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WILD GARDEN

By

BLISS CARMAN

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TO

ERNEST FEWSTER

MASTER OF ANCIENT WISDOM

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WILD GARDEN

JUNE CALL

When June is come and the cool deep woods
Ring with the thrush and the oven-bird,
A madness springs in the heart of earth
Hearing the music creation heard.

So clear the magical wild notes fall,
Who could bide with a book indoor,
And not away through the wide sweet world,
On the sway of that old Pandean lore!

I know in my heart 'tis time to go
On the Twilight Trail with its tawny kills,
Where thrushes call to the frail new moon
In far blue passes among the hills.

THE PINE

TO W. F. G.

Tall as a mast in morning light
Stands our old pine against the sky,
A sentinel upon the height
To watch the wheeling days go by.

His dark boughs etched against the blue
Are like a print of old Japan,—
Some war-god marking the review
Of the mysterious march of man.

Eastward above the sleeping land
He sees the growing dawn unfold,
Until the Holyoke ranges stand
Purpled against the silent gold.

He sees the city far below
Wake to its toil with smoke and steam,
And miles of meadow in the glow
Of Indian summer, touched with dream.

He sees the silver moon appear
Above the river's curving line,
And when the chill of dusk draws near,
The homing lights flash out and shine.

Unwearying through snow and rain
He signals courage from the steep,
And when night settles on the plain
He has his starry watch to keep.

Then when the winter storms arise,
And the gay leaves are fled in fear,—
In a great grieving voice he cries
His reassurance, "I am here!"

NATURE LORE

Would you learn of Nature
And all her wisdom prove,
Understand her secrets,
Comprehend her love?
Would you know the service
Of rhythm and refrain?
Walk with the diurnal sun
And the tramping rain.

To reach her sanctuary
Where inspiration dwells,
Her morning revelations,
Her twilight oracles,
Your eyes must wear her sea-hues,
Your cheek her seasons' tan,
Your bearing the calm leisure
Of her starry caravan.

Learn the swing of snowshoes,
Time as time you must—
The ax-stroke in the wood-lot,
The hoof-beat in the dust,
Dip and swing of paddle,
Thrust of setting-pole.
These will give you poise and flight,
These will make you whole.

The waving grass shall show you
The highway to her door.
Every singing river
Chants her enticing lore.
Her twelve great winds come seeking
To teach you line by line
The harmonies of sense and soul
In music of the pine.

They share great Nature's rapture
Who tread her wilding trails,
Her desert stars will guide them

When every false flare fails.
Her wondrous heart is never
From wondering hearts estranged,
And you shall find at journey's end
Her smiling grace unchanged.

THE LORD OF RHYTHM

As the wind's breath in the evening stirs among the summer trees,
Moves the soul of all things sentient to creative mysteries.

As the voice of falling water fills the deep of noon with sound,
In the waiting heart a whisper wakes to trouble the profound.

When the great pines lift the plain-song of their deep-toned symphonies,
And the fluttering aspens follow with their treble on the breeze;

When the sea-tides set their chorus surging on the granite shore,
And the rain's torrential silver makes street music at the door;

Who but feels the mighty Maestro trying every reed and string,
As we vibrate to his rhythms, swept by their eternal swing!

When the colors change before us in the paling afterglow,
When the shifting northern streamers march across the midnight snow,

When the green and mauve of April flush the re-awakening world,
When the gold and scarlet trappings of October are unfurled,

When the new moon in the hemlock hangs, for an immortal sign
Light shall cease not in her season from revealing the divine,

We behold how the supernal Glory-maker still outpours
Stains of Paradisal splendor on the pageant at our doors.

Soul, hast thou not marks of kinship,—gladness, dignity, and grace,—
Signets from the Lord of Rhythm which attest the heavenly trace!

Light of eye and lift of spirit, magic of the living word,
These are man's unfailing witness of his heritage—of his Lord.

MOMENT MUSICALE

The round moon hangs above the rim
Of silent and soft-shadowed trees,
And all the earth is fey and dim
In a blue veil of mysteries.

On such a night one must believe
The Golden Age returns again
With lyric beauty, to retrieve
The joyance we have lost in vain.

And down the wooded aisles, behold,
What dancers through the dusk appear!
Piping their ardor as of old,
They bring immortal rapture near.

A moment on the brink of night
They tread their transport in the dew,
And to the rhythm of their delight
Old sorceries are made anew.

NYMPH AND FAUN

Have you not seen a nymph in June
Go dancing through the misty woods,
Her mad young beauty hid beneath
A tattered gown of opening buds?

She flitted through the alder swamp,
And loitered by the willow stream,
Then started down the wood-road dim,
With bare young throat and eyes a-dream.

Her playmate is a shy young faun
Who follows her through dappled shade,
Craving a blossom from her hand,
His wandering by wonder stayed.

The soft winds fan their hearts to flame,
Like violets that nod and swoon,
They spread the fragrance of the Spring
Across the ardor of the noon.

The singing of the twilight brook
Is music for their pastorage,
Echoing through the aisles of dusk,
Where mysteries of Eden fall.

They catch the sorcery of light
That trembles from the evening star;
And fearlessly they tread a world
Where beauty and enchantment are.

When the great round and yellow moon
Comes flooding all the marshes wide,
She will have crossed the scented dune
To dance upon the silver tide.

And when I hear along the coast
The wind that pipes through larch and fir,
She beckons me to join her host,
And I must go and dance with her!

LITTLE SMOKING FLAX

TO L. E.

Dance, Little Smoking Flax!
Dance and proclaim
All thy still loveliness
Lyric as flame.

Unmute thy life-music,
Set free thy young joys
In magical phrases
Of rhythm and poise.

The passion of life
And the pageant of art
Must time to the drum-beat
That sounds in thy heart,—

With eloquent telling
Of gesture and bearing,
Each impulse revealing,
Each story declaring.

Of shimmering beryl
Thy garments shall be,
To dance with the tumult
And shine of the sea.

Under tints of the dawn,
In azure and jade,
The floor of the world
For thy dancing was laid.

Release thy enchantments,
Thine ardor unveil,
With the rapture that ran
Through the feet of Izevl.

Bare-foot and tender,
Each step like a note
Of jubilant song
From a bobolink's throat!

Light as an Oread
Treading the dew

In glamorous twilight
When summer is new,

Dance to the silver moon
Slim in the west,
Glad with the answering
Thrill in thy breast.

Dance with the running brook,
Run with the rain,
The wind o'er the wheat field,
The snow o'er the plain.

Dance with the sunlight
That falls through the trees
In quick golden patterns
That shift with the breeze.

Swirl with the trailing mist
Through the blue canyon,
Pan's pipe thy music
And mirth thy companion.

Flit with the fireflies
Weaving their spell,—
Fairy lights moving
To signal all's well.

Swing with the planets
Their sarabands slow,
In mounting *Te Deums*
The Seraphim know.

Through thrice-happy measures
No hesitance mars,
Ungirdle thy beauty
And dance to the stars.

Spring, Little Smoking Flax,
With thy heart's flame,
Vibrant with Spirit
That earth cannot tame!

Thou shalt be called
Beloved of Shamballah,
And dance like the joy
In the Garden of Allah.

DEVOTEE

TO M. G.

A lovesome thing is Madeleine,
With night-dark eyes and hair,
Traces of a Celtic strain
And a woodland flair
Caught in a half-whimsical,
Nun-like, faun-like air.

Glowing as Indian summer,—
When all the Earth is still,
With gold and scarlet through the veil
Of blue haze on the hill,
As if some enigmatic trance
Were laid on her door-sill.

A Gipsy creature, city-bound,
She curbs her wilding mien
In each sophisticated role,
And lends to every scene
A beauty that would more befit
Tatters and tambourine.

Intriguing, exquisite and gay,
Playing her gracious part
With a distinguished ecstasy,
A Temple-Girl of Art,—
Only a fleeing glance betrays
The wood-nymph in her heart.

MAVERICKS

TO F. AND J. C.

There's a highroad in the Catskills, a pleasant road that winds
Among the dreaming mountains by any pass it finds.

By Stony Clove and Beaverkill and Ashokan it runs
Through goldenrod and aster in the idling August suns.

There's a byroad in the Catskills, a road that turns aside,
A winding road, a wood-road, that is neither long nor wide.

Through shade of spruce and hemlock its grassy way it wends,
And happy are the farers who follow till it ends.

What's back here in the mountains, what's up here in the woods,
That anyone should seek in these outlying solitudes?

Look there—at the road's turn, groups in gay attire!
See that gaudy kerchief like a fleck of fire!

Costumes like October, when all the hills are clad

In russet gold and scarlet announcing they are glad.

Hark, is that a flute note? Surely! Classic Shades,
Can Pan be in the Catskills piping for men and maids?

A caravan of gipsies camped among the trees?
Players in a pageant? What happy folk are these?

Out of their great slab building, as open as a barn,
Where all the airs of heaven may enter and return,

There comes that silver music down the wind again!
No Pan-pipe ever uttered a more beguiling strain.

No wood-thrush in the twilight, pouring his rapture fine
Out of the heart of nature, is nearer the divine.

The wonder of the forests is rapt and brooding there,
With people standing reverently, as if in happy prayer,

Transported by the magic of haunting harmonies
Born in their rustic temple to wander down the breeze.

Their eyes are full of joyance, their mien is poised and free,—
Artists, by the grace of God! And who else could they be?

Music-makers, poets, masters of paint and clay,
They "make the pomp of emperors ridiculous" today.

Devotees of vision for high adventure freed,
With beauty for their gospel, and gladness for their creed,

Children of enchantment well content with truth,
Hearts that never bid good-bye to immortal youth.

Initiates in Wisdom who dream and understand,—
God Almighty's mavericks who range without a brand.

A DREAM GARDEN

TO S. H.

Our friend had a vision, aloof in a haven of hills
Where the sun and the wind carry balm for the healing of ills.

Far fleeing the tumult of cities, the fever of fame,
To commune with the earth and the sky an exile he came.

By the stir of creation, the drama of seasons beguiled,
Sanctuary and solace he found in the heart of the wild.

There like a woodsman he camped, bade ambition good-bye,

With blanket and fire befriended and stars brave and high.

Did he harden his heart and despair of the future? Not he.
Having trust in the goodness of life still to make beauty be,

He dreamed how a garden might rise in the wilderness there
With the ranges undaunted around it uplifting his prayer.

And he who had poured aspiration through rhythms of sound
Would call living harmonies forth from the seeds of the ground.

What matters the mould or the means, whether music or flowers,
When soul in the urge of creating assembles her powers?

Where his clearing looked out on the slopes of the dark wooded range
At peace in the blue haze of summer and fearless of change,

With old magic renewed, a fresh masterpiece he would build,
Walled in with rough field-stone, with loving care planted and tilled,—

A place of enchantment, surprising, made perfect, apart,
Dispensing delight with its spells, to the eager of heart.

Each day by a rough winding foot-path folk come to its gate
Where the welcoming rest and revival of paradise wait.

A hidden rose-garden whose odors with heliotrope blend,
And aisles of tall lilies where scent-enthralled humming-birds wend;

A dim lotus pool soft-colored with blossom and frond;
And a pergola framing a vista to mountains beyond.

All summer this benefice high in the wild gives its dole
Of beauty for strengthening heart and replenishing soul.

What chorale more golden, what symphony richer in praise
Than this anthem of flowers arising from wilderness ways?

All winter its sleep is companioned by whispering snows
And choiring stars that inspire the dreams of the rose.

The Lord of all Music rejoices when spirit finds wings
In words or in tone or in color whose ecstasy sings.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

When Beauty slept in the forest old
With gleaming breast and her hair of gold,

And the days went by with never a stir
That could reach her heart and waken her,

I was the Fortunate Prince who came
To touch her lips with the sacred flame,

And kindle her pulse's ebb and flow
With the warmth of life it used to know

Before some evil enchantment stole
Like a blight of frost on her flowering soul.

I was the envoy of Love's desire
To quicken her life with holy fire.

Her eyelids fluttered, her bosom heaved
Like virginal woods of spring new-leaved,

When shimmering heats across them run
At the first warm touch of wakening sun.

She opened her eyes, and over me
Flooded a glory of sunlit sea.

A shudder of joy through her being ran
Like the stir of dawn when the first day began.

The passion of earth so long unlearned
Through her slim white body swept and burned,

For love in her was as if a star
Were lighted within a porcelain jar.

All of love I had dreamed of old
She gave me again a hundredfold—

The wine of ardor, the bread of truth,
And the golden robe of triumphant youth.

There in the dusk of the haunted wood
Under the spell of life we stood,

While the great moon, wondrous white and still,
The Lantern of Lovers, rose over the hill.

WOOD LILY

Wood Lily, Wood Lily in the sweet fern,
Bright as a flame in the forest you burn.

Gleam in the solitude, flash from afar,
Signal of joy for the traveller you are.

Delicate Wood Lily in the deep shade,
In Orient scarlet for joyance arrayed,

Staying our hearts at the turn of the year,
Straying from Paradise, how came you here?

Wood Lily, Wood Lily, what must he bring
Who would love you forever without book or ring?

A heart that is tender, a mind that is free,
A hand that is gentle? Oh, say I am he!

RIVER WATER

*The Dance of River Water
Sets all the leaves astir,
And all the woods of Arcady
Are glad because of her.*

*They whisper, "Listen, listen,
While River Water sings
That bubble song of bobolinks
And wild June things."*

*And when the silver birches
Are golden in the fall,
And in the quiet sunlight
The plaintive phoebes call,*

*I lie and listen, listen,
While River Water sings
The murmur song of meadow-bloom
And white moth wings.*

Among the silver birches
Young River Water grew,
A happy sprite who loved to dance
Her joy the whole year through.

When first the wind of April
Arose and called her clear,
"Come forth from the cold stars and hills,
O River Water, dear!"

Out from the stilly alders
That keep the meadow side,
A murmur through the melting snows
Awakened and replied,

"From dream thou dost arouse me
Under the wintry dome,
But thy warm voice is sweet to hear.
O Mother Wind, I come."

Shake out the buds of April,
Sing of the growing year,
Drum up glad morning on the heights,
Thy dancing child is here.

Here is gay River Water,
Thy fairy forest child,
To dance with shadow and with shine,
And learn their secrets wild.

Here in the wild-rose weather
Laughs River Water brown,
Dancing the gorgeous noons away,
Dancing the twilights down;

Dancing the stars from slumber,
Dancing the hills to sleep,
Dancing the barley-colored moon
Up from the beryl deep;

Dancing the dawn to ashes,
Dancing the white day through,
Until soft night comes round again
With whippoorwills and dew.

And when the moon in winter
Shall make the night like day,
When all the creatures are asleep
And all the birds away,

Though merry River Water
A frosty robe must don,
The crooning hill-born heart of her
Will still go dancing on.

Enchanted by the echo
Of an immortal chime,
She knows what God intends to do
With music and with rhyme.

THE FIELD-LARK

TO A. E. D.

Ah, though doubtless you aver
Other songs are lovelier,—

None casts such a spell o'er me
As the field-lark's sorcery.

It recaptures one swift year

When the Golden Age drew near,—

Summer by the Sconset shore
With the ocean at the door.

The warm smell of bayberry
And sweet fern comes back to me,

And the floor of blue and gold
From the cliff's foot is unrolled.

I can feel the soft wind blow,
Breath of grasses whispering low,

Where in peace the lone moors lie
And the field-larks nest and cry.

Like a boatswain piping clear
Silver magic to the ear,

Down the wind comes eerily
That wild music by the sea.

Well I know that sliding call
With its haunting slur and fall,

When the air is filled with sound
From a nest upon the ground...

Many a morning in the hills
My enchanted spirit thrills

At a whistle from the grass
Of a sudden as I pass.

Then am I borne far away....
It is morning on a day

Where the Path to Sankoty
Climbs the moors above the sea,

And the breakers boom and sigh
To the moor-lark's shrilling cry.

THE WEATHER VANE

I saw a painted weather-vane
That stood above the sands,—
A little shining mermaid
That turned and waved her hands.

She turned and turned and waved and waved,

Then faced toward the hill,
Then faced about and back again,
Then suddenly stood still.

And every time the wind came up
Out of the great cool sea,
She'd spin and spin and whirl her arms
As if in dancing glee.

And when the wind came down the road
With scent of new-mown hay,
She whirled about and danced again
In ecstasy of play.

It seemed as if her madcap heart
Could never quite decide
Whether her heaven was on the hill
Or on the drifting tide.

And would she rather be a sprite
To guard some singing stream,
And sparkle in the summer field
And through the forest gleam?

Or would she be an ocean child,
A spirit of the deep,
To run upon the billows wild
And in their cradle sleep?

And still she turned and veered between
The river and the sea,
And many a time I thought her hands
Were praying to be free.

And then there came a night of storm,
Of wind and dark and snow,
And in the morn my weather-vane
Had vanished in the blow.

THE LARGESS OF LIFE

Because I have given my heart
To the joyance of living,
Its lords have given me life
Past their measure of giving.

Because I have given my soul
To the rapture of gladness,
They have taught me the simples of earth
For the healing of sadness.

Because I have given my days
To the seeking of knowledge,
They have opened the doors for me
Of the wilderness college.

They have opened my eyes to behold
And my senses to love
More than the careless perceive
Or the learned can prove.

Because I have given my years
To the service of beauty,
They have given me wonder and light
Without limit or duty.

Because I have followed their trail,
Often faint yet unswerving,
They have given me guides in the way
Beyond all deserving.

IMMORTELLE

My glorious enchantress,
She went in silken hose,
With swaying hip and curving lip
And little tilted nose,
As full of fragrant fire
As any English rose.

Her voice across the morning,
Like olden balladry
Or magic notes from woodland throats,
It laid a spell on me
As wondrous as the west wind
And haunting as the sea.

She might have walked with Chaucer
A-jesting all the way,
Her figure trim a joy to him,
Her beauty like the day,
With that unfailing spirit
Which nothing can dismay.

Her heart was full of caring,
Her eyes were touched with dream.
In happy birth, in noble worth,
I thought that she did seem
As fair as Kentish roses
And rich as Devon cream.

I loved her airy carriage,

Her bearing clean and proud,
When glad and fond she looked beyond
The plaudits of the crowd,
Or when in prayer or sorrow
Her comely head was bowed.

I loved her eerie piping
Of measures without name.
Wild as a faun at rosy dawn,
Out of the crowd she came
To breathe upon old altars
A fresh untroubled flame.

I loved her lyric ardor
Her chosen words and dress,
Her dryad's face, her yielding grace,
Her glowing waywardness,
Her deep adoring passion
No careless eye would guess.

And all the while as lovely
As early daffodils,
When woodland Spring comes blossoming
Among the Western hills,
And from her trailing garments
A mystic glory spills.

O sorceress of raptures
Beyond the dream of art,
Be still our guide to walk beside
And choose the better part,—
Thou lyric of enchantment,
Thou flower of Nature's heart!

FIRST FROST

Down from the hills with their glory around him
In scarlet and gold of a herald he comes,
Quiet as hill mist that steals through the passes,
The Indian Spirit ahead of his drums.

With heaven-blue asters and goldenrod leaning
From lone sun-warm ledges high overhead,
To the thunder of falls and the chorus of rivers
He conies to the lowlands with pride in his tread.

The magic the Masters of Silence have taught him,
The power by Council of Summits conferred,
The spell of elation, with beauty's bewitchment,
He brings to illumine the infinite word.

From Hills of the Sky he has summoned his cohorts
To march with the colors of Autumn unfurled
Where plains in the haze of the Indian Summer
Lie waiting his touch to emblazon their world.

The settlements waken with morning to wonder
At shining encampments o'er hillside and dale.
Arrived over night to enhearten the dreary—
The Legions of Glory have taken the trail.

IN THE OFFING

FOR R. H.

I walked upon the headland
With my friend one summer day,
When an unknown foreign schooner
Came stealing up the bay.

Her sails were light as moonshine
Her hull was dark as night,
And silence fell between us
For wonder at the sight.

No name upon her quarter,
No flag at peak nor fore,
To tell her port or errand,—
No friendly look she wore.

All day she tacked before us
Or lay to on the tide,
As if awaiting orders
From one who should decide.

Never a ship's bell sounded,
Never a voice rang out,
As she heeled before the wind-flaws
Or stood up to come about.

"Why, it is passing strange," I said,
"Aye, passing strange," said he;
And I could see that in his face
I did not like to see.

She did not come to anchor
Nor cross the restless bar,
But when the harbor twilight
Flashed out its evening star,

Without a hail at parting
Or any colors shown,

My friend had gone aboard her—
For the Isles of the Unknown.

AFTER A PARTING

TO J. W. R.

What ails the air in Denmark,
And darkens all the day?
There is a gloom upon the place,
Since Hamlet went away.

The morning and the noonday
Are no more magical,
And no more comes the witchery
That fell with evenfall.

There is no heart in laughter,
There is no cheer in wine,
Even the women's shining eyes
Have somehow veiled their shine.

There is no royal presence,
No smile to bless the day,
No word to make us gladder, now
The prince is gone away.

The fair and wide-spread city,
That used to bask in gold
Under the mellow autumn sun,
Is dull and gray and cold.

The street-cries that were music
To herald in the morn,
Under a wintry twilight now
Fall minor and forlorn.

The lamps that flashed at sunset
Across the purple square
To make a twinkling fairyland,
Are dimmer than they were.

No lights are in the palace,
No crowd about the door,
The chain is rusting on the gate,
And dark is Elsinore.

There's something drear in Denmark
That saddens every day,
For lonely-hearted is the place
Since Hamlet went away.

THE TWILIGHT STORY

The woods are dyed with purple,
The west is washed with gold,
And in the waiting twilight
There is a story told.

The crooning river sings it,
The tree-top robins call,
The bloodroot stirs to hear it
Beside the pasture wall.

It rings along the meadows
With piping clear and wild,
The burden of the moment
By loveliness beguiled.

'Tis sadder than the south wind
Or the deep sobbing rain,
With memories of by-gones
That will not be again.

It runs through all the music
From haunted woodlands blown,
When April comes with gladness
To make the world her own.

It has the spell of magic
That brings the mountains near,—
The note of breathless wonder
The hearts of seashells hear;

The story of the twilight
Is countless ages old,
And every one has heard it,
And none has ever told.

IN APRIL

Spring-beauty is a gipsy
Who travels by my road,
And makes my April pasture
The place of her abode.

Dark Trillium in purple,
Hepatica in gray,
Spread mystery of their coming

Through woodlands where they stray.

The Windflowers that gather
Along the orchard wall
In welcome flutter toward me,
Yet never speak at all.

But after all the wilding,
I only love the more
The golden-hearted Daffies
That crowd about my door.

A SPRING MEMORY

O my dear, the world once more
Now is lovely as of yore!
Every laden apple bough
Blossoms in the orchard now,
And the hang-birds build and sing
In the paradise of spring.

Sweetly falls the whispering rain
On earth's loveliness again,
And the wood-thrush as of old
Sounds upon his flute of gold
His serene immortal psalm
Through the twilight's pulsing calm.

All the passion of old years,
All their sorrows, joys and fears,
Meet and blend in that fine strain,—
Like a mystical refrain
Of sheer rapture beyond thought,
Which no poet ever caught.

As I listen, dearest dear,
Your transcending voice I hear,
And your joy comes back to me
In the fragrant lilac tree
Flowering at the open door
Of the House of Life once more.

Once again I see you stand
In the field, and spread your hand
Over the wild rose to bless
Its beauty in your tenderness,—
And no poet ever told
Half the treasure heart can hold.

GREEN FIRE

You will never know the glory of the coming of the spring
Till you look upon its magic in the North,
When the wilderness is waking in a mist of Magian green
To the everlasting wonder of new birth.

Here in a starry silence when the Manitou sent forth
His summons to the Keepers of the Word,
The pine-tops caught his whisper, and from the swampy lands
The shrilling frogs made answer as they heard.

Now the birches break in yellow against the morning blue,
The aspens are a wash of palest gold,
And tamaracks in young green are soft as drifted smoke
In the freshness of enchantment never told.

The open lakes are sparkling, the rivers running white
With rapids calling all along the trail,
And Wise-heart and Fond-heart, they know 'tis time to go
Where lonely valleys answer to their hail.

Old heart, dear heart, hold the glory dream!
There's a cabin in a clearing round the bend,
With pointed firs about it, a river at the door,
And hermit thrushes singing at day's end.

For the Master of the Open, the Spirit of the Wild,
Our guide in wisdom, beauty and desire,
Is making the old Medicine whose conjure name is love,
And all the hills are smoky with Green Fire.

A STRANGER IN HEAVEN

TO W. S. R,

Listen, angels! Just a moment, ere your praise begins anew!
As you harped, I had a vision and I know that it is true.

What is music but the rhythm to set free the prisoned soul,
And transport the quickened senses home to harmony's control?

As you harped, even so I hearing, touched in fancy, dreamed a dream,—
Caught the meaning of your music, saw the substance of your theme,—

Knew from many a haunting measure, turn and interlude the same,
That the world you would interpret was the earth from which I came.

As you plucked the perfect phrases, suddenly one silver call

Sliding from dissolving discords rang—and I remembered all.

I could see the first faint wash of color tinting swamp and grove,
As the spring comes sweeping northward in a tide of green and mauve.

And the orchards are in blossom over all New England now,
With the blue flag by the brookside and the flame-bird on the bough.

Roadside gardens with old-fashioned bleeding-heart and peonies,
And the honeysuckle's bounty spread for velvet-coated bees.

Grassy lanes and stone-walled pastures, meadows where bright rivers wind
Singing through the scented evening airs of the enchanted mind.

Hush your lonely harps and listen! Don't you hear a wondrous note
Ringing through the soft green twilight from a sure unanxious throat?

That's the music used to lure me through the woods where I would roam,
When I was in love with beauty and New England was my home.

All the burden of the ages, all the rapture, all the calm,
Uttered by that twilight singer in a single earth-born psalm.

Open your dark-shadowed portal, Shining Ones, and let me go!
I am homesick for the glory and the good I used to know.

No mere Heaven can detain me when I hear a wood-thrush sing...
It is May, and God is walking through Connecticut with Spring.

WILD GARDEN

This is a garden wild and sweet,
Where gray-mossed ledges lie out in the sun
Amid scented fern in the August heat,
On the mountain side where lone trails run
Through splashes of aster and goldenrod
In clearings sown by the hand of God.

Here we pass with moccasined tread
In the friendship of earth, through the glory of morn,
With the lore of the learned little read,
To the gladness and wisdom of love free-born,
Wild hearts beating and hushed before
The lowered bars and the Open Door.

The sunlight sleeps on the purple hill,
The world is a-dream in dim blue haze,
Even the poplar leaves are still,
As if aware of a day of days
Vouchsafed the creatures of earth to employ
In the wonder of life, in the fulness of joy.

The maple leaves are beginning to turn
To scarlet and gold, the victorious hues.
The topmost summits in splendor burn
To signal the world their mystic news,
The gospel of beauty that will survive
The clamorous doubts of all alive.

For what is the sacrament sense receives,
When the new moon hangs in the purple pine
And silence speaks and the heart believes,
But a portal that leads to the inner shrine?
And our hermit thrush at his evening psalm
Is celebrant of that holy calm.

Here radiant pilgrims have smiled and passed,
The seed of Shamballah, the angels of Earth,
Swayed by the breath of a heavenly vast,
In lovely ardor and fadeless worth,
For Love is Lord of the Seraphim
And heaven and earth are one to him.

[End of *Wild Garden* by Bliss Carman]