

Cawein Madison Julius

# Weeds by the Wall: Verses



Madison Cawein

**Weeds by the Wall: Verses**

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# Madison J. Cawein

## Weeds by the Wall: Verses

### FOREWORD

In the first rare spring of song,  
In my heart's young hours,  
In my youth 't was thus I sang,  
Choosing 'mid the flowers: —

"Fair the Dandelion is,  
But for me too lowly;  
And the winsome Violet  
Is, forsooth, too holy.  
'But the Touchmenot?' Go to!  
What! a face that's speckled  
Like a common milking-maid's,  
Whom the sun hath freckled.  
Then the Wild-Rose is a flirt;  
And the trillium Lily,  
In her spotless gown, 's a prude,  
Sanctified and silly.  
By her cap the Columbine,  
To my mind, 's too merry;  
Gossips, I would sooner wed  
Some plebeian Berry.  
And the shy Anemone —  
Well, her face shows sorrow;  
Pale, goodsooth! alive to-day,  
Dead and gone to-morrow.  
Then that bold-eyed, buxom wench,  
Big and blond and lazy, —  
She's been chosen overmuch! —  
Sirs, I mean the Daisy.  
Pleasant persons are they all,  
And their virtues many;  
Faith I know but good of each,  
And naught ill of any.  
But I choose a May-apple;  
She shall be my Lady;  
Blooming, hidden and refined,  
Sweet in places shady."

In my youth 'twas thus I sang,  
In my heart's young hours,  
In the first rare spring of song,

Choosing 'mid the flowers.  
So I hesitated when  
Time alone was reckoned  
By the hours that Fancy smiled,  
Love and Beauty beckoned.  
Hard it was for me to choose  
From the flowers that flattered;  
And the blossom that I chose  
Soon lay dead and scattered.  
Hard I found it then, ah, me!  
Hard I found the choosing;  
Harder, harder since I've found,  
Ah, too hard the losing.  
Haply had I chosen then  
From the weeds that tangle  
Wayside, woodland and the wall  
Of my garden's angle,  
I had chosen better, yea,  
For these later hours —  
Longer last the weeds, and oft  
Sweeter are than flowers.

## A WILD IRIS

That day we wandered 'mid the hills, – so lone  
Clouds are not lonelier, – the forest lay  
In emerald darkness 'round us. Many a stone  
And gnarly root, gray-mossed, made wild our way;  
And many a bird the glimmering light along  
Showered the golden bubbles of its song.

Then in the valley, where the brook went by,  
Silvering the ledges that it rippled from, —  
An isolated slip of fallen sky,  
Epitomizing heaven in its sum, —  
An iris bloomed – blue, as if, flower-disguised,  
The gaze of Spring had there materialized.

I have forgotten many things since then —  
Much beauty and much happiness and grief;  
And toiled and dreamed among my fellow-men,  
Rejoicing in the knowledge life is brief.  
"T is winter now," so says each barren bough;  
And face and hair proclaim 't is winter now.

I would forget the gladness of that spring!  
I would forget that day when she and I,  
Between the bird-song and the blossoming,  
Went hand in hand beneath the soft spring sky! —  
Much is forgotten, yea – and yet, and yet,  
The things we would we never can forget. —

Nor I how May then minted treasuries  
Of crowfoot gold; and molded out of light  
The sorrel's cups, whose elfin chalices  
Of limpid spar were streaked with rosy white.  
Nor all the stars of twinkling spiderwort,  
And mandrake moons with which her brows were girt.

But most of all, yea, it were well for me,  
Me and my heart, that I forget that flower,  
The wild blue iris, azure fleur-de-lis,  
That she and I together found that hour.  
Its recollection can but emphasize  
The pain of loss, remindful of her eyes.

## THE PATH BY THE CREEK

There is a path that leads  
Through purple iron-weeds,  
By button-bush and mallow  
Along a creek;  
A path that wildflowers hallow,  
That wild birds seek;  
Roofed thick with eglantine  
And grape and trumpet-vine.

This side, blackberries sweet  
Glow cobalt in the heat;  
That side, a creamy yellow,  
In summertime  
The pawpaws slowly mellow;  
And autumn's prime  
Strews red the Chickasaw,  
Persimmon brown and haw.

The glittering dragon-fly,  
A wingéd flash, goes by;  
And tawny wasp and hornet  
Seem gleams that drone;  
The beetle, like a garnet,  
Slips from the stone;  
And butterflies float there,  
Spangling with gold the air.

Here the brown thrashers hide,  
The chat and cat-bird chide;  
The blue kingfisher houses  
Above the stream,  
And here the heron drowns  
Lost in his dream;  
The vireo's flitting note  
Haunts all the wild remote.

And now a cow's slow bell  
Tinkles along the dell;  
Where breeze-dropped petals winnow  
From blossomy limbs  
On waters, where the minnow,  
Faint-twinkling, swims;  
Where, in the root-arched shade,  
Slim prisms of light are laid.

When in the tangled thorn  
The new-moon hangs a horn,  
Or, 'mid the sunset's islands,  
Guides a canoe,  
The brown owl in the silence  
Calls, and the dew  
Beads here its orbs of damp,  
Each one a firefly lamp.

Then when the night is still  
Here sings the whippoorwill;  
And stealthy sounds of crickets,  
And winds that pass,  
Whispering, through bramble thickets  
Along the grass,  
Faint with far scents of hay,  
Seem feet of dreams astray.

And where the water shines  
Dark through tree-twisted vines,  
Some water-spirit, dreaming,  
Braids in her hair  
A star's reflection; seeming  
A jewel there;  
While all the sweet night long  
Ripples her quiet song...

Would I could imitate,  
O path, thy happy state!  
Making my life all beauty,  
All bloom and beam;  
Knowing no other duty  
Than just to dream,  
And far from pain and woe  
Lead feet that come and go.

Leading to calm content,  
O'er ways the Master went,  
Through lowly things and humble,  
To peace and love;  
Teaching the lives that stumble  
To look above,  
Forget the world of toil  
And all its sad turmoil.

## THE ROAD HOME

Over the hills, as the pewee flies,  
Under the blue of the Southern skies;  
Over the hills, where the red-bird wings  
Like a scarlet blossom, or sits and sings:

Under the shadow of rock and tree,  
Where the warm wind drones with the honey-bee;  
And the tall wild-carrots around you sway  
Their lace-like flowers of cloudy gray:

By the black-cohosh with its pearly plume  
A nod in the woodland's odorous gloom;  
By the old rail-fence, in the elder's shade,  
That the myriad hosts of the weeds invade:

Where the butterfly-weed, like a coal of fire,  
Blurs orange-red through bush and brier;  
Where the pennyroyal and mint smell sweet,  
And blackberries tangle the summer heat,

The old road leads; then crosses the creek,  
Where the minnow dartles, a silvery streak;  
Where the cows wade deep through the blue-eyed grass,  
And the flickering dragonflies gleaming pass.

That road is easy, however long,  
Which wends with beauty as toil with song;  
And the road we follow shall lead us straight  
Past creek and wood to a farmhouse gate.

Past hill and hollow, whence scents are blown  
Of dew-wet clover that scythes have mown;  
To a house that stands with porches wide  
And gray low roof on the green hill-side.

Colonial, stately; 'mid shade and shine  
Of the locust-tree and the Southern pine;  
With its orchard acres and meadowlands  
Stretched out before it like welcoming hands.

And gardens, where, in the myrrh-sweet June,  
Magnolias blossom with many a moon  
Of fragrance; and, in the feldspar light  
Of August, roses bloom red and white.

In a woodbine arbor, a perfumed place,  
A slim girl sits with a happy face;  
Her bonnet by her, a sunbeam lies  
On her lovely hair, in her earnest eyes.

Her eyes, as blue as the distant deeps  
Of the heavens above where the high hawk sleeps;  
A book beside her, wherein she read  
Till she saw *him* coming, she heard *his* tread.

Come home at last; come back from the war;  
In his eyes a smile, on his brow a scar;  
To the South come back – who wakes from her dream  
To the love and peace of a new regime.

## A TWILIGHT MOTH

Dusk is thy dawn; when Eve puts on her state  
Of gold and purple in the marbled west,  
Thou comest forth like some embodied trait,  
Or dim conceit, a lily-bud confessed;  
Or, of a rose, the visible wish; that, white,  
Goes softly messengering through the night,  
Whom each expectant flower makes its guest.

All day the primroses have thought of thee,  
Their golden heads close-haremed from the heat;  
All day the mystic moonflowers silkenly  
Veiled snowy faces, – that no bee might greet  
Or butterfly that, weighed with pollen, passed; —  
Keeping Sultana charms for thee, at last,  
Their lord, who comest to salute each sweet.

Cool-throated flowers that avoid the day's  
Too fervid kisses; every bud that drinks  
The tipsy dew and to the starlight plays  
Nocturnes of fragrance, thy winged shadow links  
In bonds of secret brotherhood and faith;  
O bearer of their order's shibboleth,  
Like some pale symbol fluttering o'er these pinks.

What dost thou whisper in the balsam's ear  
That sets it blushing, or the hollyhock's, —  
A syllabled silence that no man may hear, —  
As dreamily upon its stem it rocks?  
What spell dost bear from listening plant to plant,  
Like some white witch, some ghostly ministrant,  
Some spectre of some perished flower of phlox?

O voyager of that universe which lies  
Between the four walls of this garden fair, —  
Whose constellations are the fireflies  
That wheel their instant courses everywhere, —  
'Mid fairy firmaments wherein one sees  
Mimic Boötes and the Pleiades,  
Thou steerest like some fairy ship-of-air.

Gnome-wrought of moonbeam fluff and gossamer,  
Silent as scent, perhaps thou chariotest  
Mab or king Oberon; or, haply, her  
His queen, Titania, on some midnight quest. —  
O for the herb, the magic euphrasy,

That should unmask thee to mine eyes, ah, me!  
And all that world at which my soul hath guessed!

## ALONG THE STREAM

Where the violet shadows brood  
Under cottonwoods and beeches,  
Through whose leaves the restless reaches  
Of the river glance, I've stood,  
While the red-bird and the thrush  
Set to song the morning hush.

There, – when woodland hills encroach  
On the shadowy winding waters,  
And the bluets, April's daughters,  
At the darling Spring's approach,  
Star their myriads through the trees, —  
All the land is one with peace.

Under some imposing cliff,  
That, with bush and tree and boulder,  
Thrusts a gray, gigantic shoulder  
O'er the stream, I've oared a skiff,  
While great clouds of berg-white hue  
Lounged along the noonday blue.

There, – when harvest heights impend  
Over shores of rippling summer,  
And to greet the fair new-comer, —  
June, – the wildrose thickets bend  
In a million blossoms dressed, —  
All the land is one with rest.

On some rock, where gaunt the oak  
Reddens and the sombre cedar  
Darkens, like a sachem leader,  
I have lain and watched the smoke  
Of the steamboat, far away,  
Trailed athwart the dying day.

There, – when margin waves reflect  
Autumn colors, gay and sober,  
And the Indian-girl, October,  
Wampum-like in berries decked,  
Sits beside the leaf-strewn streams, —  
All the land is one with dreams.

Through the bottoms where, – out-tossed  
By the wind's wild hands, – ashiver  
Lean the willows o'er the river,

I have walked in sleet and frost,  
While beneath the cold round moon,  
Frozen, gleamed the long lagoon.

There, – when leafless woods uplift  
Spectral arms the storm-blasts splinter,  
And the hoary trapper, Winter,  
Builds his camp of ice and drift,  
With his snow-pelts furred and shod, —  
All the land is one with God.

## THE CRICKET

### I

First of the insect choir, in the spring  
We hear his faint voice fluttering in the grass,  
Beneath some blossom's rosy covering  
Or frond of fern upon a wildwood pass.  
When in the marsh, in clamorous orchestras,  
The shrill hylodes pipe; when, in the haw's  
Bee-swarmed blooms, or tasseling sassafras,  
Sweet threads of silvery song the sparrow draws,  
Bow-like, athwart the vibrant atmosphere, —  
Like some dim dream low-breathed in slumber's ear, —  
We hear his "Cheer, cheer, cheer."

### II

All summer through the mellowing meadows thrill  
To his blithe music. Be it day or night,  
Close gossip of the grass, on field and hill  
He serenades the silence with delight:  
Silence, that hears the melon slowly split  
With ripeness; and the plump peach, hornet-bit,  
Loosen and fall; and everywhere the white,  
Warm, silk-like stir of leafy lights that flit  
As breezes blow; above which, loudly clear, —  
Like joy who sings of life and has no fear, —  
We hear his "Cheer, cheer, cheer."

### III

Then in the autumn, by the waterside,  
Leaf-huddled; or along the weed-grown walks,  
He dirges low the flowers that have died,  
Or with their ghosts holds solitary talks.  
Lover of warmth, all day above the click  
And crunching of the sorghum-press, through thick  
Sweet steam of juice; all night when, white as chalk,  
The hunter's-moon hangs o'er the rustling rick,  
Within the barn 'mid munching cow and steer, —

Soft as a memory the heart holds dear, —  
We hear his "Cheer, cheer, cheer."

#### IV

Kinsman and cousin of the Faëry Race,  
All winter long he sets his sober mirth, —  
That brings good-luck to many a fire-place, —  
To folk-lore song and story of the hearth.  
Between the back-log's bluster and the slim  
High twittering of the kettle, — sounds that hymn  
Home-comforts, — when, outside, the starless Earth  
Is iced in every laden limb, —  
Defying frost and all the sad and sear, —  
Like love that dies not and is always near, —  
We hear his "Cheer, cheer, cheer."

## VOICES

When blood-root blooms and trillium flowers  
Unclasp their stars to sun and rain,  
My heart strikes hands with winds and showers  
And wanders in the woods again.

O urging impulse, born of spring,  
That makes glad April of my soul,  
No bird, however wild of wing,  
Is more impatient of control.

Impetuous of pulse it beats  
Within my blood and bears me hence;  
Above the housetops and the streets  
I hear its happy eloquence.

It tells me all that I would know,  
Of birds and buds, of blooms and bees;  
I seem to *hear* the blossoms blow,  
And leaves unfolding on the trees.

I seem to hear the blue-bells ring  
Faint purple peals of fragrance; and  
The honey-throated poppies fling  
Their golden laughter o'er the land.

It calls to me; it sings to me;  
I hear its far voice night and day;  
I can not choose but go when tree  
And flower clamor, "Come, away!"

## THE GRASSHOPPER

What joy you take in making hotness hotter,  
In emphasizing dullness with your buzz,  
Making monotony more monotonous!  
When Summer comes, and drouth hath dried the water  
In all the creeks, we hear your ragged rasp  
Filing the stillness. Or, – as urchins beat  
A stagnant pond whereon the bubbles gasp, —  
Your switch-like music whips the midday heat.  
O bur of sound caught in the Summer's hair,  
We hear you everywhere!

We hear you in the vines and berry-brambles,  
Along the unkempt lanes, among the weeds,  
Amid the shadeless meadows, gray with seeds,  
And by the wood 'round which the rail-fence rambles,  
Sawing the sunlight with your sultry saw.  
Or, – like to tomboy truants, at their play  
With noisy mirth among the barn's deep straw, —  
You sing away the careless summer-day.  
O brier-like voice that clings in idleness  
To Summer's drowsy dress!

You tramp of insects, vagrant and unheeding,  
Improvident, who of the summer make  
One long green mealtime, and for winter take  
No care, aye singing or just merely feeding!  
Happy-go-lucky vagabond, – 'though frost  
Shall pierce, ere long, your green coat or your brown,  
And pinch your body, – let no song be lost,  
But as you lived into your grave go down —  
Like some small poet with his little rhyme,  
Forgotten of all time.

## THE TREE TOAD

### I

Secluded, solitary on some underbough,  
Or cradled in a leaf, 'mid glimmering light,  
Like Puck thou crouchest: Haply watching how  
The slow toad-stool comes bulging, moony white,  
Through loosening loam; or how, against the night,  
The glow-worm gathers silver to endow  
The darkness with; or how the dew conspires  
To hang at dusk with lamps of chilly fires  
Each blade that shrivels now.

### II

O vague confederate of the whippoorwill,  
Of owl and cricket and the katydid!  
Thou gatherest up the silence in one shrill  
Vibrating note and send'st it where, half hid  
In cedars, twilight sleeps – each azure lid  
Drooping a line of golden eyeball still. —  
Afar, yet near, I hear thy dewy voice  
Within the Garden of the Hours apoise  
On dusk's deep daffodil.

### III

Minstrel of moisture! silent when high noon  
Shows her tanned face among the thirsting clover  
And parching meadows, thy tenebrious tune  
Wakes with the dew or when the rain is over.  
Thou troubadour of wetness and damp lover  
Of all cool things! admitted comrade boon  
Of twilight's hush, and little intimate  
Of eve's first fluttering star and delicate  
Round rim of rainy moon!

#### IV

Art trumpeter of Dwarfland? does thy horn  
Inform the gnomes and goblins of the hour  
When they may gambol under haw and thorn,  
Straddling each winking web and twinkling flower?  
Or bell-ringer of Elfland? whose tall tower  
The liri dendron is? from whence is borne  
The elfin music of thy bell's deep bass,  
To summon fairies to their starlit maze,  
To summon them or warn.

## THE SCREECH-OWL

When, one by one, the stars have trembled through  
Eve's shadowy hues of violet, rose, and fire —  
As on a pansy-bloom the limpid dew  
Orbs its bright beads; – and, one by one, the choir  
Of insects wakes on nodding bush and brier:  
Then through the woods – where wandering winds pursue  
A ceaseless whisper – like an eery lyre  
Struck in the Erl-king's halls, where ghosts and dreams  
Hold revelry, your goblin music screams,  
Shivering and strange as some strange thought come true.

Brown as the agaric that frills dead trees,  
Or those fantastic fungi of the woods  
That crowd the dampness – are you kin to these  
In some mysterious way that still eludes  
My fancy? you, who haunt the solitudes  
With witch-like wailings? voice, that seems to freeze  
Out of the darkness, – like the scent which broods,  
Rank and rain-sodden, over autumn nooks, —  
That, to the mind, might well suggest such looks,  
Ghastly and gray, as pale clairvoyance sees.

You people night with weirdness: lone and drear,  
Beneath the stars, you cry your wizard runes;  
And in the haggard silence, filled with fear,  
Your shuddering hoot seems some bleak grief that croons  
Mockery and terror; or, – beneath the moon's  
Cloud-hurrying glimmer, – to the startled ear,  
Crazed, madman snatches of old, perished tunes,  
The witless wit of outcast Edgar there  
In the wild night; or, wan with all despair,  
The mirthless laughter of the Fool in Lear.

## THE CHIPMUNK

He makes a roadway of the crumbling fence,  
Or on the fallen tree, – brown as a leaf  
Fall stripes with russet, – gambols down the dense  
Green twilight of the woods. We see not whence  
He comes, nor whither – 'tis a time too brief! —  
He vanishes; – swift carrier of some Fay,  
Some pixy steed that haunts our child-belief —  
A goblin glimpse from woodland way to way.

What harlequin mood of nature qualified  
Him so with happiness? and limbed him with  
Such young activity as winds, that ride  
The ripples, have, that dance on every side?  
As sunbeams know, that urge the sap and pith  
Through hearts of trees? yet made him to delight,  
Gnome-like, in darkness, – like a moonlight myth, —  
Lairing in labyrinths of the under night.

Here, by a rock, beneath the moss, a hole  
Leads to his home, the den wherein he sleeps;  
Lulled by near noises of the cautious mole  
Tunnelling its mine – like some ungainly Troll —  
Or by the tireless cricket there that keeps  
Picking its drowsy and monotonous lute;  
Or slower sounds of grass that creeps and creeps,  
And trees unrolling mighty root on root.

Such is the music of his sleeping hours.  
Day hath another – 'tis a melody  
He trips to, made by the assembled flowers,  
And light and fragrance laughing 'mid the bowers,  
And ripeness busy with the acorn-tree.  
Such strains, perhaps, as filled with mute amaze —  
The silent music of Earth's ecstasy —  
The Satyr's soul, the Faun of classic days.

## LOVE AND A DAY

### I

In girandoles of gladioles  
The day had kindled flame;  
And Heaven a door of gold and pearl  
Unclosed when Morning, – like a girl,  
A red rose twisted in a curl, —  
Down sapphire stairways came.

Said I to Love: "What must I do?  
What shall I do? what can I do?"  
Said I to Love: "What must I do?  
All on a summer's morning."

Said Love to me: "Go woo, go woo."  
Said Love to me: "Go woo.  
If she be milking, follow, O!  
And in the clover hollow, O!  
While through the dew the bells clang clear,  
Just whisper it into her ear,  
All on a summer's morning."

### II

Of honey and heat and weed and wheat  
The day had made perfume;  
And Heaven a tower of turquoise raised,  
Whence Noon, like some wan woman, gazed —  
A sunflower withering at her waist —  
Within a crystal room.

Said I to Love: "What must I do?  
What shall I do? what can I do?"  
Said I to Love: "What must I do,  
All in the summer nooning?"

Said Love to me: "Go woo, go woo."  
Said Love to me: "Go woo.  
If she be 'mid the rakers, O!  
Among the harvest acres, O!  
While every breeze brings scents of hay,

Just hold her hand and not take 'nay,'  
All in the summer nooning."

### III

With song and sigh and cricket cry  
The day had mingled rest;  
And Heaven a casement opened wide  
Of opal, whence, like some young bride,  
The Twilight leaned, all starry-eyed,  
A moonflower on her breast.

Said I to Love: "What must I do?  
What shall I do? what can I do?"  
Said I to Love: "What must I do,  
All in the summer gloaming?"

Said Love to me: "Go woo, go woo."  
Said Love to me: "Go woo.  
Go meet her at the trysting, O!  
And, 'spite of her resisting, O!  
Beneath the stars and afterglow,  
Just clasp her close and kiss her so,  
All in the summer gloaming."

## DROUTH

### I

The hot sunflowers by the glaring pike  
Lift shields of sultry brass; the teasel tops,  
Pink-thorned, advance with bristling spike on spike  
Against the furious sunlight. Field and copse  
Are sick with summer: now, with breathless stops,  
The locusts cymbal; now grasshoppers beat  
Their castanets: and rolled in dust, a team, —  
Like some mean life wrapped in its sorry dream, —  
An empty wagon rattles through the heat.

### II

Where now the blue, blue flags? the flow'rs whose mouths  
Are moist and musky? Where the sweet-breathed mint,  
That made the brook-bank herby? Where the South's  
Wild morning-glories, rich in hues, that hint  
At coming showers that the rainbows tint?  
Where all the blossoms that the wildwood knows? —  
The frail oxalis hidden in its leaves;  
The Indian-pipe, pale as a soul that grieves;  
The freckled touch-me-not and forest-rose.

### III

Dead! dead! all dead besides the drouth-burnt brook,  
Shrouded in moss or in the shriveled grass.  
Where waved their bells, — from which the wild-bee shook  
The dew-drop once, — gaunt, in a nightmare mass,  
The rank weeds crowd; through which the cattle pass,  
Thirsty and lean, seeking some meagre spring,  
Closed in with thorns, on which stray bits of wool  
The panting sheep have left, that sought the cool,  
From morn till evening wearily wandering.

#### IV

No bird is heard; no throat to whistle awake  
The sleepy hush; to let its music leak  
Fresh, bubble-like, through bloom-roofs of the brake:  
Only the green-blue heron, famine weak, —  
Searching the stale pools of the minnowless creek, —  
Utters its call; and then the rain-crow, too,  
False prophet now, croaks to the stagnant air;  
While overhead, – still as if painted there, —  
A buzzard hangs, black on the burning blue.

## BEFORE THE RAIN

Before the rain, low in the obscure east,  
Weak and morose the moon hung, sickly gray;  
Around its disc the storm mists, cracked and creased,  
Wove an enormous web, wherein it lay  
Like some white spider hungry for its prey.  
Vindictive looked the scowling firmament,  
In which each star, that flashed a dagger ray,  
Seemed filled with malice of some dark intent.

The marsh-frog croaked; and underneath the stone  
The peevish cricket raised a creaking cry.  
Within the world these sounds were heard alone,  
Save when the ruffian wind swept from the sky,  
Making each tree like some sad spirit sigh;  
Or shook the clumsy beetle from its weed,  
That, in the drowsy darkness, bungling by,  
Sharded the silence with its feverish speed.

Slowly the tempest gathered. Hours passed  
Before was heard the thunder's sullen drum  
Rumbling night's hollow; and the Earth at last,  
Restless with waiting, – like a woman, dumb  
With doubting of the love that should have clomb  
Her casement hours ago, – avowed again,  
'Mid protestations, joy that he had come.  
And all night long I heard the Heavens explain.

## THE BROKEN DROUTH

It seemed the listening forest held its breath  
Before some vague and unapparent form  
Of fear, approaching with the wings of death,  
On the impending storm.

Above the hills, big, bellying clouds loomed, black  
And ominous, yet silent as the blue  
That pools calm heights of heaven, deepening back  
'Twixt clouds of snowdrift hue.

Then instantly, as when a multitude  
Shout riot and war through some tumultuous town,  
Innumerable voices swept the wood  
As wild the wind rushed down.

And fierce and few, as when a strong man weeps,  
Great rain-drops dashed the dust; and, overhead,  
Ponderous and vast down the prodigious deeps,  
Went slow the thunder's tread.

And swift and furious, as when giants fence,  
The lightning foils of tempest went insane;  
Then far and near sonorous Earth grew dense  
With long sweet sweep of rain.

## FEUD

A mile of lane, – hedged high with iron-weeds  
And dying daisies, – white with sun, that leads  
Downward into a wood; through which a stream  
Steals like a shadow; over which is laid  
A bridge of logs, worn deep by many a team,  
Sunk in the tangled shade.

Far off a wood-dove lifts its lonely cry;  
And in the sleepy silver of the sky  
A gray hawk wheels scarce larger than a hand.  
From point to point the road grows worse and worse,  
Until that place is reached where all the land  
Seems burdened with some curse.

A ragged fence of pickets, warped and sprung, —  
On which the fragments of a gate are hung, —  
Divides a hill, the fox and ground-hog haunt,  
A wilderness of briars; o'er whose tops  
A battered barn is seen, low-roofed and gaunt,  
'Mid fields that know no crops.

Fields over which a path, o'erwhelmed with burs  
And ragweeds, noisy with the grasshoppers,  
Leads, – lost, irresolute as paths the cows  
Wear through the woods, – unto a woodshed; then,  
With wrecks of windows, to a huddled house,  
Where men have murdered men.

A house, whose tottering chimney, clay and rock,  
Is seamed and crannied; whose lame door and lock  
Are bullet-bored; around which, there and here,  
Are sinister stains. – One dreads to look around. —

## **Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.**

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