

BEYOND OF LA FOLLERA  
AND OTHER POEMS

BY  
ELLEN SHEILA HILL





Contemporary Poets of Dorrance (353)

**LEGEND OF  
LA POLLERA**

And Other Poems

By

**EILEEN SHEILA HILL**



**DORRANCE & COMPANY**  
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TO MY "GOOD NEIGHBORS"  
Berta, Angelita and Hilda

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LEGEND OF LA POLLERA  
AND OTHER POEMS



## LEGEND OF LA POLLERA

LIKE a shining emerald jewel  
In Oceanic nuptial band,  
Where the sun in kingly splendor  
Splashes gold with Midas' hand—  
Where the rain unwinds in silver threads  
From endless spools on azure loom;  
And tapestry of color spreads—  
Spun from Nature's bright cocoon.  
Where ocean lips lie closely pressed  
Against her verdant fertile breast—  
Lies the land of lost enchantment,  
Lies the land of Panama;  
Lies the land of rhythmic tambor,  
The "Land of La Pollera"!

From the hills of Andalusia,  
And the Gypsies' truant way;  
From the shore-line of Valencia,  
Come tales of those who say  
La Pollera, in its embryo  
Was conjured by their spell,  
And to China, Spain, and Mexico  
Her hair adornment fell—  
Gold mosquetas, that twin lobes sway!  
Peinetas de Balcón—tembleque!  
See the heavens dripping silver,  
See the sun through sparkling rain;  
See each dawn in Panama,  
La Pollera born again!

Countless times her roots are cultured,  
Husbandry of lore—ten-fold!  
Countless are the stories nurtured  
On the soft lips of the old—  
Of the crown of bright tembleque  
Of upturned pert babucha  
Of the flora—fauna display  
(Petit Punto de Marca)  
Of the skirted spiral staircase  
Of frosted mundillo lace!  
    Told in color panorama,  
    Told in picaresque design;  
    The birth of La Pollera  
    Told in nature's muted rhyme!

In colloquial derivation  
Is seen authenticity  
While name gives confirmation  
To her Spanish history  
Hooped skirt, once reminiscent  
Of dress of old world Spain—  
Parted coiffure, twin descendent  
Of ornate comb's mantilla reign.  
The hoop—now forfeit to her clime,  
Brocade silk—to passing time!  
    Accenting rhythmic movement free,  
    Típico de Panama!  
    Reflecting allegorically  
    The seed of La Pollera.

To the Indian of Ocu  
In the Province of Veraguas  
Can be traced, origin true,  
Of the patterns reproduced  
On two tiered blouse and batiste skirt  
With twelve yard width swinging free,  
Embellished so—by hand expert  
In diary stitch, for all to see!  
Depicting thus romantically,  
Portraiture pictorially,  
    Of Butterflies' "Atlantis Flight"  
    Of Orchid Queen of Jungle Throng,  
    Of the whole delirious sight—  
    La Pollera's Flower Song!

On the pin cushion, 'mundillo'  
Native fingers nimbly plot,  
The lace insertion, shoulder low,  
Held in place by 'borla' knot.  
Each lace suspended ruffle flares  
Disclosing with airy drift  
Ribbon badges in 'galon' pairs—  
Denoting color motif  
Omit bracelet from her Jewel Song!  
(Badge of Slave, does not belong)  
    In tambor beat enraptured,  
    In rhythm tamborito.  
    In melody recaptured,  
    In garb of La Pollera!

Sift through all of truth or fiction,  
Score legendary saga—  
Sift the past of proved tradition,  
Sort recorded trivia.  
Sift from timeless allegory  
Of fable, myth, and memoir—  
I like best the story told me,  
By an aged Paisana,  
Near the winding Changuinola,  
Near the Pueblo Zegala,  
    Of the very first Pollera  
    Of the chain with which she's girth—  
    The enchanted web of Panama  
    Since dawning of her birth!

It starts "Había una vez"  
As in fairy tales of yore—  
Rose a mermaid, full of grace,  
Rose from depth of ocean floor;  
Rose by vestal light of moon,  
Rose before the world's first dawn,  
Rose where powdered sun is strewn,  
Where poetry of song was born—  
'Neath Southern Cross of jewelled star  
On flame-gold strands of Panama!  
    Thread each bead on History's needle  
    Weave on cloth of Panama.  
    Knit together nature's riddle  
    To fashion "La Pollera."

Caught in spell of her environ  
By each new and wondrous sight,  
All unmindful of the potion  
Granted—of amphibious delight,  
The enchanted Naiad lingered  
While she listened to the song  
Of the zephyr strum of palm frond  
And orchestral insect throng.  
Charmed by mesmeric choral lay  
Tarrying so—found with dismay  
    According to the old man's tale,  
    Herself denied ocean retreat.  
    Where once had been a fish's tail,  
    She now possessed two mortal feet!

Filled with remorse the mermaid wept  
Until by tears exhausted.  
Then, one by one, the while she slept—  
Crept forth on stealthy tread—  
The jungle creatures, bold and shy.  
Bewitched by her happy face,  
Curious now to see her lie  
A limpid note of liquid grace.  
Quickly formed their Jungle Plan  
To costume her with due élan  
    In the moon dust of the sky  
    In silken petal flora.  
    Dipped in bowl of rainbow dye,  
    The robe of "La Pollera."

From the gold in flowing river  
Fashioned they, the tembleque.  
On spiral curls that quiver,  
Their exquisite models sway.  
In fascinating effulgence,  
The Orchid Queen is seen ;  
As in replica transference  
From her native jungle scene—  
Spider, Moth (*Oncidium Papilio*)  
Holy Ghost (*Espiritu Santo*)  
    In the land of light and shadow  
    In the land of Panama  
    Where orchid monarchs mirror  
    The crown of La Pollera.

Indians brought their horde of gold  
From the hills of Darién ;  
Pressed and stamped and formed and rolled  
Into links of chain, and then  
From the slender shining mass,  
While the maid slept on and on ;  
Shaped the delicate mosquetas—  
Shaped twin Peinetas de Balcón.  
Shaped to form the chain Cordona—  
Shaped to make Cadena Chata.  
    Deck with gold and silver jewel  
    Embellish La Pollera !  
    Poetry and music rule  
    The heart of her first wearer !



Then the jungle creatures skurried  
In the race to do their share  
All the spider spinners hurried,  
Weaving cloth for her to wear.  
Spun mundillo lace from stardust  
Cut from banyan leaves, babucha  
Sprinkled thousand red hibiscus.  
In gay Punto de Marca.  
'Galones' snipped from rainbow end—  
'Borla' dipped in matching blend!  
    See the tapestry of beauty  
    Of the land of Panama.  
    See the jungle passamentrie  
    The land of La Pollera.

Rose the mermaid from her sleeping  
To behold their magic gift.  
Ceased forever all her weeping  
As the jungle heard her lift  
Silver voice in pæan of song.  
With light heart and foot-step airy  
For her adoring wild-wood throng,  
Whirled in dance 'til all unwary  
She discovered (to complete the tale)  
She was now once more with tail!  
    Left her song's immortal boon  
    On the shores of Panama,  
    Left 'neath virgin light of moon—  
    The song of La Pollera!

So with rising of the moon  
On the eve of world's first dawn,  
Leaving naught but foot-prints strewn  
Where La Pollera was first born;  
Returned the mermaid, fair of face,  
Returned to home on ocean floor;  
Returned the mermaid, full of grace,  
Returned to sea for evermore—  
Leaving seed of ocean fauna  
On the tip of gold Cordona  
    A miniature amber fish  
    Talisman of La Pollera!  
    Inscribed with her immortal wish—  
    "Abundance" for her wearer!

Like this ball, forever rolling  
Gathers light on every side,  
So each legend with each telling  
Enhances her historic pride.  
In the beauty and significance  
Of her native costume lore  
La Pollera is synonymous  
With her birthright—Panama.  
Embraced by color rhapsody  
Clasped by arms of azure sea  
    Lies the land of lost enchantment,  
    Lies the land of Panama;  
    Lies the land of rhythmic tambor,  
    The "Land of La Pollera"!

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

PANAMA—Is an Indian word meaning "Abundance of Fish."

LA POLLERA—National dress of Panama.

MUNDILLO—Native hand-made lace or insertion.

CADENA CHATA—Flat gold chain.

CORDONA—Long gold heavy chain.

TEMBLEQUES—Hair ornaments made from gold and semi-precious jewels and patterned in the shape of flowers.

PEINETAS DE BALCÓN—Tortoise-shell combs decorated with gold and pearls and worn in the hair on either side of part.

MOSQUETAS—Gold and pearls earrings patterned in the shape of a rose.

BABUCHAS—Shoes of felt or similar materials, without heels, and always the color of the wool in the Pollera costume. These shoes are worn by the girls with The Pollera and Montuno costumes. In appearance these shoes resemble a pump with an upturned pointed toe and without heel.

TAMBORITO—National dance of Panama.

TAMBOR—Crudely made native drum fashioned by the natives of the Interior by hollowing out pieces of logs and stretching pigskin over the hollowed surfaces.

HABÍA UNA VEZ—"Once upon a time."

GALONES—Colored ribbons about 4" long 2" wide, worn in pairs at center back and front of waistline.

BORLA—Pom-pom of colored wool worn at center back and front of neckline on blouse.

## E L T A M B O R I T O

Mi Pollera! Mi Pollera!  
Song of joy of Panama!  
Sound the tambor, beat the hand!  
Hear the rhythm of the land!

Hear the throb of sea at play,  
Watch the palm fronds bend and sway.  
Mi Pollera! Mi Pollera!  
Song of dance of Panama!

Hear the rush of Chagres might,  
Watch the butterfly in flight.  
Mi Pollera! Mi Pollera!  
Dance of joy of Panama!

Like all flowers lean to sun—  
With the beat of tambor drum,  
Like a rhythmic magnet star—  
Calls the dance of Panama!

Dance, dance El Tamborito!  
When tambor drums beat low.  
Dance, dance El Tamborito!  
To the music's endless flow.

Skirt held high by finger tip,  
Curtsey, bow, glide, and trip  
Through the movement of the dance,  
Through each measure's gay romance.

Arms wide spread as boy meets girl  
See her quickly turn and twirl  
From his arms' feigned embrace,  
To the tambor's quickened pace.

Straight of shoulder, swivel hip,  
See the dancer whirl and dip,  
Flirting shyly with soft glance,  
To the rhythm of the dance.

'Neath the skirt's mundillo lace,  
Gay babucha peep and trace  
Nimble steps that give no inkling  
Of the dancer's wheeling twinkling.

Smooth dark hair is all aquiver  
With tembleque's trembling shiver,  
Though her head's sedately held,  
Dance of joy cannot be quelled.

Faster, faster, beat the hand.  
As the dancer's feet are fanned  
With the boy's doffed sombrero  
Hail! Hail! El Tamborito!

Mi Pollera! Mi Pollera!  
Dance of joy of Panama!  
Sound the tambor, beat the hand!  
Hear the rhythm of the land!

---

*El Tamborito is the National Dance of Panama. It is primarily a dance of courtship consisting of quick gliding flirtatious movements; usually danced in the National Pollera Costume.*

## CARNIVAL

A W A K E ! Awake! O Panama! Don quick your  
festive gown!

Now, La Flor de la Reina blooms,  
And earth is flooded with song's warm glow.  
Now, Gods of Mirth, on golden looms  
Weave colored masks of joy to throw  
Across the face of those who frown.

O God of Mirth and Raillery! King Momus take your  
throne!

Your wild, gay, giddy court awaits  
Your sceptered sway and mock decree!  
"First order of the Day, it herein states,  
Is Song and Dance and Revelry!  
A sober face, we'll not condone!"

Awake! Awake! O Panama! Tambor throbs on morn-  
ing air!

Doff sanity if sanity  
Holds but the taste of bitter rue.  
In this brief hour of Jubilee,  
Such things as song and laughter woo  
Your living, and your pulses stir!

Beat, beat, beat, drums of old slave days, hear tambor  
rhythm call!

Hear the deep bass of the Caja,  
With bollidos pounding, pounding!  
Hear with minor keyed Pujador,  
High pitched Repicador sounding  
Invitation to the dance to all.

To the tap, tap, tap of hammer song! Build your corner  
toldo

On every garland festooned street.  
Build it safe and build it strong  
For El Tamborito's dancing feet.  
While glad rejoicing singing throug  
Chant 'Guararé' and 'Mi Negro'.

For the Queen of Momus' hand, choose the fairest of  
the land!

Honor her with ceremony—  
With homage due a royal Queen!  
With courtiers, pomp, and pageantry,  
The like of which is only seen  
When Momus waves his royal wand.

With the crowning of the Queen, make haste the cele-  
bration!

Let Conquistador and Pirate raid  
The city walls in mock pretense,  
Kidnapping maids, whose ransom paid  
With song and dance and mad nonsense,  
Are willing slaves to captivation.

Hear the clop, clop, clop of horses' feet, in mounted  
cavalcade!

See Queen and Court in gay Montuno,  
With her banners bravely flying—  
Ride like wind to far Juan Franco  
Where kingly steeds are proudly vieing  
For the Queen's Royal Acolade.

Now the sabbath's dawning light, heralds bright Pollera  
Night!

When youngest to the oldest, dress  
In Pollera and Montuno!  
And feet of youth and aged express  
A salute to El Tamborito—  
The Nation's song and dance delight.

O hurry, hurry, hurry! Make way for the Grand  
Parade!

Through serpentine and ribbon crepe  
Through confetti mosaic street  
Where buffoon clown and demon ape  
Youth and beauty all en fete  
In Carnival's Mad Masquerade!

On the dawning of Ash Wednesday, on the shores of  
Panama

To a torrid drum cantation,  
By sun's rising light is seen  
Ceremonial dedication—  
The "Burial of the Sardine"  
In red-gold seas of Panama.

O God of Mirth and Raillery, your moon is on the wane  
Your midnight bell has tolled once more  
As 'Tuna' procession flashes  
Through the streets to temple door  
Receiving Ritual of the Ashes  
Symbolic closing of your reign.



## EXPLANATORY NOTES

- CARNIVAL**—The annual celebration of Carnival in Panama originated in the year 1673 and takes place the last four days preceding the Lenten Season. The celebration consists of a mock ceremony of the sacking of Panama by Morgan, and election of a Carnival Queen. Celebrants dress in native Pollera and Montuno and other costume dresses, and the four days are given over to dancing, feasting, and merry-making.
- LA FLOR DE LA REINA**—Bougainvillea, Flower of the Queen.
- KING MOMUS**—The God of Mirth and Raillery who descends from Olympus to rule the Carnival days.
- TAMBOR**—Crudely made native drum fashioned by the natives of the Interior by hollowing out pieces of logs and stretching skin over the hollowed surfaces.
- CAJA**—Large drum, barrel shaped, both ends covered with leather. Is used to carry the bass tune.
- PUJADOR**—Small wooden cylindrical drum with upper end covered with leather which causes the minor and mournful beat of the music.
- REPICADOR**—Small wooden cylindrical drum with upper end only covered with leather, which causes the high pitched gayer tune which directs the movement of the dance.
- BOLLIDOS**—Wooden drum sticks.
- TOLDO**—A square wooden platform of any size, not necessarily raised above the ground, erected on street corners, in parks and various conspicuous

places for the express purpose of dancing native dances. These platforms have no roof but a narrow railing around them with poles evenly spaced between which colored decorative flags are strung.

EL TAMBORITO—National Dance of Panama.

'GUARARÉ'—Native song of Panama (Mejorana).

'MI NEGRO'—Native song of Panama (Tamborito).

CONQUISTADOR—Early pioneers and settlers of Panama.

MONTUNO—One of the National costumes of Panama next in importance to La Pollera, and is worn by the men.

JUAN FRANCO—The National Race Track at Panama City where the Carnival Classic is run during (Sunday) Carnival Season. The Queen of the Carnival and her Court and followers form a mounted Cavalcade and ride to Juan Franco where the Queen awards the trophy to the winner of the Carnival Classic.

BURIAL OF THE SARDINE—This is an ancient Panamanian custom. The word Panama is derived from the Indian word meaning "Abundance of fish." At sunrise, on the morning of Ash Wednesday the Carnival celebrants in gratefulness for prosperity return to the sea their thanksgiving token—the fish.

TUNA—A group or gathering of merry-makers who, at the close of festivities, parade in columns with lighted candles through the streets.

RITUAL OF THE ASHES—At dawn and daylight, on Ash Wednesday, the celebrants go to the temples

to receive the ashes of penance in the sign of a cross on their forehead signifying that they have done away with merry-making and wordly pleasures for the forty days of Lent. Usually the ash is derived from the burning of the palm fronds which on the previous Palm Sunday were blessed and distributed to the Churches.

## MORGAN'S RAID ON PANAMA

(1671)

THE sky was a pool of darkness and damp was the  
cheek of the land,  
When the light of the earth was blotted by Morgan's  
bloody hand.  
Not a star winked bright in the heavens and sealed were  
the eyes of the night,  
The moon in the dark was hiding,  
Hiding, hiding—  
As inked by the Spirit of Evil, he unfurled his flag of  
blight.

Where ribbon of purple laneway threads the Bay of  
Panama,  
Where needle of San Anastasious points luminous lode-  
star,  
Where the Southern Cross swings low against the  
velvet throated sky!  
Hear in the wind's night sighing,  
Hear in the Ocean's cry,  
Prelude to prayer of the dying—immortal lullaby!

Fresh blood dripped from his cutlass and it stained red  
the seven seas  
When the City of Portobello buckled to his knees,  
Then in shameful pride Sir Henry cried, in his eyes his  
greed foretold,  
I'd have yet one more prize, Panama!  
Fair Panama—  
Shall yield her gold to the sword of this pirate bold!

With artful cunning culled from years of similar bloody  
deeds,  
He picked his soldiers, a score or more, best fitted for  
his needs,  
To seize at the mouth of the Chagres, the Fort of San  
Lorenzo—  
(The Butcher needs his block for cutting,  
Cutting, cutting—  
His slaughtering crew, a base from which to strike the  
blow).

Again and again by arrow point, the raiders met  
defeat—  
The Indian archers' swift rain of steel, forcing their  
retreat,  
Driving Brodley to seek safety in the sheltering ravine.  
Then Pirate, from his back,  
Plucked bloody shaft of steel,  
Which, fired from his musket, ignited their powder  
magazine.

Like puppets on a crimson screen, in flame etched sil-  
houette,  
The King's men now were brightly seen on burning  
parapet—  
An easy mark for Pirate fire—a shooting massacre  
Of blazing comets lighting,  
Lighting, lighting—  
Candles in the sky, as Fortress falls, a Morgan Victory.

Deep in the forest of jungle, deep in the tangle of trail,  
The inferno of Dante was naught to the Hell of each  
pirate's travail,  
For hunger was like a rodent always gnawing at his pelt  
And his tongue, with a thirst was bleeding,  
Bleeding, bleeding—  
And the madness of some and the death of a few was  
the blow that the jungle dealt.

Seven days passed ere they sighted a column of black  
chimney smoke  
Kindling the lust, speeding the greed, their avid desires  
bespoke,  
But their mirage was a desert of hunger, their oasis  
nothing of worth,  
Las Cruces rang with their raging,  
Raging, raging—  
At the simple Paisanos' oblation—their tithe of scorched  
earth.

Crawling through fungus of forest, like snake on its  
tortuous way,  
The raiders gained sight of their quarry at close of the  
eighth long day—  
Of soldier in battle array, of Paisano and beast of the  
land!  
O city of golden quest!  
O fabulous jewel  
So soon to be plucked from verdant breast by Morgan's  
cruel hand!

Palm fronds whispered and banyan leaves echoed the  
night wind's sighing  
And the bowl of the sky was red-rimmed and brimful  
from crying  
While the wash of the ocean on the curved margin of  
shore  
Became a rondo of weeping,  
Weeping, weeping—  
As creeping like viper on soft jungle floor the raiders  
crept silently, silently fore.

Brave were the King's men—outnumbered they fought,  
and in desperation,  
Wild bullocks were loosed to stem the rapacious inva-  
sion.  
On swept the blood thirsty roaring tide, cutting the  
soldiers down in their stride,  
O, pity the city in her hour of dying,  
Dying, dying—  
While over her ramparts her heart wept its dark crim-  
son pride.

And the groans of the trampled rose on the smoke per-  
fumed night air  
And the moans of the dying were something fearsome  
to hear—  
As with grim fortitude and firm belief in their right  
The wine of their life was flowing,  
Flowing, flowing—  
Spilled generously, riotously, in a fast losing fight.

When with looting and vandalism, the proud city's laid  
waste,  
The torch of fire is applied, her shattered beauty, flame  
embraced.  
Four weeks the city burned until all was devastation—  
O the cruelty and pity!  
His rape of the city!  
The shame and the pity of such wanton conflagration.

Drunk with power and with red hate, Morgan's cruel  
insensate band  
Stole from storehouse, home, and church, pillaged and  
despoiled the land.  
Sacked the castle and cathedral, robbed the coffers of  
their gold!  
The funeral pyre forever mounting,  
Mounting, mounting—  
While Pirate King kept counting, counting his loot of  
Pirate Gold.

While guns burst their rocket of fire, wounding the  
city's fair face,  
Draping Cathedral spire with mantilla of scarlet lace,  
Black cloak of protection was painted, concealing the  
Altar of Gold;  
Pirate greed vainly seeking,  
Seeking, seeking—  
As the aged priest buried his treasure beneath blanket  
of earth's soft mold.



The plains before the City ran red with pride and valor,  
The ocean's mobile image matched moon and stars'  
    night pallor,  
As scourge of pirate hate, billowed to relentless heat.  
And like ill wind, blowing,  
Blowing, blowing—  
Out the candle flame, the King's men, one by one, were  
    blasted to defeat.

Laden with gold and silver and with pearls beyond  
    compare,  
Taking six hundred prisoners to be held for ransom  
    fare,  
With beast of carriage numbering two hundred more  
    or less,  
The Caravan of Morgan—  
Vulture of the Sea,  
Journeyed back to Chagres Fortress o'er the trail of  
    Las Cruces.

The sky was a pool of darkness and damp was the  
    cheek of the land,  
When the light of the earth was blotted by Morgan's  
    bloody hand.  
Not a star winked bright in the heavens and sealed were  
    the eyes of the night,  
The moon in the dark was hiding,  
Hiding, hiding—  
As inked by the Spirit of Evil, he unfurled his flag of  
    blight.

Where ribbon of purple laneway threads the Bay of  
Panama,  
Where needle of San Anastasious points luminous lode-  
star,  
Where the Southern Cross swings low against the  
velvet throated sky!  
Hear in the wind's night sighing,  
Hear in the Ocean's cry,  
Prelude to prayer of the dying—immortal lullaby.

The centuries walk in quiet, ghostly shadows kneel in  
prayer  
And soft in the moon's white embrace forever is hal-  
lowed there—  
Vestigia Flammae—escutcheon and spoor of her  
people's seed.  
In the benediction of evening hush,  
Hush, hush—  
In the flush of each blushing dawn—muted litany of  
their creed.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES

MORGAN—Sir Henry Morgan, Pirate and Scourge of  
the Caribbean, 1668-1671.

SAN ANASTASIOUS—The Cathedral of San Anastas-  
ious in Panama la Vieja (Old Panama) destroyed  
by Morgan, the ruins of which still stand.

PORTOBELLO—The City of Portobello (Beautiful Port)  
at the Atlantic Terminal of Las Cruces Trail with  
a Fort girdled harbor, was the first Isthmus city  
to fall to Morgan.

CHAGRES—Chagres River, which flowed across the Isthmus to the Atlantic was used for transporting gold and silver from Panama to Portobello.

SAN LORENZO—Fort of San Lorenzo which guarded the gate of the Chagres on the Atlantic Coast.

BRODLEY—Captain Brodley one of Morgan's Pirates who with 4 ships and 400 men successfully captured the Fort of San Lorenzo.

LAS CRUCES—Las Cruces, small hamlet near the Pacific end of the Cruces Trail. The inhabitants fled at the approach of Morgan, burning their houses, gardens and buildings before fleeing.

PAISANO—Man of the country—not city. One who lives in the interior or country region, or who was born in the country.

BANYAN—Banyan tree, native tree of Panama.

PRIEST—Tradition and legend credits Father Vicente, of the Order of Augustine, with painting the famous Golden Altar (Church of San Jose) black to escape the covetous eyes of Morgan and his men. Later it was buried in the sands of Panama and recovered after the departure of the Pirates.

## THE BLACK CHRIST

(El Cristo Negro)

IN the valley of shifting sands,  
His feet annointed by the sea,  
On the shores of Portobello,  
Walks the Man of Galilee!

Close to Nombre de Dios!  
Close to the changeling sea  
In the Town of Portobello  
Molded and carved of ebony—  
Symbolic El Cristo Negro  
Finds perpetual sanctuary.

Enshrined in the faith of the old,  
Blessed in the eyes of the young,  
Belief in its miraculous  
Power, is ever on Native tongue,  
As tale of El Cristo Negro  
Again and again is re-told.

Many a long, long year ago  
At seventeenth century mark—  
One October night, as black as crow,  
Cowed by angry sea, a Spanish Barque  
Sought shelter at Portobello

With Cartagena's prized cargo—  
A gift, 'tis said, of Queen of Spain!  
The Black Christ lay in ship's dark hold,  
And peace fell on the ocean breeze  
And sea slept calm on shore threshold  
As Captain, noting storm's wrath cease  
Prepared to make sail once again.  
Then seas and wind in protest rose,  
Turning ship's bow back once more—  
A Sailor's Sign, that Gods oppose  
Her leaving Portobello's shore!  
Fearful of their good ship's loss  
If she should crash upon a reef,  
In panic haste, the sailors toss  
In superstitious sea belief—  
The Black Christ from their cargo!  
On their sturdy backs the Natives  
Hoisted high their precious load,  
Carried it through jungle maze  
To the Church of its abode—  
The Church in which the town still prays  
And its bright legend ever lives.

Then throughout that jungle region  
Plague and fever spread its ill  
(Their town alone, of disease free,)  
The grateful Natives offering still  
For the incredulous to see—  
Their Thanksgiving dedication!

Thus each October Anniversary  
On Portobello's lonely shore  
By candlelight procession  
Lives the parable once more—  
In humble assimilation  
Of Him who walked to Calvary!

In the valley of shifting sands,  
His feet annointed by the sea  
On the shores of Portobello,  
Walks the Man of Galilee.

---

*The Black Christ (El Cristo Negra) is one of the few Black Christ statues remaining in the world. The one in the ancient Church of Portobello (Stronghold of the Spanish Main) is over 300 years old. Tradition claims that this statue (Gift of the Queen of Spain) was originally intended for Cartagena. The ship carrying the Black Christ was forced by storms to seek shelter in the Bay of Portobello. Every time the ship attempted to continue its voyage high seas and wind forced it back. The sailors believing this to be a sign that the statue should not leave Portobello, tossed the Black Christ overboard and it was rescued by the natives. Early in the nineteenth century Portobello, alone, escaped the scourge of a terrible epidemic and the natives attribute their salvation to the presence of the Black Christ. Annually on October 21st, the statue is removed from the church, paraded around the town to the shores of the sea and back to the church by candlelight procession, the progress of the procession moving forward and back and swaying from side to side in the form of a cross.*

## LINES TO THE PANAMA CANAL

T H E R E was anguish, and blood, and strife,  
And evil, hostile thoughts were rife  
Before you—stillborn for centuries—  
Quickened to everlasting life!

When first your embryonic seed  
Implored Balboa to take heed—  
Your vision rent by ocean shores  
As King of Spain decried your need.

For DeLesseps, who came and spent  
Ghastly sums of human content,  
You fanned in vain the fragile flame,  
And waked its death with fury vent.

While Orville Wright and brother Bill  
Sprouted wings at Kill Devil Hill,  
Your puny cry reached 'Teddy R'  
Who spanked to life your substant will.

So Goethals came, and Gorgas too,  
Their vision high, within your view.  
As with sick, recalcitrant child  
They purged you of erosive spew.

Like a slashing sabre leading  
'Neath a sun forever bleeding,  
Slowly spilled your liquid substance  
Thru a beauty, chained, unheeding.

Thus, with the white man's will to do,  
Black man, brown man, dug deep—and you,  
The greedy tyrant, took your toll!  
Of man, what matter—while you grew?

The Gaillard banks your waters slake,  
The spectres on your bosom lake!  
Mute echo of futurity  
Within the premise of their wake!

Anew, your world encircling belt  
Is strengthened by a Roosevelt,  
His baton bright, in sustained flight  
As inbred 'growing pains' are felt.

---

*Written in commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the  
opening of the Panama Canal to traffic, 15 August 1939.*



## LAS BOVEDAS

(The Tombs)

OFTEN have I read  
Las Bovedas' stone face.  
Golden words that trace  
The narrow waterway  
Which two oceans wed.

The story I know well  
And yet, when moon and stars  
Drop earthward ladder mesh.  
Fancy takes me unawares  
And quickly casts a spell.

In retrospect I see them—  
Spanish galleons riding,  
Ploughing green trough of sea.  
And view with entombed eyes,  
Prisoners' requiem.

Beneath these lightsome feet  
That walk thy walled prado  
Imprisoned cries ring out,  
And foot-steps re-echo  
Thy dungeon ghosts' measured beat.

When night is dark and dour,  
Seemingly I hear  
The sound of beating wings  
Against the wall, as fear  
Protests each passing hour.

And yet when climbing rim  
Of Bay of Panama,  
Sun's reborn glory lights  
Plaza de Francia—  
Such darksome fancies dim.

Daylight, like truth, commands  
My homage to those few,  
For whom the symbolic  
Column plumbs depths of blue—  
Where Court of Justice stands!

---

*Las Bovedas (The Tombs), is situated on the top of the sea wall which faces Panama Bay and which in colonial days, was one of the city's strongest fortifications. The name Las Bovedas, refers to the vaulted chambers within the wall which at one time were used as dungeons for criminals. In the Park a Marble Memorial, honoring the French Engineers who planned and worked on the French Canal is erected. The History of the Panama Canal is carved in letters of gold on the marble plaques of the wall. Today, the triangle of territory (location of Las Bovedas) is named Plaza de Francia. Here stands the beautiful Palace of Justice.*

## THE GOLDEN ALTAR

I F I could compare thee, indeed I know not to what  
mortal thing—  
For thy eternal beauty doth forever cling and bless  
each offering.  
'Tis not the word of poet, I know, nor hymn of thy  
past history  
That lights the candle in my heart to you, but rather  
it is this—  
That in the darkest hour each heart must surely know,  
Even as each waking dawn follows sleeping night.  
The Church of San Jose is ever light and bright  
With amber warmth of your caressing golden glow,  
And weary souls find surcease and release from burdens  
No longer burdensome within your hallowed sight.  
Then have I raised mine eyes to thine,  
And almost fathomed your design.  
Your purity of style and line—  
A simple truth—as Bread and Wine.

---

*The Golden Altar, in the Church of San Jose, "A" Avenue, Panama City, is one of the most prized and beautiful possessions of the City. The Altar's rare woodwork is covered with gold leaf and is a thing of exquisite loveliness. Originally this Altar was in the Church of the same name in Old Panama and was saved from destruction or robbery by Margan through the ingenuity of the Priests of the Church.*

## LA FUENTE BAUTISMAL

(Baptismal Fountain)

WITHIN this hollowed bowl of stone  
Phantom fingers prie the veil.  
Echoing seas' resurgent moan  
Phantom voices in travail.

The ghosts of slaves—your shadows plumb.  
Their sins cleansed in your tomb—  
The years and truth, but total sum  
Of deathless birth in freedom's womb.

Deep-drenched in fog the line is lost  
Of shore and ocean margin  
So dimmed by wanton human cost  
The sun flecked waters sparging.

The sun on San Anastasious' face,  
Like blood on remnant spire—  
Reflects in genuflecting grace,  
Your first baptismal fire.

---

*On the Highway to Panama Vieja (Old Panama) the Baptismal Fountain still stands. It was at this fountain that the slaves were baptized before being taken through the Gates of the City.*

## THE KING'S BRIDGE

(El Puente del Rey)

O H ! Bowed and ancient Bridge of King  
Where purple laneways swing and cling  
To ocean's redolent bosom—  
Thy metaphors like incense, cling.

The window of your arch of stone  
Is choked and sown and overgrown  
With mossy fern and emerald bracken,  
That fails to dim your lambent throne.

The King's mules once again parade  
As moon mist drapes a mock charade  
Across your rounded shoulder—  
Their bells a tinkling serenade.

The columns of the King's men lean  
In chimeric and mystic scene  
Against the frame of lilac sky  
On tapestry of mesmeric screen.

The sea still stretches succoring arm,  
As if to haven from all harm  
The phantom ships that nurse your breast,  
And vanish with the tide's moon-charm.

The tears of blood forever run  
As each day's flaming race is won  
And scarlet lashes whip your back  
With every wound of dying sun.

Oh! Royal and ancient keystone arch  
Over thy columnella, still march  
In each successive stroke of time—  
The seed of high born patriarch.

---

*The King's Bridge, on the Royal Highway to Panama La Vieja, (Old Panama), is considered the finest example of Keystone Bridge in the World. It is still in excellent preservation. On State occasions, the King's mules, exquisitely groomed and with harnesses decked with musical bells, were paraded over this bridge and through the streets of the city.*

# LA FLOR DEL ESPÍRITU SANTO

(Holy Ghost Orchid)

ESPÍRITU Santo!  
In SISTINE robe of white—  
Hallowed by the Holy Grail's  
Emerald Light.

Pale white dove, translucent petal  
swaddled—  
Holy Ghost, alabaster sanctum  
cradled.

Symbolic harbinger of peace,  
Rest well within your manger!

---

*La Flor del Espíritu Santo, Holy Ghost Orchid, is the National Flower of Panama.*

## BOUGAINVILLEA

(Flor de la Reina)

W H E N the earth, brown seared  
By relentless sun,  
And rain, her cups, has spilled;  
Seasonal weeping done—  
Bougainvillea brushes,  
Dipped in color bright,  
Paint ecstatic pictures—  
Purple, red and white!

Raise your scarlet banner!  
Wave white and purple plume!  
Spread in regal manner  
Confetti carpet  
Where you bloom!

Tropic sun won't burn you,  
Tropic rain won't fade  
Colors of the rain-bow—  
Your blossoms  
Cast to shade!

---

*The Bougainvillea is known as the Flor de la Reina, in Panama, because it blooms in such profusion during the reign of the Queen during the Carnival Season.*



## BUENAS TARDES

(Good Afternoon)

J A U N T Y little Four O'Clock,  
With upturned saucer face,  
Drink, before the sun must lock  
Your tiny cup in place!

Buenas Tardes! How are you?  
You greet us, one by one—  
Blushing pink and powder blue,  
Aglow with Day's late sun.

So primly proper, sentry stiff,  
Your dress belies your mien  
Until by sun, in gay motif,  
Your party frock is seen.

Like ladies at a soiree,  
From petal cups you sip;  
Nodding heads in silent glee  
Over garden gossip.

Your tea-party, the day's event  
Almost, if not as grand  
As that to which Fair Alice went  
In Carroll's Wonderland!

---

*In Panama the Four O'Clock blossom is known locally as the "Buenas Tardes" or "Good Afternoon" flower, because it opens only from four to six o'clock in the afternoon.*

## GALÁN DE NOCHE

(Gentleman of the Night)

TINY flower of romance,  
Knight of chivalry,  
Climbing by the moon's light  
To my balcony—  
Arrayed in milky surplice,  
Divested with the dawn—  
'Galán de Noche,'  
Flee before the morn!  
Lest,  
Stroke of twelve discounted,  
Your spell begins to pall!  
Hurry, hurry, hurry  
From your Cinderella  
Ball.

---

*"Galan de Noche" is a small white tropical flower (vine variety) that blooms only at night, turns to yellow and dies with the dawn.*

## HIBISCUS HEDGE

GREEN ribbon, ruby studded,  
Edging vale and hill,  
Scattering garnet petals  
At the Trade Winds' will  
Like silent heart beats.

'Tis whispered, Bright Hibiscus,  
Shame inclined your head  
As dropped from hand of Bacchus,  
Wine stained and flamed red  
Your inverted chalice!

Like beads strung on emerald strand  
Blossoms splash along  
Verdant pattern of the land.  
A gayly muted song  
Of captured music!

## NIGHT BLOOMING CEREUS

S H Y worshiper of Juno,  
Flashing lantern flares,  
Lighting vestal candles  
To pray nocturnal prayers.

Drenching air with fragrance,  
Seen by moon's white light  
Keeping tryst with romance,  
Through the night's swift flight.

Night Blooming Cereus  
Holding vespertine rite—  
Are you never curious  
To probe the day's blind sight?

## P A N A M A

C R A D L E D by the oceans  
Bathed in sunlight glow,  
I see the waves caress you  
Crooning secrets low.  
And I would that I could fathom  
What makes your beauty rare,  
Sometimes I sit and wonder  
If the angels lingered there!

Mayhap it's like a woman's charm—  
A bloom that's never seen  
Ever present, living, vital—  
As elusive as a dream!  
Or perhaps when God created  
This world so wondrous fair,  
He smiled at His own handwork—  
And the smile has lingered there!

PANAMA PICTORIAL  
SHINING SUN THRU FALLING RAIN

TRUANT sunbeams flitting  
Off their course again—  
Amber needles knitting,  
Strands of pliant rain!

MOON ON GATUN LAKE  
White Moon Goddess stealing  
Her drink from Gatun Lake  
Unwittingly revealing  
A spectral jungle wake.

STARS OVER PANAMA  
See silver starfish trace  
A silent saraband—  
Omar's starry necklace  
Re-strung above the land!

THE SOUTHERN CROSS  
Invisible chain in unseen hand  
Clasps diamond lavalier  
To drop from black obsidian band—  
A four point lucent tear!

CHORRERA FALLS  
A bridal bouquet tossed  
From rock-carved balcony—  
Marks beauty, ocean lost  
On Chorrera's course to sea.

### CUMULUS CLOUD

Foaming cloudlets filling  
Blue arc of puffed pastry—  
Blue ice-cream cone spilling  
Thunderhead above the sea!

### RAINY SEASON

Open spigots of the sky  
Pouring unceasingly—  
Futile effort to decry  
Rainbow promissory!

### MOON MIST

Moon sheds chiffon drapery  
Of night light, to display  
Sea in 'Motif Fantasié'—  
Interpretive ballet!

### LIMON BAY

An orange in the morning  
A purple plum at night—  
An azure tinted lemon  
Of succulent delight!

### THUNDER OVER EL VOLCAN

El Volcan's yawning dome  
Wearing vapor shroud—  
Cauldron boiling witches' foam  
Mixed of fog and cloud.

## SALUTATION

I N Panama, they greet you  
With a cheery "Buenos Dias!"  
And never fail to speed you  
With a "Vaya con Dios!"

To the guest within her boundary,  
These words speak a warm caress,  
The softly spoken phrasing  
Of her "Vaya con Dios!"

Of all Panamanian customs,  
Some quaint—not always understood,  
I like best her way of saying  
To the stranger "Go with God!"



## PANAMA NOCTURNE

THE witchery of waltzing trees  
In moon-drenched silhouette—  
Like puppets, plucked by phantom breeze,  
Dance shadow minuet  
In muted three-four time!

The purling pull of ocean wash  
The spell of moon defies!  
The crescendo pitch, as breakers crash  
On couch of Lorelie's  
Twin legendary tails!

Dissonant of monkeys' chatter,  
Ruffling of giant leaves;  
Rustling of squirming matter!  
Through tangled morass weaves  
Their chordic harmony.

The plaintive sigh of songless birds,  
The pad of feline stealth,  
Pianissimo cadenza! Herds of  
Procreative insect wealth  
On THUMBELINA wings!

This—  
The matutinal waking choir  
Of all moving jungle things,  
Heard  
In the moon's half light—  
Heard  
In the day's first yawn—  
The suspended stillness of the tropic night  
Before the prayer of dawn!

## SUNRISE AND SUNSET

THE Pacific sky reflects the gold  
Of morning's rising glory.  
Thus—mirrored  
In Atlantic face, is told  
As Evening's Bed-time Story!

---

*Due to geographical location of the Isthmus of Panama, residents of Panama and Colon see the sun rise in Pacific Ocean and set in Atlantic Ocean.*

## P A S E O

(Flirtation Walk)

S H E walks lightly as a zephyr,  
With rhythm in her toes—  
A smile demurely waltzing  
'Neath saucy upturned nose.  
She reaches to my shoulder,  
(Exactly right for size)  
I'd answer, were I bolder,  
The question in her eyes.

He is tall, dark, and handsome,  
And proudly turns his head  
As though he meant to greet me—  
Then winks at me instead.

Strange no doubt, it seems to you  
I go left! She goes right!  
That we walk such different ways  
Presents a puzzling sight!

For

She's my childhood sweetheart  
And I'm her "Novio"—  
Tis the custom of our country  
During the "Paseo."

---

*The "Paseo" is a national tradition in Panama. In Panama City, at the Plaza de la Independencia, almost any Sunday evening, during the Band Concert, boys and girls enjoy a "Paseo" under the beautiful banyan trees. (Girls parade around the Plaza in one direction while the boys walk in the opposite direction.)*

## GRINGOS' LAMENT

IN the Tropics, there's a hunger  
Every 'Gringo' knows and feels  
That the web of its enchantment  
Neither blankets nor conceals.

Tho' the Chagres River's leadin'  
Thru a wild an' torrid heat,  
An' the sun's forever bleedin'  
With a beauty hard to beat.

Tho' the jungle's allus teemin'  
With adventure like you've read  
An' you walk the trail adreamin'  
At each corner meet the dead.

Tho' the moon clasps silver bracelets  
On the arms of Limon Bay,  
As the water's crested wavelets  
Bow to the palm tree's sway.

An' grass and trees are greener  
An' the skies are brighter, too,  
While the rain spills down unendin'  
'Til the heaven sheds its blue.

Oh, it's not that you can't see it,  
The grand picture that it makes—  
But it's beauty-muted music  
That the "gringo" never wakes.

For you'd trade the sun and moonlight—  
An' the Palms' inviting sway  
For the drugstore on the corner  
And a chocolate nut sundae,  
For the Band Stand near the Parkway  
An' the Town Hall in the Square  
An' the movie down on Main Street  
An' the girl who'll meet you there—  
For the front porch in the shadows  
An' the swing that squeaks and groans,  
An' the old man blowin' smoke rings  
An' mom's rockin' chair that groans  
For the smells that keep a-seepin'  
Thru the friendly kitchen door,  
For Joe and Mary, Tom and Dick  
An' no doubt a score or more  
An' the neighbors allus droppin' in  
Without knockin' on the door.

An' that's the way it allus is  
For absence makes you see  
That "homeland's" where your heart is  
No matter where you be.

An' tis then you wish you'd borrowed  
Just one moment more,  
Of the beauty all around you  
That was spilled across your door.

## INVISIBLE BY DAY

So many things lie hidden in the light of day,  
So many things, darkly seen—you nor I can say  
The why, the wherefore, or the blind reasoning that  
Points our destiny.

So many paths are faintly drawn on earthly plan,  
So many thoughts bewilder mind of seedling man,  
He seeks through childhood's blessed eye to pry  
Answers gropingly—

So man gathers swiftly to his side, the years  
Of wisdom, folly, hope, despair, love, laughter, tears;  
Sustaining thus, this gay bright bouncing ball we toss  
To one another.

So—as it is when Evening, dropping shrouded cloak  
Lends shelter to the day—revolving to evoke  
The light. All seeing are the stars that nightly shine  
Invisible by Day!

## THE LOWER KINGDOM

I'VE watched the beaver dam each span  
With finical exactitude;  
And waited hours for ant to plan  
A castle of such magnitude—  
That in his minute image seems  
A replica of man-made dreams!

The squirrel with much fortitude,  
Stores fast his winter horde,  
The bee with blest beatitude  
Strives with subjective lord—  
To procreate eternity,  
With multitude maternity.

The pattern that the spiders weave,  
Is clearly not less intricate;  
Than that which weary mortals leave  
On earthen loom. Immediate  
And so conclusive is the sum—  
The lower kingdom is not dumb!

## DAY WITHOUT END

### FEEDING—

The wheeling loom turns on,  
And turning ever seems  
To dull each destined dawn  
With dim penumbral beams,  
That weal  
And reel  
Within this cosmic ball.

Bleeding  
Night climbs day—rung by rung  
And blots each cancelled date.  
Seasons pass with the sun,  
Quickening to create  
The sperm  
And germ  
Of embryonic seed.

Breeding  
Each new age that's written  
In cycles on the page  
No mortal hand's smitten  
With power to assuage  
The stroke  
And spoke  
That marks each turn of time.



## SUCH LITTLE THINGS

SUCH little things  
Awake my dreams—  
O! should I reason why  
A flag unfurled against the sky,  
Can send them soaring high?

Such little things  
As arid seeds,  
That change from brown to green,  
The earth in which the sowers wean  
A pattern scarcely seen.

Such little things  
Or so it seems,  
In which my heart's held fast;  
A universe encompassed  
Within a baby's cast.

A piece of cloth,  
A clod of earth,  
A baby's first flung cry—  
Reach out and wrap and seal and tie  
A world— for which men die.

## GOSSIP

I NEVER see two jaws aslant,  
In furtive wordage vie;  
And hark to evil prating cant  
As young love passes by—  
But that I pray  
Dear God, I may  
Eschew the twisted word,  
In abstinence be not among  
The Corps who wield a muck-slaked sword  
Whet on a biased tongue!

## THE LAMB

G H O S T L Y hosts are praying  
On the Plains of Abraham.  
Ghostly hosts assaying  
The Sacrificial Lamb.

Ghostly hosts are weeping  
On the Plains of Abraham—  
Wolfe and Montcalm reaping  
Into their fold—the Lamb.

Ghostly hosts are forming  
Close shadow ranks—from death.  
Silent heart-beats storming  
A quickening world's first breath.

Le Voyageur from Northland,  
Le Cleric from the shrine;  
The sower of the prairie,  
The gleaner of the mine.

Page Boy from the Senate,  
Le Professeur L'école;  
Member of Parliament,  
Worker with tool and scroll.

Ghostly hosts are marching  
On the Plains of Abraham.  
The Peasant and Le Seigneur  
For Peace on Earth—the Lamb.

Ghostly hosts in kneeling rite,  
Are pledging ghostly troth  
Frozen hymnal etched in white  
On pristine altar cloth.

Ghostly hosts are praying  
On the Plains of Abraham.  
Ghostly hosts assaying  
The Sacrificial Lamb.

---

*Commemorating the Canadian dead of World War II.*

## SUMMER LOVE

EVEN in so short a time  
As turns the season's page  
I 'stoke' the fires in my heart  
With fuel for Winter's cage.

The lazy days of mid-July,  
Wrapped in a bright cocoon  
Swiftly scatter, lie by lie—  
Through Autumn's pending gloom.

'Twas you who said, 'twas all in fun  
A dance to Summer's song—  
Are you quite sure, now that it's done,  
We didn't dance too long?

## DAY - DREAM

THE placid pool sleeps at my feet,  
While lazily I view  
Through leafy canopy, a fleet  
Of floating flakes of blue  
And airy puffs of sudsy foam  
Billowing from the bowl.  
The rim of its inverted dome  
My indolent horizon—  
On which I can forever beam  
(Just to try their size on)  
Enchanted dreams, the whole day long,  
Evoking pure delight!  
Unfettered as a bird in song  
Enraptured soaring flight  
Of such intoxicating bliss—  
No other dream is quite like this!

## LINES TO A MEADOW LARK

I HEARD a voice this morning  
Which sang a song of love.  
It seemed to be the dawning  
Of faith in God above—  
A voice at first so sweet and low  
I thought it could not be—  
Until each note did swell and grow  
And unexpectedly burst forth  
A riotous tremolo  
Of exquisite melody.  
The liquid notes to me revealed  
A path to heaven above,  
I glimpsed the glory there concealed,  
It was the home of love.

## THEY SAY

THEY say  
That I'll not know you  
When you come back to me.  
That you—who went away  
Will a stranger be,  
They say!

They say  
That every happening  
Will on your face—be note,  
That every day of Soldiering,  
You'll wear like 'Joseph's Coat'  
They say!

They say  
These things, the—O! so wise!  
And yet, how can they know  
What I would recognize?  
The very way you'walk,  
Your brief lop-sided smile,  
Your tendency to balk  
At any show of guile;



The way your eyes light up  
When I wear something blue  
The fact that when you're near  
I need not look for you  
To know that you are there.  
These things, I'll always know.

. . . . .

They say  
My dear—the O! so wise!  
So many things I know  
Are lies.

## A P R A Y E R

W H E N this mad dream is over,  
Please let the waking bring  
To all who walk in shadow,  
The light swept song of Spring  
Hawthorne hedges cotton white,  
Winding lanes so curious;  
Pregnant orchards' fulsome sight,  
Loveliness, incredulous!  
Walk her meadows, emerald lush,  
Thick with scented clover;  
See the dogrose brier blush—  
Cowslip suns all over.

. . . . .

Pray dear God, for all who die  
'Neath freedom's flaming blade,  
Childhood once more lifts its eye  
Upward—Unafraid.

## TO A VERY LITTLE GIRL

LET others strut with pride and joy  
Because their first is born a boy!  
But to you, I will confess,  
You're my Sweetheart—nothing less  
Than  
Mother's miniature.  
And  
I would have you know,  
If boys are heavenly in blue,  
This one fact is no less true,  
A little girl like you, I think—  
Is simply "Heaven done in Pink"!

## LETTER FROM A LITTLE BOY

DEAR Dad:

Today I caught a rock bass,  
Right where you said he was  
Below the willows—beyond  
The ell in Miller's Pond.  
Do you remember Dad?

And Dad,  
All I used for bait was worms—  
'Skip' dug too—mostly bones!  
You know Skip's way of 'helping'  
When we three went fishing  
Do you remember Dad?

But Dad—  
On account of the rock bass  
I missed school and I guess  
Mom was a bit upset  
Except for the trilliums  
I stayed so late to get.

So Dad  
I showed her where they were—  
On top of Pine Hill, where  
We had the picnic the day  
Before you went away  
Do you remember Dad?

And then  
She smiled and said I'd better  
Just write you a letter—  
And 'you'd know that what I'd done  
Was simply 'having fun.'  
Do you remember Dad?  
Yes, I remember, Son!

B A B Y B A L L A R I N A

B A B Y Ballarina,  
Star-dust in your eyes—  
Reaching up on tip-toe  
To embrace the skies.

Pirouetting powder puff,  
In briefest tarletan.  
Gossamer enchantment—  
Bourrée, changé and run!

Twinkling toes trip each note  
With steps I never taught!  
That one, two, and curtsy  
With final entrechât  
Was added, I surmise  
To—  
Finish with the music  
To “my” complete surprise!

## DEVOTION

THEY lay very close together,  
And seeing them like this,  
No one would ever—ever—  
Deny that this was bliss!

She didn't even touch him,  
But seemed to be content  
Just to sit still and adore him;  
While he slept on—silent.

And some who passed them by,  
Smiled at them knowingly—  
Not by a flicker of her eye  
Did she see them, Seemingly!

Still he slept and she sat on,  
Watchful lest he moved—  
And asking nothing more than  
"To guard the one she loved."

Suddenly, he is awake,  
Leaps quickly to his feet—  
She gives a brief ecstatic  
Shake.  
And Boy and Dog run swiftly  
Down the street.

## TREE OF MAGI

W O U L D that *these* were the days of magic,  
And *now* was a fairy spell.  
That all dreams, that I've dreamed  
Were all that they seemed,  
And I dwelt in a Wishing Well.

Neither riches nor fame would I conjure,  
Nor a castle on lost Shangri-la.  
Simply to be—a child of three,  
Beholding his Christmas tree—  
The tree of the Bethlehem Star!

Oh! The joy and innocent wonder,  
As the ever green story is told!  
First glimpse through an infant's eye.  
The Christmas gift of the Magi—  
Frankincense, myrrh, and gold!