

POEMS BY HARRY WESLEY-SMITH 1939-43

JEREMY

We dreamed him into being, you and I,
who in his wicker basket now lies sleeping,
repository of secret hopes so high:
two whole worlds lie within his small soul's keeping.

[1940]

ON TROPICAL SERVICE

I'm restless with the tawny sun
that must too long delay
the dusky night, so kind to one
a-weary of the day.

When stars prick out, then I put by
the yearning and unrest;
dreaming of you, I run, and I
am gathered to your breast.

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HOMeward BOUND

Long is the far horizon
that girds the streaming plain,
and long the sea-road leading
us to our homes again.

Across the curling ocean
we lead our trackless way,
and chase the great sun southwards
thro' west winds wild with spray.

Yet once again united
with those we love the best,
sweet is the journey's ending,
stilled is the heart's unrest.

LAMENT

She said that she would meet me
 this morning after ten;
 I thought how I was surely
 the happiest of men.
 Put up my young heart's shutters,
 and draw its dark blinds down:
 today she was to meet me, but
 she cannot come to town.

Ten thousand germs have raided
 her bronchial tubes and head,
 so now I shall not see her
 'til five drear days are sped.
 Ah me! I must do something
 my misery to drown;
 I hear she's had three Aspros, but
 she cannot come to town.

Geraniums are blooming,
 the meadow grass is sweet,
 and little sparrows chirping
 the kindly sun to greet.
 My heart's not gay or singing,
 and every smile's a frown:
 I'm crying out for Sheila, but
 she cannot come to town.

WEALTH

If in the twilight of your life's long day
 you'll say "I love you true" -
 older than mists on earth are these words, they
 which yet are ever new -
 if as you say them now you'll speak them then,
 come hear me prophesy:
 you shall not find in all the world of men
 one man so rich as I.

REFLECTIONS

Things would not be so bad
 if only his dad
 had throttled [Adolph] Hitler
 when he was littler.

BEAUTY

Take all the beauty of soft summer skies,
 or sunset clouds aflame with red and gold,
 and colours rich as rare old tapestries
 e'er black-cloaked Night appears, the Earth enfold.
 Take wide seas basking in the sparkling sun,
 or purple shadows sleeping on far hills,
 or bursting buds that tell of life begun
 in tree and flower; or twittering song that fills
 the blithesome morning's sun-flecked leaves - O take
 the sum of lovely garbs we've seen Earth wear,
 spin out the essential beauty's thread and make
 her looms weave magic fabrics rich and rare.
 I'll cut and shape them for my lady's dress:
 they will look dull beside her loveliness.

DO YOU REMEMBER . . . ?

[To **SMM**]

Do you remember all the hours we've spent,
 We two? How once we climbed the little hill?
 The sunlit morning, filled with flowers, we went
 Among the woodland trees? Remember still

That day the grey rain slanted down, and how
 We rode through swirling mists in fading light?
 Saw you the moon peep through the pine-tree bough
 While we sang lovesongs to the listening night?

We two have watched the golden-headed sun
 Climb down the sky and sink into the sea;
 He's seen us walk, and swim, and leap, and run.
 He's heard us reading chosen poetry.

In our rich happiness these have their part.
 Will you not throne them always in your heart?

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AT SEA

Daylong and nightlong now my poor head
 while we sail on to Capetown from Aden,
 Is all mazed with thoughts of the face
 and the ways of a lovely young maiden.
 The seagulls cry out at her beauty,
 and she loves me! It's quite turned my brain,
 And head over heels I have fallen
 in love all over again.

She walks with such delicate motion,
 her lips are so tender and sweet,
 The blue of her eyes like the ocean,
 and whiter than sea-foam her feet.
 Whenever I hear her voice calling
 I exult in most jubilant strain,
 For she loves me! and each day I'm falling
 in love all over again.

When she comes, old ladies who're fearful
 and trembling because of the war
 Are uplifted; their curtains of sorrow
 fall in a heap to the floor.
 Where she comes, there I see her distilling
 a freshness like flowers after rain;
 Can you wonder that I keep on falling
 in love all over again?

Snow-white are the tips of the wavelets,
 the morning's all silver and blue;
 Young flying-fish flit around playfully,
 as all well-bred flying fish do.
 I feel like leaping round also,
 like a bull-pup just loosed from his chain.
 Then I laugh in the sun for I've fallen
 in love all over again.

I sit here at ease in the deck-chair
 while deck-quoits whizz over the decks;
 A smudge on the starboard horizon,
 and passengers craning their necks.
 You may think I'm dotty, but oh no!
 believe me I'm perfectly sane!
 Since I've fallen in love with my darling
 all over and over again!

[September 1939]