Of this edition of *Cavalcade*, by Norah Godfrey, five hundred copies only have been printed.

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To

My Son

Norah Godfrey began writing verse at the age of ten for the *Bellevue College Magazine*, Quebec City, as School Poet. She has lived in both Canada and the United States, and now resides in Toronto. Active in the League of Nations Society, and the Home and School Clubs, golf and badminton, she has found time to write verse which has appeared in *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, *Chatelaine*, *The Globe and Mail*, and elsewhere. The inspiration for this first formal offering of her work had its origin in World War I, from which her only brother returned an invalid. Her only son enlisted in the Navy in World War II. This explains the indignation as well as the pity shown in her work.
There was fever in the wind;
Thunder on the hill.
Lightning flashed a silver chain across the clouds
Linking war and war
With only a furlough between.
Summer spilt August on the ground
Leaving a red stain.
Autumn burnt her leaves to sudden flame.
The tops of the maple trees in the valley
Nodded like scarlet poppies . . .
Mars lit a red candle in the sky,
Then Winter came.

The earth is a bondswoman
Serving fear
Holding out wrists
To be shackled.
The beating of the drums
Muffled her capture,
Martial music softened her screams,
And it was Spring again.

The world is a chain of you and you and you
Linking security
To girdle the earth.
One break
And the chain is broken
Slipping under foot
Ground to dust
Under a goose-step tread.
We pledge the third and fourth division
For the battle front—
Calling the strong, calling the brave,
Calling mechanics, carpenters, shipbuilders;
Calling all craftsmen and craftswomen;
Calling more working hours for old and young,
Calling for blood to mend the things that men undo—
Calling me, calling you.

1940

In Canada airplanes in massed formation
Uncontested take the air
Scraping the blue and white ensign of the clouds,
Stabbing through space in silver battle dress,
Mirroring the sun in polished gleams,
Gigantic robot birds streamlined for speed
Killing the silences of early morning.

Today we close schoolbooks of history,
Close our ink-stained maps,
Closing their leaves together
Laying them all away.
Tomorrow with the ink
Spilled from our hearts
We write on pages waiting for new print
A history that we make each fighting day of progress,
Or in a night's relapse.
Then in the interval we dig deep trenches
For new graves,
And with unsteady fingers draw red lines
Of wavering length
Across a continent to form new maps.

In the beginning God made the light;
He made the night;
He made the land and ocean and the clouds.
Herbs for the field,
Fish for the sea,
Fowl for the air.
For the Heavens he made the stars
And for the earth he made man.

Page Two
The stars obeying his will
Accepted responsibility to the stars,
And there was order in the heavens.
But man accepting insufficient responsibility towards man
Assumed the mantle of disobedience
And there was chaos on earth,
And there was chaos at sea,
And there was chaos in the clouds.

How beautiful, how beautiful
Upon the mountains
Are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings
That publisheth peace.

How precious now each moment
Ticking the clock away!
How short the time—
Sea training is not long
And we who scarcely know the sea
Will greet it with a song.

1941

The skies of England burn
Their royal red to dull grey ash;
There is shrapnel in April rain,
Iron in the heart of springing flowers.
But the shades of England record undimming sun—
The spirit of England.
Her triumph over the defeat at Dunkirk,
The courage of her serenity
Though she walks in flame.
We salute the fortitude of a long inheritance
While a song rises over the Battle of Britain
‘There’ll Always be an England.’

Maturity is time grown mellow with good humour.
Our April sky is blue, bluer than ever before,
The breeze softer, the green greener
On trees and bush and lawn.
In the garden our apple tree blossoms
For the first time
Building a bower to shelter winged things . . .
This democracy of birds once ours
Seems ours no longer,
Nature, kinder than man,
Shelters, restores, replenishes.

In Canada our spirit holds the essence of white pine,
Of spruce and cedar and hard maple,
Shaped by the fret of bitter winds,
Of brittle ice and stinging snow.
We bear the spirit of our fathers,
The pioneers who dared a wilderness of terror
That we their children's children
Might know width
To shape new kingdoms of our own
In lands whose character could brook no overlords.
Though centuries have passed and gone,
This fence of root, this wall of stone,
Bear testimony to a mighty conquest
Over the rocky woodlands
Now beds of fertile soil
That cradle golden wheat to feed a world.

Our hearts were singing melodies
None of us could name
But there was sorrow in them
Sorrow and pain,
That made us want to linger
Till it was almost dark,
Holding on to the finger
Of day until the spark
Of tinder lit the stars on high
And the gold full moon flood-lit the sky.

There were tears in the wind,
Tears on the cheek
Tears on our lashes
Barbing our heart—
God bless you all,
God keep you all,
God keep you safe,
Good-bye . . . good-bye.

Above the sea the wind has rolled a call,
Calling and calling to the inland tides
Along the lakes and rivers, over the wall
Of sapience and sentiment it rides
   Against the wind of fear,
   Against a mother’s tear—
Above the winds the sea has tolled a call.

Sea, sea, ease your great heaving,
   You cradle our son.
Hold, hold, stay storm and grieving
   Peace, peace, must be won . . .

Oh peace, so fragile on our finger tips
Before it slipped from our too-careless hold;
Whose very word was stolen from our lips
To speak of peace in war is overbold.
But should we bend our will for it as now
We bend our every effort for this war,
It shall arise again with glowing brow
When we have earned its worth unknown before.

For peace needs constant earning to be won,
And confidence needs courting day by day,
And both can place a carillon for a gun
On borderlands when peace has come to stay.
Their chiming tones could call an hourly prayer
Of spiring rhythms that ring, "Bear and Forbear."
This pale-blue letter, feather-light
Flown in by plane
Is the small grain of sand
That moved a mountain from my heart.
It smoothed the furrows
Fear had plowed
Between the temples of my thought . . .
Its rays have lit this Winter day,
Lifting the weight of shadows
That made the weeks seem months
The moments days.
O heart of our heart!
O son!
God keep you safe from harm.
You said:
I’m going to see Old London
Think of that!
The trip across was fine—
The world’s my oyster shell,
And watch me pry this thing apart
Called travel.

You did not say
Yet, yet I knew
When you touched shore so far away
Our sailor men
Just stood and sang,
And sang again,
O Canada—
Nor ever loved it half so much before.

You did not say
That sailors weep
As only strong men do . . .
These are the things I knew.

Pacifica, the statue of a woman
Symbolizing peace
In the San Francisco Exposition
Was pulled down today.
Pacifica, like peace in the Pacific,
Is no more.
Across the continent we heard
The silver echoes of her dying song—

Lower me slowly, my friends,
Help me to bear the shock;
All that my symbols uphold
The turbulent wars shall mock—
They leaden my shroud with mould.

Lower my pride if you will,
Efface my statuesque form,
Obliterate all that I am . . .
Incite even earthquake and storm
To prove that peace is a sham.

Lower me down to the dust,
Bury my soul in the soil,
Yet from my heart shall spring flowers
Plunderers cannot despoil . . .
Remember, God holds my hours.

Malaya, Singapore become quicksands
Under the Japanese heel.
The tides of war in Burma and Africa
Advance, retreat,
Like spindrift in a gale.

The raid of Dieppe—
A testing battle that proves
How fragile is the strength of men
Against the armament his mind has made . . .
But bravery has no word that acknowledges defeat.

Even the wind is muffled with snow . . .
Footfalls pad softly down the street.
Even the voices hold a muffled echo
Of people thinking in the distance.
Even pride and poverty are muffled
In this vast communion of loneliness.

Beneath the winds the snow muffles the trees
Touching each branch in new and haloed beauty—
Trees that are sorrowing for branches
Missing in the war of years.
1943

When warm winds carry songbirds home
And forsythias light their torches on the lawn
We shall return
On furlough or peace
God grant that both are one . . .

The birds have had their seasons
Built new homes,
But we have not returned
Though Springs have come and gone—
The years have endless range
Within the thought . . .

Mimosa has been blooming on the beaches
Of a landlocked sea
Spilling gold into the Mediterranean
And perfume into the wind;
There is no scent to equal it
On land or sea;
No word to tell how small
How soft its blossom.

For this one moment we can think
Of peaceful things . . .
The scent of pine and cedar
In our woods at home;
A gust of perfumed lilac
By our own back porch;
Syringa called mock orange
By the rustic bench
On moonlit nights
At home.

Above the mountains
Gunfire smoke, iridescent and beautiful
Moulds the clouds in billowing mockery.
Even the thunder of guns
Is melodious
In the distance
Like an army on the march with a thousand drums . . .

Page Eight
Cantata we call it,
And with our souls we wish that it could be
Cantata at home . . .

Beyond the grey stone walls
Children are lying sick and hungry.
Young mothers weave through ruins,
Scantily clad,
Searching forever searching
For someone dear they cannot find.
Old women with bent shoulders, hungry-eyed
Tell their prayer beads
With faith undaunted by atonement yet deferred . . .
"Our Father which art in Heaven,
Hallowed be thy name . . .
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Pray for us now and at the hour of death."

Their voices rise and fall in cadences
Rich in monotony
Till every bead is told
And fingers clasp the cross.

1944

In the secret places of the heart
Mothers of Canada kneel
To the silken touch of curls
Soft as a spider's web,
Remembering in pain . . .
The trusting tilt of his small head,
The stars of mischief that brim young eager eyes,
The toddling steps
In small white shoes,
The silvery voice,
The dimpled wrist,
The clutch of soft fingers,
Too small to hold a spoon,
Now shaped to fit the mechanism of a rifle
To hold a frontier against
The living likeness of himself
In all but speech.
This youth he might have loved
If love could fill the mart
Where wars are sold
To fit the swollen currency
Of national vanity.

The hand that rocks the cradle does not rule the world.

Hold, skies of April blue
Long spent with April rain.
Blow softly April breeze
To ease a heart’s new pain.
Though sorrow stalk the earth
We know no lovelier thing
Than the budding gentle birth
Of a slow Canadian Spring.
Then Winter’s frigid claim
Of sonant black and white
Yields to the warmth of sun
That daily lengthens light.

While England
Industriously awaits the passage of time
Russia builds live fences
From the Baltic to the Carpathians
To the tune of a world’s applause . . .
Without Russia
June would have been telling her summer children
How goose-stepping became popular
All over the world.

The Luftwaffe is said to be in decline
But Mars is a hungry dragon
Demanding blood sacrifices till the end.
The seasons pulse with the heavy grind of war engines
Shunting ahead at slow pace,
But the final call to France comes in June . . .

There is a rainbow over Europe
It hangs like a bubble over Normandy
Where once upon a time
Children raced along the beaches flying balloons
Red, blue, green and yellow.
Where babies built sand castles, moats and bridges,
Scooping out small rivers with tin shovels,
Where they splashed each other with water,
And the world with laughter.
Where the waves gurgled and tossed
Sun to sun,
Laughter to laughter.

Men come swarming the decks in hives of immense Armadas,
Or they fly high above the clouds
Irresistible as dust in storms . . .
Men blow like sands in the wind,
Covering the beaches in France from end to end.

The miracle of Mulberry acclaims
What mighty miracle man can perform for man
If peace should gather such resourcefulness.

On the beaches men die
Clutching the sand castles of small children
In their hands,
With the echo of child laughter
A bedtime prayer
Easing their last goodnight.

We watch the wild geese flying
Northward in Springtime,
Southward in Autumn.
We are the wild geese, lacking their wisdom.
We walk with webbed feet
Or we fly in double wedges,
And the wedges do not hold in storms.

We laugh and our laughter sounds hollow.
Wisdom is at a premium
But there is no demand for it . . .
While purses jangle with the gold of war
Wisdom is forgotten.

National prayer becomes an order.
The earth has stolen
The scarlet from this dawn,
The crimson from this sunset.
There is no red as red as fluid blood . .

Europe becomes an altar
For the sacrificial offering of sons,
While the inferno of guns robs the sky of peace,
And the world of homes.
Men lie deep in the soil
Branding the world
With unforgettable scars
In full payment of International irresponsibility.
The allies press on however
Encircling the enemy
Crushing the breath of conquest
In the immediate.

1945

A great man dies at the frontline
Of his crucifying task
Of uniting people
Imprinting a speech
Stamped with his dying legacy—
Let there be peace.
Roosevelt mounts the steep steps
Of the great world court beyond
To join Lord Lothian and President Wilson;
Crucified by spiritual blindness
Dying that the unity of the spirit might be established
In the bond of peace . . .

In mid-spring the Atlantic war ends,
But the chill of Winter rides
A May-day’s sun
When we now turn from West to East
Remembering Japan.
While the suspense of waiting
Holds a summer’s bounty to the charter
Of one ship’s return,
Chalk River dumps her unhappy secret
On a stricken world.

From some far lone seabase,
Atomic energy,
Bearing the stamp of England, America and Canada
Pinpoints a target for unloading bombs,
Labelled Japan . . .
In the thunder of annihilation
Another war ends.

Above the echo of its thunder
Shaking the rooftops of the world
A zephyr of peace whispers tremulously
In midsummer nineteen hundred and forty-five—
But there is still a strong threat of frost
In the summer wind.

AUTUMN:

Our hearts stand still
Listening to young returning voices
Below the parapet;
The lonely years depart
Blowing away with yesterday’s gale.

He comes today
Why do you weep!

No closer to the heart
But closer to the touch
They come,
Soldiers in units,
Airmen in squadrons,
And sailors one by one.
Hungry we search this swirling tide—
This sea of browns and blues and greys
For our beloved
Finding a part of one in each,
Though none the same.
Hungrily we listen for one voice
As voices blur like heavy rain . . .
Deep eyes reach ours at last
Deep with their questioning
Asking for secrets of the hidden years.

Oh Lord,
Comfort ye the mothers
Who stand in the window
Watching for sons
Who cannot come again.

1946

They said
We saw England in April,
England in June.
When the church bells were silenced
Daffodils rang out instead,
Blowing in the wind.
Daffodils just marched along the downs
Spilling new gold on old hills.

The hawthorn is beautiful, mother,
White and glistening in half-light,
And the scent of them
Just steals away your heart.
Oh England is beautiful with memories of things
Long gone before.
There is depth and soundness to the place
Except where bombs untidied things.
England is as tidy as she can be tidied,
And her people are kindly,
And her young girls
Most gracious.

Page Fourteen
Science has narrowed a thousand miles of world
Down to an inch.
Radar in waves has touched the moon.
Knowledge is a little thing though dangerous.
The wings of science wraps the world
Into cordion folds—
Yet still unlearned this simple little thing—
How can man live with man in peace . . .
Profoundly simple, or simply as profound
In worlds so complicated with superior lore.

We see the eloquence of suffering in their eyes
That hold remembrances in sacred trust.
Remembrances that seem to say—
We have waited in Canada, in England,
In Dunkirk, in Dieppe, in Africa, in Italy,
But we marched in Normandy.
We are now remembering how long our companions waited,
Only to be snuffed out in the end.
How sadly pagan that we should let them die
While we live on to keep on waiting
To begin our living again.

We say
In tones that tremble to the echo of a memory
Once heard before—
You shall not lie out there
In lonely buried honour
While we forget.
Not while time leaves our heart one throb,
One pen with which to write . . .
You may lie there in grateful stillness
Eased from the strain of lurid battle fields.
You shall not lie out there alone
And leave us uncondemned.
We shall condemn ourselves remembering you
Each year of joyous youth you gave
Shall each one be remembered . . .

Our deeds must speak.
The battle marches on;
The allies' flag is flying
Supremely red
With stars in angles of five points...
Five powers you say
Or one or two or three.

We say
Not powers but light
At one with all
With all at one
In confidence re-born
By proven faithfulness in policies
At home.
Yielding the things unneeded
For another's need.
When powers are linked to universal love
What paradise this transient world of ours could be.
At one with all—with all at one—
Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit
In the bonds of peace.

Science at work in the laboratory of the soul
Discovering new energy emptied of hate
To be filled with the heaven of a better and enduring substance
To make all nations great;
Justifying their right to live
By strengthening their right to love,
Granting a furlough with happiness for all
In our small sheaf of years.
# Ryerson Poetry Chap-Books

**Lorne Pierce—Editor**

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*Out of Print

One Dollar