sunset Caoilte's hair blows back,
And Niamh calls once more.

Or the brown bees hum through the drowsy day
In glades of Inisfree, where sunlight gleams,

The bean-flower scents again the dear old way,
Once more the turf fire burns,
The memory of the long dead past returns
Borne on that wind of dreams.

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Two Crowns

The young King rode through the City street,
So gallant, gay and bold;
There were roses strewn 'neath his horse's feet,
His brows were bound with gold,
And his heart was glad for his people's cheers
Along his pathway rolled.

Glad was his heart and bright his face,
For life and youth were fair;
And he rode through many a pleasant place-
Broad street and sunny square-
Till he came to the market-place and saw
A crucifix stand there.

Hushed were the crowd's exultant cries,
To awe-struck silence grown;
For they saw the young King's laughing eyes
Grow grave beneath his crown,
As the crownéd King looked up, for lo!
A crownéd King looked down.

Grave were the eyes above, and sad,
The face with pain was lined,
And the piercéd hands no sceptre had;
Both brows a crown did bind.
But the earthly King was crowned with gold-
The Christ with thorns entwined.

Slowly the young King homeward rode
In awe and wondering;
He had looked that day on the face of God,
And learned that for a king
The lordliest crown his brows can bear
Is the crown of suffering.

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