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On the Prairie

By the author of

MY CHRISTMAS TREE

etc.



On the Prairie

By

Mabel Cecilia Taylor

Perhaps,

You have lived in the East,
You have lived in the West,
And the North and the South you must hail,
But the home you loved best
Was that little log nest,
At the end of a long prairie trail.

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MABEL CECILIA TAYLOR

Mrs. Taylor has sometimes used the pen name Mary Manning

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To my six children

Cecilia
George
Gwendolen
Mildred
Dorothy
Beatrice

On the Prairie

Some of these poems appeared in M. J. Writers' 1945 Year Book.

ON THE PRAIRIE

My cayuse is Rover, and he and I,
O'er the prairie wander, both far and nigh,
Where it dips and climbs to the setting suns,
Where it cuddles coulees and on it runs,
Till emerged in hills in the crimson west,
To encircle mountains of silver crest.

I delight in shade of a poplar bluff,
If the trail is long or the weather rough.
I disport on lakes where the wild ducks splash,
By the cattailed banks where the pheasants flash,
And the sage brush beds me on starry nights,
'Neath the rainbow tints of the northern lights.

When the snow-wraiths flee and the robin sings,
Comes the rarest gift that the spring time brings—
Fairy crocus blooms, quaint beyond compare,
With the mauve-gray gown and the golden hair,
And they stand so prim and sedately there
Like the Quaker folk at a solemn prayer.

I have built my shack on a hill, to perch
Near the tossing arms of a weeping birch.
It is gilded bright through the sunny days
And at night I dream as the moonlight plays
With the rippling waves on old Manitou,
While my banjo haunts me with songs of you.

FELLOWSHIP

It is only the grip of a hand you may have
As the precipice, steep, you would climb,
Yet you place all your confidence into each step,
Till you stand on the summit sublime.

It is only a nod and a smile you may see,
When your heart may be laden with woe,
Yet the knowledge that some one has friendship for you,
Quickly lightens your load as you go.

It is only a note of few words you may read,
When the clouds of catastrophe loom,
Yet it points, for a doubting and sorrowing one,
To the sunshine beyond the deep gloom.

So please give them the hand or the smile to them each,
Or the kind written word or the nod,
And thus help all your fellowmen, everyone,
When they pass 'neath the chastening rod.

THE ALIEN

She does not fret about the life
Upon this western plain;
She does not mind the sand and stones
Nor such a lack of rain.

She seems to be accustomed to
Extremes in temperatures—
The antics of the wild dust storms
Complacently endures.

The house is old and warped and drab,
From frost and drought and sun,
While early until late she toils
And never thinks of fun.

But he has travelled southern lands
And sailed on southern seas,
And all his life has been a book
Of tuneful melodies.

He picked the luscious nectarines
From sunny walls in Spain,
While sparkling wines of France entice,
Through memories, again.

Old Italy one time gave him
A palace passing fair,
And though fate sent his body here
His heart still lodges there.

Yes, he is but an alien here;
His heart beats over there.
Now who would chide him if his mind
Builds castles in the air?

A MAN TO A ROSE

You lovely thing that I hold close
In crimson velvet dress . . .
What memories your touch impels
I dare not here confess.

So fragrant, frail and very fair,
I'm mad to fondle you,
And sense June days and starry skies,
And gardens wet with dew.

Fade not from me my pretty one,
A suppliant I am,
And may each joy I dream to-day
Unto my heart be balm.

I would have now what I have lost,
(Wild youth is never sane)
And you a redolent, red rose
Recall past years again.

AIMS

They who have never known ambition's urge
But dally on the plain 'mid mundane things,
Have never thrilled to wide horizons fair
Nor sensed exulting joy that victory brings.

They know not beauty of the mountain tops,
The fearlessness within the eagle's nest,
Suspect not mirrored lakes in silver mists,
Nor blossoms rare that crown a summit's crest.

Self-satisfied, they crave not higher planes,
Though others aim to rise, through wind and rain,
Above the storm, and view with sun-lit eyes
The blue sky flushed with dawn they would attain.

Aims oft emerge from poverty and want,
From bitter loneliness and toil and strife,
From agony of pain . . . a stony road,
Until they mount us to the richer life.

OCTOBER

She came one night, that uninvited guest,
A dancing gypsy, wild, malevolent,
Seeking a place to conjure up mad tricks,
For merrymaking, or with vile intent.

Her fingers, with the Midas touch for gold,
Held torch to fire the hedges and the vines
In scarlet, iridescent flame, and brush,
For daubing trees in gaudiest designs.

My flowers cringed beneath her frosty stare
And ruffled sparrows scolded in their nests.
Pine trees alone retained their pristine green
But whispered a dislike of gypsy jests.

Now, curling from a sad, complaining sea,
Gray fog enfolds us in a funeral pall,
Commingled with the acrid smoke from leaves
On sacrificial altars of the fall.

GIRL IN HONOLULU

(Hoolaulea—festival)

This morning I walked down the street
To post a note to Marguerite.
What should my happy thoughts disturb—
A car drawn up beside the curb.

It was a big, blue, shiny one,
That can so swift and smoothly run.
With much alarm I glanced inside . . .
Could someone want me for a ride?

But there, alone, behind the wheel
A picture was,—did not seem real—
An Indian, a handsome red,
With eagle feathers on his head.

"Please, where around can Dole street be?"
He smiling asked and bowed to me.
Aghast, I managed: "I can't say,
I too, am stranger down this way."

A California license new
I noted on his car of blue.
Hoolaulea guest was he
That Indian from o'er the sea.

The car sped on, soon lost to view . . .
A secret I confess to you:
I wish, again, that I could see
That handsome Chief who smiled at me.

THE WINNER

A dandelion stood by the wild prairie sage
And winked a bright eye his old heart to engage—
Inquired: "Would you like, sir, to run a wee race,
Just down to, and back from, the old Market Place?"
The sage plant be-shook the gray dust from his hair,
For he had been lazily napping right there—
Replied he would much like to race for a mile,
If she would consent to but rest for a while.
So in a few days I commanded them "Go!"
But prairie winds, brisk, had then started to blow,
And ere the old sage could have lifted his feet,
The dandelion's white cap was far down the street.

PHANTOMS

Keen griefs within each mind are pent
That bring regret, a tear, a sigh,
And though to bury them we try,
They rise as wraiths, on mischief bent.

Of many things that Fate has sent
Weird skeletons in closets lie;
Keen griefs within each mind are pent
That bring regret, a tear, a sigh.

A rose, a song, a face, a scent,
Recall locked doors we would deny,
Where phantoms leer with muted cry.
To challenge joys that Heaven lent
Keen griefs within each mind are pent,
That bring regret, a tear, a sigh.

DROUGHT ON THE PRAIRIE

I took the winding trail here
Among these well-known hills,
And all their eerie solitude
My heart with sorrow fills.

The sun has but a wan smile;
The wind now mourns the dead,
While all I see is rock and sand,
And dried-out river bed.

For we have had these drought years
When nothing grew at all.
In vain we searched the sky for clouds
From which some rain might fall.

Yet once the fairy springtime
Held crocuses so blue,
And prairie roses bloomed in mass
In such a gorgeous hue.

Then with the early autumn,
It seemed a fairy hand
With scarlet, bronze and yellow brush
Had painted all the land.

The placid cattle grazed here
Where sweetest forage grew,
And water drank, so cool and clear,
Within each little slough.

From every shrub and tree then
The birds would joyous sing,
And there was flash of mallards wild
And whirr of chicken wing.

But in the wake of drought years
A desert bare have we.
With longing hearts our only song
A sad lament must be.

I hope that soon old Winter
Unfolds his cloak of snow,
Then I'll not miss so much, perhaps,
The joys I used to know.

IN MEMORIAM

To a Nurse-in-Training
Buried Good Friday
Aged 19

Pretty little Winnie Shea,
They have taken you away,
And laid you in God's acre far from us,
Just when winter storms were o'er,
And as April smiled once more,
And nesting birds piped songs melodious.

At the break of a new day,
Your fair spirit slipped away
To join the hosts who wait in yonder land.
Life for you had just begun
With its chosen work undone;
Your going seems so hard to understand.

With those busy hands at rest
Folded softly on your breast,
(May angels stand on guard forever near,
Laid in uniform of blue,
With your scarlet cape round you,
We have of you a memory ever dear.

THE OLD HOME IN ONTARIO

I walked, to-day, through tall, green woods
Where ferns and bluebells lined my way,
Then skirted fields of ripened grain
And scented ricks of new-mown hay.

Beyond, I traced a narrow path
Along a rocky, winding shore,
Where oxeye daisies grow in mass
The same as when they bloomed of yore.

Raspberries still hang ripe and red
Beside the twisted fence of rails,
And by a little purling brook
Some placid cows stood switching tails.

But how the house has changed with time!
The rooms all empty, silent are,
While broken panes and hingeless doors
To bats and birds have been no bar.

Yet winds that whispered through the trees,
And crooning waves on sands below,
Brought back to me, down through the years,
My mother's voice of long ago.

SPRING

I think a heart is like a garden fair
That pulsates in the golden, summer air,
Afire in ecstasy with azure skies,
With roses' scent and birds' sweet lullabies.
As frozen winter, firm, enchains the land,
So tears and doubt make hearts their contraband.
When spring returns—that smiling zealot bold—
All beauty is re-born a hundred fold.
Likewise, grief-frosted hearts vibrate again,
As love and sympathy surcease all pain.

TO A PRAIRIE DUST STORM

Blow you wind, you demon roar,
Slam each window, bang each door,
Bend my shade trees to the ground,
Hurl your dirty dust around.

I had all my house so clean.
Why, oh, why, are you so mean?
Now my neighbors' ash piles tall
On my furniture will fall.

You are just some evil witch
Out to ill-treat poor and rich.
When I once more have things bright
You will shriek in mad delight.

You will rave and tear the air—
Seek to put me to despair.
If it only would but rain
You would do your pranks in vain.

MODERN SOCIETY

We always seem to disagree
Whenever you can come to tea.
 You tilt your nose at my plain fare,
 Dislike the sort of dress I wear,
 And criticize my style of hair,
When you can come to tea.

We always seem to disagree
Whenever I can go to tea.
 I do not like your painted nails,
 Your cigarette my nose assails,
And shocked I am with wicked tales,
When I can go to tea.

We must agree to disagree.
I'll not ask you, nor you ask me,
 Thus each will go her own sweet way,
 Live placidly from day to day,
 But miss the fun when sisters play,
Modern society.

THE OLD MINISTER

I've picked scented blooms in friends' gardens so fair,
Then pressed them and stored them in boxes with care.
From books I have captured bright thoughts I would find,
And locked them secure in the cells of my mind.
Then God's goodly world, I had fortune to see,
Makes loveliest pictures in sweet memory.
So, if it comes true, what the learned men surmise,
And soon I must lose the prized sight from these eyes,
I yet shall have with me the red roses' thrill,
For hundreds of sermons, the texts, if I will.
I also can roam all the rooms of my mind
Where beautiful pictures the walls now have lined.
So what if I'm blind, dear, to each outward thing,
I'll still have the joys that my memories bring—
My memories gay, and with your hand in mine,
Down through the dark years I shall never repine.

TROPICAL EVE

As vesper bells chime in quaint Amasing
The sun is a ruby set in the ring
When gold sea and sky, in colorful guile,
Embrace all around this magical isle,
Where gay little fish wear gaudiest scales
And sharks are out gadding for mermaids' tails.

Old Peter swings low his man-in-the-moon,
Arranges the stars to whimsical croon
Of ocean caressing her white coral strands,
Where lovers go sauntering silvery sands
To wish on a lunar bow's crystal arch,
While palm trees are humming a wedding march.

A pharos will wink a big crimson eye
At larrikin sea gulls wheeling too nigh,
While amorous wind enticingly hints
Of thousands of blooms, in thousands of tints,
As lei-bedecked songsters serenade Night
And hulu girls dance their mystical rite.

A PRAIRIE WOMAN'S LAMENT

O Sea, O Sea, you ruthless Sea,
You arch-fiend ever mean with me!
Why cannot you be gentle, true,
And love me as I fain would you?

In garb of blue, or green, or brown,
You are a giant circus clown,
Who tosses me about with scorn
To make me wish I ne'er was born.

Afar, you have a winsome grace,
A pleasant, dimpled, smiling face,
But always in your arms, when laid,
I am so helpless, ill, afraid.

Hawaii, land of fruit and flowers,
Of laugh and song and moon-lit bowers!
When I must leave, I'll fool that Sea,
And have an airplane carry me.

CONTRAST

Respect the haunting gray Novembers,
The gray of sea, of wind-wracked cloud and sky,
Of gray birds touring o'er with raucous cry
And gray streams winding through the brooding firs.
But lyrists sing of crystal winters—
On vernal green and blossom time rely,
Or autumn's purple, red and gold they vie
With rosy June and gay-winged choristers.

As bright hues for the drab ones make amends
And cool winds mock at heat as summer's toy,
So nature teaches man through each extreme.
Thus traitors show the worth of loyal friends
And grief and pain make ecstasy of joy . . .
Contrast alone defines what is supreme.

THE ARTIST

He maimed her body, soul and mind—
Held her apart like something vile,
Yet she had what he could not break,
Just held in shackles for a while.

This talent she tried to submerge
But breezes fan dull coals to red,
And flowers though crushed, waft wide their scent,
As wine is bright though grapes be dead.

A resurrection she will be,
For tombs of hate can yield their bars,
And flesh, we know, is strongest oft
Where wounds have healed and left their scars.

He yet will see her write her name
In Life's gold annals of success,
For heritage God gives at birth
Is sanctuary in distress.

She drops his bonds of servitude,
Though gray of hair and lined by pain . . .
Frosts often mar our gardens fair,
But they re-bud in sun again.

GOLDEN DAYS

Golden! Golden!
The world is all golden.
Great Sol is a Midas upon a gold seat.
Gold nod the autumn flowers,
Bees in the trellised bowers,
And fountains are splashing their gold at my feet.

Golden! Golden!
The world is all golden—
Each hillside and valley, each river and lea.
Gold paints the aspen leaves,
Glints from the barley sheaves,
While sunbeams pulsate in gold over me.

Golden! Golden!
The world is all golden.
My beautiful pheasants their gold feathers preen.
Gold has the harvest spilled,
With gold the garners filled,
And pumpkins lie golden for gay Hallowe'en.

HOPE

A ship sails forth on a stormy sea
In spite of a red sunrise,
And pigeons carry a message far
Not heeding the clouded skies.

A farmer's land must be sown with seed
Whatever he gleaned before.
A cluster of little green trees sprout
From out of an apple core.

Two robins fashion a nest of twigs
In crotch of a cherry tree,
And bulbs entombed in the cold, black earth
Will answer my prayers for me.

A convict toils at his given task,
So stolid and old and grim,
Yet plans a life, in the future years,
If pardon be granted him.

SNOWDROPS

Tiny, tri-petalled, white, waxen flower,
Studding the grass in wee garden bower,
Is a rare pearl that is dropped from the string
Decking the bosom of dancing Miss Spring.

Dancing with daffodils trimming her gown,
Crocuses, yellow, to make a gold crown,
Cheeks that have borrowed the tulips' red dye,
Violets' blue in her beckoning eye.

Warm zephyrs carry, far over the hills,
Lilting sweet song and his soul is a-thrill,
Picking the snowdrops . . . kissing each pearl,
Making a nosegay to give to a girl.

WHAT I WOULD DO

She died down east the other day,
This childless, loveless dame,
And left two million dollars clear . . .
Perhaps you know her name.

Now all this tidy fortune went
To church and library,
While there were those who much extolled
Her generosity.

This was, I know, a splendid deed
And quite her largess worth,
But I'd have made my neighbors glad
While I was yet on earth.

What of the crippled children near
That science could make whole,
What of the poor and toil-spent souls
Upon their meagre dole?

So many, many boys and girls
Her wealth could educate.
She missed the joy she might have had
To see them graduate.

I would have bought a trousseau for
That pretty bride next door,
And many dozen layettes sent
The infants of the poor.

Now Mrs. Cary's cottage leaks
And Granny needs a coat,
And Cap's brig foundered in a gale
So he must have a boat.

New hats and pretty dresses I
Would shower along my way,
And oh, a thousand toy-filled trees
Would shine next Christmas day.

MARCH

The foothills yet are crowned with snow's white sheen
And prairie streams and sloughs their ice still keep.
Too long they lie in Winter's arms asleep,
While stubbled fields maintain their sullen mien,
And shaded corners yet are deep with rime
Where violets lie blue in summer time.

This evening when the sun sank red and vast
As a chinook came softly sighing here,
A robin carolled from an aerial near
And through the hedge a gopher scurried fast . . .
When I espy a crocus peeping shy,
I'll know that rainbowed Spring is riding nigh.

WHAT SUMMER HOLIDAYS MEAN

Fooling with a fish-line,
Rocking a canoe,
Sprawling in the hot sand
With a friend or two,

Swimming night and morning,
Any time between,
Waiting on the chow bell
With a savage mien,

When the lake is stormy,
Taking chilly walks,
Or beside a fire, p'r'aps,
Having spiteful talks,

Dancing every night, sure,
Doing all the sights,
Salving backs of blisters,
Scratching 'squito bites.

When it's over we ride
Homeward in the rain,
There to earn the coin to
Do it all again.

CHE SARA SARA

(Allegory)

She was beloved, joyous, from all care free,
As paths so straight, so smooth, before her lay,
While golden sun endowed her with each ray
That fretting wind and cloud she might not see.
A husband walked with her protectingly
Where luscious fruit and fragrant rose held sway,
With carolling of gay-plumed birds each day,
And purple grapes spilled nectar temptingly.

Then came the reckless one, with evil mien,
Who blocked her course and set disaster's doom
Of grief and want and toil on her to lean,
And she bereft, distraught, faced winter's gloom.
Why, in life's summer, would Fate intervene
To scourge a woman to an early tomb?

CRYSTAL GARDENS, VICTORIA

If I were not a fool
Afraid of water,
I'd hie me to the pool
With my brave daughter.

She swims beneath that dome
Opalescent bright,
Where roses, palms and ferns
Nod to left and right.

She is a lily fair
In translucent jade—
Red-haired Aphrodite
Wholly undismayed.

But I can never there
Deign to wet my toes,
Not to speak of diving
In with mouth and nose.

Yet if Nan were alarmed—
For aid were to shout,
Not e'en a hundred sharks
Could then keep me out.

SPRING IN ALBERTA

The white peaks of the Rockies gleam
Like castle turrets fair;
The world is now a magic land
With fairies dancing there.

The foothills cast their robe of snow;
The prairie's misty green;
In frilly frocks the crocus blooms
Like laughing elves are seen.

By sloughs no longer bound with ice
The pussywillow stands,
While sedges red and yellow screen
The frogs' triumphant bands.

Now in our little garden here
The lilacs have re-birth,
And tulips shoot their tall, green blades
Up through the moist, warm earth.

So April gay comes dancing in
On breeze and silver rain,
While beast and bird broadcast the word
That spring is here again.

A CALL TO THE COLORS

Perhaps,

You have boated on the wide St. Lawrence and studied old Quebec,

You have sailed a stormy ocean on a wildly heaving deck,

You have travelled western prairies and have heard the coyote's
call,

You have sensed the eerie lights within a virgin forest tall,

You have gathered shells at Key West and have basked on golden
sands,

You have tasted wine in Portugal, the fruits of tropic lands,

You have trolled Canadian salmon, speared the squid at Tahiti,

You have kissed a hulu dancer, swam the surf at Waikiki,

You have seen the Sphinx, the Taj Mahal, an Indian prince's jewels,

You have laughed at jealous lovers fighting sword and pistol duels,

You have climbed the Rocky Mountains, skied with skill upon the
Alps,

You have foiled a tribal chieftain with his girdle hung with scalps,

But,

Have you ever steered a bombing plane, or worn a uniform,

Have you ever shouldered gun and marched to face a battle's storm,

Have you ever prayed and sung with zest "God Save Our Gracious
King"?

Well,

Let me tell you this is just the time to do this very thing.

IN DECEMBER

(Rondeau)

Victoria can roses show,
Chrysanthemums in stately row,
 Where cedars reach to wondrous heights
 And holly trees have crimson lights,
While in and out the blue tides flow.

But how can Santa ever go,
With sleighbell chimes his reindeer know,
 To places which King Winter slights,
Victoria?

He has his fun when blizzards blow,
In frozen streams, in hail and snow,
 In crystal skies on frosty nights
 And rainbow tints of Northern Lights,
With magic iridescent glow,
Victoria.

I. A. C. P.

Oh, tell me if to Germany
Spring comes as she does here,
With golden sun and silver rain
And carols sweet and clear.

Have they green fields and crocuses,
Snowdrops and daffodils,
And cheery robins building nests
Beside wee chiming rills?

On battle field in alien land
A gallant lad was laid;
I pray his grave is on the route
Of Spring's bright cavalcade.

Good night, dear one, beyond the sea,
God guard you where you lie,
While you are there, and we are here—
Your little son and I.

DOWN THROUGH THE YEARS

(Rondeau)

Down through the years we peal our bells
For yuletide, bridals and death knells,
Of iron, silver, bronze or brass,
And Chinese bells of tinkling glass,
From chapels, jails, to hermits' cells.

The savage clanks his concha shells
And rattles skulls through haunted dells,
While rhythmic incantations pass
Down through the years.

To-day the bell of freedom swells
And fear from countless hearts dispels.
Grant that each race and creed and class
Pledge love that will all hate surpass,
So peace on earth in future dwells,
Down through the years.

CARLYLE LAKE, SASKATCHEWAN

This placid lake, now day is done,
Mirrors each tint of setting sun,
As sky is spread with gold and rose,
And wind is hushed in tranquil doze.

Far in the west, a forest tall
Casts one black shadow like a wall,
And from this eerie place a loon
Is idly calling to the moon.

Just out amidst the crimson sheen
A fisherman in boat is seen;
With hand on reel he silent lies
Where fish are snapping water flies.

Now suddenly he jerks an arm,
While water stirs in wild alarm,
And as it spreads in rings afloat
A struggling fish lies in the boat.

Within the purple eastern sky
A golden moon will soon ride high,
While on the rocky shore along,
Frogs chant their throaty vesper song.

MUSIC

I know no music. I have never learned
The classics, played on deep-toned organ keys,
Nor strummed the harp's amazing wires with ease.
In youth, the sense of rhythm in me yearned,
But through those years my guardians were concerned
With their endeavours in another field,
So forced potential talent then to yield,
And keyboards for a palette were adjourned.

But how I love the humming of the bees,
The crooning wind in chimneys, crunching snow,
Wee purling brooks, the sea's dirge deep and slow,
The rhapsodies of birds and rustling trees!
I know no music, but it's ecstasy
When Nature plays on silver lyres for me.

GEORGE

To-day wee Georgie overturned
My work basket—was much concerned
To see its contents rolling o'er
The rug upon the sun porch floor.

"Grannie, what is this yellow string
With numbers all along the thing?
Why have you got so much of thread?
I think the bestest is the red."

"What makes the pins and needles hurt?
Why can't I stick them in my shirt?
May I have all the fimbles, then,
To be hats for my soldier men?"

"I got a knife to cut my toys.
Just scissors are no good for boys.
Did I pick buttons up enough?
Why don't you sew them on your stuff?"

So on and on the questions ran
For poor old busy, worried Gran.
But little boys in this odd way
Made politicians for to-day.

ARIADNE'S CROWN

What fools may trample in the mire,
Some wiser men the most desire.

Deserted by an Athens king,
Of Ariadne we oft sing—
A princess from the isle of Crete
And fairest woman one could meet.

When Bacchus chanced to voyage there
He loved her for her beauty rare—
Made her at once his treasured wife,
The dearest prize to win in life.

Then when on earth her time was spent
Onto the gods he had her sent;
Her wedding crown he hung up high,
As constellation in the sky.

What fools may trample in the mire,
Some wiser men the most desire.

JANET

Little Miss Jan
Sits with a fan
A-fanning all the day.
Think you her thoughts you understand,
Way down upon this silver sand,
By turquoise sea and coral strand,
And why she does not play?
She deems it foolish that we roam
A-wishing is she were at home.

I seem to know
She thinks white snow
A-snowing is the best,
With sleds upon the hills to ride,
Her skates and skis on which to slide,
And wearing pretty furs, beside,
From mother's cedar chest.
Down here you cannot jump and run,
A-swimming is not any fun.

This maiden rare
Thinks it not fair
A-trading winter's white,
For what you find in tropic clime,
The flowers, ocean, fruit sublime,
If hot it must be all the time,
Through morning, noon and night.
So little Janet we shall go,
A-sailing back to ice and snow.

RENUNCIATION

You can but grant him liberty
If erstwhile lover he must be.
No words of yours now thrill his heart
And kisses now no charm impart
While passion quite has lost its art.
Yet bitter tears no one must see
To question your Gethsemane.

So as he fares in foreign lands
Accepting love from other hands,
Ambition's hopes are cold and spent
And life for you is solemn Lent,
With self denials Fate has sent.
Some will forget their marriage bands
As long as Time runs out his sands.

You may but thank him for the past
And faithful be while life shall last.
Perhaps the fault was yours, alone,
You could not hold him for your own—
Had not the seeds of true love sown
Yet if he should be ill, downcast,
Some day your arms may hold him fast.

MINNESOTA

On either side the road are trees
With high tops swaying in the breeze,
And here and there, all tucked between,
Such gaily-painted homes are seen.

Great fields of grain line all the way,
And acres wide with ricks of hay,
While brooklets purl away in fun
By willows bowing to the sun.

With kindly folk at every door
Wee hamlets most I do adore,
All nestled round a church, with spire,
That has its sweet-voiced country choir.

The cities, too, give me delight,
All hustle, bustle, clean and bright,
With people eager serving you
And giving you a welcome true.

You bright gem of the U.S.A.
I'm glad I found your paved highway.
Sometime, perchance, I'll come again,
Maybe, become a citizen.

JOAN'S DREAM HOUSE

I like a fine, white damask cloth,
With silver to reflect the splendour
Of open fires, Dresden tea cups,
And crystal goblets frail and slender.

I like sun smiling through stained glass
Of purple, topaz, green and azure,
Designing patterns on white tiles
To rival some Mosaic treasure.

I like rich drapes of crimson silk
And soft rugs green as forest bowers,
Wide, cushioned chairs of cretonne fine,
Arrayed with gayest birds and flowers.

I like sweet peas in all their hues
And morning glories on a trellis,
Scarlet of maples, lily ponds,
And spicy scent of amaryllis.

But my home is a wee, chill room,
Atop a long stair gloom enshrouded,
Yet in the night dreams build a house
That holds my love and joy unclouded.

THE WOMEN AT HOME

We give, O Lord, the war god's fee—
The husband, son, of hope the key,
The work of hands, our gold, and fain
Our lives would yield, if Peace might reign
Henceforth onto eternity.

This sacrifice he does decree,
On altar of vile treachery,
For those the sons of Cain enchain,
We give O Lord.

The storm was stilled on Galilee.
Stem now the vultures' tyranny.
Our prayers that men may yet be sane,
That we bear not our cross in vain
But faith retain, nor fearful be,
We give O Lord.

FROM MY CAR WINDOW

The house is battered and old and gray,
With chimney top that has gone astray;
It veers sideways like a tipsy man,
And stranger is to its former plan.

Yet just in front is a window wide,
With broken panes, but it has inside,
Geraniums, pink, in the neatest row,
And curtains washed like the fairest snow.

I know some woman must live within
Who wrestles poverty, hard, to win,
And what she is, is so clearly seen,
In love of flowers and her curtains clean.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE

He now has gone who came as knights of old
In shining armor, belted, wise and brave;
He came, the hearts of strangers to enslave,
To this far realm, with pride and courage bold.
Renowned he was within his Scottish fold,
Revered as man, beloved as friend, who gave
Unto his kin, and those beyond the wave,
So freely of his counsel and his gold.

Alas, our Governor we could not make whole
Of wounds received in service of his King,
And like a knight we place him on his shield.
Priests chant their prayers and church bells lowly toll
While choirs a dirge in sad lamenting sing,
But to our bard Heaven's joys are now revealed.

MISINFORMED

One day a little boy I know
To his dear mother said:
"What color are your chickens, Ma,
All black or white or red?"

The lady very much surprised
Gave him a look so keen—
"My child, I have no chickens, pray,
Just tell me what you mean."

He stared at her in wonder now—
"I thought you joined a thing,
And it was called the poultry club,
What do the members bring?"

"Poetry, not poultry, is our name;
We have no chickens, son;
We learn the works of clever men
Like Roberts, Scott and Dunn."

She laughed and thought this quite a joke,
A tale she must relate,
And in this rhyme she told her club
On their next meeting date.

AFTER AN ACCIDENT

No more I hear the sound of children's chatter,
Their mirth like chimes from many a silver bell;
No more I hear my husband's merry whistle,
Or hear him whisper low, "I love you, Nell."

Now when I feed my birds on dewy mornings,
I shall not get their dulcet notes of thanks,
Or know the dogs are speeding forth to greet me,
Until they leap at me in joyful pranks.

Oh, tell me not the righteous God of Heaven
Decrees that I should be both deaf and blind . . .
Take not from me, as well, the scent of roses,
The feel of baby hands with mine entwined.

WINTER

(Rondel)

That tyrant raided our farm again,
White-haired and gaunt and of sullen face.
I watched him stalk through my garden place,
His rime coat tossing in cold disdain.

This harsh old fellow is e'er our bane,
Venting his spite on each field apace.
That tyrant raided our farm again,
White-haired and gaunt and of sullen face.

The flowers plead for their lives, in vain,
To frosty stare of the one so base
Who deals out seldom a day of grace
But binds them firm in a silver chain.
That tyrant raided our farm again,
White-haired and gaunt and of sullen face.

NOW YOU ARE GONE

The sun has lost its warmth,
Now you are gone.
Earth lacks the fragrance that is due,
The skies their pristine smiling blue,
While flowers have but a tiresome hue
Now you are gone.

Dark pines intone a dirge,
Now you are gone.
I do not fret these days at rain,
Nor frosty fingers on the pane
Painting caricatures insane,
Now you are gone.

I climb at still of night,
Now you are gone,
To silver mountain tops afar,
With Luna and one guiding star,
And sense that death can be no bar
Though you are gone.

MARGARET

A yellow bowl
With crimson flower,
May bring a soul
A sudden shower
Of memories:
The yesterday
Of youth and ease
And pleasures gay,
A home once dear,
The friends so true,
Kind parents near
Who cherished you.

That life I met
Again I see,
And vain regret
Comes haunting me
Midst weariness,
And toil, and care,
In loneliness
And sad despair.
Your roses sing
Of joy to me,
But also bring
Gethsemane.

HILLS

I love hills, great skyward reaching hills,
With crystal-clear waterfalls and rills,
And playful winds sighing pine trees mock,
Blossoms cuddling crannies of the rock—
Hills where birds with rarest songs abide,
Squirrels, rabbits, coyly run and hide.

I love hills by sunny breezes fanned,
Or all storm-drenched, opal rainbow spanned,
When painted red, russet, gold or green,
Dark and eerie in a dense ravine—
Hills all swathed in scarves of mist at eve,
While moonbeams, pale, fairy magic weave.

I love hills, high watch-towers for the race,
Which I may climb to view the world apace—
Hills from where to note a new day's birth,
Or red suns slip 'neath the rim of earth,
See His lode star, lit in Heaven's dome,
Guiding pilgrims safely to their home.

LIMERICKS

I have a nice kitty named Kate,
Who vexes my parents of late,
They do not much care
They made me aware,
For cats' serenades at the gate.

Now my mother had knitted a mat,
Of a little of this and of that,
But it slid on the floor
So my dear Daddy swore,
When he skidded and sat on the cat.

I have a new dress of bright red,
Which matches the hair on my head,
But I can't stand the gaff
Of the boys when they laugh,
So buy me a green one instead.

TRIOLETS

TO BEATRICE

May God protect you, girlie,
Where'er you go.
So dimpled, smiling, curly,
May God protect you, girlie,
And from His Heaven, early,
Wise gifts bestow.
May God protect you, girlie,
Where'er you go.

THE NIGHTMARE

My heart is filled with awe and dread
Of airships sailing through the sky—
Some nights when I retire to bed
My heart is filled with awe and dread
Of roaring demons overhead,
While I in anguish, sweating lie—
My heart is filled with awe and dread
Of airships sailing through the sky.

WHEN MOTHER HURRIES

When mother hurries up the stair
Dark corners soon become so light,
And disappear those eyes that glare
When mother hurries up the stair.
For dragons hide in shadows there
And try to frighten me each night.
When mother hurries up the stair
Dark corners soon become so light.

Transcriber's Note

- Obvious spelling errors repaired.

[The end of *On the Prairie* by Mabel Cecilia Taylor]