

Thompson

JOHN SJOLANDER - POET OF CEDAR BAYOU

1950

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A COLLECTION

A THESIS

Approved:

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Committee

Approved: 

Dean of the College



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JOHN SJOLANDER -- POET OF CEDAR BAYOU  
A COLLECTION

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF  
SAM HOUSTON STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF ARTS

ESTILL ALLEN

BY

MARTHA WOOD THOMPSON, B.S.

HUNTSVILLE, TEXAS

MAY, 1950

Dedicated  
to  
ANNIE SJOLANDER SCOTT  
and  
ELTON C. RUNNEBERG

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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- Martha W. Thompson

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"WHAT MANNER OF MAN?"

"Twelfth Night"

Being what others have said  
in prose and verse about him.

## A NEIGHBOR'S TRIBUTE TO JOHN SJOLANDER

What tho' the world acclaimed his just renown  
He wore his laurels with a gentle grace,  
This hardy Norseman from the Baltic Shore  
Who 'side a Texas Bayou found his place.

There on the modest acres which he claimed  
He tilled and wrought a husbandman's success.  
And while he fructified the fecund soil  
He sang the lays which made so great impress.

Upon the world of letters and plain men  
They crowned him Laureate of a great domain.  
Though now his lyre and pen have long been still  
Primate of Texas poets he'll remain.

With feet deep rooted in his loved earth,  
His mind, free soaring in the firmament  
Consorting with the muse, begat sweet verse  
Extolling Nature, toil, and man's content.

His lyrics sang the lore of little folk,  
Shy creatures of the prairie, swamp and wood.  
Of humble men and their productive toil.  
Endowed he all with purpose kind and good.

To us who knew him not as famous bard  
Who stood exalted in the learned clan,  
He was the helpful neighbor, simple friend  
And toward all, a gracious, kindly man.

-- Elton C. Runneberg

*Elton Runneberg*  
1949



## JOHN P. SJOLANDER

An' how old be yeh, John? I heard yeh say  
 Yer friends had jollied yeh about your age.  
 An' with kind wishes on yer natal day  
 Had helped yeh as yeh turned another page;  
 Which I, with all my heart do hope may bring  
 Fuition of all hopes yeh've entertained;  
 May true endeavor's tautly twanging string  
 Speed swift th' dart ter strike where you have aimed.

We're gittin' on, old friend, our falt'rin' feet,  
 Air treadin' far from paths of youth and love,  
 An' retrospection's joys do grow so sweet  
 As e'en to win our thoughts from lands above.  
 This brown old earth an' us air now acquaint,  
 We're growin' old together an' our ways,  
 Free from youth's turbulence an' passion's taints,  
 Grow brighter in life's sunset's lessenin' rays.

I don't know how you feel, but I, friend John,  
 Will shore regret it when we're called to quit,  
 Th' flowers I'm afraid, 'll miss us when we're gone,  
 An' all earth's clingin' ties by friendship knit.  
 'll make it hard ter leave th' paths we've trod  
 An' go a ramblin' long celestial ways;  
 But we can't crawfish when grim Fate doth nod,  
 An' - well, here's to yeh, John, an' future days.

- Judd Mortimer Lewis



JOHN P. SJOLANDER

(Written for the Dallas Morning News)

June 23, 1939

The old Laplander to his rest has gone,  
And one sweet harp is silent evermore;  
Our sailor bard has beached his boat upon  
The moorings of that undiscovered shore.

For forty years I listened to his lay,  
And he could sing as true poet can;  
But I would write upon his tomb today:  
"The poet overshadowed by the man".

His songs were sermons chanted soft and low,  
That spoke the love and kindness of his creed.  
Sweet be his sleep where the sea breezes blow --  
The splendid poet and the royal Swede.

-- Whitney Montgomery

SJOLANDER, THE MAN

"This dust was once the man  
Gentle, plain, just and resolute."

This Dust Was Once the Man

- Walt Whitman

## SJOLANDER, THE MAN

As possibly the greatest pioneer poet of the Southwest, John Peter Sjolander<sup>1</sup> merits the title which has been accorded him of "The Dean of Texas Poets".<sup>2</sup>

The importance of Sjolander's literary work has been attested by these two facts: he has been listed in Who's Who in America, and in 1922 he was presented for election to the Swedish Academy - much to his surprise - as a result of his translations of Scandinavian folk songs into English and of English poems into the Swedish language.<sup>3</sup> That he failed of election was not due to lack of merit on his part nor support by his admirers in America. It may have been due to his long absence from his native country or a reason might be found in the conditions which were responsible for his exile from Sweden in his early youth.

"The Dean of Texas Poets" was born March 25, 1851, at Hudiksvall, Sweden, far up the Bosnian Gulf in about the latitude of Iceland. His father, a Swedish naval officer, had been dismissed from the service for nonconformity to the state church and, taking

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<sup>1</sup> E. C. Runneberg, Route 2, Crosby, Texas - Note: The name Sjolander can be literally translated as "Sea-lander". Sjo means sea in Swedish. The closest the ordinary English speaking tongue can make is Shoh'lander. The sound of the Sj is a sort of Scandinavian silibant which only those familiar with these languages can pronounce without much practice.

<sup>2</sup> Goldie Capers Smith, The Creative Arts in Texas, Cokesbury Press, Dallas, 1926, p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> Dallas Morning News, June 9, 1923.

to seafaring in his own vessel, was drowned when it was wrecked. John Peter was then five years old, and being denied access to the state schools on account of his father's dereliction, stayed at home where he was taught by his mother. "We spoke Swedish, English, and German by turns, a day of each," he explained.

At the age of eleven he was reading Scott's Lady of the Lake and Marmion, which remained his favorite poem. Under his mother's tutelage he also learned Robert Burns, and later penned a graceful and discerning tribute to the Scottish bard.<sup>"4</sup> Finally, a change in the political picture gave John a chance to attend public school on condition he study Latin and become a priest, but he did not take kindly to the tyrannical idea. He wrote and published (at seventeen years of age) a satire on his would-be tyrants. For this act of apparent insubordination, he was exiled.

The form and the quality of his character were strongly moulded by these influences which were reflected throughout his life in his dealings with his fellowman, and in his writings, poetry and prose.

John was working for an English lumber firm at the time, and its owner, Mr. Herbert, sympathetic with his young employee, took him to England and into his own home where he became a close companion to his son Arthur. They attended Trinity College together. This fact and his mother's teaching account for his accurate usage of the English language.

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<sup>4</sup> T. C. Richardson, "The Sage of Cedar Bayou", Southwestern Historical Quarterly, January, 1945.



On a pilgrimage to the grave of Robert Burns he met a fellow admirer, Charles Peterson, publisher of Peterson's Magazine in Philadelphia. Peterson encouraged him in his poetry writing and proffered him a job with his magazine should he ever come to America.

Shortly after this, in 1870, his young friend Arthur was killed in an accident. John sought forgetfulness from his grief in travel; taking passage as a seaman he sailed into many ports. On one occasion during the Franco-Prussian war his ship was captured; he was imprisoned for a time, then was paroled with orders to return to Sweden. Having no love for the country that had so ill-used him and his family, however, he slipped on board an English ship. He then made contact with his brother, Eric, who was also a seaman, and they signed on a Norwegian vessel bringing railroad rails to the Port of Galveston. The captain with whom they were to sail was an old friend of their father's -- but at the last moment he was replaced with a "slave-driver". There was mutiny on board, and when they reached Bolivar straits, six of the seamen "jumped ship", slipped up Cedar Bayou on one of the barges used for hauling brick, and there hid until it was safe for them to return to Galveston. They worked there around the docks for some time. Remembering beautiful Cedar Bayou, they went back there to work at one of the eleven brickyards then operating on its banks, where most of the brick that went into the early buildings in Houston and Galveston were made.

Later they established a boat-building enterprise and sailed some of their own vessels on Trinity Bay. Before the Houston deep water channel was dredged for seagoing navigation, Mr. Sjolander captained a light draught boat used to transfer cargoes over the shallows and bars at the mouths of Cedar Bayou and San Jacinto River where they empty into Trinity and Galveston Bays. It was during these years no doubt when he "picked-up" many of the sailor's legends, stories, and superstitions which he wrote of so vividly in his group of poems, "Rhymes of Galveston Bay".

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In 1876, Sjolander decided to attend the Philadelphia Centennial. His old friend, Peterson, true to his word given at Burn's grave, gave him a job as reader for his magazine. When the dreary cold weather of Philadelphia set in, John longed for the mild Texas weather. He returned and never again left his beloved Cedar Bayou home except for short journeys. He married a congenial and warm-hearted Cedar Bayou girl, Catherine Bush, who bore him six children, five sons and one daughter. They built their home on the farm where he spent the remainder of his life and to which his brother brought their mother from Sweden in 1879 to live.

Although John Peter Sjolander had written and published works in Sweden and England, it was not until he settled down that he did his best and most prolific writing.<sup>5</sup>

Nearly all of his earliest work has been lost. Of the five hundred odd poems which remain, many are unpublished; the rest are

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<sup>5</sup> Hilton Ross Greer, Dallas News, March 29, 1925.

scattered in periodicals of different kinds in many parts of this country and foreign countries, appearing between the years 1878 and 1936, with the exception of 65 poems contained in the published volume Salt of the Earth and Sea.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Sjolander has been a sailor, brickmaker, woodchopper, market gardner, store manager, charcoal burner, boat builder, farmer and poet. Mr. Sjolander was a charter member of the Texas Poetry Society and on occasions favored that group with readings and with the story of his life. In the 1927 yearbook of this society a note is made of his appearing at the May meeting "in advocacy of the making of a distinctive Texas literature".<sup>7</sup> He wrote a history of the Cedar Bayou Masonic Lodge, one of the oldest in the state, of which he was a charter member. He was an active lodge member until his death.

It was not lack of recognition nor lack of opportunity that caused Mr. Sjolander to remain quietly on the farm -- he loved the farm; -- it was his living but writing poetry was his pleasure, "a rest akin to sleep". "All my writing had to come from an inward urge" he said. The thoughts that came as he plowed a furrow or cut down a tree were shaped and polished, and possibly set down on paper while he was waiting for dinner.<sup>8</sup>

"In discussing his poetry, he showed that he realized fully

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<sup>6</sup> Personal interview with Mrs. E. L. Scott, daughter, Sjolander Road, Cedar Bayou, Texas, October 27, 1949.

<sup>7</sup> The Texas Poetry Society Yearbook, 1927, Dallas, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> T. C. Richardson (Rambling Longhorn), Farm and Ranch, August 15, 1934.



its literary value and importance; yet without affectation or ostentation he indicated that he considered it a gift of God to transmit to the world without taking personal credit unto himself. His personality, as reflected by his attitudes and conversations, might best be described as one of good-humored kindness, devoid of all trace of sanctimony or self importance. He was a most interesting conversationalist; his speech flowed smoothly and in a gentle tone that was pleasing to the ear. His choice of words and expressions showed him to be a master craftsman in the use of the English language, shading his meanings with delicately chosen nuance. He had an intriguing enunciation in which the American mode of speech was slightly, very slightly, tinged with both the British and the Norse inflection."<sup>9</sup>

Mr. Sjolander was active in his community life and was especially interested in wholesome recreation and reading matter for schools. He often appeared on programs in Cedar Bayou and other places and with his quaint enunciation and soft voice charmed his audiences with his poetry and tales of adventure.<sup>10</sup>

"He forgets his audience when he begins to sing; his songs come direct from the heart and go direct to the heart in a simple childlike way."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Personal interview with Elton C. Runneberg, December 20, 1949.

<sup>10</sup> Personal interview with Mrs. Thad M. Johnson, 310 Hines St., Baytown, Texas, March 16, 1950. Neighbor to the Sjolander family since 1912.

<sup>11</sup> Davis Foute Eagleton, Writers and Writings of Texas, Broadway Publishing Co., New York, 1913, p. 115.



His dreamy blue eyes and soft rich voice were strangely out of keeping with his bronzed features and rugged frame. He had a radiant smile, a hearty laugh, and a quick, ready friendliness for all who came in contact with him, ever modest and serene.<sup>12</sup>

"The evening before my father became critically ill", said his daughter, "he told me he had a little verse that he would like to have placed on his grave stone. Something seemed to tell me to write it down. I did so on an old envelope close at hand. I have always been glad that I did, for the next morning he went into a coma from which he never recovered. He died two weeks later, July 15, 1939, at his home and was buried in the shadow of the Masonic Hall on the banks of Cedar Bayou."

#### Life Never Dies

When life saw that the body could house it no more,  
 When it knew that its mission on earth was ended,  
 Then it sang a little, and singing floated upward  
 Back to the Loving One -- to be again with God  
 Who had sent it away with his blessings.

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<sup>12</sup> A. L. Bennett, The Texas Outlook, August, 1938, p. 19.

SJOLANDER, THE POET

"My songs may not waken the hillsides  
That wall in my place in the valley;  
But there, in the gleam of the morning,  
And there, in the glory of noontime,  
And there, in the glow of the sunset  
Perchance some sad pilgrim may listen  
And find some small cheer, and pass on."

My Songs - John P. Sjolander

## SJOLANDER, THE POET

Sjolander's poems are born not in the intellect, but in experience -- in the contact of mind and heart with the great and terrible facts of life, in the soil of common hopes, loves, fears, aspirations, sufferings. He was a discernor of that which is hidden in individual experience, interpreter of men to themselves and to each other.

He sought to discover what was significant in the life that is nearest, convinced that all life is a revelation, and that to the observer and lover of nature and men beauty is universally diffused through all created things. Nothing was insignificant or without interest to him. Sjolander entangled God in the shining meshes of his own creation; he never clearly separated him in thought from Nature.

He had drunk deep from the cup of experience; won victories and suffered defeats; experienced baseness and risen to heights of nobleness -- in short, he had lived. His spiritual autobiography lies written in his work, poems which express his personality -- personality in the large sense which includes temperament, quality of imagination, artistic sense, point of view, education, and faculty of expression.

It gives us deep satisfaction to know something of his smile, his carriage, his manner of speech, and bearing among his fellows. At the very bottom of the man's work lies his thoughts of life -- his idea of the materials which were at hand and of the use he could

make of them; and this thought contains the very essence of that which makes him different from all other men who have been or shall be. For this thought embodies everything that is peculiar and distinctive to him.

He had seen and felt; therefore, he spoke. There were racial marks on the mind and temperament of the man; there are evident impressions of the time in which he lived, with all its subtle and interwoven influences.

His ability to write poetry came to him he knew not how; in swift flashes of intelligence, in the long silence of brooding, under the pressure of tremendous experience -- through the alchemy of living. It came to him and he gave it form.

He studied and interpreted life from the point of view where he found himself; and the range and beauty of vision which he discerned depended upon the clearness and range of his sight; the power of seeing the permanent in the transitory, the universal in the particular; the power of perceiving and realizing the soul of things visible, and out of the real constructing the ideal; the power of discerning the spiritual behind the material, the Creator behind the creation.

It is obvious that the style of Sjolander is not uninfluenced by his era: it is reflected as in a mirror, but in an age of pessimism he was ever optimistic and hopeful -- to him the falling of the leaf and the fading of the flower were joyous and not grievous, because they spoke of a larger and more continuous fertility.

As the Cantor sings in the synagogue with reverence and ecstasy of the glories and mysteries of what to him is the true faith, so sings Sjolander from the temple of the soil of the wonders and mysteries of Nature and her unfathomable processes -- an outpouring of devotion from one who knew and was attuned to Nature's spirit.



## PREFACE

The following collection has been culled from poems which have never appeared in print, and from others which have been printed in newspapers and magazines. It has not been possible to learn with any degree of certainty which poems belong to the latter group. Hence no valid differentiation could be made between the two general groups.

In the appendix is a list of others of Mr. Sjolander's poems which have been printed and which have been accessible to this reader.

A group of photographed copies of the original manuscript is included in this collection.

THE MARINER

Sea Yarns Spun in Song

"Home is the Sailer,  
Home from the sea."

- Requiem - Robert Louis Stevenson

## THE OLD BOATMAN

He laughed, and fought the winds and won;  
He dared the treacherous shoals and bars;  
Fearless he faced both cloud and sun,  
And smiled when he beheld the scars.  
For like the oak upon the shore,  
All gnarled and gray, he held his ground.  
Who cares for beauty's lessened store  
When hearts are big, and hearts are sound?

At anchor in some friendly cove,  
Or harbored at some bayou-side,  
He scans the clouds that idly rove,  
And foretells weather, wind and tide.  
He watches all the waves that come  
For certain shadows, certain gleams,  
And reads what they portend, like some  
Who read the hidden things in dreams.

Steadfast and true he loves the sea;  
For it forever yearns his heart.  
To him what else God's footstool be,  
The sea is the most glorious part.  
In its alarms 'neath angry skies,  
He soothes it with soft words like balm,  
And sings to it low lullabies  
Until it rests serene and calm.

And then it speaks to him and smiles,  
And he smiles back and understands;  
And where he sits, with tender guiles  
The waves flash up and kiss his hands.  
Thus in sweet peace his days are passed  
Waiting the day that soon must be,  
When clustered stars shall tip the mast,  
Where ne'er a storm alarms the sea.



## THE BEACHER

A piece of drift from the sea of life,  
 The waves have left him high and stranded;  
 And all he brought from the scenes of strife  
 Are scars for the blows he handed.  
 And still, if his mates were here to tell  
 How many are debtors to him,  
 You might think, while weighing the story well,  
 That more than the scars was due him.

A piece of drift with some barnacles on,  
 And his sap rather worn and wormy,  
 A beacher's place, that is sought be none,  
 Is his after labors stormy.  
 And still, if his mates down at Davy Jones  
 On the deck of life had a hearing,  
 For him there might be in a couple of zones  
 A whole lot of music and cheering.

A piece of drift that is sogged with brine,  
 Uncouth he may swear and swagger;  
 And loaded down to the guards with wine,  
 He may shout, and sing, and stagger.  
 And still, if his mates could tell their tale,  
 You might judge him better thereafter;  
 He might cease his song, and might leave his ale,  
 For a feast of sweet baby laughter.

A piece of drift on a wreck-strewn shore,  
 That clings to its faults and blunders,  
 He sits and sorts us, and names us o'er,  
 As evens, and overs, and unders.  
 For his heart is sound, and his judgment kind,  
 And the gleam in his eye will show it.  
 Oh, meet him fairly, and you might find  
 A prophet, philosopher, poet.

## AT THE GATE TO THE SEA

All night we watch at the gate to the sea,  
Where the restless waves creep up and retreat,  
I lean on the wind, and the wind on me, --  
The soft sea wind -- where we sighing meet,  
Where we sighing meet;  
For I am in port, and in port to stay,  
While the weary wind must at dawn away.  
Must at dawn away.

For I and the wind were as one, we two,  
And were hurled on the world from some dim somewhere,  
Elemental things with a will to do  
Our best or our worst without thought or care,  
Without thought or care;  
And fate turned us loose on the helpless seas,  
Where we made the waves restless memories,  
Restless memories.

So now, at night, where a far light gleams,  
I meet the wind at the gate to the sea;  
And all night long, as we do in dreams,  
I lean on the wind, and the wind on me,  
And the wind on me;  
For the wind and I we must vigil keep  
Till the waves are hushed, till their memories sleep,  
Till their memories sleep.

## A SEA PHANTASY

(Produced by looking down into the sea on a calm night.)

The world in peace is sleeping,  
The wind has left the ocean,  
Night wraps my boat and me;  
And silence vigil keeping,  
The waves with softest motion  
Slip inward from the sea.

'Tis then the stars go playing;  
Go running 'round and dancing,  
Where worlds are upside down;  
Now moving backward, swaying,  
Now bowing and advancing,  
Way down in Neptune Town.

Some little stars go strolling,  
Some lesser ones run after,  
Adown the Milky Way.  
It seems one hears the rolling  
Of merry peals of laughter  
Most musical and gay.

And now the full moon enters  
Below the treetops, smiling,  
But what a changeeful face!  
Now long where all woe centers,  
Now grinning and reviling --  
He wants to run the place.

He takes whole constellations,  
And eats them, (but between us,  
This see I with my eyes)  
Some big stars from their stations  
Spit fire when straight at Venus  
He darts adown the sky.

Then every star-eye twinkles,  
And everything goes whirling,  
For thunder's voice speaks loud;  
The moon's face turns all wrinkles,  
And something dark comes hurling,  
And hides him in a cloud.

And now the wind sings lowly,  
Setting the white waves arching,  
One o'er each hollow cup.  
O'erhead the stars move slowly.  
Sedate the moon goes marching --  
The world is right side up.

## THE SAILOR'S SEA

## I

Of all the wondrous things God caused to be --  
The land, the air, the sea --  
Most beautiful, and wonderful, and true,  
The sea has seemed to me.

A child, I reached my little hands to it,  
And splashed its waves sun-lit,  
And laughed to see their golden-green crystal heads  
To showers of splendor split.

Its touch was tender-soft, and seemed to charm,  
And fold me like the arm  
I'd learned to know and love, that kept away  
From me all thoughts of harm.

And I remember when a storm, the first,  
Upon my loved sea burst,  
And made it writhe and plunge, and sweat white foam,  
Stung by some thing accurst.

How my two eyes with angry light aglow  
Threatened the clouds hung low,  
That if they would not leave my sea alone,  
I'd let the good God know.

## II

A boy among the fisher folk I grew,  
And learned their ways, and knew  
How in their hearts they held that more than earth  
The sea was safe and true.

The only doubt that ever dimmed their eyes  
Was when they scanned the skies;  
But when they viewed the sea, a steady light  
Made them look sure and wise.

Their voices ever had a friendly hail  
For every passing sail;  
But when it stormed, a mighty roar they ran  
A mile against the gale.

These fisher folk, from fears and frailties free,  
Always seemed grand to me.  
They sang the sea, and lived their songs, because  
Their love was for the sea.



"Hey! up we go, Ho! down we go,  
 Sea heart, man heart, hold fast.  
 Out-bound we go, in-bound we go,  
 True sweethearts to the last.  
 So blow and blow, Santonio,  
 But don't blow down the mast."

### III

As youth and man I heard the sea's soft call,  
 Its heart-enthraling call,  
 And loved it for its strength and gentleness,  
 Giving to it my all.

And loving it, it showed to me its heart,  
 Its deep mysterious heart  
 Whose calm no hurricane can reach and break,  
 Or storm can stir and start.

For in its quiet deep are gardens fair,  
 With palaces of rare  
 Unearthly beauty, all designed by God,  
 Who caused them to be there.

And music's soul in them in peace has dwelt  
 Forever, and has dealt  
 Sea lovers songs too fine for ear to hear,  
 Songs only hearts have felt.

Oh, there is nought too great, or small, or mean,  
 Celestial or terrene,  
 But storms can wreck, except the gentle sea  
 Whom storms leave calm and clean.

See o'er the gold-green waves, behind the gale,  
 Far down a shining trail,  
 Rises a little cloud that grows, and grows, --  
 A cloud of silver sail.

The glory of the sea, the ever young,  
 In simple songs are sung,  
 For there's a tip -- a lilting little tip,  
 To every lover's tongue.

There's none escapes the wind-wild spell,  
 It strikes the sea,  
 And us, and we  
 Dance up to where the land folk dwell.

"A day or two, two nights or three,  
The wind grows slack,  
And we creep back,  
The sea like us, we like the sea."

## IV

Loving the sea, a child again I sit  
Reaching my hands to it;  
And from my boat all day, my heart content,  
I stroke the waves sunlit.

Then comes the night, and 'neath its mantle vast  
My loved sea sleeps at last,  
While upon me, a-drowse, lights twinkle down  
From stars that top the mast.

## THE MOON SERPENTS

With one sunken cheek rose the magical moon  
 From the Orient sea where no ripple was stirring;  
 And it called to the wind, and it wakened the loon,  
 But a sound as of wings hushed the voice of the bird.  
 Then a sea full of serpents were roused from their sleep,  
 And their eyes shone like fire, and their fangs glistened white,  
 As they darted in haste from their haunts in the deep --  
 The long serpents the moon fills the sea with at night.

Oh, their sides they were silver, and then they were gold,  
 And next they were black as the cursed abyss;  
 As the length of the sea was the length of their fold,  
 But the sound that they made was more laughter than hiss.  
 'Twas the sound that will follow and haunt one for years.  
 'Twas a vision stands ever unveiled to the sight,  
 A memory bringing now smiles, and now tears --  
 The long serpents the moon fills the sea with at night.

Far down by the shore where the moon serpents play,  
 Where half hissing they came, and half laughing drew back,  
 There were two in the night that e'er struggled and swayed,  
 And their forms 'gainst the sky now loomed white, and now black.  
 And they blended together, and they bended apart,  
 Till, sometime when a cloud hid the moon and its light,  
 A long cry on the wind gave the night owl a start,  
 And the moon serpents, shivering, sank out of sight.

Still the two by the shore ever struggled and strove,  
 While the wind tossed their hair and their garments about,  
 But the more they would part all the closer they clove,  
 And the cause of it all none shall ever find out;  
 Or the cry like the wail of a soul when it dies,  
 That went up when a cloud hid the moon from their sight.  
 There are things we ne'er dream of that cry to the skies,  
 When the moon fills the sea with its serpents at night.

But the bright sun came up, and the pale moon went down,  
 And the serpents sank back to their haunts in the deep;  
 And the clouds, soft and white, brought nor fear nor a frown,  
 And the night owl went out to the woods and to sleep.  
 Then down by the shore where the struggle had been,  
 The wind and the wave sang a song full of glee,  
 For only two moss-grown old trees could be seen,  
 And a loon, a dark spot, all asleep on the sea.



## BALLAD OF THE BAYOU BELLE

When Doubleyou Tom launched his brand-new boat  
'Twas the trimmest craft on the bay afloat.  
He had painted her white with a belt of gilt,  
While many an airy castle he built,  
For he named her after mischievous Nell --  
The Bayou Belle.

When he hoisted the rippling snow-white sail  
For a trial trip with a favoring gale,  
He used all the skill that a boatman could  
But he couldn't keep her away from the mud;  
So he thought and thought, then he thought of Nell,  
The Bayou Belle.

But Doubleyou Tom was a patient man,  
And smiled as only a strong man can.  
He learned her tricks and her prankish ways,  
When before the wind, or when up in stays,  
Till he knew the faults and the virtues well  
Of the Bayou Belle.

Then a dandy came to The Town one day,  
With winning smiles and with manners gay;  
His voice was so soft, and his words so fair,  
That he might have had anything that was there  
But he said that all that he wanted was Nell,  
The Bayou Belle.

With a toss of her head, and a laugh in her eye,  
One night to The Town Nell bade good-bye.  
Then the people talked, just as people will,  
And some spoke well of her, and some spoke ill,  
Till at last they forgot little willful Nell,  
The Bayou Belle.

Old years would go, and new years would come,  
But they all were the same to Doubleyou Tom.  
In spring and in fall, since the boat was built,  
He painted her white, with a belt of gilt;  
For his heart was true to the Bayou Belle,  
And to willful Nell.

Thus year after year he patiently toiled,  
His boat and the memory of Nell uncoiled;  
Till at last a dark and a stormy night,  
Hid Doubleyou Tom and the boat from sight,  
As years before it had hidden Nell  
The Bayou Belle.



## AFTER THE STORM

Far down to leeward, on the weck-strewn shore,  
A wreck lies mirrored in the sunlit sea;  
And hearts grow weary for the freight it bore,  
And tears are bitter as the salt waves be,  
Far down to leeward, on the weck-strewn shore,  
A wreck lies mirrored in the sunlit sea.

Far up to windward, like a snow-white cloud,  
A sail is rising from the sunlit sea;  
And hearts leap joyous that were scrow-bowed,  
And eyes grow hope-bright as the bright waves be,  
Far up to windward, like a snow-white cloud,  
A sail is rising from the sunlit sea.

## A SUNSET ON THE BAY

A big red sun glides down the purple west,  
The wind is silent -- hushed its song and sigh;  
A lonely pelican floats slowly by  
A boat becalmed, upon the sea at rest.

Far to the westward shows a rim of shore,  
A shadowy line dividing sea and sky;  
And in the deep as brightly as on high  
A sunset's glory gleams, a golden store.

A gentle swell, a balmy breath of air,  
A murmur as of multitudes at prayer,  
Comes o'er the deep; a cloud like a man's hand  
Floats upward from beyond the fading land;  
More dim, more dark, grow the sky, the shore, and sea  
And from the cloud, uncaged, the wind comes: **free.**

## THE FARMER

Of Nature, Home, and Husbandry

"We own no masters, we that walk with God  
In workday garments smelling of the sod."

The Plowman to His Brethren

- J. P. Sjolander

## THE FARMER OLD

The fields with waving banners green  
Look up at him and laugh;  
For he's their lord in pose and mien,  
Though leaning on a staff.  
His life is strewn in every row,  
And love, and constant care;  
And now, wrapped in the sunset's glow,  
How rich they are, and fair!

He won them from the warlike wood  
With many a valiant stroke;  
The prairie's daring hardihood  
With loving care he broke.  
He gave to them his all, his best  
That life to loved ones yields,  
And now, at sunset, he walks blest  
Among his grateful fields.

For men may come, and men may go,  
And kingdoms fall away,  
But he that tames the wild land, oh,  
With it is bound to stay!  
And though he lean upon a staff,  
Or take the rest he craves,  
He and his field will live and laugh  
Where others find their graves.

## SONG OF THE SOIL

Sing a song of the woodland, the pasture and field,  
From a heart that is touched by the pow'r that they wield;  
And is full of the gladness and joy they bestow  
On the one that knows them, and the one that they know.

Oh! to walk in their deeps that are full of content,  
And grow stronger each day for the strength that is spent;  
For the God that is there is the God whose delight  
Is to watch o'er the fields while we rest, in the night.

There are mysteries there -- in the seed, in the clod,  
In the dew, in the light -- none can fathom but God --  
And how buds, and how blooms, in their dying transmute  
Heaven's smile and earth's joy into life-giving fruit.

There are mysteries there -- in the field, in the wood --  
Little voices that sing: -- "Life is great, life is good;"  
And we know not their source, nor would care if we knew,  
But we know that we feel that the song must be true.

Oh! the joy to be there, and to learn, as we toil,  
The glad song that uplifts -- the strong song of the soil;  
And we feel we must rise, as the lark takes to wing,  
And soar upward, and outward, and onward, and sing.



## FARM SILHOUETTES

## I

## Discouraged

The winter winds sweep the bare fields again,  
And whistle passing close-shut barn and crib;  
The day looks shrunken, lacking tuck and bib,  
And drags its hours grown few through drifts of rain,  
The cattle at the bars, humped up, complain,  
And lick the rills that tickle flank and rib,  
While fowls, bedraggled, plying toe and nib,  
Scratch o'er and o'er the wasted straw in vain.

And by the fire that dimly lights the hearth,  
The farmer sits and hugs his trials close;  
And there, beside him, holding back their mirth,  
The children huddle, wriggling laughing toes.  
Of all discouragements upon this earth,  
The bitterest are the farmer's winter woes.

## II

## Encouraged

The south wind kisses the brown fields again,  
And singing passes unlocked barn and crib;  
The day comes smiling in new tuck and bib,  
With merry hours that lengthen, in its train.  
The cattle at the bars content remain,  
Their silken coats drawn tight o'er flank and rib,  
While fowls, bespangled, plying toe and nib,  
Singing, scratch the golden straw for grain.

And standing dreaming on the flower-strewn hearth,  
The farmer smiling plans the long straight rows;  
And there, beside him, full of life and mirth,  
His children stand, expectant to their toes.  
Of all encouragements upon this earth,  
Spring's are the sweetest that the farmer knows.

## DROUGHT

Like an army left in a desert world,  
Stand the ranks of corn, with their banners furled;  
And their plumes droop low on that side and this,  
While their rusty blades swing curved and curled,  
Like writhing serpents that touch and kiss.

And with nostrils wide stand the panting kine  
On the outer edge of the drought-fires shine;  
And their breath is as hot as the blaze that trims  
With yellow and brown the prairie pine  
From its topmost tips to its lowest limbs.

O'er the wounded earth with its scars, alas!  
With its withered flowers and frazzled grass,  
Not a shadowing cloud does come or go;  
Only the shimmering heat-hosts pass,  
On tiptoe ever, and to and fro.

And the dust lies deep, everywhere, everywhere,  
On the doorstep wide, on the winding stair,  
And as far beside as the eye can scan;  
And it seems, from the hush of both song and prayer,  
That it lies as deep on the heart of man.

And under the sun that molten clings  
In the haze-hid sky, like an omen swings --  
A speck as large as a human hand --  
A voiceless vulture on tainted wings,  
The only shadow to cool the land.

## DARK DAYS ON THE FARM

We'd miss a lot of cheer and fun  
 If things should prove as they appear.  
 Why, there are streaks of glory run  
 Clear through the dark days of the year.

A blazing fire  
 To sit before;  
 A year's desire;  
 Attained, and more;  
 O'erflowing cribs,  
 And barns a-burst;  
 Yams and spareribs,  
 And cures for thirst.  
 And, oh, the jingle we can wake --  
 How clear it calls! --  
 Just any time we choose to shake  
 Our overalls.

Who cares how low the clouds may lean?  
 Who fears because the north wind blows?  
 Why, these are good strong walls between  
 Them and the glad, bright world indoors.

There is content,  
 From envy free;  
 And merriment,  
 And childish glee;  
 And pumpkin pie,  
 And candy stew;  
 And popcorn balls,  
 And Kisses, too.  
 And, oh, that feeling felt always --  
 How sweet its charm! --  
 That comes when come the year's dark days,  
 Down on the farm.

## WINTER VIOLETS

Let winter seem unchary in joyless January,  
But we will never question, and we will never fret;  
For in the woodlands shelter, where dead leaves leap and skelter,  
There smiles at us in passing the winter violet.

O gem in January!  
O little violet,  
Set deep 'mong tints that vary,  
In winter's coronet.

Some say the day is dreary, and that the way is weary,  
But we will never question, and we will never fret;  
For mixed in with the sadness there is a grain of gladness --  
Deep in life's January there peeps a violet.

Yes, life may seem unchary,  
But we will never fret,  
For deep in January  
There peeps a violet.

## PERSUADED

Sun-kissed, free and frolicsome,  
Now the fleecy gulf clouds come,  
    Light as any feather;  
And the woodland violet,  
And the singing birds, forget  
    There was winter weather.

Heigh-ho! heart of mine, come out  
From beneath the clouds of doubt,  
    Worry and repining;  
Be a brave bird and forget,  
Or at least a violet --  
    See, the sun is shining.



## HOMESTEADS

Like vacant eyes the windows stare  
Upon the old field pines;  
The trumpet vines trail up the bare  
Gray walls in zig-zag lines;  
Between the logs the lone winds fare,  
A host that moans and whines.

The sills are sunken to the ground,  
Around them briars grow;  
The doors swing with a mournful sound  
To all the winds that blow;  
And dust-gray webs hang all around,  
And motion to and fro.

The front porch is a wilderness  
Of wreck and running rose;  
The eaves are hanging in distress,  
Succumbing to their woes;  
And questioning, and shelterless,  
A red wasp comes and goes.

The chimney at the gable end  
Is just a heap of earth;  
And gnarled and sooty log-ends bend  
Above a missing hearth  
Like witches, huddled to forefend  
Betrayal of their mirth.

What once were flower-beds now seem  
Like old graves in a row,  
Forgotten, and without a gleam  
Of love-wrought flowers aglow.  
The garden is a jangled dream  
Of something long ago.

And still the year is in the May,  
With hopes of rare perfume,  
When life is brought beneath the sway  
Of promises in bloom.  
But here all speaks of yesterday  
In language of the tomb.

But hush! Beyond the trees somewhere  
A happy woman sings;  
And listen! There are children there,  
Hear how their laughter rings;  
And feel the pulsing of the air,  
Soft as from hovering wings.

And look beneath the branching pines,  
Just on the other side,  
See, there a white wall brightly shines,  
With windows open wide  
That peep from under trellised vines,  
Twinkling and merry-eyed.

For here the north wind had full scope,  
His voice was cold and shrill;  
But there, upon a southern slope,  
The roses bloom at will.  
Time has again fulfilled a hope --  
On th' other side the hill.

Oh! there are things 'most anywhere  
That hearts would fain forget;  
But let us hope that over there  
There are no memories yet,  
While here faint scents still haunt the air --  
Old mint and mignonette.

## AN "OLD THREE HUNDRED" WEDDING

## Invitation

They were a sturdy people no hardships could subdue,  
 A merry aristocracy with heart, and braun, and brain;  
 Home-builders and home-lovers to old traditions true,  
 Children of Mother Nature, and heirs to her domain.

And so when Cartwright's daughter and Widow McNutt's son,  
 After a real courtship, and with their folk's consent,  
 Were to be duly married, the news went on and on,  
 A lilting invitation, to every settlement.

## Preparation

For days huge pots like pendants swung from the Cartwright cranes,  
 And there were fire-banked skillets alway upon the hearth,  
 With "mammy" cooks a-humming above them soft refrains  
 Of old songs about angels in human form on earth.

Then dawned the wedding morning, and festive throngs and gay,  
 In ox carts and in wagons, some horseback, and some not --  
 The neighbors and near-neighbors from many miles away --  
 Found all roads led to Cartwright's, that day earth's central spot.

## Consummation

Tom Duke, the "Big" Alcalde, was there from San Felipe.  
 In Anglo-Saxon fashion he made two lives one life,  
 By pledging fair maid Cartwright and young McKutt to keep  
 Their troth till death should part them, as husband and as wife.

Then there were sighs and laughters, and smiles, and almost tears,  
 Hugging with tender kisses, and fending hands and grips,  
 With wishes softly whispered in bride's and bridegroom's ears,  
 And prayers sent straight to heaven that ne'er touched human lips.

## Provocation

But when you see long tables with good things on to eat,  
 All sentimental feelings are apt to take to flight;  
 And that is just what happened, when they beheld the treat  
 Spread out before them ready to smite their appetite.

They ne'er had dodged a challenge, and ne'er had quit till through,  
 And so they doomed battalions of pones and cakes and pies,  
 Of venison and turkey, and red-hot barbecue,  
 Until the pride of conquest shone in their twinkling eyes.



### Orchestration

After the sumptuous feasting they were prepared to play  
 With all the zest and ardor that made their lives' romance.  
 The rooms were cleared of tables, the things were put away,  
 And grinning black musicians tuned up to let them dance.

Old Mose he played the fiddle, young Mose he "scraped" the hoe,  
 Big Eben beat the clevis, while Dumpy patted time;  
 Long Abel called the figure, and fast, now soft and low,  
 While Dodo did the "humming", and "sot" the tunes to rime.

"If Ah had a scoldin' wife  
 Ah'd whip huh sho's you bohn,  
 Or take huh down to Nuh Ohleens,  
 An swop huh off foh cohn."

or ...

"O git up gals at dawmin',  
 Git up when de sky tuhn gray;  
 O git up gals in de mawmin',  
 Git up at de peep o' day."

### Jollification

The lucky ones wore brogans that spurned the splintery floor,  
 Where moccasins or bare feet for "stomping" had no chance;  
 And so each with the other swapped footgear o'er and o'er --  
 Soft moccasins for brogans -- for every one must dance.

And there they jigged and shuffled, and sang and laughed with glee,  
 The good wife and the husband, the young man and the lass,  
 Until the sun surprised them, as merry as could be,  
 Dancing and sowing jewels upon the morning grass.

### Summation

Among "The Old Three Hundred", a sturdy folk and free,  
 This wedding was an event no other could surpass;  
 So to it has been given a page in history,  
 As that "when Cartwright's puncheons were danced as smooth as  
 glass."

## THE MOCKING BIRD

With a heart full of song, with his whole heart he sings  
Of the common things.  
Out of every sound in the world around  
He builds with marvelous art and skill,  
As some fain would, he as he will  
The tenderest lay  
That was ever sung in the hall of day,  
Or that ever filled the chamber of night  
With pure delight.

The ring of the hammer, the snap of the tong,  
The call of the dove, and the din of the gong,  
And the manifold tunes of the feathery throng  
That at morning rejoices  
In various voices,  
He takes, and he makes into jubilant song.  
And he asks not why  
Of the earth or sky  
How the fewest pause while the most pass by.

With a joyous song, and a flash of wings,  
He leaps to meet what each moment brings.  
Oh, the little flight --  
Be it day or night --  
With its full abandon to life's delight!  
Oh, the little flight when the glad heart fares  
A little ways from its little cares --  
A moment's flight to give fancy rein --  
And the swift return to its cares again!



## THE GRINDING OF THE CANE

These are the days when we grow young again,  
And laugh the laugh of youth,  
And drink the juice of joy and sugar cane,  
That suits our sweet, sweet tooth;  
The day when kisses grow more long and sweet,  
And lovers truly cling,  
And we get stuck to everyone we meet,  
And stick to everything.

We smile to see the mill turn 'round and 'round,  
And never get away,  
And hear it rolling out the same old sound  
Of one old song, all day;  
We smile because we see ourselves right there --  
We never get turned loose,  
But in our round on round we wring from care  
Just lots of rich, sweet juice.

'Tis fun to see the red-hot furnace glow,  
As if it saw the joke  
It plays on the mock sweets that upward go  
In steam, and scum, and smoke;  
'Tis fun, for joy sometimes is full of tricks  
And fools us by its quibs,  
But when time boils it down the goody sticks,  
Tickling us in the ribs.

Oh! these are the days of frolic and fun,  
Though skies may smile or frown,  
When the last harvest of the year is done,  
And all its sweets boiled down;  
Yes, these are the days when we renew our youth,  
And laugh its laugh again,  
And eat and drink, and roll in sweets, in truth,  
Grinding the sugar cane.

# Glowworm and Toad.

(From the Swedish.)

On a little hill,  
 All peaceful and still,  
 A glowworm was living alone;  
 And every night  
 He lighted his light,  
 And knew not how friendly it shone.

But a toad below  
 Saw the glowworm glow  
 And crept out from his filthy lair,  
 And went flippety-flop  
 To the little hilltop,  
 And spit on the glowworm there.

Asked the little glowworm:

"O Toad, in what form  
 Have I harmed you with action of mine?"  
 Said the old toad then -  
 And he spit again -  
 "I hate you because you shine."

Dawn.

Awake! Dawn treads with rosy feet  
 the burning edge of day;  
 Her skirts are bright like yellow wheat,  
 And gleam along the way;  
 While shoulder-deep within the night  
 Her hand holds up on high  
 The morning star, to guide her flight  
 Across the brightening sky.

Noon.

Noon rises on the crest of day.  
 A giant wide and high;  
 His flaming hands point either way  
 Adown the slanting sky;  
 The grasses wither 'neath his feet,  
 The shadows fade and fly;  
 And earth lies quivering in the heat  
 Of his fierce-blazing eye.

Dusk.

Be still! As gentle as a dream  
 of childhood, comes the dusk,  
 Shot through with evening's tender gleam,  
 Perfumed with dew-moist musk,  
 And wraps within her garments' fold,  
 Deep-purpled, rich and rare,  
 The day-worn world grown wan and cold,  
 With all a mother's care.

Night.

A sister of sweet mercy, clad  
 in black, the night does vigil keep  
 Above the world worn fever mad,  
 And soothes it into sleep.  
 And at her beck from realms above  
 The angels bring to earth below  
 Bright memories of trust and love  
 In dreams of long ago.

## NOTE ON "LAPLAND LULLABY"

This newspaper clipping, taken from Chicago News (date missing), was written by Eugene Fields, American Poet. It was found in some of Mr. Sjolander's papers at Mrs. E. L. Scott's home in Cedar Bayou.

"Here is a lovely little poem, written by a Texan -- Mr. John Sjolander -- a native Laplander, but for many years living in the Lone Star State. This is as charming a lullaby as has ever been written. Listen, and you will see a quaint beautiful picture unfold and you will hear the tintinnakulation that heralds the coming of the bell deer."



## Lapland Lullaby.

47

The smoke is up-curling, the embers burn low,  
The bell-deer is coming, ting-ling, o'er the snow,  
With father's swift ackie filled full to the top  
With beautiful playthings from King Elfin's shop.

So wye, wye, my baby, a pipe he will bring,  
With a musical sound as of birds in the spring;  
And a top that goes spinning and singing around,  
Till springtime shall come at the wonderful sound.

And wye, wye, my baby, a magical glass  
He'll bring for to look in - and Winter shall pass;  
The streams shall burst loose from their chains and be free,  
And singing go down through the vales to the sea.

And wye, wye, my baby, the mirroring lake,  
From under its cover of ice shall awake;  
And heaven be smiling with sunshine, and leap  
To earth, and kiss softly the flowers from their sleep.

So wye, wye, my baby, to dreamland we go,  
To wait the deer coming, ting-ling, o'er the snow,  
With father's swift ackie, filled full to the top,  
With beautiful playthings from King Elfin's shop.



## The Prairie Pine.

Rugged and strong it stands with outstretched arm  
 A shelter and a shield  
 Between God's helpless creature and the harms  
 That lurk for them afield.

Here weary wings are folded ~~in sweet~~ <sup>in</sup> rest,  
 When tempest clouds hang low;  
 And safely hidden is the little nest  
 From hawk and human foe.

The wild-eyed cattle, when the sky is blue,  
 Or winter winds blow cold,  
 Beneath its branches of never-changing hue  
 A fastness find, and fold.

Even the winds that never yet have sung,  
 With not a joy to voice,  
 Here find ~~sweet~~ <sup>their</sup> themes to sing, and give them tongue  
 And pass on, and rejoice.

And mute as were the winds that now sing low,  
 So I have often come  
 And sat beneath its shade in silent woe—  
 And then gone, singing, home.

THE TROUBADOUR

Philosophy, Fantasy, Humor and Plain Song

"Of shoes - and ships - and sealing wax -  
Of cabbages - and Kings."

The Walrus and the Carpenter

- Lewis Carroll

## MY SONGS

I gather my songs like the children,  
That playing find pebbles that please them.  
A flutter of wings in the thicket,  
A butterfly, hesitant, darting,  
The stir of the morning wind, waking,  
Surprise me with possible beauty,  
And brighten my work-a-day world.

As children that laugh without thinking,  
I sing without thought of the singing.  
It bursts from a heart that is rugged,  
And leaps to the lips in a ripple,  
And pours itself out as a brooklet  
That springs from the rock, unexpected --  
A glad little thing in the sun.

My songs may not waken the hillsides  
That wall in my place in the valley;  
But there, in the gleam of the morning,  
And there, in the glory of noontime,  
And there, in the glow of the sunset,  
Perchance some sad pilgrim may listen,  
And find some small cheer, and pass on.

So I gather my songs like the children,  
That playing find pebbles that please them.  
They come to me out of the darkness,  
They speak to me out of silence,  
They spring from my toil and my labor  
And for the great blessing to voice them  
My heart is most thankful to God.

## LIFE

Oh! my life is a wind-blown flower,  
A common, uncoveted one;  
But its root grows glad for the showers,  
And its heart turns gold in the sun.  
And never in vain, oh, never!  
Has it held out the empty cup,  
But what God in some way, and ever,  
With something has filled it up.

## THE WAY

I know not what the day will bring  
Of sorrowing; but I have seen,  
    Where passed the shadow  
    O'er the meadow,  
There the grass was deepest green.

I know not what the day will be  
Of joy to me; but I have known  
    Some joys the sweetest,  
    And completest,  
When they were not all my own.

I know not what the day will prove  
Of life and love; but this I know:  
    That be it sadness,  
    Be it gladness --  
Loss or gain -- God willed it so.

For when he planned and made the day,  
He made the way; and be it dust,  
    Or be it dirty  
    Clothed in beauty,  
I will tread it -- I will trust.



## THE WAYWARD HEART

Here at thy feet I lay a wayward heart.  
Take it, O Lord, destroy or save at will,  
And let me lie at peace from it apart,  
For in thy keep alone will it be still.

It is a stubborn heart that oft rebels  
Against thy will, and all its gain is dross.  
Subdue the pride with which it keeps and dwells --  
'Mong thieves, O Lord, impale it on the cross.

It is a wounded heart that hides its pain  
Without a sigh, without a word of prayer.  
Break it, O Lord, and make it whole again.  
With thy great love that all its ills would share.

My soul is hungry, Lord. This heart of mine  
Hath starved it long with prayers from mumbling lips;  
It is athirst, for not a joy divine  
Is in the cup from which it hourly sips.

It is a wayward heart, and full of strife,  
Take it, O Lord, destroy or save at will;  
But this I know, that be it death or life,  
Within thy keep alone will it be still.

## A VISION OF CARE

It seemed, one day, I stole away  
And left myself behind me,  
With all the cares that came to prey,  
And hid, so none could find me;  
But, though unseen, I still could see,  
And saw myself bend double  
To conquer care, and to be free  
From things that boded trouble.

And what a sight! To left and right  
A sky-high wall fast bound me;  
For I had piled, both day and night,  
Troubles and cares around me.  
And where an angel strove with might  
To make a door and build it,  
There lo! I strove to close it tight,  
And with great care I filled it.

Then straight-away, it seemed, that day  
Back to myself I hastened,  
And 'mid my cares I knelt to pray,  
In heart and spirit chastened;  
And as the morning mists take flight,  
By winds and sun-rays driven,  
So faded all my cares from sight,  
Touched by a light from Heaven.

## GIVE US TASKS

We murmur at the tiresome road  
Bestrewn with rocks and boulders;  
We groan beneath the weary load  
Laid heavy on our shoulders;  
We sigh that many tasks demand  
An endless daily tourney,  
That life is dreary in the land  
Through which we make the journey.

We look across the low divide,  
Where things nor kink nor ravel,  
And see rose-bordered roads and wide,  
That carefree people travel;  
A song seems floating from their lips,  
No burden do they carry.  
Fate speed them on, while duty grips  
Us tight, and bids us tarry.

Not for the smooth, rose-bordered way,  
Nor for the lighter burden,  
We will not, envious, ever pray  
As life's most valued question.  
But let this be all that we ask  
As life's most precious dower:  
"God gave us power to do our task;  
Not tasks to fit our power."

## MY LIFE IS LIKE A RIVER

My life is like a river fed by many crystal streams,  
Unto whose song the notes still cling pure from the land of dreams,  
Of joys that are forever new, of things well worth the strife --  
The blessings piled up heaven-high, fresh from the source of life.  
And so my life flows full and free where banks of flowers press,  
A river fed by crystal streams from life's high fastnesses.

My life is like a river that is flowing through a land  
Of sunshine and of shadow by loving heaven spanned;  
A heaven into which it looks, and never looks in vain,  
In winter for some sunshine, in summer for some rain.  
And so my life flows on serene, by fears all unaffected,  
A river in whose tranquil deep God's stars see heaven reflected.

My life is like a river from some hidden higher source,  
And has its destiny marked out despite its winding course;  
For when it's turned this way and that, it loves to think a Hand  
Does guide it so its overflow may bless some desert land.  
And so my life unfettered flows, sure that some need it serves,  
A river with few obstacles, but many bends and curves.

My life is like a river on whose flower-bordered brinks  
There is laughter from sweet children, and songs from bobolinks;  
Their forms are mirrored in it, and the memory of them stays,  
A glory and a gladness to be with it all its days.  
And so my life flows on and on, a gladsome thing and free,  
A river on its way to meet its final destiny.

## LIFE AND LOVE

If he has life and has not love,  
 He sits beside an unlit fire;  
 But has he love he is rich above  
 Life's maddest longing and desire.  
 For life has wine  
 To cheer and bless,  
 But none can sip  
 The draught divine  
 Till love does press  
 It to the lip.

If he has life and has not love,  
 His gold is but a load of care;  
 But, Oh, with love is he blest above  
 A many million millionaire.  
 For life has set  
 A surer sign  
 For sweet content,  
 That none can get  
 But through love's wine  
 And sacrament.

If he has life and has not love,  
 His lot is barren in the land;  
 And he is like a goodly glove  
 That lacks a warm and pulsing hand.  
 For life is aye  
 A golden cup,  
 When love comes there  
 Some sunny day,  
 And fills it up  
 With its sweet care.



## TREASURES

There is a treasure-house within,  
Where God alone is bidden;  
And not a thief nor Time can win  
What there is held and hidden.  
And still they are but little things --  
By worldly values measured,  
But once possessed they ne'er take wings  
From where they lie, deep-treasured.

There is a loving word, perchance,  
A gift received when needed;  
A little smile, a tender glance,  
When anguish mutely pleaded;  
A gentle touch of finger tips,  
When all passed on, unaiding;  
And words that died upon the lips  
That trembled in upbraiding.

Or there may be of hope a ray  
That in some heart we lighted;  
A grateful look upon the way,  
For some small wrong we righted;  
The knowledge of a mercy shown  
To someone low and lonely,  
That none beside ourselves has known,  
Except the good God only.

Ah! pleasure palls, and wealth takes wings,  
And friendships fail and grieve us;  
And pain and tears, nor sorrow, clings  
More close than joys that leave us;  
But treasured memories none can take,  
Though all things else are taken  
And holding them, when all forsake,  
We still are unforsaken.

## The Visionary.

It's fears none made a road for him, his doubts have carved a way,  
And he stands shoulder-high in light, where there is break of day.  
He sees a host of purple rays led by the morning star,  
Overwhelm the phalanxes of night in fields that fade afar,  
And he is a <sup>strong</sup> <sup>musical</sup> <sup>voice</sup> rise from the deeps and slopes,  
The gathering of centuries of songs, and prayers, and hopes.

The flush of rose is on his brow the bright dawn in his eye,  
And he drinks all the glory in of earth, and air, and sky.  
Above the sea of molten blue the gold-tipped temple spires,  
And silver mountain peaks, gleam out, a thousand beacon fires;  
While on the shores that seem afar his kindling eyes behold,  
Within the vast deeps of the promised day unfold.

Then how his hope the earth o'flows his thought swift time outstrips!  
And all the joy a heart can feel makes eloquent his lips.  
He speaks the promise he has seen, he sings the song he hears -  
The song of every human heart the hope of all the years,  
When light shall lead to perfect peace, and love to brotherhood,  
And <sup>man</sup> shall speak the voice of God that life is very good.

## IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

It might have been, we sigh, and look regretful.

For sad regrets are thankless brats to nurse;  
They pull, and tug, and tease, till we grow fretful,  
They dim our eyes, and make our hearts forgetful  
Of things that be which might have been much worse.

It might have been. Oh! let glad thoughts employ us,  
And life grows rosy like a damsel kissed  
Just think how much we have to make us joyous,  
How much of fret that came not to annoy us,  
How many might have beens of ill we've missed.

It might have been. But that shall no more grieve us!  
This firm resolve shall put ill dreams to rest;  
And sad regrets shall never more bereave us,  
For we'll maintain -- till death might undeceive us --  
That what each day brings forth, that is the best.

## GLEANINGS

We hear a song of sweet accord  
    In one faint work,  
And read out life's long afterwhile  
    In one shy smile;  
And one small hand that softly clings,  
    A treasure brings  
Worth more than all the wealth of kings.

One flower stands out from all the rest  
    The loveliest;  
One day among a host of days  
    Is bright, always;  
One treasure among treasured things  
    Most pleasure brings;  
One memory the closest clings.

For as the glad, glad earth does hold  
    Both dust and gold,  
And as the wide, wide sea uphurls  
    Both sand and pearls,  
So life that every pleasure brings,  
    Its treasure flings  
Hidden among the common things.

## IN PLEASANT PLACES

Haven't got no work to do, only what's my own;  
Nor a care to tote aroun', 'ceptin' me alone;  
Whistlin' when the thought comes slow, sighin' when't is sad,  
And by tryin' to I can-just-be-glad.

Haven't got a foe worth shucks, just myself to blame;  
Nor a frien' that isn't true, tho' a few are lame;  
Grumblin' if things don't come right, an' perhaps get mad;  
But by tryin' to I can-just-be-glad.

Haven't got a single want, just the fewest needs;  
Have no hankerin' to do -- only common deeds;  
Work a while, an' rest a while, not too good or bad,  
An' I can, by tryin' to, just-be-glad.

Grandest world that ever was -- this here world of ours!  
Never saw the like before -- beats old Eden's bowers!  
Love an' kisses, cakes an' pies, oodles to be had,  
No use tryin' to be sad -- must-be-glad.



### The Critical Crow.

He would have been a likely crow among crows  
That smartly caw within the woodland maze,  
Only he strayed into the low hedgerows,  
Where sang the nightingale sweet summer's praise.

He drank the music in, and learned by rote  
Each separate trill that heavenward was borne;  
He critically analyzed each note,  
And took the measure of each pricking thorn.

He picked his moonlight, free from rift or flaw,  
And chose white roses, and warm winds that blow;  
Then, like some men, for song he made a law  
That even nightingales might heed, you know.  
But when he sang by it - "caw-caw, caw-caw!"  
It would have shamed a self-respecting crow.

## AFTER THE VICTORY

We have waded through deep seas of trouble,  
And come out to the shore with a song;  
We have lifted life's burden laid double,  
And to its proportions grown strong;  
We have fronted the foe and not quivered,  
And fought him, and conquered him, fair;  
But we stood in the darkness and shivered,  
Afraid of what never was there.

We have met what misfortune has sent us,  
And made it to serve some good end;  
We have faced the storm's fury that bent us,  
And curbed it, and caused it to bend;  
And the wounds of the strife have healed over,  
And the scars are a faint make-believe;  
But we never will fully recover  
From the hurt that we failed to receive.

## THE SINGER

Hard toil had calloused palm and finger tip,  
And paled the smooth cheek's glow;  
A full heart's anguish trembles on her lip,  
And sorrow bent her low.

Her eyes that looked afar were dimmed with tears,  
No light or brightness there;  
Sunless her sky had been for years and years,  
With darkness everywhere.

But when a cry came from her close-clasped arms,  
Near to her mother breast,  
She smiled to still a little child's alarms,  
And sang its fears to rest.

And never was a song more sweetly sung,  
Nor ever song more true,  
Than that which from that utter darkness sprung  
Its terrors to subdue.

## Dreamers All.

A dream-brought thought is back of each attempt.  
See in the street the crowds that push and surge,  
They had thought-bringing dreams and feel the urge  
To do the things they dreamt.

Shapers of life are dreams. Within them lies  
The future - its progenitors are they.  
Through them, if followed close, is found the way  
To light 'neath darkened skies.

It is in dreams the hidden is unfurled:  
In them creation's secret is laid bare,  
Through them mankind is helped to do and dare  
To make a happier world.

For in our dreams shines the eternal light  
That lighted the Divine when in a dream  
He saw a million worlds in glory gleam -  
Made out of empty night.

In dreams song's harmony finds voice and birth,  
In them the beautiful first charms the eye,  
In them our temple spires pierce the sky,  
Uniting heav'n and earth.

O singing dreams that chant of victory,  
How good it is to sit and dream 'mong you,  
And, listening, dream again bright dreams and new  
Of victories to be.



## ENFANS PERDUS

When she was fair and proud and young,  
A lovely sprite and gay,  
Lost him 'round whom all future hung  
Upon her wedding day.  
And since that time a curtained gloom  
All day keeps guard within her room.

But when the evening star hangs low,  
A light to soothe earth's din,  
The curtain rises slowly, so  
The star may peep within,  
And light it with its friendly ray,  
Baring what ne'er was seen by day.

For there she sits at peace at rest,  
With dream-shine in her eyes,  
Holding a doll close to her breast,  
Crooning soft lullabies,  
Easing her heart, resting her hands.  
We may not -- but God understands.



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## FACE TO THE LIGHT

We are meant to be glad, we are made for good cheer,  
And our hearts are for laughter and song;  
But we often get sad when the prospect looks drear,  
And we feel there is something gone wrong;  
But we say 'tis our luck, or misfortune, or fate,  
Or the impish ill-will of the elves,  
Never knowing, or dreaming, till almost too late,  
That the trouble is all in ourselves.

They may tell us there are many various ways  
In which to accomplish a thing;  
But there is but one way, though we try all our days,  
To be glad, and to laugh, and to sing;  
And that is, as whoever will try it shall find,  
Not to look to the left or the right,  
But to leave ourselves and our shadows behind,  
By turning the face to the light.

## PICTURES FOR A PRINCESS

A picture, Princess? See my canvas there?  
 It is a blank, and I have none to show.  
 But -- but perchance -- I might find words with care,  
 And tell you one, if it would please you so.

Oh! it would please me.

Then you must behold  
 How one by one the pictured parts unfold;  
 There is a mist-veiled wood, its path all dim,  
 Bordered with thorns. The trees stand stark and grim,  
 With pendant dewdrops, black, on leaf and limb;  
 And one small bird  
 Hid among leaves no merry wind e'er stirred,  
 Sits ruffled and unheard.  
 And in the valley, dark a small stream shows --  
 With pools like eyes  
 That blindly stare at non-existent skies.

Oh! death in life?

No, life where naught inspires  
 Life unaware of what the heart desires.

Inspiration?

Yes, Princess. But she came  
 As lovely as a morning dream -- white flame --  
 With cheeks rose-flushed, and eyes whose merry glance  
 Made everything she looked at leap and dance.  
 And the dim paths grew wide and bright with morn,  
 And all the bordering brambles stood disarmed,  
 Bowing her coming, charmed  
 Showing a rose where there had been a thorn.  
 The trees came all alive, and the black dew  
 Turned sparkling gems, and then into a brew  
 The pale sun sipped and grew  
 Warm-hearted and full-orbed. 'T was Beauty's hour,  
 When life awakes and finds itself in flower.

What of the little stream?

Oh, from the hills  
 A hundred little rivulets and rills  
 Fed it and made it strong. Then it went on --

'Neath skies alight with moon, and star, and sun,  
 Dashing o'er obstacles, and leaping deeps,  
 Until it swept around the headlands far,  
 Glad in the morning light, and found the sea.

O brave, brave stream! O happy, happy sea!  
 But there was, too, a bird.  
 Please make a picture of him.

Ah, yes. He dreamed he heard a bird come winging,  
 And woke up singing.  
 And when he looked about, a bird -- the queen  
 Of all the birds that he had ever seen --  
 Sat on a limb, half-hidden, just above him.  
 And he sang songs to her, songs old and new,  
 But if she heard she gave nor sign nor clue;  
 And then he flew.....

Oh! tell me, did he fly  
 Away somewhere, and mope, and pale, and die?

No, he flew up to her,  
 And sidled close. She did not move nor stir;  
 But when their shoulders touched -- soft wing to wing --  
 An ecstasy set them both quivering.  
 And thus they sat.....words are superfluous.

And thus they sat? Sir Artist, illustrate!

Thus, Princess, thus.

## A GHOST

'Twas night within the wood. From overhead,  
By moon or star, not any light was shed;  
And like a shadow, lighter than the night,  
A trodden path turned sharply to the right.

And one for whom my heart with hate did burn  
Would come that way that night; and he would turn  
His back upon me, where concealed I stood  
Beside that shadow-pathway through the wood.

And he would sing, perhaps; but that would serve  
To steel my heart and steady hand and nerve.  
And in my mind, with that one purpose fed,  
I heard him come, and pass, and saw him -- dead.

And now, when'er we meet, by day or night,  
I feel my heart grow cold, my face turn white;  
For though we smile, as passing friends beseem,  
He is the ghost -- the dead man in my dream.



## O VIOLIN

O violin, violin, all through the years,  
 You have throbbed to my songs, and have sobbed to my tears;  
 My joys and my sorrows, my hopes and my fears,  
     Have I told you,  
 Who was glad with me, sad with me, tender and true,  
     Tender and true.

Once we loved all the world, in the days long ago;  
 Next we loved but our friends, and our God-given own;  
 But now we have love for our loved ones alone.  
     We love but a few,  
 Who are glad with us, sad with us, tender and true,  
     Tender and true.

O violin, once were our cheeks rosy red,  
 Now their surface is rough, and their lustre is fled;  
 But, oh! not in vain has the brightness been shed,  
     At least not by you,  
 Who was glad with me, sad with me, tender and true,  
     Tender and true.

We have friendship for friends, and kind words when we meet,  
 We have smiles of good cheer when acquaintances greet,  
 But love is for love through both bitter and sweet.  
     We love but a few,  
 Who are glad with us, sad with us, tender and true,  
     Tender and true.

A Rose.

Elusive as the red that faintly tips  
The waking rosebud, dreaming yet a while,  
So was your little, near, yet far off smile,  
That flashed a promise from half-parted lips.  
And like the sun that nothing can control,  
But controls all, and bade the rosebud open,  
So love prevailed, and filled the world with hope,  
When you breath'd low the word that made life whole.  
And even as the rose that blushing bent,  
To take the warm caress the sun bestowed,  
So you looked down, while smiles of beauty glowed  
Upon your face, taking love's little sent.  
But not till now, held close, when winds come cold,  
Did you look up, baring your heart of gold.

## IN OCTOBER WOODS

Lying still and listening underneath the trees,  
Listening to the spirit of the lazy breeze,  
Just a drowsy whisper, neither far nor near,  
Like dream-music falling on a dreamer's ear.

"Don't care if I rise or fall,  
Don't care if I move at all,  
Just-don't-care."

Eyes go shut and open, only half and half,  
Feels so good it tickles, but is too gone to laugh;  
Don't know where my feet are -- over there somewheres.  
Don't know where my head is -- and who cares?

"Don't care if I rise or fall,  
Don't care if I move at all,  
Just-don't-care."

Had something that bothered -- must been long ago.  
Had something, or had it not -- Just don't know;  
Just don't care for anything but the lazy breeze  
Whispering to the golden leaves twinkling in the trees.

"Don't care if I rise or fall,  
Don't care if I move at all,  
Just-don't-care."

## MY NEIGHBOR

He and that bird they call the lark  
Must be birds of a feather,  
For he just sings from dawn till dark  
In all blamed sorts of weather;  
The cold don't seem to make him sneeze,  
Or blizzard winds to pelt him,  
And he just laughs, sweet as you please,  
When hot days try to melt him.

His children -- dang 'em, ain't they cute --  
Are gay as any posies;  
His wife -- I envy the galeot --  
Is brighter than a rose is.  
And when she speaks he never grunts,  
But comes and goes a-dindling;  
Why he can sing -- sing doin' stunts  
Like splitting wood and kindling.

I know he has more friends than I,  
Stored up like bees store honey;  
But I have more, much more, laid by  
In wealth of lands and money.  
But shucks! I'll quit this senseless thing,  
For man must strive and labor.  
Still, darn it all! Why can't I sing,  
And be just like my neighbor?



## The Town Clock.

They do not understand. No more do I.

I'm just a clock ~~that~~ and move my hands  
My white-enameled face, and know not why.

A brazen bell I regularly sound,  
And every one but I seems moved thereby.

Some mystic numbers on my face are found;

My iron hands are fates none dare deny.  
That what I blindly do does hold them bound. -  
They do not understand.

To other oracles that stand renowned,

I know not what I tell, but men rely  
On my signs and sounds with faith profound.  
Even even think I teach old Time to fly!  
Yet I am regulated, oiled, and wound,  
They do not understand.



"WELL, I DECLARE"

Old Silas lived threescore and ten  
 Of years, to him one long surprise.  
 To ways of women and men,  
 To ways of fleas and fools and flies.  
 To reptiles crawling on the ground,  
 To swift birds flying through the air,  
 Wide-mouthed, but one comment he found:  
 "Well, I declare!"

It was the same from morn till night,  
 From night till morn, and everywhere;  
 When life was dark, when life was bright,  
 When doctors told him, have a care,  
 When preachers preached with all their might,  
 When judge and jury bade him swear.  
 Surprised, he answered, wrong or right:  
 "Well, I declare!"

When someone said the earth was round,  
 And others said the earth was flat  
 The disputants he would confound  
 By saying nothing but just that.  
 When he was told, Oh! this is hot,  
 It seemed to take him unaware,  
 And he would gasp out as if shot:  
 "Well, I declare!"

One summer day Old Silas died  
 And friends sad tears above his shed;  
 He passed beyond the great divide  
 That parts the living from the dead;  
 But from the blue and tender skies  
 Down through the sun-lit summer air  
 A whisper came of glad surprise:  
 "Well, I declare!"

## THE KISS

"The Japanese have no word for 'kiss'". - Extract

Oh! What blisses rare they miss  
 Who from fragrant lips and sweet  
 Never stole a little kiss.  
 And their lives how incomplete,  
 When no gleaming eyes they meet,  
 Daring them -- Oh, heavenly bliss! --  
 The sweet thieving to repeat.  
 Oh! What blisses rare they miss.

What is love without a kiss?  
 Grapes that never went to press;  
 Heaven without a breath of bliss;  
 Smiles shorn of their tenderness  
 Barmicidal feast, I guess,  
 Where hearts starve for what they miss  
 At the board of emptiness.  
 That is love without a kiss.

And -- Oh beautiful Meliss!  
 Pouting? What is the mishap?  
 Ah, I see. O land of bliss!  
 And I what a lucky chap  
 In not being born a Jap!  
 Then I couldn't steal -- this,  
 No, not though I were your Pap.  
 Could I, happy-eyed Meliss?

# OURSELVES THE BIRDS AND BABY

Never had no voice to sing -- makes the baby cry  
 Every time it goes "ting ling". There's no use to try.  
 But some people would go daft, and some folks turn dumb,  
 Could they hear the baby laugh when we start to hum.

Oh, that laughing baby!  
 When we start to hum.  
 Ain't we happy, maybe?  
 Um, um-um, um-um.

Never had to voice to sing; and no gift of words,  
 Every time a song we bring, how we scare the birds!  
 But it just beats everything how they come and come,  
 Singing as but birds can sing, when we start to hum.

Oh, the birdies singing!  
 When we start to hum,  
 And the joy they're bringing!  
 Um, um-um, um-um.

Oh! What is the lack of words, or the lack of voice,  
 So the baby and the birds, and our hearts, rejoice?  
 Let whoever will be sad, and their thoughts be glum,  
 But for us we shall be glad, and just hum and hum.

Are we happy, maybe --  
 Um, um-um, um-um,  
 Ourselves, the birds and baby?  
 Um, um-um, um-um.

## BEACHED

Oh, the chances of life,  
Like the waves from the sea,  
Have rolled in and gone back,  
And left nothing with me.  
For I found some too large,  
And I thought some too small,  
And some were but foam --  
Of no value at all.

Only one did I see  
Had no blemish nor lack,  
But I let it recede,  
--And it never came back.

## TOM PASSAWAY

## I

Tom Passaway owned leagues of land.  
A land poor man was he;  
With lots of longhorn cattle, and  
All fat as they could be.

To live he had to take long strides,  
And use both gun and ax,  
To get in tallow enough and hides,  
To sell, and pay his tax.

## II

Then people came from everywhere  
And saw the country's charms,  
Land hungry folk who said they were  
In search of homes and farms.

To Tom this was the great event.  
He sold ten farms each week,  
And then they named the settlement  
.....Passaway Creek.

## III

Ere long they built a road and bridge,  
And next they built a store  
This side the creek, and up the ridge,  
Along the road, built more.

The road in time became Main Street.  
And streets grew every day,  
Till now it smiles -- sun-kissed and sweet --  
The town of Passaway.

## IV

This year Tom built a new high school,  
And gave it to the town.  
Last night they chose a board to rule,  
And win the school renown.

The voters with a merry hum  
Picked Schlowitz, Bump, and Bore.  
And, yes, of course they honored Tom --  
They made Tom janitor.



## THE "JUDGE"

To see him in the street it seems an error  
To call him Judge, the friendly little sport,  
Who wags his head and laughs a blithe "ha-ha".  
But, oh, on Mondays then he is a terror,  
A feudal tyrant from some ancient court,  
Whose whim is rule, whose every word is law.

Lawyer and client--he groups them together.  
If deferent is proved innocent,  
He fines the lawyer his whole fee because  
It is unearned. Then he flings the tether,  
And fines the next because by argument  
He would shield crime, and circumvent the laws.

And then came neighbor Dow and neighbor Dundee,  
Both fighting mad, and to the court lay bare  
A tale 'bout cats, with vail and countervail.  
Then says the Judge: "Judgement reserved 'till Monday,  
And let me caution you that if you dare  
Appear here then, I'll send you both to jail."

## HUNCHBACK JIM

Jim Hopper had more stored up egotism  
In his small body than  
The whole of Passaway could ever show;  
But even so, he had more optimism  
To back it up with than  
The whole of Passaway would ever grow.

To look at him he seemed most pitiful,  
So pale, and pinched, and small,  
A little hunchback mite no bigger than a child;  
But Passaway, the whole blamed city full,  
To him seemed mean and small  
When he compared them with himself, and smiled.

For Jimmie thought he was the only one  
That was worth noticing  
In the entire Passawayan bunch --  
That he stood out distinct, the lonely one,  
Whose greatness men must sing --  
No back like his had such a lovely hunch.

As he saw life he lived it, dutiful,  
And died an egotist  
In Passaway that meant so much to him.  
And what he thought and felt was beautiful  
Was beauty others missed.  
Ah, some of us have often felt like Jim.

## SIMON MOLE

If there were joy in many farms and lands,  
And happiness in much of gathered gold,  
And sweet content in houses joining hands  
Beside long streets, then were life's fulness told.  
But Simon Mole for these his best years spent,  
And ended sad, unhappy, discontent.

He walked alone -- men looked at him askance.  
He frowned on things -- the children ran away.  
Bowed down he passed -- he must have felt the glance  
Of women's pity like a piercing ray.  
What had he missed? He wondered with a frown,  
Was he not rich, the richest man in town?

Then one day "Hunchback Jim", the human rod,  
Spoke to him thus: "Say, Simon Mole", said he,  
"You look so sad, I think I'll ask of God  
To hunch your back, so you can laugh like me."  
The words were like a life-reviving draught,  
For Simon humped himself, and laughed, and laughed.

## GRANDMA BIMMER

Her eighty years were her eighty teachers  
They were her servants too. When duty called  
They came and went, and gave, and took away.  
But always they left behind some gift for her --  
Some beauty she had sought to fill a place  
In life unsightly. But best of all,  
They brought her heaven-inscribed talismans  
Bestowing blessings -- trust and faith in God,  
And love for all mankind.

And now she sits  
In beauty garmented, with all the gifts  
Her four score years have laid before her feet.  
And all in Passaway, the rich and poor,  
May come and share them, and none ever yet  
That felt her hand, and heard her gentle voice,  
Or saw her love-lit eyes searching their hearts,  
But what have passed on better satisfied  
With life. For, oh, Grandma has loved and lived,  
And next to God all know she understands.

## ONE PERFECT DAY

It was brought to him into the dark, somewhere,  
The one perfect day, in the long ago;  
And its wine he quaffed, and he sang and laughed,  
Till the face of him shone with a wondrous glow;  
And the sky leaned down upon every side,  
And its balm was poured, and his wounds were healed;  
And Life, as sweet as a smiling bride,  
Unveiled to him, and stood out revealed.

For some one -- but who there was none could tell,  
If a man, or a woman, or only a child --  
Someway, somewhere, with the tenderest care  
Had met him, and hailed him, and sped him, and smiled;  
And whichever way that he chanced to look,  
On the earth below, or the sky above,  
He saw how the pages of Life's great book  
Were writ in a thousand ways with love.



## SOMEBODY

Somebody said that the world was bad,  
And there was no use to deny it.  
And somebody said that it made him sad,  
And there was not a thing to make him glad,  
That there was no use to try it.  
And somebody went from place to place,  
And a frown did the whole world show him;  
And a hang-dog look was on every face,  
With no outward beauty nor inward grace.  
The somebody -- did you know him?

Somebody said that the world was glad,  
And there was no use to deny it.  
That the joke was on him who would still be sad  
When the good outweighed, oh, by far, the bad.  
Oh! say, did you ever try it?  
And somebody went from place to place,  
And a smile did the whole world show him;  
And a happy look was on every face,  
Showing inward beauty and outward grace.  
The somebody -- did you know him?

## SING A SONG

There is not in the universe so small and mean a thing,  
But what the God Almighty gave some sort of voice to sing.  
And what a happy world 'twould be, and what a joyous throng,  
If all would use the precious gift, and each one sing a song.

Oh! get up in the morning!  
And sing a little song,  
And through the hours that follow  
Just hum it right along.

And what a happy world 'twould be, and what a joyous throng,  
If all would use the precious gift, and each one sing a song.

Oh! would not things be humming then, and would not things come right,  
When there would be no frown to fret, and not a blame to blight?  
For frowns that fret and blames that blight make everything go wrong,  
But, Oh! it would not be that way if life were filled with song.

Oh! get up in the morning,  
And sing a little song,  
And through the hours that follow  
Just hum it right along.

For frowns that fret and blames that blight make everything go wrong,  
But, Oh! it will not be that way when life is filled with song.

## LET US WORRY

Let us worry a bit -- let us worry;  
We can't be everlastingly glad;  
If we do we are sure to be sorry  
When the day comes at last to be sad.  
Let us worry today  
For the sorrow  
That may darken our way,  
On the morrow.

Oh, we know that a surfeit of honey  
Is but pain in attractive disguise;  
That the long days -- the pleasant and sunny,  
Bring the short days and lowering skies.  
Let us worry, just some,  
For the sorrow  
That may come, or not come,  
On the morrow.

No, it won't do to sing and to whistle,  
And to be everlastingly glad;  
There are thorns on the rose and the thistle --  
Even love has been known to be sad.  
Let us worry today,  
And look sorry,  
Too-ree-lee, too-ree-lay,  
Let us worry.

## ONE SONG FOR TWO

Two are singing in the dawn,  
Two together closely drawn;  
(Time is tangled in the rhyme.)  
In that hour is all of Time.

Two, apart, sing in the moon,  
Two are singing the same tune.  
(Time at dawn lies tangled yet.)  
They are singing to forget.

Two, apart, sing in the night,  
(Time lies where the morn is bright.)  
Keeping May in cold December:  
They are singing to remember.

## SUMMER ALL THE TIME

With one accord we call the summer blest,  
 And praises of its smiling sky we sing;  
 For there how gaily all the earth is drest --  
 How beauty peeps from every living thing!  
     O lips, and hearts, and eyes,  
     Be glad and gaily sing,  
     And smile like summer skies  
     That earth's bright beauties bring.

Let it be summer always in the heart;  
 Then joy will never fail to find a way  
 To keep the naked winds of ill apart,  
 Making of life a lengthened summer day.  
     O lips, and hearts, and eyes,  
     Strow sunshine on the way;  
     Sing songs of summer skies  
     Through all the living day.

What have gray clouds to do with summer skies?  
 Or winter winds within a sunny cline?  
 Let us have summer until summer dies,  
 And then dispute it with old Father Time.  
     O lips, and hearts, and eyes,  
     Sing life is in its prime;  
     Sing under summer skies --  
     'Tis summer all the time!



## IN PRAISE OF EGOTISM

Hail! Quickener, that keeps this frame up straight,  
 And make the slowing feet keep up the gait;  
 That nerves the palsied hand to deft employs,  
 And gives the wobbling head a prideful poise;  
 And shuts a gaping world, (or think you do,) by  
 outward splendor, from an inside view;  
 Walking serene life's way, making believe  
 No slur or slight can cause the heart to grieve.

Great central self, round which the small world moves,  
 That feels, but must not care who disapproves;  
 Lighting the way that no one may be lost  
 Without returns for the tremendous cost!  
 For, set above the common ones who toil,  
 How can one ask a price for burning oil?  
 And were it offered? Ah! behold the flare  
 Of burning blushes flashing through the air!

Gentle by birth, but hardened in life's school,  
 The inward worth out-weighs the outward fool.  
 And having walked from outer marge to marge,  
 The understanding has grown broad and large.  
 Yet, only satisfied there is no lack,  
 The outward fool would hold the wisdom back,  
 Only, somehow, once every little while,  
 It breaks out in a nod, or wink, or smile.

Live on, rule on! Ignore the caustic smile!  
 The lesser selves but praise whom they revile.  
 The true approval is the conscious pride  
 One feels in being fully satisfied.  
 Yet, with a modest mein accept the praise  
 When it comes upward, and in proper phrase,  
 With grand assurance to the bowing few  
 That praise will find its way to where 'tis due.

## THE POETRY SOCIETY OF TEXAS

June 9, 1923

(An Interpretation)

His years had made him oblivious to words,  
But had vouchsafed his vision instead;  
And he saw what seemed like a flock of birds  
That spilled some softly musical notes  
From quavering throats,  
In tune with the word-songs read.

He asked: What are words? Have they ever voiced  
The glory that gave them birth?  
And he looked and saw -- and his heart rejoiced --  
That after each poem read there came  
Flashes of flame  
From eyes that saw more than earth.

And then he knew what the words had meant,  
For loosed from the lips' control  
He saw how their spirit veils were rent,  
Each word a part  
Of a message whispered from heart to heart,  
And from soul to soul.

He knew not the words of the poems read,  
But he saw in each singer's eye,  
That loosed they had been interpreted  
By the listening  
To mean: "If thou wast not gifted to sing,  
Thou wouldst surely die."

## HYMN OF COMMERCIALISM

(Has been translated into German)

Mine is the rule and rod  
 That knows nor love nor God.  
 I am the force that flays; mine are the mills that grind  
 The harvest's human grist into one common kind;  
 I bind the bad and good  
 As in one brotherhood,  
 And laugh to see them serve before the hollow shrine  
 Where hearts and souls turn dust, doing the will of mine.

No friendships do I know;  
 My creed is: foe and foe;  
 And soon my followers know the masked smile's deceit,  
 And how the helping hand, when grasped, holds but defeat.  
 The truth is made to mean  
 The lie that it would screen;  
 I am the whole; all else my rite requires  
 To be the sacrifice upon my altar fires.

There are no sacred things;  
 All have cash valueings.  
 I teach that faith is vain, because it does not earn;  
 I claim that love is loss with only love's return;  
 And hold that there should be  
 Some gain from charity.  
 I even dare to take, to serve me and my creed,  
 Pure childhood's tender love -- a mother's God and creed.

I laugh at right and wrong;  
 The best must be most strong;  
 Only one sin I know, and that one is to fail,  
 When love or liberty and conscience does prevail.  
 I set my seal upon  
 What in my name is done;  
 What serves my aim I own, what does not, I deny.  
 The might and right is mine -- God, man and devil, I.

## THE PEOPLE

It is well with the world, my masters,  
It is well with the world and you,  
While we move along with a smile and song  
'Mid the tasks we are set to do.  
And the smile and the song of the People  
Should be ever your compass and chart;  
Oh! it's well with you while the song rings true  
That pours from a People's heart.

It is ill with the world, my masters,  
It is ill with the world and you,  
When our eyes look down, and our faces frown,  
At the tasks we are set to do.  
Beware of the frown of the People,  
Lest their wrath and their patience part!  
Oh, let not a wrong ever burden the song  
That comes from a People's heart.



## FOR HUMANITY'S SAKE

For right and for humanity the cause was made the Lord's;  
He smiled upon the banners, He breathed upon the swords;  
He strewed the land with mercies, like flowers along the way,  
And every tyrant trembled upon his throne that day.

To him that much is given, of him is much required.  
Who wars for sweet humanity for war is twice attired;  
For where one fight is fought and won, another is begun,  
And it were well the first were lost unless the last is won.

Deep in the victor's heart, O Lord, let thy sweet spirit rest!  
Permit not that the conquered for Self's sake be opprest;  
But that, where law and justice clash, the law might bite the dust,  
And he stand out against the world, twice armed, who dares be just.

A nation's fate does gather slow, a man's is swift in growth,  
But justice sure is meted out in equal parts to both.  
So wave, O banners, pure and bright, untarnished gleam, O swords -  
For right and for humanity, the cause is still the Lord's.



## RISE TEXAS SONG

Rise, Texas Song, on Wings of Melody,  
 Artlessly dressed in natures garb and free.  
 Rise tenderly a lowly drifting song --  
 A simple, strong, a slowly lifting song --  
 Heart-high to hearts that dare not sing, but would  
 If you were made to tell them that they could.

Rise, Texas Song, and wake with tender voice  
 The silent soul, and teach it to rejoice.  
 Sing, humble like, an artful aiding song,  
 An everyday, a heart persuading song,  
 That makes the listeners feel that they are heirs  
 To all that's Texan -- that your song is theirs.

Rise, Texas Song, and fill the humdrum days  
 With lilting ditties and glad roundelays.  
 Rise 'mong the farms and sing them planting songs  
 And songs of the harvest -- earth enchanting songs --  
 Contented songs -- 'till not a living thing  
 Shall feel too poor to have a song to sing.

Rise, Texas Song, and sing the beauty here,  
 That lives, and fades not in a day or year.  
 Sing of the land that has more story-glory,  
 And of the people with more glory-story,  
 And where more beauty lights the humblest home,  
 Than Greece ere dreamed, or ever dawned on Rome.

O Texas Song! So wondrous, new and young,  
 With dreams of song, just waking to be sung.  
 Sing on, sing on, your hope inspiring songs  
 Your heart-uplifting, life-desiring songs,  
 Until all hearts are vocal in the land,  
 From blue Sabine to Golden Rio Grande.

## THE AMERICAN GIRL

She is famed the world over, and well she might be,  
 For there is not another as priceless as she;  
 She is flawless and pure as the one Ko-hi-noor,  
 And like her there never can be any more.

From the tip of her toe,  
 To the top of her curl,  
 She is beauty aglow --  
 The American girl.

There never yet was, and there never can be,  
 A ruler of hearts as resistless as she.  
 At the smile on her lips, at the touch of her hand,  
 We stand ready to do as she chose to command.

From the tip of her toe  
 To the top of her curl  
 She's a queen, you must know --  
 The American girl.

She has wisdom and wit, and she knows her own mind,  
 And her heart is just right to be tender and kind  
 She must have what she wants, and she wants her own way,  
 And her way is so sweet there is no more to say.

From the tip of her toe  
 To the top of her curl  
 She's resistless we know --  
 The American girl.

Let her hurry and marry, or live life alone  
 Let her leave us or grieve us, or make us her own,  
 Let her do what she please, let her say what she will --  
 She can't help but be the most glorious still.

From the tip of her toe  
 To the top of her curl  
 She's our pride, you must know  
 The American girl.

## Ballade of Old Shoes.

We love old shoes. We love to wear them, though  
they show some signs of disrepute, in spite  
of all the gloss we carefully bestow.

We know they can not stand inspection, quite,  
That we must keep them in the doubtful light,  
Or flush them where the shadows come and go.

They're not respectable when in full sight  
We know, but hope that no one else will know.

We love old shoes, not for the way they grow,  
Not for the way <sup>they</sup> lean to left and right,  
Nor for the wrinkles and the bumps they show,  
For these, we know, won't stand inspection, quite;  
At least not closer than the knave or knight  
That stands within them with his cheeks aglow;  
For, somehow they seem builded to indict.  
We know, but hope that no one else will know.

We love old shoes, not that our taste is low,  
Or that we love the less the new and bright,  
But they are easy - say, on so-and-so -  
And something that won't stand inspection, quite.  
But in them, somehow, we can stand upright,  
And not show more than half our real woe.  
It takes so little to put ease to flight;  
We know, but hope that no one else will know.

### Envy.

We love old shoes because they hide our plight,  
And man is something more than heel and toe,  
But even these won't stand inspection, quite,  
We know, but hope that no one else will know.



The Crowd.

I want not a home on a far away isle,  
 Nor a place among the haughty and proud;  
 For my heart wants to sing and my lips want to smile,  
 And I love to shake hands with the crowd,  
 And say 'Howdy' and 'Howdy' each glad little while,  
 And say it out hearty and loud.

I want not a place where the silences dwell,  
 Armed tones in deep-sheltered nooks;  
 For my eyes want to read what books never can tell -  
 What none ever can write into books -  
 The wonderful strength and the magical spell,  
 Of the crowd in its actions and looks.

I want not a height where to view things afar,  
 And see ills that are coming this way;  
 For I care not one whit how the distances are,  
 So the crowd that I love is kept gay.  
 Oh! a fig for a thing that the morrow may mar,  
 So my neighbors are happy today.

Oh! a crowd for my share of what joys may be mine,  
 And I care not what else may befall;  
 To touch elbows and look into eyes all a-shine  
 And hear voices that cheerily call;  
 Just a crowd where we feel that one blessing divine  
 Is a blessing that blesses us all.

Tolstoi

He stood serene, untroubled by the night,  
 For he had grown heart-high into the light;  
 And when he saw where law and justice clashed,  
 When him the thunders rolled, the lightnings flashed,  
 And swift he hurled his bolts, and winged them straight,  
 To point the way, and blaze a road for fate.

He stood serene where others could but mock,  
 For he had built his faith upon the rock;  
 And though all powers in this whirling world  
 Their fierce anathemas against it hurled,  
 They could not move it, nor its beauty mar;  
 Its piercing light no darkest frown could bar.

He stood serene, for he had sunk the dark  
 Of human blindness to the breast-deep mark.  
 He knew that when the eye could look above,  
 The heart would answer to the light of love;  
 And where love is, the eye will see a way  
 Out of the darkness into light of day.

He stood serene where dangers piled up high,  
 He dared to speak, and live, nor feared to die.  
 O brother of the seer! you looked afar,  
 Beyond the creed of priest, and prince and czar,  
 And saw the dawn of that great day to be,  
 When they, like you and yours, should dare be free.



What is a kiss?

What is a kiss?

It is

The press wherein the sunniest  
And sweetest grapes of life are pressed.

What is a kiss?

It is

The cup that holds the sparkling wine,  
'Round which life's freshest laurels twine.

What is a kiss?

It is

Of every joy on earth the sum,  
A foretaste of a heaven to come.

What is a kiss?

It is

An ecstasy, a death, a birth,  
And heaven is no more than earth -  
A place of bliss.

## Pity

I saw a strong man shiver, shrink and quail  
 Before thy glance, and he was strong no more;  
 I saw one bravely unkind fate assail,  
 One little word - it chilled his brave heart's core;  
 I saw one weeping for a frail love, dead,  
 One little smile - in death the sobs were hushed;  
 And one was joyous as he onward sped,  
 One little gesture - hope was lying crushed.

I saw an outcast, steeped in darkest vice,  
 Dead to all virtue, whose bold, brazen cheek  
 For years had never felt shame's reddening flush,  
 Give Pity glance for glance thro' bleary eyes,  
 And answer boldly as acquaintance speak,  
 And, lo! - a miracle - give blush for blush.

Where Joy Abides. .

What is a fast to you  
 May be a feast to me;  
 From heights the deeps you view,  
 From deeps the heights I see.  
 You look for things to be,  
 And long for things afar;  
 But Joy abides with me -  
 We take things as they are.

A strong and stately craft  
 Must save you from the sea;  
 But any sort of raft  
 May succor bring to me.  
 You say how things should be,  
 To make life frolicsome;  
 But Joy abides with me -  
 We take things as they come.

You strive with all your might,  
 From worry I am free;  
 Sadness is yours at night,  
 Gladness the dawn brings me.  
 Your heart for things to be  
 Sighs ever soon and late;  
 But Joy abides with me -  
 Serene we sing, and wait.

# "A SCOTTISH CORNER"

## The Haggis

A piece of beef that's guid and lean,  
A lambie's pluck baith sound and clean;  
Parboil: And when in proper state,  
Mince the ane, the ither grate.

A pint of oatmeal lightly brown'd,  
A dozen onions strong and sweet,  
With suet, saut and pepper ground,  
Mix with guid will amang the meat.

Noo temper a' with broth until  
The juice rins free. Then wet and fill  
The bag sae white. For hours three  
Then slowly boil this mystery.

## Remarks

The gods of auld that were divine,  
Feasted on milk, and meal, and wine,  
And Passed away in the lang syne,  
At Fate's cauld blink;  
But we hae found a fountain fine,  
Baith meat and drink.

And feasting there nae care can grieve,  
Nae foe survive, nae friend deceive,  
And Fate a chaplet fair does weave,  
Round every brow,  
To which eternal youth does cling,  
Some way, somehow.

Let wha sae will be kings and queens,  
Great dudelums and high serenes,  
But we, our wifies and high weans,  
Hae sweeter lots,  
For meat like this interpit means  
The world to Scots.

- Galveston News  
September, 1896.



## THE MEMORY OF HOME

There is an isle within the troubled sea,  
A blessed place where there is peace and rest;  
However fair all other isles may be,  
This one, all mortal men agree, is best;  
For there the lights are kept both night and day,  
That none that braves the sea be cast away.

This isle alone contains the spring of youth,  
Where all Time's frailties by love are healed.  
There earth's white angels dwell with gifts to soothe,  
And heaven's angels watch, and ward, and shield.  
And God has leaned the sky much nearer there,  
To grant more readily unselfish prayer.

Who leaves this isle to go on any quest --  
Fortune's or fame's, a place above all men --  
A secret hope keeps hidden in his breast,  
That what befall, he might return again;  
And though all other hopes may fade and die  
This one will live till life's last hour rolls by.

For birds may sing elsewhere with swelling throats,  
And flowers bud and burst in perfect bloom;  
But morning's joy seems missing from the notes,  
And spring's new gladness from the rare perfume.  
Even the winds that bring the mirth of May  
On twinkling wings, somehow, seem tipped with gray.

And the attained? Though it shapes destinies,  
It is still but the shadow of a dream,  
For life is measured by its memories,  
And is not what it once was wont to seem;  
For all things pale and die 'neath heaven's dome,  
But last of all the memory of Home.





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## APPENDIX

An incomplete list of newspapers, periodicals, and books in which John P. Sjolander's writings appear or in which there is a bibliographical sketch of his life. Mr. Sjolander contributed to foreign periodicals and newspapers also, but their names are unknown.

- - -

The New York Weekly

Bonner's New York Ledger

Saturday Night

Peterson's Magazine

Galveston News

Farm and Ranch

Holland's

New York Independent

New Orleans Times - Democrat

Texas Review

Galveston Tribune

Chicago Daily News

Writers and Writings of Texas

Biography in America

A Survey of Texas Literature

Southern Literature

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## SALT OF THE EARTH AND SEA

John P. Sjolander  
P. D. Turner Co., Publishers,  
Dallas, 1928

ContentsSection One: Songs Afield

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Spring of the Woods  
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The Old Rail Fence  
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 Notes on Rhymes of Galveston Bay



## POEMS LISTED IN RESEARCH PAPER OF MARIE COURSEY

Sul Ross State College - July, 1949.

Title: Footprints of John F. Sjolander on the Sands of Time

At the Grave of Burns  
 Coffee  
 God Knows Best  
 Angels  
 Recompense  
 The Hosts of Night  
 Where Is My Country  
 The Poet's Limitations  
 The Rain Frog  
 After the Storm  
 If We Were Wise  
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 Point Sesenta

Donna Mia  
 After Care in Autumn  
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 After the Victory  
 Sonnets From Winter Fields  
 All Get Paid But Mother  
 At Night Among the Flowers  
 The Eternal Circle  
 February  
 A Fence Post  
 A Sparrow  
 The Golden Cup  
 The Hoe  
 Hush-A-Bye  
 Lapland Lullaby  
 Lead On Bright Star  
 The Master Song  
 The Night  
 The Racers  
 The Sweetest Song  
 To A Clod  
 A Scarecrow  
 Treasures  
 Unknown  
 Where Joy Abides  
 The Wings of Morning

"ABOUT THE PEN GIVEN DAD IN 1888"

These lines are affectionately inscribed to the memory of Luigi C. Solari, who died at Galveston, July 16, 1888, aged six months.

GOD KNOWS BEST

Across the billows to the sunset land,  
Her pure young spirit, like a snow-white dove,  
    Has winged its flight.  
And we stand murmuring on earth's darker strand  
That she has left us for a home above;  
    And now 'tis night.

But she sends greetings through yon gleaming star  
That shines the brightest in the cloudless blue,  
    High in the west.  
"The ways of God are many near and far,  
And past our finding out, but they are true,  
    For God knows best."

- John P. Sjolander

"The mother of this baby, Mrs. Tina Traversa Solari, loved the poem so she gave my father a nice pen bought in Galveston, and he wrote all of his writings and correspondence with it from that time until his death in 1939. The pen is still in good condition."

- Personal interview with  
Mrs. E. L. Scott, Sjolander  
Road, Cedar Bayou, Texas.  
November 28, 1949.

