

SPRING MORNING

BY

FRANCES CORNFORD

(WOODCUTS BY G. RAVERAT)



THE POETRY BOOKSHOP
PRICE TWO SHILLINGS & SIXPENCE

NET

* A Distributed Proofreaders Canada eBook *

This eBook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the eBook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the eBook. If either of these conditions applies, please check with an FP administrator before proceeding.

This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. **If the book is under copyright in your country, do not download or redistribute this file.**

Title: Spring Morning

Date of first publication: 1923

Author: Frances Cornford (1886-1960)

Date first posted: Apr. 28, 2017

Date last updated: Apr. 28, 2017

Faded Page eBook #20170489

This eBook was produced by: Barbara Watson, David T. Jones, Al Haines & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <http://www.pgdpCanada.net>

SPRING MORNING

BY

FRANCES CORNFORD

(WOODCUTS BY G. RAVERAT)

THE POETRY BOOKSHOP
PRICE TWO SHILLINGS & SIXPENCE
NET

SPRING MORNING
BY
FRANCES CORNFORD

A NEW EDITION

(Third Thousand)

LONDON
THE POETRY BOOKSHOP
35 DEVONSHIRE STREET, THEOBALDS ROAD, W.C.
1923

CONTENTS

<u>SPRING MORNING</u>	5
<u>A RECOLLECTION</u>	6
<u>YOUTH AND AGE</u>	7
<u>A CHILD'S DREAM</u>	8
<u>TO A FAT LADY SEEN FROM THE TRAIN</u>	10
<u>A WASTED DAY</u>	11
<u>IN FRANCE</u>	12
<u>THE OLD WITCH IN THE COPSE</u>	13
<u>IN DORSET</u>	16
<u>THE WATCH</u>	17
<u>PEOPLE</u>	18
<u>DAWN</u>	19
<u>MOUNTAINS</u>	20
<u>A PEASANT WOMAN</u>	21
<u>AUTUMN MORNING AT CAMBRIDGE</u>	22
<u>AUTUMN EVENING</u>	22
<u>AT NIGHT</u>	23



SPRING MORNING

Now the moisty wood discloses
Wrinkled leaves of primèroses,
While the birds, they flute and sing:
Build your nests, for here is Spring.

All about the open hills
Daisies shew their peasant frills,
Washed and white and newly spun
For a festival of sun.

Like a blossom from the sky,
Drops a yellow butterfly,
Dancing down the hedges grey
Snow-bestrewn till yesterday.

Squirrels skipping up the trees
Smell how Spring is in the breeze,
While the birds, they flute and sing:
Build your nests, for here is Spring.

A RECOLLECTION

My father's friend came once to tea.
He laughed and talked. He spoke to me.
But in another week they said
That friendly pink-faced man was dead.

"How sad . ." they said, "the best of men . ."
So I said too, "How sad"; but then
Deep in my heart I thought with pride,
"I know a person who has died."

YOUTH AND AGE



Say, is it dim and grim and all full of fear?
Not at all, not at all, my pretty dear.
Will there be no hope? Nothing to desire?
You shall be comforted sitting by the fire.
Will no one look at me? love me, if I please?
You shall doze happy with a little bread and cheese.
Even the springing grass—will it look pale?
You shall be gladdened with a little warm ale.
Shall I be trembling and querulous of tongue?
You shall be wiser than anybody young.
When the first thrushes sing, shall I not hear?
Not at all, not at all, my pretty dear.

A CHILD'S DREAM



I had a little dog, and my dog was very small;
He licked me in the face, and he answered to my call;
Of all the treasures that were mine, I loved him most of all.

His nose was fresh as morning dew and blacker than the night;
I thought that it could even snuff the shadows and the light;
And his tail he held it bravely, like a banner in a fight.

His body covered thick with hair was very good to smell;
His little stomach underneath was pink as any shell;
And I loved him and honoured him, more than words can tell.

We ran out in the morning, both of us, to play,
Up and down across the fields for all the sunny day;
But he ran so swiftly—he ran right away.

I looked for him, I called for him, entreatingly. Alas,
The dandelions could not speak, though they had seen him pass,
And nowhere was his waving tail among the waving grass.

I called him in a thousand ways and yet he did not come;
The pathways and the hedges were horrible and dumb.
I prayed to God who never heard. My desperate soul grew
numb.

The sun sank low. I ran; I prayed: "If God has not the power
To find him, let me die. I cannot bear another hour."
When suddenly I came upon a great yellow flower.

And all among its petals, such was Heaven's grace,
In that golden hour, in that golden place,
All among its petals, was his hairy face.

TO A FAT LADY SEEN FROM THE TRAIN

O why do you walk through the fields in gloves,

Missing so much and so much?
O fat white woman whom nobody loves,
Why do you walk through the fields in gloves,
When the grass is soft as the breast of doves
 And shivering sweet to the touch?
O why do you walk through the fields in gloves,
 Missing so much and so much?

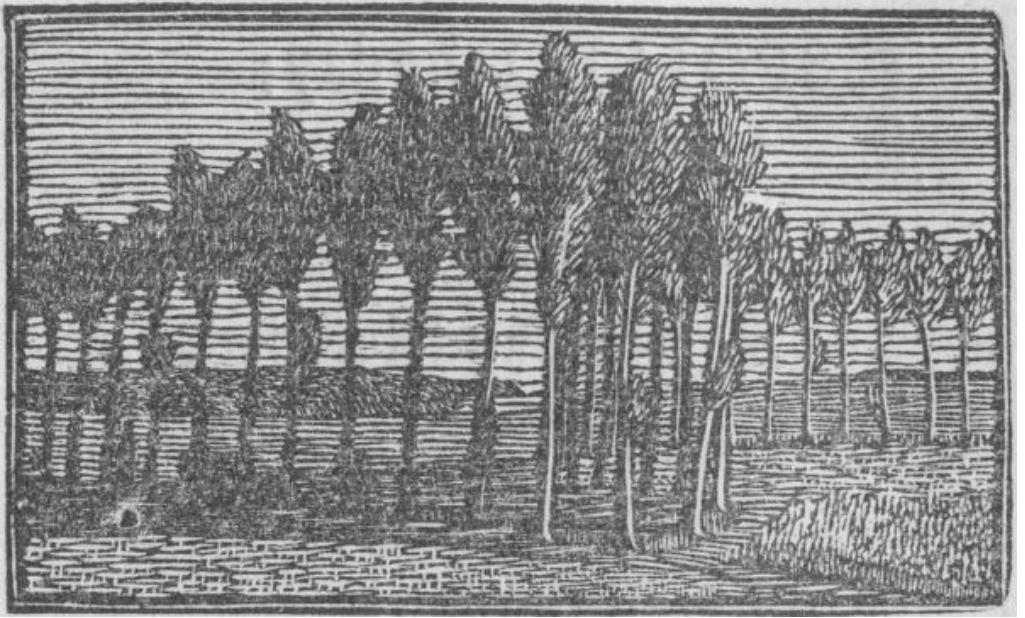
A WASTED DAY

I spoiled the day;
 Hotly, in haste,
All the calm hours
 I gashed and defaced.

Let me forget,
 Let me embark
—Sleep for my boat—
 And sail through the dark.

Till a new day
 Heaven shall send,
Whole as an apple,
 Kind as a friend.

IN FRANCE



The poplars in the fields of France
Are golden ladies come to dance;
But yet to see them there is none
But I and the September sun.

The girl who in their shadow sits
Can only see the sock she knits;
Her dog is watching all the day
That not a cow shall go astray.

The leisurely contented cows
Can only see the earth they browse;
Their piebald bodies through the grass
With busy, munching noses pass.

Alone the sun and I behold

Processions crowned with shining gold—
The poplars in the fields of France,
Like glorious ladies come to dance.

THE OLD WITCH IN THE COPSE

I am a Witch, and a kind old Witch,
There's many a one knows that—
Alone I live in my little dark house
With Pillycock, my cat.

A girl came running through the night,
When all the winds blew free:—
"O mother, change a young man's heart
That will not look on me.

O mother, brew a magic mead
To stir his heart so cold."
"Just as you will, my dear," said I,
"And I thank you for your gold."

So here am I in the wattled copse
Where all the twigs are brown,
To find what I need to brew my mead
As the dark of night comes down.

Primroses in my old hands,
Sweet to smell and young,

And violets blue that spring in the grass
Wherever the larks have sung.

With celandines as heavenly crowns
Yellowy-gold and bright;
All of these, O all of these,
Shall bring her Love's delight.

But orchids growing snakey green
Speckled dark with blood,
And fallen leaves that curled and shrank
And rotted in the mud,

With blistering nettles burning harsh
And blinding thorns above;
All of these, O all of these
Shall bring the pains of Love.

Shall bring the pains of Love, my Puss,
That cease not night or day,
The bitter rage, nought can assuage
Till it bleeds the heart away.

Pillycock mine, my hands are full,
My pot is on the fire.
Purr, my pet, this fool shall get
Her fool's desire.

IN DORSET



From muddy road to muddy lane
I plodded through the falling rain;
For miles and miles was nothing there
But mist, and mud, and hedges bare.

At length approaching I espied
Two gipsy women side by side;
They turned their faces broad and bold
And brown and freshened by the cold,
And stared at me in gipsy wise
With shrewd, unfriendly, savage eyes.

No word they said, no more dared I;
And so we passed each other by—
The only living things that met

In all those miles of mist and wet.

THE WATCH

I wakened on my hot, hard bed;
Upon the pillow lay my head;
 Beneath the pillow I could hear
 My little watch was ticking clear.
I thought the throbbing of it went
Like my continual discontent;
I thought it said in every tick:
I am so sick, so sick, so sick;
O death, come quick, come quick, come quick,
Come quick, come quick, come quick, come quick.

PEOPLE

Like to islands in the seas,
Stand our personalities—
Islands where we always face
One another's watering place.
When we promenade our sands
We can hear each other's bands,
We can see on festal nights

Red and green and purple lights,
Gilt pavilions in a row,
Stucco houses built for show.

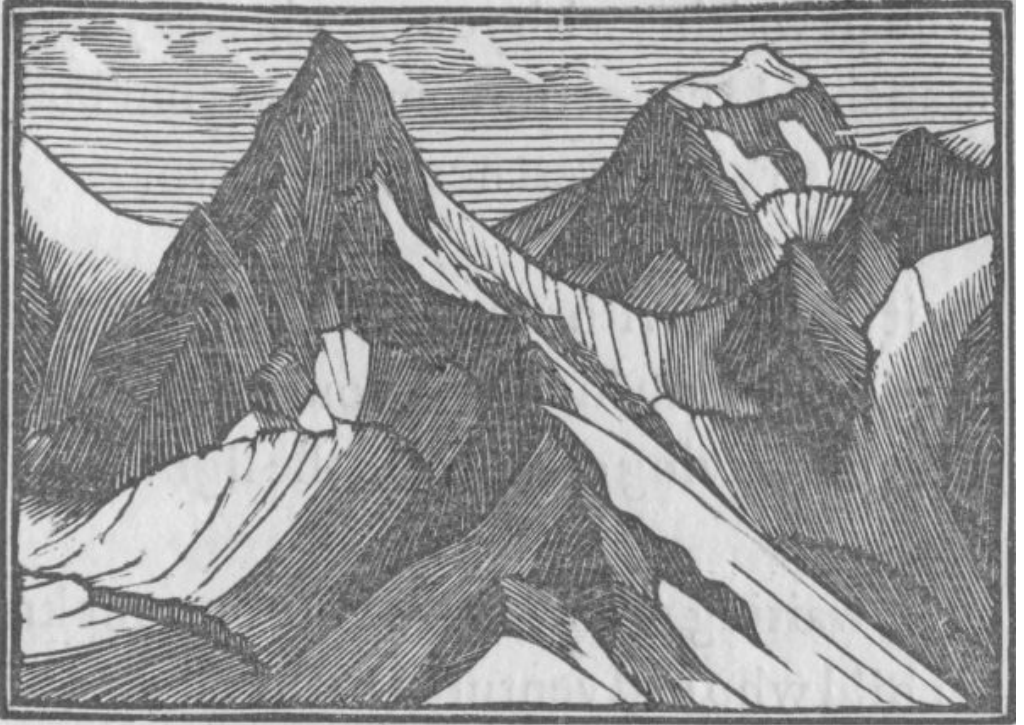
But our eyes can never reach
Further than the foolish beach,
Never can they hope to win
To the fastnesses within:
Rocks unsealed that watch the sky
And the tormented clouds go by;—
Darkest forests full of gleams
Ever-passing;—pouring streams;—
Chasms where a Monster lowers;—
Sweet and unimagined flowers.

DAWN

So begins the day,
Solid, chill, and gray,
But my heart will wake
Happy for your sake;
No more tossed and wild,
Singing like a child,
Quiet as a flower
In this first gray hour.

So my heart will wake
Happy, for your sake.

MOUNTAINS



Mountains, mountains in the morning,
Great beasts backed with stainless snow,
Rocks which even the hawks have not visited,
Vast blue shadows climbing up their gullies,
Magnificence, magnificence of blue shadows.

Child unknown who shall be mine hereafter,
Your heart, too, shall leap at sight of the mountains,
The peaks and their shadows in the morning

—Uncaring for me or for any man—
Even as my heart has leapt, uncaring.

A PEASANT WOMAN

I saw you sit waiting with your sewing on your knees,
Till a man should claim the comfort of your body
And your industry and presence for his own.

I saw you sit waiting with your sewing on your knees,
Till the child growing hidden in your body
Should become a living creature in the light.

I saw you sit waiting with your sewing on your knees,
Till your child who had ventured to the city
Should return to the shelter of his home.

I saw you sit waiting with your sewing on your knees
—Your unreturning son was in the city—
Till Death should come along the cobbled street.

I saw you sit waiting with your sewing on your knees.

AUTUMN MORNING AT CAMBRIDGE

I ran out in the morning, when the air was clean and new,
And all the grass was glittering, and grey with autumn dew,
I ran out to the apple tree and pulled an apple down,
And all the bells were ringing in the old grey town.

Down in the town, off the bridges and the grass
They are sweeping up the leaves to let the people pass,
Sweeping up the old leaves, golden-reds and browns,
While the men go to lecture with the wind in their gowns.

AUTUMN EVENING

The shadows flickering, the daylight dying,
And I upon the old red sofa lying,
The great brown shadows leaping up the wall,
The sparrows twittering; and that is all.

I thought to send my soul to far-off lands,
Where fairies scamper on the windy sands,
Or where the autumn rain comes drumming down
On huddled roofs in an enchanted town.

But O my sleepy soul, it will not roam,
It is too happy and too warm at home:
With just the shadows leaping up the wall,
The sparrows twittering; and that is all.

AT NIGHT



On moony nights the dogs bark shrill
Down the valley and up the hill.

There's one is angry to behold
The moon so unafraid and cold,
Who makes the earth as bright as day,
But yet unhappy, dead, and gray.

Another in his strawy lair
Says: "Who's a-howling over there?
By heavens I will stop him soon
From interfering with the moon."

So back he barks, with throat upthrown:
"You leave our moon, our moon alone."
And other distant dogs respond
Beyond the fields, beyond, beyond.

[The end of *Spring Morning* by Frances Cornford]