

**A. ETHELWYN**  
**WETHERALD**

THE HOUSE OF THE  
TREES & OTHER POEMS

A. Ethelwyn Wetherald

**The House of the  
Trees & Other Poems**

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# Ethelwyn Wetherald

## The House of the Trees & Other Poems

### The House of the Trees

OPE your doors and take me in,  
Spirit of the wood;  
Wash me clean of dust and din,  
Clothe me in your mood.

Take me from the noisy light  
To the sunless peace,  
Where at midday standeth Night,  
Signing Toil's release.

All your dusky twilight stores  
To my senses give;  
Take me in and lock the doors,  
Show me how to live.

Lift your leafy roof for me,  
Part your yielding walls,  
Let me wander lingeringly  
Through your scented halls.

Ope your doors and take me in,  
Spirit of the wood;  
Take me—make me next of kin  
To your leafy brood.

## The Sun on the Trees

**THE** sun within the leafy woods  
Is like a midday moon,  
So soft upon these solitudes  
Is bent the face of noon.

Loosed from the outside summer blaze  
A few gold arrows stray;  
A vagrant brilliance droops or plays  
Through all the dusky day.

The gray trunk feels a touch of light,  
While, where dead leaves are deep,  
A gleam of sunshine golden white  
Lies like a soul asleep.

And just beyond dank-rooted ferns,  
Where darkening hemlocks sigh  
And leaves are dim, the bare road burns  
Beneath a dazzling sky.

## Moonlight

**WHEN** I see the ghost of night  
Stealing through my window-pane,  
Silken sleep and silver light  
Struggle for my soul in vain;  
Silken sleep all balmily  
Breathes upon my lids oppressed,  
Till I sudden start to see  
Ghostly fingers on my breast.

White and skyey visitant,  
Bringing beauty such as stings  
All my inner soul to pant  
After undiscovered things,  
Spare me this consummate pain!  
Silken weavings intercreep  
Round my senses once again,  
I am mortal—let me sleep.

## Pine Needles

**HERE** where the pine tree to the ground  
Lays slip its fragrant load,  
My footsteps fall without a sound  
Upon a velvet road.

O poet pine, that turns thy gaze  
Alone unto the sky,  
How softly on earth's common ways  
Thy sweet thoughts fall and lie!

So sweet, so deep, seared by the sun,  
And smitten by the rain,  
They pierce the heart of every one  
With fragrance keen as pain.

Or if some pass nor heed their sweet,  
Nor feel their subtle dart,  
Their softness stills the noisy feet,  
And stills the noisy heart.

O poet pine, thy needles high  
In starry light abide,  
And now for footsore passers-by  
They make a velvet road.

## The Sound of the Axe

**WITH** the sound of an axe on the light wind's tracks  
For my only company,  
And a speck of sky like a human eye  
Blue, bending over me,

I lie at rest on the low moss pressed,  
Whose loose leaves downward drip;  
As light they move as a word of love  
Or a finger to the lip.

'Neath the canopies of the sunbright trees  
Pierced by an Autumn ray,  
To rich red flakes the old log breaks  
In exquisite decay.

While in the pines where no sun shines  
Perpetual morning lies.  
What bed more sweet could stay her feet,  
Or hold her dreaming eyes?

No sound is there in the middle air  
But sudden wings that soar,  
As a strange bird's cry goes drifting by—  
And then I hear once more

That sound of an axe till the great tree cracks,  
Then a crash comes as if all  
The winds that through its bright leaves blew  
Were sorrowing in its fall.

## The Prayer of the Year

**LEAVE** me Hope when I am old,  
Strip my joys from me,  
Let November to the cold  
Bare each leafy tree;  
Chill my lover, dull my friend,  
Only, while I grope  
To the dark the silent end,  
Leave me Hope!

Blight my bloom when I am old,  
Bid my sunlight cease;  
If it need be from my hold  
Take the hand of Peace.  
Leave no springtime memory,  
But upon the slope  
Of the days that are to be,  
Leave me Hope!

## The Hay Field

**WITH** slender arms outstretching in the sun  
The grass lies dead;  
The wind walks tenderly, and stirs not one  
Frail, fallen head.

Of baby creepings through the April day  
Where streamlets wend,  
Of childlike dancing on the breeze of May,  
This is the end.

No more these tiny forms are bathed in dew,  
No more they reach,  
To hold with leaves that shade them from the blue  
A whispered speech.

No more they part their arms, and wreath them close  
Again to shield  
Some love-full little nest—a dainty house  
Hid in a field.

For them no more the splendor of the storm,  
The fair delights  
Of moon and star-shine, glimmering faint and warm  
On summer nights.

Their little lives they yield in summer death,  
And frequently  
Across the field bereaved their dying breath  
Is brought to me.

## Twilight

**I SAW** her walking in the rain,  
And sweetly drew she nigh;  
And then she crossed the hills again  
To bid the day good-by.  
“Good-by! good-by!  
The world is dim as sorrow;  
But close beside the morning sky  
I’ll say a glad Good-morrow!”

O dweller in the darling wood,  
When near to death I lie,  
Come from your leafy solitude,  
And bid my soul good-by.  
Good-by! good-by!  
The world is dim as sorrow;  
But close beside the morning sky  
O say a glad Good-morrow!

## The Sky Path

**I HEAR** the far moon's silver call  
High in the upper wold;  
And shepherd-like it gathers all  
My thoughts into its fold.

Oh happy thoughts, that wheresoe'er  
They wander through the day,  
Come home at eve to upper air  
Along a shining way.

Though some are weary, some are torn,  
And some are fain to grieve,  
And some the freshness of the morn  
Have kept until the eve,

And some perversely seek to roam  
E'en from their shepherd bright,  
Yet all are gathered safely home,  
And folded for the night.

Oh happy thoughts, that with the streams  
The trees and meadows share  
The sky path to the gate of dreams,  
In their white shepherd's care.

## Fall and Spring

**FROM** the time the wind wakes  
To the time of snowflakes,  
That's the time the heart aches  
Every cloudy day;  
That's the time the heart takes  
Thought of all its heart-breaks,  
That's the time the heart makes  
Life a cloudy way.

From the time the grass creeps  
To the time the wind sleeps,  
That's the time the heart leaps  
To the golden ray;  
That's the time that joy sweeps  
Through the depths of heart-deeps,  
That's the time the heart keeps  
Happy holiday.

## The Woodside Way

**I WANDERED** down the woodside way,  
Where branching doors ope with the breeze,  
And saw a little child at play  
Among the strong and lovely trees;  
The dead leaves rustled to her knees;  
Her hair and eyes were brown as they.

“Oh, little child,” I softly said,  
“You come a long, long way to me;  
The trees that tower overhead  
Are here in sweet reality,  
But you’re the child I used to be,  
And all the leaves of May you tread.”

## A Rainy Day

**IT** has been twilight all the day,  
And as the twilight peace  
On daily fetters seems to lay  
The finger of release,

So, needless as to tree and flower  
Seem care and fear and pain;  
Our hearts grow fresher every hour,  
And brighten in the rain.

## When Twilight Comes

**ALL** out of doors for all life's way,  
The fields and the woods and the good sunlight;  
And then in the chill of the evening gray,  
A sheltered nook and the hearth-fire bright.

No hearth, no shelter attend my way!  
Not late, dear life, linger not too late;  
But before the chill and before the gray,  
Let the sunset gild the grave-stone date.

## Leafless April

**LEAFLESS** April chased by light,  
Chased by dark and full of laughter,  
Stays a moment in her flight  
Where the warmest breezes waft her,  
By the meadow brook to lean,  
Or where winter rye is growing,  
Showing in a lovelier green  
Where her wayward steps are going.

Blithesome April brown and warm,  
Showing slimness through her tatters,  
Chased by sun or chased by storm—  
Not a whit to her it matters.  
Swiftly through the violet bed,  
Down to where the stream is flooding  
Light she flits—and round her head  
See the orchard branches budding!

## The Visitors

**IN** the room where I was sleeping  
The sun came to the floor;  
Its silent thought went leaping  
To where in woods of yore  
It felt the sun before.

At noon the rain was slanting  
In gray lines from the west;  
A hurried child all panting  
It pattered to my nest,  
And smiled when sun-caressed.

At eve the wind was flying  
Bird-like from bed to chair,  
Of brown leaves sere and dying  
It brought enough to spare,  
And dropped them here and there.

At night-time without warning,  
I felt almost to pain  
The soul of the sun in the morning,  
And the soul of the wind and rain  
In my sleeping-room remain.

## Autumn Days

**AUTUMN** days are sun crowned,  
Full of laughing breath;  
Light their leafy feet are dancing  
Down the way to death.

Scarlet-shrouded to the grave  
I watch them gayly go;  
So may I as blithely die  
Before November snow.

## Woodland Worship

**HERE** 'mid these leafy walls  
Are sylvan halls,  
And all the Sabbaths of the year  
Are gathered here.

Upon their raptured mood  
My steps intrude,  
Then wait—as some freed soul might wait  
At heaven's gate.

Nowhere on earth—nowhere  
On sea or air,  
Do I as easily escape  
This earthly shape,

As here upon the white  
And dizzy height  
Of utmost worship, where it seems  
Too still for dreams.

## When Days Are Long

**WHEN** twilight late delayeth,  
And morning wakes in song,  
And fields are full of daisies,  
I know the days are long;  
When Toil is stretched at nooning,  
Where leafy pleasures throng,  
When nights o'errun in music,  
I know the days are long.

When suns afoot are marching,  
And rains are quick and strong,  
And streams speak in a whisper,  
I know the days are long.  
When hills are clad in velvet,  
And winds can do no wrong,  
And woods are deep and dusky,  
I know the days are long.

## **Out of Doors**

**IN** the urgent solitudes  
Lies the spur to larger moods;  
In the friendship of the trees  
Dwell all sweet serenities.

## Make Room

**ROOM** for the children out of doors,  
For heads of gold or gloom;  
For raspberry lips and rose-leaf cheeks and palms,  
Make room—make room!

Room for the springtime out of doors,  
For buds in green or bloom;  
For every brown bare-handed country weed  
Make room—make room!

Room for earth's sweetest out of doors,  
And for its worst a tomb;  
For housed-up griefs and fears, and scorns, and sighs,  
No room—no room!

## The Humming Bird

**AGAINST** my window-pane  
He plunges at a mass  
Of buds—and strikes in vain  
The intervening glass.

O sprite of wings and fire  
Outstretching eagerly,  
My soul with like desire  
To probe thy mystery,

Comes close as breast to bloom,  
As bud to hot heart-beat,  
And gains no inner room,  
And drains no hidden sweet.

## September

**BUT** yesterday all faint for breath,  
The Summer laid her down to die;  
And now her frail ghost wandereth  
In every breeze that loiters by.  
Her wilted prisoners look up,  
As wondering who hath broke their chain,  
Too deep they drank of summer's cup,  
They have no strength to rise again.

How swift the trees, their mistress gone,  
Enrobe themselves for revelry!  
Ungovernable winds upon  
The wold are dancing merrily.  
With crimson fruits and bursting nuts,  
And whirling leaves and flushing streams,  
The spirit of September cuts  
Adrift from August's languid dreams.

A little while the revellers  
Shall flame and flaunt and have their day,  
And then will come the messengers  
Who travel on a cloudy way.

And after them a form of light,  
A sense of iron in the air,  
Upon the pulse a touch of might  
And winter's legions everywhere.

## The March Orchard

**UNLEAVED**, undrooping, still, they stand,  
This stanch and patient pilgrim band;  
October robbed them of their fruit,  
November stripped them to the root,  
The winter smote their helplessness  
With furious ire and stormy stress,  
And now they seem almost to stand  
In sight of Summer's Promised Land.

Yet seen through frosty window-panes,  
When bared and bound in wintry chains,  
Their lightsome spirits seemed to play  
With February as with May.

## **Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.**

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